

## Minutes of the January 17, 2008 Meeting

<u>Attending Members</u>	<u>Absent Members</u>	<u>Others</u>
Crystal Norris Brock Dolman Martin Bauman Andrew Pozzi Pierre Gadd Jr. Gene Gaffney Jeff Holden Al Ferris Dave Cook Jo Bentz Jim Lynch	Ned Hill	Dave Hillendahl, Commission Retiree Michele Luna, Stewards of the Coast Brendan O'Neil, CA State Parks Earl Cummings, Sotoyome RCD Robert Pennington, Community Clean Water Institute Sarah Shaeffer, Community Clean Water Institute Kandis Gilmore, Community Clean Water Institute Steve Riske, Dept. of Fish & Game Alex McVicker, Ag. Commissioner's Office Dagny Thomas, Ag. Commissioner's Office

Chairperson Crystal Norris called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.

### **Adoption of Minutes**

Crystal Norris asks if there are any additions or corrections to the November 2007 minutes. There were none. A motion to accept the August minutes was made by Al Ferris, with a second by Pierre Gadd. Motion carried.

### **Correspondence**

- A. Letters from Fish and Game Commission:
  - *Proposed regulatory action regarding methods authorized for taking big game and non-game birds and mammals*
  - *Proposed regulatory action regarding nuisance Canada geese*
- B. Sonoma County Abalone Network Newsletter – November 2007
- C. Letters from Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue:
  - Requesting end of year tax-deductible donations for the Center
  - Thanking the Commission for the grant award in the amount of \$3,500.00
- D. Email correspondence from James Swan (Snow Goose Down Productions) with an update on the progress of "Endangered Species" video documentary
- E. Letter from Wildlife Fawn Rescue thanking the commission for the grant award in the amount of \$801.97

## **Financial Reports**

November 2007 Financials: The Abalone Fund received \$259.41 from Central Collections, with a fund balance of \$8,031.14. The General Fund received \$4,151.40 from Superior Court revenues, \$327.23 from Probation, and \$5,403.10 from the DA in fines, with a fund balance of \$180,546.83.

Crystal notes that there is a letter from Jeff Holtzman, Deputy District Attorney, attached to the November 2007 General Fund financial report that states that the income from fines in the amount of \$5,403.10 is designated specifically for "equipment and training for Department of Fish and Game Wardens in Sonoma County."

December 2007 Financials: The Abalone Fund received \$25.00 from Central Collections and \$200.00 from Probation, leaving a fund balance of \$8,256.14. The General Fund received \$2,413.87 from Superior Court revenues and \$380.58 from Probation, with a fund balance of \$183,316.89.

A motion to approve the November and December 2007 Financial Reports is made by Jim Lynch, with a second by Gene Gaffney. Motion carried.

## **Old Business**

**Second Reading of *Fish Passage Project, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods*** - Michele Luna, Executive Director, is requesting an amended grant amount for \$13,500.00 for the Willow Creek Road 2<sup>nd</sup> Bridge Area Fish Passage Project.

Michele Luna introduces Brendan O'Neil from California State Parks.

Brendan begins with a presentation that shows the boundaries of the watershed, California State Parks, Mendocino Redwood Company, the Open Space District and privately held land. He identifies the first, second & third bridges and different roads in the area that have been worked on, and ones that still need repair. He also identifies areas that have already been worked on.

He said the project focus is to modify the second bridge to provide for channel farming processes and to upgrade and decommission roads, to work with CalTrans and to place large wood into the stream channel to provide more cover and meter out sediment. They have recently received a grant from the Sonoma County Community Foundation for the wood placement project.

The premise of the current grant request project is to secure the upper portion of the watershed. He shows where the creek used to flow, where it now currently flows, the current channel alignment, and points out that it now simply stops and ponds – like a dam. There is no current channel formation even though it runs towards the bottom of the valley. The creek has jumped its bank and has moved over towards the south-side of the valley. There has been 3,000 feet of channel filled to the top of the banks in 18 years from second bridge upwards; 150 feet are lost annually.

He shows the culverts and causeways at second bridge. Their solution for the problem, through this project, is to modify the roadway across the flood plain at second bridge, provide for channel connectivity for over ¼ mile, remove restrictions to channel migration, promote sediment transport, encourage channel development, and restore fish passage.

The project has currently received \$130,000.00 from the State Coastal Conservancy; Sonoma County Department of Transportation has contributed \$16,000.00 and California State Parks has contributed \$15,000.00 to the project.

The current grant request to the Fish & Wildlife Commission is to cover the expenses for a geotechnical professional to design the actual project.

They have submitted a proposal to CalTans to develop a mitigation bank. They have worked with CalTrans for five years to develop the project after much careful study and research. The current estimate for the overall project will be \$940,000.

The Department of Fish & Game is considering a contribution of \$150,000 to future phases of the project. The Department of Fish & Game has estimated that the average of the stream reach within Willow Creek is 41 % under cover. The proposal is to insert a series of 6-foot box culverts, at a minimum - or pre-cast arched bridges.

Andy Pozzi then asks how the project team plans on removing the silt that already exists in the stream bed and how will the water velocity pick-up in the existing “pond” where the creek pools. Brendan replies that it’s designed as a low-gradient system that constantly shifts direction and works with the natural sloping in the valley to create a sinuous system. The sediment will transport through the channel. Andy wants to know if they are going to “channelize” that portion of the creek. Brendan says that there is an “adaptive” section built into the project that allows for monitoring the environmental response system to the first phase of the project before enacting the next phase. If the channel develops naturally, on its own, it would be preferable to than going in and building a man-made channel.

Brock Dolman asks about how the box culverts will be inserted at second bridge. Brendan explains that they will be inserted directly into the existing streambed, and the road will go up and over them – they will not be inserted down into dug out soil. Brock also states that when the project is complete, the roadway will be considerably elevated; Brendan confirms this.

Pierre wants to know what happens when there is a landslide situation – as there has been often in the past. He asks if it would be possible to get into the culverts and clean them out in the event that they were filled & covered. Brendan says that equipment will be able to access and clear the area, and that their equipment facility is very close nearby.

Gene Gaffney asks if the preventative work that has been done in the past in the area will assist in preventing future landslides. Brendan says that the past work done will definitely help this situation – and that the extensive work done in the area has removed major potential hazards. This project will assist with long-term prevention of hazardous landslides and excessive sediment distribution.

Al Ferris wants to clarify that the amount of the request is \$13,500.00 (the original amount requested of \$14,850.00, less 10% administrative costs of \$1,350.00), as discussed in the November 2007 meeting. Brendan confirms this.

Dave Cook asks about how much the Department of Fish & Game is contributing to the project. Brendan replies that DFG isn't contributing to the first phase, that they are interested in contributing to later phases of the Willow Creek Project. Dave wants to know what would happen with the funds if for some reason the project fell through – what guarantee does the commission have regarding reimbursement. Brendan reminds him that the amount requested from the commission would be for geophysical planning to implement the first phase of the project. It is a solid project with many years of research and planning involved and there are no foreseen reasons why it wouldn't be completed.

Jo Bentz wants to know why they are choosing the box culverts over the pre-cast arched bridges and what the difference in effect would be for the project. Brendan states that the hydrologic study he hopes to be funded by this grant will ultimately give the final results about which method will be best suited for the project.

Andy Pozzi makes a motion to approve a partial grant in the amount of \$6,500.00, with a second by Al Ferris. There are two "yes" votes from Andy and Al. There are eight "no" votes from: Brock Dolman, Martin Bauman, Pierre Gadd Jr., Gene Gaffney, Jeff Holden, Dave Cook, Jo Bentz and Jim Lynch. The motion does not pass.

A new motion to award the full grant request in the amount of \$13,500.00 is made by Gene Gaffney, with a second by Jim Lynch. The motion is carried with eight "yes" votes from: Brock Dolman, Martin Bauman, Pierre Gadd Jr., Gene Gaffney, Jeff Holden, Dave Cook, Jo Bentz and Jim Lynch. "No" votes from Andy Pozzi and Al Ferris. Motion carried for Grant #123 to Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

### **New Business**

**First reading of *Dutch Bill Creek Turbidity, Nutrient and Bacteria Study, Community Clean Water Institute*** - Robert Pennington, Program Coordinator, is requesting a grant for \$7,500.00 for the Dutch Bill Creek Turbidity, Nutrient and Bacteria Study.

Robert Pennington, Program Coordinator, introduces himself, Sarah Shaeffer (former Program Coordinator), and Kandis Gilmore (student intern from SSU), from the Community Clean Water Institute.

He explains that the Community Clean Water Institute is a volunteer based non-profit organization that monitors water quality and offers education and outreach in Sonoma County.

They are asking for funding for an in-depth study of the turbidity and water quality of Dutch Bill Creek. The chief objectives of the project are to study and collect data regarding: sediment transport, source areas and turbidity stage relationships; nutrient transport and sources; bacteria contamination levels and sources; and storm related changes in water quality.

In addition they would like to train student interns to organize and influence storm water quality monitoring projects.

The reason for the need for a study in Dutch Bill Creek is due to problems with spawning gravels – the fine sediment is clouding the coarse grind sediment, the eggs don't receive the oxygen they need and they die. Robert says that according to a habitat assessment done by Department of Fish & Game, found that the lower regions of Dutch Bill Creek were impaired due to embedded ness, which is a condition where is no through flow in the gravel due to fine sediment suspension and very little through-flow. They would like to study the suspended sediment loads during the 2007-2008 winter and storm season.

They have sites at the upper, mid and lower reaches of the creek. The lowest site corresponds with the Coho Recovery Project, where they are sharing the use of a staff plate (a water level gauge). Community Clean Water Institute has developed a cooperative research relationship with the Coho Recovery Project that utilizes the sharing of collected information and scientific study resources. They are also monitoring sites at Duvoul Creek and Lancel Creek, which are the largest tributaries to Dutch Bill Creek.

The results of this study can be used for local and state agencies in regard to decision making about planning, zoning and development. They will also submit it to the Water Quality Control Board for analysis.

Andy Pozzi asks Robert who his "Data Management Consultant" is as listed on the grant request. Robert replies that it is Nels Warden, of the Sonoma State University Chemistry Dept. Andy then asks if Nels is also the "Data Analysis Consultant", and Robert replies, "Yes."

Andy Pozzi would like Robert to obtain letters from the Department of Fish & Game and the Water Quality Control Board before the commission makes a final decision on this grant. Crystal asks the commissioners if they concur with Andy's request and they do.

Andy then asks Robert about Nels Warden and the amount he is being compensated. Robert says that Nels is the volunteer advisor on the project and donating all of his time and that he works for Sonoma State but will not be compensated by the grant funds. Crystal Norris then asks who will be getting the Data Management Consultant fees from the grant. Robert states that he himself is the Consultant and would be receiving the compensation for the work.

Brock Dolman lives in the area and agrees that this is a valid project and states that sediment is a big problem with the Creek and the fish. He is very familiar with the issues at hand and thinks that bacteria and turbidity studies are essential to the watershed.

Jeff Holden reconfirms that the letters that Andy has requested are important to validate the cause of this study.

Dave Cook states that the Water Agency has been doing studies in the main stem of the Russian River, but nothing is being worked on in the tributaries of the lower regions.

Gene Gaffney asks if the commission has funded previous projects for the Community Clean Water Institute in the past and Sarah Schaeffer replies that the Fish & Wildlife Commission helped to fund an education program for school children last year in conjunction with West County Community Services. Sarah states that the results of the project found higher bacteria levels in the Occidental area.

Andy Pozzi introduces Earle Cummings with the Sotoyome Resource Conservation District. Earle is a fish & game biologist who has spent much time in the field. He states that the Regional Water Quality Control should step forward to endorse this project.

Brock Dolman reminds the commission that the reason there is a staff plate in Dutch Bill Creek is due to a previous grant award by the commission that included a stipulation that the staff plate be put into Dutch Bill Creek. He feels the commission has a "vested long-term interest" in this project. There is a symbiotic relationship among many agencies regarding the outcome of the study.

Crystal thanks Robert for his time and adds that the commission would like to see the two letters mentioned earlier from Fish & Game and Regional Quality Control, and an additional letter of support from Dave Lewis of the University of California Cooperative Extension. She would like the letters sent to the Agricultural Commissioner's Office for inclusion with the February meeting packets.

Crystal states that this was the first reading of the grant and the second reading will be at the February 2007 meeting.

**Grant #117 Error for Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District - *Salmon Creek Restoration Project.***

Crystal addresses an error that was made at the July 2007 meeting, regarding awarding a grant request in the amount of \$7,500.00 (the original grant request amount), after Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District had amended the grant request to \$6,125.00. She tells the commission that the Ag. Commissioner's Office caught the error and has not yet contacted Gold Ridge RCD pending notification of the commission. Crystal states that the F&W Commission will be in direct contact with them.

Secretary Dagny Thomas, from the Ag. Commissioner's Office, states that even though Gold Ridge RCD requested less money, the office has not been contacted regarding the \$1,375.00 overpayment.

**Fiscal Year 2008-2009 General Fund & Abalone Fund Budget Proposals -** Crystal introduces the Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Fish & Wildlife Budget proposals.

She starts with the Abalone Fund. She states that there are revisions to the budgets included in the commissioner's packets. Abalone Fund Balance Revenue is changed from \$6,500.00 to \$5,500.00; Interest is changed from \$1,000.00 to \$500.00, which gives a revised Projected Revenue of \$6,000.00. Expenses for Grants are changed from \$16,000.00 to \$12,000.00, which gives a total revised Budgeted Expenses of \$12,000.00. The total amended Net Reserve

is -\$6,000.00. A motion to approve the FY '08-'09 Abalone Fund Budget is made by Andy Pozzi, with a Second by Jim Lynch. Motion Carried.

The proposed General Fund Budget is: Revenue from DFG Fines at \$21,750.00; Revenue from the District Attorney at \$16,500.00; Interest at \$7,500.00, for a Total Projected Revenue of \$45,750.00. Expenses for Grants (including \$3,000.00 in Scholarships) at \$52,050.00 – which Crystal states is \$10,000 less than last year's budget; Office Expense at \$800.00; Postage at \$300.00; Printing at \$100.00; and Special Dept. Expense at \$2,500.00, with a Total Net Reserve of -\$10,000.00.

Pierre mentions that he feels that Expenses for Grants amount needs to be amended to last year's amount of \$62,050.00. He states that the money is there, why not use it to fund projects now. There are comments around the room in agreement with Pierre. Crystal asks if the commission wishes amend the amount from \$52,050.00, to \$62,050.00. There are many "yes" replies.

Crystal Norris makes a request for a motion to approve the General Fund Budget as it stands - with Expenses for Grants at \$52,050.00, and a Total Net Reserve of -\$10,000.00. There was no motion made.

A second motion to approve the General Fund Budget with an amended Expenses for Grants amount of \$62,050.00, and an amended Total Net Reserve of -\$20,000.00 is made by Pierre Gadd, with a second by Jeff Holden. The motion is carried with eight "yes" votes from: Brock Dolman, Martin Bauman, Pierre Gadd Jr., Gene Gaffney, Jeff Holden, Dave Cook, Jo Bentz and Jim Lynch.

There are two "no" votes from Andy Pozzi and Al Ferris.

### **Reports and Comments**

Crystal mentions to the commission that Fawn Rescue needs donations of metal t-posts for fawn pens – they will accept posts of any size. Contact Melania Mahoney at Fawn Rescue and she will arrange pickup from anywhere.

Crystal asks the commission if they are interested in doing another dinner this year. Andy asks if the decision needs to be made at this meeting and Crystal says that it simply needs to be considered for a decision made at a later date.

### **Commission**

Brock Dolman – Got to watch Dave in action with the Tiger Salamanders; he got some great footage for his upcoming movie.

Martin Bauman had the opportunity to spend three weeks with his wife in Kenya working with Earthwatch. They got to study water turbidity and medicinal plants and did interviews with tribal elders as there are no written records – all history is passed down via oral tradition. There was a lot of "roughing it" during the trip.

Jo Bentz spent two weekends in December studying waterfowl migration.

Pierre Gadd has been observing robins & migratory birds; says that the Hawks are really enjoying it. He noted a peregrine and a raven having a scuffle.

Andy Pozzi discusses the new DFG fishing regulations. He asks Steve Riske what the "two-rod" rule means. Steve replies that the rule now restricts the use of two rods in most inland waters or closed waterways.

Gene Gaffney talks about seeing the Steelhead salmon at Salmon Creek. His granddaughter goes to Salmon Creek School; they are building an environmental center at the school. He recommends the school as a great place to observe the Steelhead migration.

Crystal reports seeing otters in Santa Rosa Creek behind her office just east of E Street Bridge.

### **Public**

Steve Riske, of DFG, comments that the new DFG Warden that just finished the Academy went back to being a biologist. Tiffany Walhbeck will be joining DFG from Sonoma Regional Parks in February. Steve also mentions that he's been involved with the Marine Protected Areas project. He says that under the new proposals, it will create extremely tight fishing regulations for the coast. The only thing that will be affected is the Tomales Bay Oyster Company; it may have to close when its lease runs out.

Gene asks Steve about the 30-33% percent ticketed in roadside checks statistic in the Abalone newsletter. Steve says that the statistic is inaccurate because it's based upon the percentage of the cars being checked, as opposed to the number of people in the cars.

Steve says that DFG wardens are finding that they are often citing repeat offenders for abalone violations.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Thomas

Secretary