



**Sonoma County Fish and Wildlife Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
August 18, 2011 – 7:00pm**

Attending  
Members

Absent  
Members

Others

Crystal Norris  
Al Ferris  
Dave Cook  
Jo Bentz  
Caroline Christian  
Darius Anderson  
Jim Lynch  
Brock Dolman  
Don McEnhill  
Jeff Holden

Andrew Pozzi

Capt., Steve Riske, CA Dept. of Fish and Game (DFG)  
James Reed, DFG  
Doris Duncan, Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue  
David Bannister, Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation  
Jasmine Hopkins, Social Advocates for Youth  
Asia Galang, Social Advocates for Youth  
Toni Abraham, Social Advocates for Youth  
Jennifer Green, Social Advocates for Youth  
Kellie Noe, Sonoma County Water Agency  
Ann Gallagher White, District Attorney's Office  
Lisa Correia, Ag Commissioners Office  
Dagny Thomas, Ag Commissioner's Office

Chairperson Crystal Norris calls the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Crystal asks if there are any additions or corrections to the June or July 2011 minutes. There are none. Al Ferris makes a motion to accept the June and July minutes as presented, with a second by Jeff Holden. Motion carried with ten 'Ayes', one 'Absent'.

**Correspondence**

- A. Correspondence from California State Fish & Game Commission regarding various regulatory actions
- B. California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision meeting notice

**Financial Reports**

In June 2011, the Abalone Fund received \$75.00 from Central Collections, with a fiscal year fund balance of \$273.05. The General Fund received \$1,511.10 from Superior Court and \$254.37 from Probation, with a fiscal year fund balance of \$24,186.83.

For the fiscal year ending '10-'11, the Abalone Fund received \$0.75 in interest, with a final year-end balance of \$273.05. The General Fund received \$1,496.11 from Superior Court and \$216.11 in interest, with a final year-end balance of \$19,753.90.

In July 2011, the Abalone Fund received \$25.00 from Central Collections, with a fiscal year fund balance of \$5,000.00. The General Fund received \$254.37 from Probation, with a fiscal year fund balance of \$58,550.00.

Crystal asks if there are any additions or corrections to the June, July or fiscal year-end financial reports. There are none. Al Ferris makes a motion to approve the financial reports as presented, with a second by Brock Dolman. Motion carried with ten 'Ayes', one 'Absent'.

### **Old Business**

#### **Kellie Noe, Sonoma County Water Agency/Youth Ecology Corps – youth crew member presentation**

Kellie introduces Toni Abraham and Jennifer Green, Coordinators, with Social Advocates for Youth (S.A.Y.), and Asia Galang and Jasmine Hopkins, Youth Ecology Corps participants.

Asia says working for the Youth Ecology Corps has been a life-changing experience and a gateway to many opportunities. She enjoys the creek restoration projects and takes pride in the work she does. She is grateful to be a participant and thanks the Commission for funding the program.

Jasmine has acquired many trade skills she may not have otherwise had the opportunity to learn and is also appreciative of the opportunity to participate; it has been an invaluable educational experience. She enjoys going to work every day and is passionate about the work she is doing. She thanks the Commission for supporting Youth Ecology Corps.

Crystal asks if the women plan on attending college after they graduate. Asia is planning to attend a four year college. Crystal mentions the Fish and Wildlife Commission scholarship program and encourages her to apply if she decides to pursue a degree in one of the qualifying areas of study.

Brock asks if they have seen any beavers along the Prince Memorial Greenway. Asia says they haven't seen any there, but have seen evidence of beavers near Willowside.

Al asks if there is a "want to do" attitude amongst the work crews, as opposed to a "can do" attitude. Asia says the youth crews are very motivated and eager to do the work.

#### **Noelle Johnson, Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District (GRRCD), is requesting a grant in the amount of \$3,750.00, for *Hedgerows for Habitat – Phase II*, second reading**

The second reading will be tabled until the September meeting.

### **Status update on boat transfer (DFG/Sonoma County Sheriff's Office)**

Lisa Correia, Assistant Agricultural Commissioner, says Ag department staff researched the feasibility of transferring ownership of the boat to the Ag Commissioner's Office for use by DFG, but the Sheriff's Office ended up selling the boat at auction.

### **Scholarship requirements – Discussion**

Caroline Christian would like to revisit the criteria used for eligibility for the Fish and Wildlife Scholarships. She asks why graduate students aren't able to apply. She feels grad students tend to be very focused and 'serious' about their studies. Her students at Sonoma State University (SSU) perform research and compile data that is beneficial to the county.

Jeff Holden agrees and feels that scholarships benefit grad students the most.

Darius Anderson and Jim Lynch weren't aware that grad students couldn't apply.

Crystal says that in the past, the only people applying were graduate students and they weren't receiving undergrad applications, which is why the criteria changed.

Jo Bentz supports undergraduates at the junior college (JC) level and those who face financial hardships.

Jim Lynch feels there should be a scholarship for undergraduates and another for graduates. He then suggests the annual allocation for scholarships be raised from \$5,000 to \$6,000 and three \$2,000 scholarships be awarded – one at the JC level, one at the junior/senior level, and one at the graduate level. Dave Cook agrees that this is a good idea and would like to add that if, for some reason, there were no qualified grad student applications that the graduate 'category' award be given to a JC or junior/senior applicant.

Darius Anderson suggests the individual award amount be lowered to allow for creating more scholarships at a smaller amount. He feels that reaching a larger number of students is important.

Don McEnhill supports the idea of creating three awards, and feels the scholarship program is a great investment in the future.

Crystal says there is no line item in the budget for scholarships so amending the annual amount would be an easy process.

It is agreed that the eligibility criteria for residency and relevant fields of study remain the same and that the 'mailing list' for the annual scholarship announcements is reviewed and updated to include a broader range of potential candidate pools besides Santa Rosa Junior College and regional four year universities.

Jeff Holden likes the idea of awarding five scholarships at \$1,000.

Darius would like to see more flexibility in the eligibility criteria to include a broader range of potential candidates.

Crystal would like a summary of the proposed ideas. The discussion will be continued next month and a subcommittee will be formed regarding scholarships.

### **New Business**

**David Bannister, Executive Director, Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation (Laguna Foundation), is requesting a grant in the amount of \$9,500.00 for *Restoration Department Truck, first reading***

David introduces himself and explains that the Foundation's Restoration Department needs a vehicle for use out in the field. They restore riparian habitats, plant native vegetation, remove non-native plant species and conduct research important to the preservation of the Laguna. Having a vehicle is critical to this aspect of the work the Foundation performs. The Sonoma County Water Agency and Marin/Sonoma Mosquito Vector Control have been contacted about potential vehicles for sale. Crystal suggests David also check with Sonoma County General Services to see if there are any vehicles being sold.

Jo Bentz asks where Meadowlark Field is in Sebastopol. David says it was formerly called Barlow Field. The parcel they are currently working on is owned by the City of Sebastopol and runs behind the Sebastopol Community Center. Jo asks if there will be trail maintenance occurring with this project. David says the trail she is referring to is being worked on by the Open Space District.

Crystal states this is the first reading and the second reading will be heard at the September 2011 meeting.

**Doris Duncan, Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue (SCWR), is requesting a grant in the amount of \$8,304.00, for *Disease Control Area Project, first reading***

Doris thanks the Commission for their previous grant award for SCWR's electrical project last year. They are currently working on a new enclosure for North American river otters, which will be made available to rehabilitation agencies around the state that take in river otters.

The current grant request is for facilities upgrades for disease control. Doris says their intake numbers have been increasing 100-150 per year. They are in the process of merging with another wildlife rescue center, the Wildlife Center for Disease and Toxin Investigation. Their intake numbers are currently around 890 due to the acquisition.

Due to the increased number of intakes, the isolation area needs to be upgraded and modernized to improve their methods for disease control. DFG will be using the facility as well and will have a key to access it. They are micro-chipping and video documenting intakes and the current facilities are not adequate for their needs.

They have been working with biologists and pathologists from DFG and UC Davis to identify the source of "hopping fox syndrome". For the past three years they have been observing and taking in foxes with their back legs stuck together that cause them to hop like rabbits. The numbers of "hopping foxes" have increased over the last three years.

Jeff Holden asks about micro-chipping the animals and wonders if they could use grease pen instead to mark them. Doris has tried using grease pens, but the animals end up grooming themselves and it rubs off too easily. She says it is nearly impossible to tell the animals apart and that micro-chipping is the safest and most effective way to do this. It is error-proof and is also the method used by DFG.

Dave Cook asks if there is runoff from the isolation area and if diseases can spread that way. Doris says the diseases are airborne and do not transmit through runoff. She wants to build a perimeter fence around the isolation area to ensure containment of diseases and to prevent contamination from outside sources.

Jim Lynch asks how many microchips the grant money would buy. Doris says the chips cost around \$14.00 each which would buy 400 and should last through next year. Dave suggests Doris look into the supplier that the Water Agency uses for pit tags, because they pay \$2-\$3 apiece for them. Crystal would like to see a detailed supply list at next month's meeting.

Jeff asks why diseased animals are contained and not euthanized. Crystal explains that keeping animals for observation can help identify diseased populations in specific areas. Doris says that oftentimes animals are treated and recover from their illness, and then released.

Darius asks if they have been able to rehab the hopping foxes. Doris says it varies, depending upon what stage of the illness they are brought in at. She explains the less severe cases have been rehabilitated through steroidal drug treatments. They have kept a test group of six foxes to research and observe with DFG. Sonoma County is the only county in the state this syndrome has been observed or reported so far.

Caroline would like to see the information from the research distributed to relevant agencies and rehab groups to develop best management practices. Doris says Deanna Clifford with DFG is responsible for reporting out on the research.

Crystal states this is the first reading and the second reading will be heard at the September 2011 meeting.

## **Reports and Comments**

### **Commission –**

- Jim was in contact with Jake Wise (former Commissioner) who now lives in Washington State. Jake is applying to an advisory board for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and included a brief description about his service on the Sonoma County Fish and Wildlife Commission in his application.
- Brock enjoyed his trip to France and Spain and did a lot of birding. He recently attended an informational session in Sacramento held by Assemblymember Wes Chesboro regarding Coho salmon. Brock gave a talk about the relationship between Coho and beavers and the reintroduction of beavers in Coho habitat areas. There haven't been observations of beavers in the Russian River since the early 1800's.

Crystal has seen beavers in the creek behind her office recently.

- Jo asks the Commission for referrals for the vacant commissioner seat in the Fifth District vacated by Gene Gaffney. Anyone interested may contact Jo directly with questions or Supervisor Carrillo's office to apply.
- Jeff took his daughter to the creek restoration event held by the Youth Ecology Corps, but couldn't locate anyone involved with the project when they arrived. He recently attended the Petaluma Farms kid's benefit and suggested the kids write thank you notes as part of their graduation exercises.
- Al went camping with his granddaughters at Lake Pillsbury and taught them how to fish.
- Don shares pictures of a rain garden and bio-swell project just completed in the parking lot at Healdsburg High. Students were involved in the project and it was part of their curriculum. The funding for the project came from a polluter mitigation fund from a lawsuit settlement. Don collected visual evidence for the lawsuit with a camera funded by the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

**Public –**

- Steve Riske says deer season has started, and it's been slow. He met with Supervisor Carrillo regarding hiking classifications and regulations at Laguna de Santa Rosa.

He is attending an Urban Coyote workshop in San Francisco and Daly City hosted by Fiona Ma. Crystal says there needs to be more public education regarding dealing with wildlife in urban areas. Steve says there is a DFG program which has been very successful in Southern California called "Wildlife Watch" which gathers animal agencies, rehab groups and stakeholders to educate the public on safe practices when dealing with urban wildlife. He is looking to use recently trained local DFG volunteers to assist with the program if implemented in Northern California.

Caroline asks why the mountain lion populations and sightings have increased in urban areas. Steve says development, lack of predators, and blocking of natural corridors are some of the reasons there has been an increase.

- Ann Gallagher White is working on many large investigations for the District Attorney's Office and has a very high caseload at the moment.

With no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Thomas  
Commission Secretary