

California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision Project
December 5-8, 2011 Public Meetings Summary
January 3, 2012

This document represents a summary of the public meetings held December 5-8, 2011 for the California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision (CFWSV) Project. Meetings took place in four regional locations (San Diego, Ontario, Fresno and Redding). The summary for each meeting includes:

- general meeting information;
- the number of participants, including represented organizations and CFWSV Blue Ribbon Citizen Commission (BRCC) and Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) members;
- a compilation of participant comments made during roundtable discussions; and
- facilitator observations, where noted.

San Diego

Monday, December 5, 2011
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Port of San Diego
Administration Building Training Room
3165 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101

Participants

- 14 public attendees, representing the following organizations:
 - Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission (FWAC)
 - San Diego County Wildlife Federation (SDCWF)
 - San Diego Yacht Club
 - San Diego Seafood Harvesters
 - Driscoll's Wharf
 - Port of San Diego
 - San Diego Trout
 - TM Sport Fishing Conservancy
 - National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF)
 - General Public
- 3 BRCC/SAG members: Carol Baker, Skyli McAfee and April Wakeman

Areas within DFG that Participants Believe Are Working Well

- Automated Licensing Data System
- Education in the schools about the goals of DFG should continue
- Natural Communities Conservation Planning Program
- Pre-California Environmental Quality Act/California Endangered Species Act: Overall, the agency worked well, now it seems more bureaucratic with too much to accomplish and not enough funds to reach the goals.

- The dedication of the staff has been amazing. The commitment level is very high.

Participant Concerns / Problems

- Communication – internal DFG – internal staff communication (about goals, measurements, strategies, etc. could be greatly improved. Staff does not always understand what other staff is working on – within and across DFG regions.
- There is a lack of coordination among DFG regions and a lack of access and understanding from region to region about what each region is doing.
- F&GC leans toward supporting environmentalists.
- Science: Internal capacity has decreased at DFG, and not enough staff is able to translate science from outside sources.
- Transparency / Accountability – DFG and F&GC need to be very transparent about how decisions are made and show the data used to make those decision.
- Budget and Politics involved – the legislature should not dictate mandates to DFG without appropriating the necessary funds to accomplish those goals.

Participant Solutions / Suggestions

- Each region should have a dedicated public information officer or communication coordinator.
- Regional control /flexibility /priorities – let regions decide how best to implement the work that should be done.
- Ensure someone answers the phone when the public calls local offices.
- Share history of and information about historic science being used.
- Wardens and biologists need to talk to each other. Suggest cross training for wardens and biologists. All DFG staff should have some communication training/experience.
- Staff at DFG needs to be able to translate science from outside sources.
- Partner with non-governmental organizations (NGO's) as long as everything is transparent and open.
- Ensure diversity of employees, as well as in their disciplines.

Ontario

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Ontario Police Department
Community Room
2500 S. Archibald Avenue
Ontario, CA 91761

Participants

- 8 public attendees, representing the following organizations:
 - California Association for Recreational Fishing (CARF)

- Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD)
- Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD)
- General Public
- 3 BRCC/SAG members: Carol Baker, Bob Bertelli and April Wakeman

Areas within DFG that Participants Believe Are Working Well

- Commitment of agency staff is very high. The work the wardens do is especially highly regarded given their various responsibilities.

Participant Concerns / Problems

- There are not enough wardens (both for enforcement and to meet the mandates).
- Unfunded mandates. The legislature should not give mandates without funding associated to achieve them; therefore the agency should consider prioritizing and/or narrowing its focus.
- Partnerships and collaboration. This can work as long as it is very clear what the goals are, what the roles of the partners are, and that there is no undue influence.

Participant Solutions / Suggestions

- DFG should set fines and penalties for violations of the law. Legal ramifications should be stronger.
- DFG should take care of what is core/central to its mission. There is good potential for a smaller, more focused DFG.
- Prioritize what gets done first within the agency since the legislature has given unfunded mandates. Inform the legislature that without funding associated with their mandates, it won't get accomplished.
- Convene a blue ribbon citizen commission of current and retired wardens to get their input on potential changes. More wardens are needed; Florida has 1200. California has less than 400.
- Agency and NGO partnerships are different – just be clear, transparent and open.
- Conservation education in schools should continue and be expanded if possible.
- Have F&GC hire (and fire) the executive director of DFG.
- Wardens should help more with public outreach and communication with communities.

Fresno

Wednesday, December 7, 2011
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Caltrans Manchester Center
2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite100
Yosemite Room 145
Fresno, CA 93726

Participants

- 9 public attendees, representing the following organizations:
 - North Fork Rancheria

- California Deer
- General Public
- 4 BRCC/SAG members: Carol Baker, Jennifer Fearing, April Wakeman and Kathy Wood

Areas within DFG that Participants Believe Are Working Well

- DFG should keep doing outreach, partnerships and conservation management.
- Not requiring that licenses be worn is a good policy.

Participant Concerns / Problems

- There are not enough wardens for enforcement.
- Wardens are not always prepared to handle issues on tribal lands. Ensure they know the rules.
- Some wardens over-reach in their duties and seem to overstep the legal boundaries of their job.
- GPS restriction on dog collars should be reconsidered.
- More money from licenses should go toward the fish side of DFG's mission.

Participant Solutions / Suggestions

- Require sensitivity training for wardens.
- Consider a master environmental impact report for grazing lands. Allow DFG more tools to manage the lands.
- Have more communications staff and ensure there is more accessibility to DFG by the public. Make it easy for the public to find out who to call with questions.
- Encourage opportunities for stewardship (Merced CalFire program as an example.) Offer vocational and educational opportunities.
- Reduce paperwork in regulations for fishing and hunting – simplify.
- F&GC should hire the executive director of DFG rather than have that person be appointed.

Competing / Compatible Interests

This group had a few conflicting interests. While some participants felt more wardens were needed, others did not. Most felt the wardens were doing a good job and had positive experiences interacting with them, yet two in the group believed that their experiences were not positive and that wardens over-reached their duties. Finally, some in the group believed that DFG, with more help from the state, should deal with marijuana eradication on state lands, while others believed it should not be a part of the mission of DFG.

Redding

Thursday, December 8, 2011

5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Turtle Bay Museum
840 Sundial Bridge (Auditorium) Drive
Redding, California 96001

Participants

- An estimated 120 public attendees, representing the following organizations:
 - Shingletown Patriots
 - Kayakers
 - Shasta Miners
 - Sportsmen
 - Cow Creek Watershed
 - California Rifle and Pistol Association
 - U.S. Bureau of Land Management
 - Bear Creek Watershed
 - Sierra Club
 - California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery Association (CBH/SAA)
 - Government Representatives
 - General Public
 - Tea Party
- 4 BRCC/SAG members: Carol Baker, Debbie Byrne, Jerry Karnow and Curtis Knight

Areas within DFG that Participants Believe Are Working Well

- DFG communicates well with watershed groups.
- DFG has been successful at planting fish.
- DFG is appropriately focused on managing fish, wildlife and plant resources.
- Local regional DFG staff members are very helpful and nice.

Participant Concerns / Problems

- DFG warden's law enforcement function is distracted by ancillary jobs (i.e., marijuana, water rights, etc.).
- The wardens' geographical area of responsibility is too big to be effectively covered.
- More wardens are needed.
- DFG is inappropriately getting involved in water rights. DFG is being asked to be water cops when they should be managing wildlife.
- Let DFG manage wildlife – not politics and emotions.
- Fear exists that the strategic vision will create a bureaucracy that will take away citizen rights.
- There is also a fear that this strategic vision process will expand DFG's powers.
- Certain terms need better definition, such as partnership and land owner.
- DFG has too much land to manage.
- DFG has introduced some of the species they are now labeling as invasive (e.g., striped bass).
- Fishing and hunting rights are being curtailed to cater to conservationists.
- DFG is being unduly influenced by partners such as the Humane Society of the United States.
- Decisions should be based on science, not politics (i.e., regarding cougars).
- Fishing and hunting licenses are too expensive.

- Lands available for hunting are diminishing.
- Mountain lions are a problem for deer herds.
- DFG supports wolves over farmers and ranchers. People and their livelihood are made to suffer.
- Treat landowners as partners, not adversaries
- Why is hydroelectric power not considered “green energy?”
- DFG needs to take into account how many silver salmon are caught in Alaska and factor that into the equation and not just look at agricultural water diversions as the problem.
- Expand F&GC and have F&GC hire the director of DFG.
- We need decisions based on sound science that is reviewed by a private firm.
- Create smaller regions.

Participant Solutions / Suggestions

- Focus wardens on enforcement of DFG regulations, not other law enforcement activities.
- Better education of the public, particularly young people, would promote support for DFG and their mission. Many people do not understand the role of DFG.

Competing / Compatible Interests

A brief analysis of the information focused on the facilitator’s perspective about how compatible or competing respective concerns / problems, and solutions / suggestions are. The early “roundtable” groups were highly suspicious of DFG motivations and the purpose of the CFWSV Project and the public meetings. There was a general concern that this project was an attempt to expand DFG’s power, take away citizen rights and increase fees. The later roundtable groups were less suspicious. In general, most participants believe that the wardens are doing a good job, although there was general agreement that more wardens are needed. There were divergent views on the mission of DFG. Several members of the public thought DFG should remain a hunting and fishing organization; others supported conservation efforts at the expense of hunting and fishing.