



**Sonoma County Fish and Wildlife Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 16, 2011 – 7:00pm**

Attending
Members

Jim Lynch
Brock Dolman
Crystal Norris
Al Ferris
Don McEnhill
Dave Cook
Andrew Pozzi

Absent
Members

Gene Gaffney
Jeff Holden
Darius Anderson
Jo Bentz
Caroline Christian

Others

Noelle Johnson, Gold Ridge Resource Conservation
District
Capt., Steve Riske, CA Dept. of Fish and Game (DFG)
Ed Hoener, Sonoma County Sheriff's Office
Stephanie Parreira, Scholarship Recipient
Katie Robbins, Scholarship Recipient
Lisa Robbins, Guest
Ken Robbins, Guest
Dagny Thomas, Ag Commissioner's Office

Chairperson Crystal Norris calls the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

Adoption of Minutes

Crystal asks if there are any additions or corrections to the April 2011 minutes.

Andy Pozzi makes a motion to approve the April 2011 minutes as presented, with a second by Jim Lynch. Motion carried with seven 'Ayes', five 'Absent'.

Correspondence

- A. Thank you note from Kellie Noe, Sonoma County Water Agency/Youth Ecology Corps
- B. Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue – May 2011 Newsletter
- C. DFG email regarding summer activities for children in Northern California (submitted by Crystal)

Financial Reports

In April 2011, the Abalone Fund received \$75.00 from Central Collections, and \$0.54 in interest with a fiscal year fund balance of \$273.05, and a total fund balance of \$528.93. The General Fund received \$260.62 from Probation, \$246.33 in interest, and paid out \$11.77 in office expenses, with a fiscal year fund balance of \$36,551.07, and a total fund balance of \$159,502.06.

In May 2011, the Abalone Fund received \$25.00 from Central Collections, with a fiscal year fund balance of \$273.05, and a total fund balance of \$553.93. The General Fund received \$1,798.77 from Superior Court, \$312.49 from Probation, and paid out \$5,000 in scholarships and \$7,320.00 for grant #153 - with a fiscal year fund balance of \$24,186.83, and a total fund balance of \$149,249.08.

Crystal asks for a motion to approve the April and May 2011 financial reports as presented. Andy Pozzi makes a motion to approve, with a second by Al Ferris. Motion carried with seven 'Ayes', five 'Absent'.

Old Business

2011 Scholarship award – Katherine Roberts

Al Ferris presents Katherine with her check. She says she graduated from Casa Grande High School and was the President of the United Anglers during her senior year. Her interest in animals has been prevalent since she participated in 4H as a young girl. She is going into her sophomore year at Santa Rosa Junior College, majoring in Biology, and hopes to transfer to Sonoma State University. She has experience as a field biologist working with DFG at the fish hatcheries and really enjoys that type of field work. She thanks the Commission for choosing her.

2011 Scholarship award – Stephanie Parriera

Al presents Stephanie with her scholarship check. She also graduated from Casa Grande High School and just finished her junior year at Sonoma State University in the Environmental Studies Conservation/Restoration track, minoring in Biology. She would like continue on to earn her Ph.D. immediately after she graduates. She was accepted into a program that assists first-generation college students get into graduate school. She is working on a research project for controlling invasive yellow star thistle at the Fairfield Osborne Preserve. She is also working at the Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory for the summer on their Zooplankton research. She is thankful to the Commission for the award.

Al Ferris invites Katherine and Stephanie to the Salmon Festival in Oroville to assist with removing tags on the fish.

Ed Hoener, Sonoma County Sheriff's Office/Marine Unit is requesting a grant in the amount of \$4,397.46, for *Russian River Enforcement*, final reading (previously submitted by DFG)

Captain Steve Riske met with the Assistant Chief of DFG. He explains there is a state-wide hold on the purchase of all vehicles and boats, so they are unable to take possession of the Sheriff's jet boat. The only option would be for the Fish and Wildlife Commission to take ownership and allow DFG to use it; DFG can store it at one of their facilities and they are self-insured.

Crystal thinks there may be a conflict with the Ag Commissioner's Office (as the acting department that governs the Fish and Wildlife Commission) taking possession because of the current budget situation and with issues related to tracking fixed assets.

Ed Hoener says the Sheriff's Office will not retain ownership of the jet boat either way, and the last option would be to sell it at surplus auction. The Sheriff's Marine Unit still needs the kayak, which would be used for joint enforcement operations with DFG on the Russian River. Ed explains that during the summer months, there are areas that are only reachable by kayak such as Mother's Beach and Steelhead Beach. The kayaks are designed for traversing very shallow water, can go 10-15 miles per hour, be beached, and pulled across rocks.

Don McEnhill received a call from Sheriff's dispatch calling in need of a boat for an enforcement call up in Healdsburg. Due to the shallow water conditions in the area, Don provided the Sheriff's Office with a canoe, suggesting it would be easier to navigate.

Andy Pozzi asks what the current status of the jet boat is. Ed says it is currently out of service.

Crystal suggests the Commission budget committee meet with the Agricultural Commissioner's Office analyst and County Counsel to determine what may be possible with transferring ownership of the jet boat.

Brock Dolman says the Commission should look at the grant award for the kayak and the situation regarding what will happen to the jet boat as two separate issues.

Brock makes a motion to approve the grant in the amount of \$4,397.46, with a second by Jim Lynch. Motion carried with seven 'Ayes', five 'Absent' for grant #154.

Scholarship requirements – Discussion

Crystal says this item will be tabled until the next meeting, as Caroline Christian is not present and had originally suggested the discussion.

New Business

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*, first reading

Noelle introduces herself and explains that for the first phase of the project GRRCD has planted over 5,000 plants:

- 1,250 plants at Singing Frogs Farm in Sebastopol
- 1,200 plants at Rued Vineyards in Graton
- 730 plants at Dierke Farm, including native plants for riparian habitat restoration along Redwood Creek; the owner of the property engages all of his work crews to assist with the planting
- 360 plants at Joy Ranch Road in Bodega; they created a wildlife corridor
- 500 plants at Three Ox Farm in Sebastopol
- 600 plants at Gabriel Farm in Sebastopol; included assistance from the Cub Scouts and the Volunteer Center; produce from Gabriel Farm goes to the Fruit Guys, who bring healthy food into offices

They also used the first grant award for the construction of bee nesting box materials and plants.

GRRCD is now approaching phase two by asking for funding assistance from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and National Resource Conservation Service to work on two new farms: New Family Farm and Laguna Farm, both in Sebastopol.

The grant monies requested from the Fish and Wildlife Commission would be used for materials to construct owl, bee and bat boxes with assistance from the Cub Scouts, who contacted GRRCD and asked if they could work on more habitat projects. They would also like to purchase additional plant species that can be used in habitat restoration that are not limited to pollinator plants.

Noelle says she took the advice of the Commission last year and contacted the Jail Industries Nursery. She is very pleased with their quality and pricing, but wishes they had a wider variety available. Ed Hoener suggests she speak with 'Rich' at Jail Industries and ask him in advance to plant the varieties she will need. She says that will help a lot.

GRRCD has incorporated the pollinator program into a K-6th environmental education program with funding from the Open Space District. Students go on field trips to dairies, ranches and wildlife preserves to learn about different environmental systems first hand. They created a YouTube video about the program.

Brock suggests placing bee boxes close to sheds or barns because Orchard Mason Bees tend to nest close to these types of structures.

Crystal says the size of the entrance to owl boxes needs to be monitored because starlings will nest in Barn Owl nests. She also suggests Noelle contact Bird Rescue in the fall, during nestling season, for possible hack or release sites.

Al Ferris asks what material lines the bee boxes. Noelle says they use bamboo fiber liners.

Crystal states this is the first reading; the second reading will be heard at the July 2011 meeting.

Reports and Comments

Commission –

- Jim Lynch went abalone diving in rugged conditions but saw a lot of abalone. He also attended a Wild Pig workshop at Duncans Mills. He learned about the hazards of lead ammunition and the long term effect on wildlife and the ecosystem and found the workshop very educational.

Crystal mentions research on condors in Hollister that are anemic due to eating carrion laden with lead shot.

- Brock Dolman is leaving soon to study wild, acorn-fattened hogs on a rolling grassland savannah in France for ten days.
- Al Ferris will be attending the Salmon Festival in Oroville.

- Don McEnhill has recently been reviewing self-monitoring reports about lead levels in the Russian River. A family of coyotes was trapped next to the Healdsburg Golf Course, near his house, and a baby deer was killed by another coyote.
- Crystal attended the California Outdoor Heritage Alliance dinner last month, hosted by Darius Anderson, with Jo Bentz, Jim Lynch, Jeff Holden, Al Ferris, Dagny Thomas and Jeff Furlong (Wildlife Specialist from the Ag Commissioner's Office) and his wife. The event promoted hunting heritage, advocacy and environmental preservation. There was a diverse group of people in attendance and she enjoyed the event.

Public –

- Steve Riske says that Rob Roberts, who was the District Lieutenant, was promoted to Captain position for a state-wide volunteer program based in Sacramento. Abalone numbers are down in some areas; there are some proposals being considered to change the daily start time, cut the annual limit, and/or modify the length of the season.

Dave Cook asks what caused changes to the Lingcod regulations. Steve says the changes were federally regulated, so California DFG is following the federal changes.

- Ed Hoener says one of his Deputies, Matt Peralta, is in the final two weeks of a year-long major environmental cleanup of the Petaluma River. The Sheriff's Office is working in conjunction with the CalRecycle, the Petaluma Police Department Code Enforcement Division and the US Environmental Protection Agency to remove derelict commercial vessels from the mouth of the San Pablo Bay to within Petaluma City. The current vessel they are removing is a huge barge filled with asbestos. The US Environmental Protection Agency contributed over \$800,000, with the project totaling over \$1.5 million. The only money spent by Sonoma County was the salary of the Deputy working on the project.

With no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Thomas
Commission Secretary