

Bay-Delta Sport Fishing Enhancement Stamp Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2006, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Yolo Wildlife Headquarters

Attendees

Jim Crenshaw, Chair
John Beuttler, Committee
Jim Edgar, Committee
Phil Havlichek, Committee
Ken Jones, Committee
John Ryzanych, Committee
Bon Strickland, Committee

Neil Manji, DFG
Heather McIntire, DFG

Mike McKenzie, Public
Jackson Chapman, CSBA *** add to mailing
John Banks, CSBA

Minutes

There were no minutes for review.

MOTION: Send meeting packets electronically to committee members
Second

VOTE: Unanimous support

Introductions

Neil Manji is the new Fisheries Branch Chief and this Committee is one of his responsibilities.

Neil comes from Region 1, DFG's Northern California region. There he oversaw all the fisheries in Northern California and worked on regulations. He was heavily involved in Klamath River issues and is still tying up loose ends on that project. Neil is an avid angler. He enjoys fishing for bass, striped bass, shad, salmon, trout and tuna.

"Reharmonization" Update

The DFG is going through a re-organization. Two branches: the Fisheries Program Branch and Native Anadromous Fish and Watershed Branch have

combined and become the Fisheries Branch. This brings all of the inland fisheries together.

The Central Valley Bay-Delta Branch has split into two branches: the Water Branch and a Regional component. Currently, the Regional component looks a lot like a slightly expanded Region 3. Chuck Armor is acting as the Water Branch Chief. Carl Wilcox is acting Central Valley Bay-Delta Region Chief. Perry Herrgesell is now a consultant to the Director. We do not know how long it will be before these positions are made permanent.

The POD research is being conducted under the Central Valley Bay-Delta Region.

What is the status of the Striped Bass Stamp Fund? Currently, the Central Valley Bay-Delta Region controls the stamp, but it is anticipated that eventually it will be moved into the Fisheries Branch.

Sonke Mastrup is Deputy Director for the Fisheries Branch, Water Branch, and the Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Branch. Banky Curtis is overseeing all the Regions including the Central Valley Bay-Delta Region. Banky will be retiring soon and an interim deputy director has not yet been appointed.

Action Log

Legislative Update

John Beuttler – Senate Bill 1574 (Kuehl): This bill convenes a multi-agency committee for a strategic vision for the Delta. That is our territory and we should be participating in this process. One way or the other that vision is going to be handled by people who do not know about the Delta. This Committee may want to send letters to the Vision committee.

- ACTION ITEM: (sent to committee 10/31/06) Get a copy of the bill and find out if it is signed and e-mail to the Committee.
- ACTION ITEM: Add SB 1574 to next agenda.

John Beuttler – Assembly Bill 2773 (Berg) Steelhead Trout: This bill reauthorizes the existing Steelhead Fishing Report-Restoration Card (Steelhead report card) and makes a one-time appropriation of \$800k from the Steelhead Trout Dedicated Account for steelhead restoration projects which is available to expenditure until June 30, 2009. Could we do better with that kind of spending authorization? Even when funding is specified by legislation, spending authority from the Department of Finance is still necessary.

- ACTION ITEM: Provide the Committee with a copy of AB 2773 and include on the next agenda.

John Beuttler – Assembly Bill 2685 (Cogdill): This bill amends the reporting requirement implemented as part of AB7. Beginning July 12, 2006, AB7 requires increased hatchery production and it dedicates 1/3 of all license sales to be used towards trout.

Currently, it looks like 25 percent of all production will be of heritage trout: not including steelhead. The 1/3 of license sales is approximately \$17 million and it increases hatchery budget by about six million.

John Beuttler – If the Central Valley Angler Survey is a good thing every year? Does the Committee want to look at this in the long-term? We need to see this on the first agenda of every year to evaluate if we want to make a new recommendation to the Director. We should review what was originally agreed upon.

- ACTION ITEM: Provide financial status report for the Central Valley Angler Survey, anticipated long-term costs, and the SFRA cost-share at the January meeting.
- ACTION ITEM: Determine if the BDSFES trailer bill was signed by the Governor and provide a copy to the Committee.
- ACTION ITEM: Follow-up on the Director's response to the resolution process.

Warden Enforcement

No wardens are present. Remove wardens from agenda. If they have a special request, they can request an agenda item.

Phil Havlicek – There are a lot of issues that do not relate directly to the projects. Enforcement is nice, but does it relate directly back to projects? Agenda items should be based on need and we do not need to have wardens on every agenda. It is time that we got our act together as a committee. Push has come to shove and he believes that it is almost impossible to look at everything (project) that comes down the line. Phil wants to see more fish in the fishery and that's it. We should only put money into habitat and fisheries. There is a limited budget and we should dump black bass and salmon because there is other money for those species and something will be done for them. We need more and bigger fish and the Committee needs to sort out what its priorities are. The Committee needs to focus meetings on project and project areas. Then organize information and actions around those priorities. We have gotten caught up in other things and it is now a waste a time.

Project Status

Angler Access RFP

The RFP is being advertised and we are receiving questions from various parties. The closing date is November 6, 2006 at 3:00 and the project evaluation needs to occur between November 7 and November 29. The Committee will need to meet prior to November 29. The scheduled intent to award is November 30, the last day to protest the award is December 7, and our proposed award date is December 8.

The Committee will meet Tuesday, November 14, 2006 to evaluate proposals. Bob and Phil will require a conference line.

- ACTION ITEM: E-mail Committee Angler Access RFP.

Education RFP

It is in progress and I hope to have it out before the end of the year.

Acclimation RFP

The process has started over for this program and I am trying to talk with the Commercial Salmon Group to see if we can coordinate with them.

There are issues with the Commercial Salmon Stamp; the committee may be problematic. The Director has pulled the funds from them and we may not be able to cost-share because there is not any money. There have been issues in the past with the acclimation program and who ever gets the bid must ensure the quality of program. Salmon acclimation would save striped bass as well as salmon smolts.

BBAC Release Boat

We will need to go to bid for a service contract for this.

Public Solicitation Notice

The PSN is underway and we are working with the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program to coordinate with their PSN. This will be one advertisement annually for all types of programs.

Today we have presentations by the Wildlife Conservation Board on cost-share opportunities, DFG's Aquatic Education Program, and the sturgeon genetics proposal.

Sturgeon Punch Card

At the last meeting, Sonke brought up that the DFG is proposing regulation changes that would require a punch card if you are going to fish or retain a sturgeon. Sturgeon regulations and the punch card concept were discussed at the last Fish and Game Commission (FGC) meeting and there will be additional discussions at the next two FGC meetings. This regulation change will cost

money and DFG is evaluating funding options. DFG will absorb the costs of the additional research associated with the punch card data. There are also costs associated with printing the punch cards and including some sort of tag. Initial estimates have the costs between \$30k and \$40k. The cards will require special paper, perforations, and tags. The exact cost of printing is not yet known. The question then becomes how much will the punch cards cost anglers.

The Committee needs to discuss if it would support funding a portion of the punch card cost.

Are you going to charge for the card? Anglers can be charged up to \$7.50 without going to the legislature. The DFG believes this is a good way to give back to anglers who have paid for the BDSFS stamp. If we were to fund this punch card then the angler would not be charged? Yes, depending on how much the Committee recommends covering. If this funding is not made available, then anglers would cover the punch card's cost.

The BDSFES will not fund things that should be funded by DFG... again. Are we funding a project that is not already popular?

There is more to it than just the punch cards; there will be tags as well. The tag will attach to the report card. Bob notes that the card allows for no more than three fish kept annually and that there is additional information required for each fish you catch and release.

Jim Edgar - States that he sells \$150K in fishing licenses and we are nickel and diming the anglers with all these stamps and cards. Why can't we have one charge for the whole thing? I don't see this as an issue. It is something we can legitimately do with BDSFES funding that directly benefits anglers. Anglers understand that sturgeon are a sensitive species and this makes sense.

DFG does not know how the FGC will see this program. They will likely approve some sort of sturgeon program but we do not know how they feel about the punch card. If something does go forward, we are trying to find ways to not hit anglers with another cost. The value of doing this is to limit the cost to the angler, as opposed to letting the DFG go and determine that the card will cost xxx and it will be perceived as another TAX.

The sturgeon Skippers' logs are not being used now; so, what is the purpose of collecting more data now when the other is not being used?

That information is now being used. This card may also be required for people under the age of 16 and we are missing 16 percent of these individuals.

John Beuttler – I think we need an entire day to discuss that we are using this funding to subsidize these costs, because we will have all different anglers to come and ask for funding for their cards.

Phil Havlicek – Instead of breaking it down you should put it all in one place. If we wind up funding a portion of the sturgeon card then we advertise the situation DFG was going to stick it down their throat if we didn't fund the cost of the card. Anglers don't always think things through so we have to advertise it and let people know!!

Are we supplementing it or are we paying for something that DFG would normally pay for?

- ACTION ITEM: Add to agenda for Jan/Feb meeting to discuss this when the FGC makes a decision.

John Beuttler – We are not big on subsidizing fishing costs; however, we might be interested in fisheries research.

Wildlife Conservation Board Projects

- ACTION ITEM: Table WCB for November meeting. No action without Tony present. There are questions on the budget.

Putah Creek is outside the geographic range.

John Ryzanych - does not support anything in the packet.

Boating and Waterways Projects

Item tabled.

Aquatic Education

Ethan Rothman runs the Aquatic Education Program in the Bay Area. Ethan is presenting a proposal for funding for the Aquarium in the Classroom Program. This program focuses on salmon and trout.

California has abundant wildlife resources that allow people to focus on solitude, physical fitness, and wildlife watching. The opportunities are there if you want to take them. Children are spending more and more time indoors resulting in adults that are disconnected from the natural world. It is important to keep people and their children outdoors if we want these people to care about California's resources.

There are many programs within DFG that seek to bring children outdoors. We need to get children and their parents intimately involved with our resources

because they are the ones who will ultimately care for and protect our diverse and rich resources.

Fishing in the City – provides mentoring and equipment to inter-city children. The community is also involved in this program. The Rotary Club goes into the classroom and teaches children about the fish, ethics, and skills, and then they go fishing with the kids. These are valuable programs that teach repeatable skills and get kids involved directly with our resources.

Aquariums in the Classroom – provides teachers with equipment, support, and training so they can provide their classrooms with meaningful curriculum on salmonids. The community also participates in these programs. The teachers and the community guide the students through the rearing and release process. This program is consistent with state criteria standards.

This year, the Aquariums in the Classroom Program received significantly more teacher's requests than they were able to provide for. The community has stepped up and the local fly fishing clubs have sponsored additional classrooms. Last year, the fly fishing clubs sponsored three classrooms and came in this year ready to sponsor five classrooms. When they heard about the level of requests, they were willing to provide the manpower for 21 classrooms. There is still a need for aquariums and chillers to make this program happen. We want all the teachers, but we are lacking people and funding.

As part of the teacher training, the DFG would like to provide an educational DVD. They do not have enough DVD's for all the participating teachers and would like to acquire additional funding to purchase the DVDs.

Needed: 25 aquariums /chillers at \$250 each and approximately \$2,000 to purchase the DVD.

John Beuttler – believes it's going to be a stretch that education programs will legislation and he is not interested in supporting this type of project.

John Ryzanych – if we do support this project, what will prevent other groups from coming back to us requesting funding?

It is only \$8,000 and it will provide a lot of will.

MOTION: The BDSFES recommends DFG provide \$8,000 for aquariums and coolers.

Amendment up to \$10,000 to the Aquatic Education Program with the following priority: 1) aquariums & chillers, 2) educational DVDs, and 3) any remaining funds can be used as necessary brochure reprints. Ensure proper acknowledgement from the BDSFES.

Second – support motion with the amendment

VOTE: Support - Phil, Ken, Jim C., Jim E., Bob - For our future anglers
Opposed - John B. and John R.

Genetic Sturgeon Proposal

This proposal is very expensive to determine what sturgeon products are marketed illegally. There must be other options that are more cost-effective and equally as enforceable.

Could there be requirements imposed on the aquaculture facilities that would require each fish/fillet sold to be marked or tagged and matched with its sales invoice? The tag or mark would need to be easily identifiable and difficult to falsify.

With enforcement levels so low, would it provide a benefit to tag fillets? Is there enough enforcement with the tags or without? Enforcement is so low, how would it improve the situation?

- ACTION ITEM: Ask Bob Hullbrock if this tag/invoice/fillet thing would work with the sturgeon. Is this a viable option? Add this item to the January agenda.

Do the wardens think there is anything that can be done through enforcement measures other than pay for all this equipment/DNA marking proposal? Is there a better more practical way to accomplish this?

Proposal Solicitation Notice

We have a lot of grant programs within the DFG. Most of these programs are ending up in the Fisheries Branch. One of Neil's goals is to get all of the grant programs in one place. There is a lot of scrutiny about how we select projects and the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program's (FRGP) Public Solicitation Notice (PSN) is an acceptable process that can receive many types of projects at one time. Many people doing restoration work are already familiar with the FRGP and may have projects within our geographic range. In addition, we will provide additional mailings. The BDSFES program will coordinate with the FRGP and their PSN to receive project proposals. There are two levels of review within this process; the technical/feasibility review and the Advisory Committee review.

Once the PSN has gone out and we receive proposals, the BDSFES Advisory Committee should plan on about two days of working meetings to evaluate proposals. Your project ranking and contingency list - DFG uses this list to contract with the successful applicants.

John Beuttler – This is like pounding a round peg into a square hole.

- ACTION ITEM: Add the Committee to the PSN mailing list.

John Beuttler – The Committee has evaluated priorities and they need to be included in the evaluation criteria and the PSN narrative.

- ACTION ITEM: Update the evaluation criteria and submit to Committee with e-mail for review.

Committee Vacancy

Could the Committee provide recommendations and then choose from the recommendation list instead of going to public press release? There could be issues with “inbreeding.” The Committee should not make the recommendations to the Director. We serve at the Director’s pleasure; the DFG should advertise, review the applications and see what we get.

WEBSITE

The Committee agrees we need to update the website - just do it.

Fisheries Advocate

Have the intentions or interest changed for the Committee to hire a fisheries advocate? There is so much going on that the DFG cannot go to every single meeting for updates. The BDSFES Advisory Committee needs someone to go to these meetings and speak up for the fish. The Resources Agency is convening a team so that CALFED works this time. The Committee should consider a person to act on their behalf.

The DFG can hire consultant.

- ACTION ITEM: Add consultant to January meeting agenda.

New Projects

Striped bass fishery has low numbers and the overall population has plummeted. DFG’s Section 10 permit to allow striped bass stocking was terminated and the salvage fish net pen-rearing program was also terminated. With the loss of the salvage fish net pen rearing program, there are very few choices for striped bass mitigation required by the 4-Pumps Agreement. The mitigation component (net pen rearing) should not have been terminated. The DFG should create a RFP for a net pen-rearing program for salvaged fish to offset the direct loss. We could also include augmentation.

John Beuttler – There is an issue; striped bass populations are declining, the FGC policy has specific population goals and DFG is responsible for the public trust. The DFG is setting itself up for a legal issue. The direct losses at the

pumps need to be mitigated. How are we honoring the 4-pumps Agreement to mitigate direct losses?

Is the fishery in such decline that we also need to augment the population?

John Banks – Anglers are having problems. The POD is a major problem and it is related to the water exports. What is being done about the water exports? After this four hour meeting the Committee spent \$10,000 on educational stuff. All this stuff doesn't address the main problems. You have money that you can spend that furthers your charter.

The Committee has spent \$10,000 on educational projects. The Committee is going through RFPs and the PSN process to get proposals for a wide variety of projects. Everything is in the works.

John Banks – That is all “bureaucratic gibberish.”

The DFG should tell management that the Committee wants action on the striped bass issues and find out what can we do to supplement the striped bass population. The DFG needs to meet the 4-Pumps mitigation requirement and then look at supplementation. The DFG needs a management plan to rebuild the fishery.

The BDSFES is not in place to push the DFG to create a striped bass management plan. We need to stay focused on the role of this Committee and do not go outside your purview.

The Committee (John R.) is seeing a decline in the fishery. The Committee is asking the DFG to get something done. Nothing is happening. What is the government doing about it? Our work needs to benefit the fishery. He needs to see some constructive effort. The DFG needs a species list for everything within the geographic range of the stamp.

The Committee's mandate is to recommend projects.

Mike McKenzie – The DFG needs to come up with a striped bass policy not the FGC, but the DFG. Most policies are joint with the FGC. It is also our mission to fulfill that policy.

I do not know any angler that believes the DFG is there to protect the striped bass fishery. The DFG needs to take action and convince the anglers that DFG wants to do what is best for anglers. They do not need to blame the anglers with a slot limit. It isn't the anglers causing the fish declines; it's the water exports. The DFG needs to make a statement that the water exports are the main reason for the POD decline. The DFG needs to “stand-up.”

We need to save the fish at the pumps and we need the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's help to do that. They are going to take the water and we need to find a way to protect the fish.

Ken Jones – What is so frustrating is that we had all the experts come in and talk about the issues with us. What is the point of improving access if there are no fish? Meeting after meeting we hear about water diversions, exotic species, etc. and more and more studies. The issues are not being solved and the numbers are still going down.

The DFG needs to think long-term: climate change, water exports, etc.

John Beuttler – We need a management plan that includes the mitigation obligation, the CALFED priorities, and the POD issues so that we can understand how to spend the money.

Jim Edgar – I share the frustrations. The leadership of DFG needs to provide the Committee with a set of priorities. There are full-time people working on these issues and DFG should make the priorities and provide them to the Committee.

Phil Havlicek – We should tell the Director what the priorities are; not the other way around.

Jim Crenshaw – How much water and what time of the year do striped bass need it? We need more water and the DFG won't make a decision that water is necessary.

Neil Manji – I believe that the Committee has legitimate issues and concerns. Is this the appropriate forum? These are excellent questions to bring up at the Fish and Game AI Tausure subcommittee. The BDSFES needs to be focused and there are questions that need to be answered. The one organization that is bringing everyone together is the AI Tausure subcommittee. The Executive Director, the President, and the big boys are all on the committee. This is the forum for these questions.

The Committee wants long-term solutions and long-term sustainability.

Proposal Solicitation Notice

When DFG releases the PSN, include the Committee's priorities and issue a press release with those priorities and the PSN information. There should be a coordinated statement to the public about what the Committee has done and that its priority is a long-term sustainable fishery with priority for striped bass.

A press release needs to be vetted through management.

- ACTION ITEM: Add to the November meeting agenda - a press release with Committee priorities.