



**Sonoma County Fish and Wildlife Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2012 – 7:00PM**

Commissioners Attending:
Crystal Norris
Andrew Pozzi
Jim Lynch
Jo Bentz
Al Gerhardt
Jeff Holden
David Cook
Julian Meisler
Al Ferris

Commissioners Absent:
Caroline Christian
Don McEnhill
Brock Dolman

Others:
Gregg Horton, SC Water Agency
Nick Geist, SSU

Chairperson Norris called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Adoption of Minutes

Crystal Norris asked if there were any additions or corrections to the February 2012 minutes.

Al Gerhardt asked that the February 2012 minutes be amended to show that Don McEnhill was absent. Crystal commented that Don was here and made comments, minutes stood as accurate.

Al Gerhardt made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, with a second by Al Ferris. Motion carried with 9 'Ayes', and 3 'Absent'

Correspondence

The following correspondence was received:

1. Correspondence from California State Fish and Game Commission.

Financial Report

In February 2012, the Abalone Fund received \$25.00 from Central Collection leaving a fund balance of \$177.43 in that account. The General Fund received 652.27 from Superior Court, \$47.95 from Probation, leaving a budget balance of \$34,348.41.

Al Ferris made a motion to accept the financial reports as present and Jeff second. Motion carried with 9 'Ayes' and 3 'Absent'.

Old Business

Scholarship Sub-Committee:

Crystal asked for the scholarship committee update. Al Ferris commented that they met and discussed the scholarships. Jo Bentz gave a summary of the areas they are working on and will meet again in April.

Andy asked what the purpose of the scholarship grant was and do we have stipulations on what they can do with this money? Al Ferris and Crystal communicated that they don't believe there are any stipulations. Jo Bentz commented that we could limit it to books and other necessary costs. Jim says most of the applications have letters from professors and employers vouching that they are good righteous students. Jim suggested that they not complicate it too much.

Crystal shared that the scholarships went out in January and that applicants have until March 31st to submit. The Commission will review at the April meeting.

Crystal thanked the committee and looked forward to the draft of their suggestions.

New Business

Crystal introduced Julian Meilser as the newest commissioner appointed. Julian gave a brief summary of his background and activities, with the Sonoma Land Trust and work on Title Marsh Restoration.

First Reading for Funding Request Application in the amount of \$10,000.00 from the Sonoma County Water Agency for downstream migrant trap for juvenile salmon and steelhead.

Gregg Horton gave an overview of the rotary screw traps and how the collection box will provide for monitoring fish populations in Mark West Creek. Gregg stated that the traps were checked daily, identifying and counting species captured.

Andy Pozzi asked where the screw traps were going to be, actually, in Mark West? Gregg gave a location and explanation of where the traps will be located.

Al Ferris asked how long are they held, and do you release the fish, Gregg mentioned that yes, they do release the fish. Gregg said “they handled well over 200,000 fish last year.”

Crystal asked once you have them in the box how long are they held. Gregg stated they are checked daily and released alive in good condition. In general their protocol involves weighing and measuring a portion of the fish. In some cases they do tag some fish, pit tag that is implanted into the fish. They might do some of that on Mark West Creek. There has been very little recent data and very little monitoring data.

Al Gerhardt said “he doesn’t remember, Chinook being native in the Russian River, and he doesn’t know where they came from.” Gregg responds that there is some debate on whether Chinook are native to the Russian river and there are those that believe they are native but regardless they are here and it’s a species that Dept. Fish and Game have recognized under both the same Fish and Wildlife Act. Particular Coho are in deep, deep trouble and any information we can get to obtain fishery information is important.

Dave Cook mentioned that he works at the Water Agency and he can assure us that Gregg Horton is experienced and can identify salmon. Dave said that the screw trap is part of the fisheries enhancement program which monitors the restoration efforts. The screw trap will be one tool that will help us identify the fish.

Crystal asked if the costs of the trap are \$23,165.00 and if the grant amount was \$10,000.00 does the Water Agency have the balance of the funding? Gregg stated that the Water Agency would be able to make up the difference.

Crystal stated that this is the first reading of the grant and the second reading will take place at the April 2012 meeting.

Nick Geist, Sonoma State University professor, gave an update on the Western Pond Turtles tagging grant from 2010.

Nick thanked the Commission for his grant and the supplies needed to run the study. One of the aspects of the project is having one of his graduate students working on how turtles are using these urban habitats. This student will be writing his theses on this project and the thesis will be published. They were able to go out twice a week for the entire year. They were able to calculate the daily movement patterns of the turtles. They are currently analyzing the data and are looking at seasonal dormancy. They are finding that the turtles are pretty limited in their territory as they are sticking in the creek. When the high water is flowing they are on land or close to the shore hunkering down. Nick also stated that most of the turtles they are finding are older males.

Board Reports & Comments

Andy Pozzi:

Al Ferris:

Jo Bentz: Not going to be here next month, on vacation.

David Cook: Nothing to report

Julian Meisler: Nothing to report

Jim Lynch: Nothing to report

Al Gerhardt: A couple of assembly bills to do creek enhancements and do woody debris and there is another one to do pond construction so they're not drawing water directly out of the streams. Al also mentions that there is a trail out at Estero Bay with burrowing owl and they allowed public access with dogs.

Jeff Holden: Nothing at this time.

Crystal Norris: Passed out a newsletter from Wildlife Fawn Rescue. Also stated the George Lowery passed away recently and he was very involved with SCAN (Sonoma County Abalone Network). The History Channel last weekend had a marathon showing of the Fish and Game Wild Justice running some show from 2010 and newer one from 2012. Most of them take place in Southern California and showed a lot of poaching. They did a piece on the big abalone bust on the coast. There were two episodes in which Demitri appeared in, (a raid in Rohnert Park and a pot cleanup in Santa Clara).

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gretchen Melendy
Acting Commission Secretary