

# **Bay-Delta Sport Fishing Enhancement Stamp Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2006, 9:00 am – Noon

Yolo Wildlife Headquarters

## **Attendees**

Jim Crenshaw, Committee Chair

John Buettler, Committee

Jim Edgar, Committee

Carter Fickes, Committee

Phil Havlicek, Committee

Ken Jones, Committee

John Ryzanych, Committee

Ed Pert, DFG, Chief Fisheries Program Branch

Dennis Lee, Supervising Biologist

Jim Starr, DFG

Randy Baxter, DFG

Heather McIntire, DFG

Nancy Foley, DFG, Enforcement

Dennis DeAnda, DFG, Enforcement

Gary Adams, CSBA

Mike McKenzie

Bob Rittenhouse

## **Meeting Minutes**

Page 3 change “toady’s” to today’s

Page 2 Under Cogdill Bill discussions - Include the point that the Advisory Committee does not know who is doing the negotiations with the legislature on behalf of the sport fishing community. Will the contact be working with angler representatives?

With the mentioned changes, the minutes were unanimously approved.

## **Warden Update**

There were no significant fishery issues since the last meeting. There is a low violation rate with the BDSFES stamp; anglers are learning it is needed. Striped bass fishing was good last fall and violations rates are similar to previous years. The salmon season started late and lasted longer than previous years. There were some gear violations and some fishing during closure violations.

The heavy rains over Christmas caused some environmental issues associated with dairy discharge. The Stockton squad is also working on cases with Woodbridge Irrigation District and Stockton Irrigation District.

Dennis brought a short video on the Delta-Bay Enhanced Enforcement Program (DBEEP) squad. Funding for the DBEEP program comes from water contractors through the 4-Pumps Agreement Advisory Committee. DBEEP was created to supplement DFG enforcement efforts on anadromous fish species: striped bass, salmon and steelhead. The squad is made up of 10 wardens and they tend to be more project-oriented. They operate a 24' Farallon, ridged-hull inflatable boat. Now the program still exists, but it is more integrated with the existing enforcement staff. Dennis believes the program should move back towards its original project-oriented design.

### **Budgets**

Sonke was unable to attend this meeting and the budget talk will be rescheduled. DFG is currently going through reorganization. Paul Stein left DFG for other opportunities. Ed is transitioning out of the Fisheries Chief position and will be in charge of the pike issues at Lake Davis. Larry Week is now the Acting Fisheries Chief until the permanent position is assigned. Dennis Lee, Supervising Biologist, will be working with the Advisory Committee.

We will ask Sonke to the next meeting to discuss this budget item.

### **Pelagic Organism Decline (POD)**

Randy Baxter (DFG) is an integral part of the IEP (Interagency Ecological Program) Management Team and has been working on POD since 2004.

In 2004, fisheries biologists began seeing fisheries declines in Delta species. With closer inspection, they found that several species were in decline. The Fall Midwater Trawl Survey in 2004 had the lowest striped bass index since 1959, one of the lowest indexes for delta smelt and very low indices for threadfin shad and longfin smelt.

Initially scientists evaluated the "usual suspects" (i.e., food web changes, toxins, and exports). They found that there were changes in all three. Introduced species changed the zooplankton and phytoplankton composition. These changes replaced nutritionally high-quality algae and zooplankton with lower quality ones. In addition, introduction of the Asian clam and others reduced the quantity available to small fish. Contaminants in the Delta have also changed over time and these reduce survival to adulthood. Exports over the last few years have also changed. Exports in the spring are reduced to protect listed species in the south delta; however, to make up for those spring reductions there are higher summer and fall exports. Food web changes, contaminants and

export changes are all interlinked and have contributed to the pelagic organism decline.

In an effort to “triage” the problem and start seeking a solution, the IEP did additional surveys in 2005. They discovered some valuable information. The zooplankton decline did continue, but it was not as drastic as originally thought. There was a decline in the early spring which is not good for early spanwers. Striped bass, longfin smelt, delta smelt indexes were still low. Toxins were evaluated in two ways: 1) bioassays on amphipods and cladocerans; and 2) histopathology on striped bass and delta smelt. It was found that amphipods had toxins in 5 of the 10 sites surveyed and cladocerans were not found to be toxic. Preliminary delta smelt results showed chronic glycogen depletion and liver disorders. Preliminary striped bass results show indications of contaminant exposure, gill parasites and gut inflammation. Exports were evaluated through particle tracking and analysis of recent operations. The particle-tracking model evaluated movement and resident time of water particles in the delta where they might be subject to entrainment by the pumping plants. Modeling showed that there were no differences in residence time; however, entrainment risks were higher in March through October for the last 3 to 4 years. Water operations have also changed. Total exports are up from previous years. Less water is exported in spring and more water is exported in fall and winter. The 2005 “triage” efforts did provide valuable information.

In 2006 and 2007 we anticipate further analysis:

- Increase monitoring and fish collection
- Target all fishes, delta smelt, striped bass, longfin smelt and threadfin shad
- Continue historical population trend analyses of fishes and inverts
- Continue investigation of changes in growth, diet, condition and disease
- Investigate gear efficiency and possibility to estimate population sizes
- Increase sampling for water toxicity, invertebrates and fishes as test organisms
- Continue and expand histopathology
- Examine contaminant use records for trends

More information about the POD can be found at [http://science.calwater.ca.gov/workshop/workshop\\_pod.shtml](http://science.calwater.ca.gov/workshop/workshop_pod.shtml).  
In the 2005 Synthesis Report & Review Panel Critique.

### **South Delta Improvement Program (SDIP)**

The SDIP has been in progress for many years and its environmental documentation is nearly complete. Public comment on the EIR will be this month and closes on February 7. DFG is reviewing the program with Region 4, our legal office and the Water Group. This presentation will describe the project to assist you with your comments.

There are two stages to SDIP implementation. Stage One includes three areas of conveyance dredging, 24 areas of sport dredging, three permanent agricultural barriers and one fish control gate at the head of Old River (HOR). The HOR is operated in spring to improve fish survival by keeping San Joaquin salmon in the San Joaquin River. If fish are drawn into Old River, their survival drops 50 to 70 percent. This barrier also improves flow and dissolved oxygen levels near the Stockton Turning Basin. Stage Two increase exports from 6,680 cfs to 8,500 cfs in March through November.

More information about SDIP and its associated EIR can be found at [SDIP.water.ca.gov](http://SDIP.water.ca.gov).

The public can request an extension for comments. This program is not in the public's eye and the legislators have very little information about this program as well. John Buettler notes that he doubts this program has authorization to proceed as the CALFED Record of Decision was rescinded. Why did DWR continue to pursue this when there was no authorization?

The Committee expressed frustration in DWR's lack of response and DFG's ability to "stand-up" to this issue. How is DFG supposed to save fish if we cannot require a complete moratorium on water exports? Once the facilities are built, the pumping will increase. The DFG should not allow this program to move forward.

### **Sturgeon Regulation Change**

Current data show that sturgeon are at a 50-year low and action is necessary to protect sturgeon. An emergency regulation will go to the Fish and Game Commission in February and public scoping meetings will be held in February and March to address long-term protection efforts.

### **Fish Health Warning Signage**

The Department of Health Services has completed their signs and they are ready to go to print. They need money to assist with posting the signs. The Committee wants specific information and requests a DHS representative attend the next meeting.

- ACTION ITEM: Invite DHS to next meeting to discuss signage.

### **Project Update**

#### *Access Request for Proposal*

The original Request for Proposal was in contracts since November. They do not think a Request for Proposal is the best way to pursue this item and they are looking into another option.

### Striped Bass Fishing Maps

The striped bass fishing maps are printed and being distributed. The Sport Fish Restoration Act provided \$5,000 towards final printing costs.

### Fish Ruler Bumper Sticker

SFRA is working on a new addition and they are aware we would like to cost-share printing.

### Black Bass Boat

We have authorization to proceed and I am seeking ways to pay for the project. It looks like we should be able to do the repairs and upgrades just by receiving bids. We will need to go through some sort of contracting process to pay for boat operations.

### Salmon Acclimation Project

It looks like we can pay through the Salmon Stamp for this program. However, it is not clear whether there is a contract in place for salmon acclimation or if the acclimation program is able to drag the net pens into the center of the channel to release fish.

### Health Warning Signage

The DHS will attend our next meeting to answer your questions. The sign is completed and they are going to production. They need assistance in recommendations for posting locations and the posting itself.

## **Fisheries Consultant**

The item has been moved to the next agenda.

## **New Business**

### Mike McKenzie - Striped Bass Broodstock

Tony Vaught at Professional Aquaculture Services has lost his lease and has one month to vacate the property. He has 300 third generation striped bass broodstock that are 5 to 7 pounds each. He does not want to destroy them and they are valuable to research. UC Davis researcher David Ostrach wants the fish because they provide excellent "control" fish for contaminant studies. These fish have been raised in pure well water for three generations and are "clean" compared to river fish. They are a valuable tool. UC Davis wants them, but Tony needs to sell them for \$30,000 dollars and UC Davis is unable to pay for the fish. In addition, Tony estimates it will cost \$2,000 for transportation and UC Davis would likely present a proposal to the Committee for \$120,000 annually to care for the fish.

- ACTION ITEM: Add warden geneticist to next agenda.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on March 9, 2007, from 9:00 am to noon at the Yolo Wildlife Headquarters.