

## STAFF SUMMARY FOR AUGUST 16, 2017

**13. DEPARTMENT INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**Today's Item** **Information**  **Action**

Standing agenda item to receive and discuss informational updates from DFW:

- (A) Director's Report
- (B) Wildlife and Fisheries Division, and Ecosystem Conservation Division
- (C) Law Enforcement Division
- (D) Marine Region
- (E) Other

**Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)****Background**

Verbal reports are expected at the meeting for items (A) through (D).

- (C) Wildlife Officer Nicole Kozicki was previously recognized by DFW's Law Enforcement Division as the 2017 Wildlife Officer of the Year, and was also recently recognized at the national level as the Pogue-Elms Wildlife Law Enforcement Officer of the Year (Exhibit C1).

**Significant Public Comments (N/A)****Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

- C1. [DFW news release: Nicole Kozicki Recognized Nationally as Wildlife Officer of the Year, dated Jul 12, 2017](#)

**Motion/Direction (N/A)**

# CDFW News



[CDFW Staff](#), [Enforcement](#), [Law Enforcement](#), [Public Safety](#)

## **Nicole Kozicki Recognized Nationally as Wildlife Officer of the Year**

July 12, 2017

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is proud to announce that Wildlife Officer Nicole Kozicki has been selected as the Pogue-Elms Wildlife Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. The award, which was formally presented to her at the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) annual conference on July 10, is considered their highest honor. Kozicki is also the first female recipient of the award.

CDFW's Law Enforcement Division selected Kozicki as the 2017 Wildlife Officer of the Year, which led to her nomination for the WAFWA award. Kozicki has honorably represented CDFW in the San Francisco Bay Area and its communities for 27 years.

“We are very happy to see Wildlife Officer Kozicki receive the Pogue-Elms award for her extraordinary dedication to the protection of California’s natural resources,” said Assistant Chief Steve Riske, who supervises Kozicki. “Her tireless investigations of poaching, pollution, and environmental crimes are an example to her fellow wildlife officers in California and to others throughout the country. Her reputation brings great credit to herself, CDFW and California.”

Kozicki’s ability to handle complex, large-scale investigations — many of which have involved harm to threatened and endangered species — has earned her a reputation as an expert in the field of environmental crimes. Throughout her career, Kozicki has led hundreds of streambed alteration and pollution cases to successful prosecution. Her tireless pursuit of the truth has resulted in hundreds of acres of mitigated lands being preserved in perpetuity and has generated millions of dollars in fines.

Fellow wildlife officers as well as investigators from local, state and federal agencies often seek her investigation expertise.

Among the greatest of Kozicki's accomplishments is her leadership of an investigation related to illegal development practices that threatened two endangered species – the California tiger salamander and the red-legged frog – at Dublin Ranch in Alameda County. Conducted jointly with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the three-year investigation uncovered numerous violations of state and federal law, including egregious grading and illegal stream alterations, habitat destruction and falsification of permitting documents. Kozicki provided testimony in state court for two full weeks. The developer eventually pled no contest to charges of submitting fraudulent documents in an attempt to avoid development requirements. The terms of the plea agreement between the developer, the California Attorney General's Office and CDFW included almost \$1.1 million in fines and restitution, preservation of 107 acres of land in Contra Costa County (known as the Brown Ranch) in a conservation easement and \$300,000 put into an account to manage the property.

“Wildlife Officer Kozicki has an extraordinary capability and reputation for investigating cases that affect not only California's fish and wildlife, but the very habitat where those fish and wildlife live,” said David Bess, Chief of CDFW's Law Enforcement Division. “The benefits of her investigations will be measured for generations to come.”

WAFWA represents 23 states and Canadian provinces, spanning from Alaska to Texas and Hawaii to Saskatchewan. WAFWA is a strong advocate of the rights of states and provinces to manage fish and wildlife within their borders. It has also been a key organization in promoting the principles of sound resource management and the building of partnerships at the regional, national and international levels in order to enhance wildlife conservation efforts and the protection of associated habitats in the public interest. Idaho Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Officers Bill Pogue and Conley Elms were killed in the line of duty in 1981, during a poaching investigation. WAFWA created the award in their honor.

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***Media Contact:***

*Lt. Chris Stoots, CDFW Law Enforcement Division, (916) 651-9982*