

Bay-Delta Sport Fishing Enhancement Stamp Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

July 12, 2007, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Headquarters

Attendees

Jim Crenshaw, Committee Chair
John Beuttler, Committee
Ken Jones, Committee
John Ryzanych, Committee
Phil Havlicek, Committee
Jim Edgar, Committee
Carter Fickes, Committee
Bob Strickland, Committee

Neil Manji, DFG
Heather McIntire, DFG
Karen Mitchell, DFG

Gary Adams, CSBA
Bob Rittenhouse
Tom Mordue, Bass Classics of Santa Clara
Mike Riehl, BBAC

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Minutes

The March 28, 2007 meeting minutes were unanimously accepted.

Action Log

64 - *SBSF Update*. Change owner to Jim Crenshaw.

81 - *New Project Ideas*. Remove from Action Log; include New Project Ideas under New Business.

84 - *Invite the head of the Fish Salvage Program to the next BDSFES meeting*. The Department would like the Committee to clarify why it wants the head of the Fish Salvage Program to come to a BDSFES Advisory Committee meeting.

John Beuttler – The Committee wants to know why the proposal to acclimate fish from the screens at the SWP pumping plants has not gone forward. We also want to hear about other improvements they are planning on making to improve fish salvage at the pumps.

- ACTION ITEM: The Department will draft a letter to the head of the Fish Salvage Program asking for information on what is being done to protect salvaged fish and how net pen acclimation is being addressed.

85 - *Invite Dan Odenweller to discuss his striped bass work.* The Department would like clarification on what the Committee would like to hear from Dan.

John Beuttler – Dan Odenweller did an independent analysis on the striped bass decline and on the mysterious increase in the fishery. Dan believes he knows why the population made the leap forward and then fell again. We would like to hear his explanation.

97 - *The Committee will discuss the role and necessity of a fisheries consultant.* The Department would like to know if the Committee wants to take action on this. We need to get some resolution on this action item.

John Beuttler – The original concept was to hire someone to review all of the legislative activities and attend technical fisheries meetings. We could use a fisheries consultant for advocacy, to represent the Committee in terms of technical things going on, and for advocacy in other arenas (e.g., lack of addressing other fisheries in the Delta - POD, not part of the CALFED recovery plan). There are places and times the Committee might want representation to speak out on part of all estuary species.

101 - *Committee will work with Department to create a POD educational strategy.* A draft Educational Strategy has been prepared and is being reviewed by the Department.

106 - *Prepare two press releases: one on POD and one on the sturgeon situation.*

John Beuttler – We need factual information on what the scientists have and put it in angler terms. Can we get the website up sooner....what do we need to do to get the word out? Anglers who purchase the stamp want to know why they are buying the stamp. We need to make that connection between POD and the stamp. We need to get the word out.

- ACTION ITEM: Get out a press release that describes the projects the BDSFES Program has funded and advertise the vacancy on the Advisory Committee.

Carter Fickes – I see a catch 22; we need to educate the public, but DFG will be damned if they do and damned if they don't.

Phil Havlicek – I don't think our mission is to educate the public. It isn't our job.

John Beuttler – We need to tell the public what is wrong so that they can understand why we made the decisions we made.

Recreational anglers don't have the information and this is an important subject.

- ACTION ITEM: Get the POD article on the BDSFES website.

116 - Have someone come speak to the Committee about viability of a striped bass hatchery and if it would help the striped bass population.

- ACTION ITEM: Have Marty Gingras provide a write-up on the viability of a striped bass hatchery.

4-Pumps Projects (John Beuttler, Committee)

The 4-pumps Agreement is an agreement between DFG and DWR to mitigate for the direct impacts on fisheries resources in the Delta. There were two separate fund accounts agreed to under the Agreement: the Lump Sum Account and an Annual Mitigation Account. The Annual Mitigation Account is used to mitigate for the direct losses of striped bass, salmon and steelhead. Mitigation paid for through this account must state a specific number of fish mitigated and that number is applied towards the direct loss number. Under the Agreement, the Annual Mitigation Account takes the direct loss and quantifies it into dollars and DWR has to come up with tangible projects that mitigate for those losses. The Agreement also stated that "other species" would be evaluated as well down the line. However, the losses of other species were overwhelming and funds in the Annual Mitigation Account were insufficient to address these losses. The Lump Sum Account was created to address losses with more flexibility than the Annual Account. These funds count towards mitigation, but do not require a specific number of fish; for example, enhanced enforcement, and habitat improvements could be funded by the Lump Sum Account.

DWR could not find ways to mitigate for striped bass so it put money towards DBEEP to mitigate for striped bass. Since stocking is no longer an option, enforcement was the best option to mitigate for the direct losses of striped bass.

Jim Crenshaw – What is their current mitigation obligation and what are the current expenditures?

John Beuttler – There is money still coming into the Annual Mitigation Account. State water contractors are paying for it. They are providing money to projects, but they do not know if it is making a difference. The feds are not constrained by this type of agreement.

- ACTION ITEM: Find out what the current striped bass mitigation is for the 4-pumps agreement.

Phil Havlicek – If we are interested in all these things that we have no power to address, perhaps these are the types of issues the fisheries consultant could address. The fisheries consultant will need to work with the Department, not be an adversary to the Department.

John Beuttler – What can the Committee do about this issue? This was an informational item for the Committee. We need a proposal – one that mitigates for all fish species lost at the SWP pumps. The 4-Pumps Agreement has a commitment to mitigate for all direct losses at the pumps. It also has a commitment to mitigate for indirect losses such as changes in hydrology. The federal issue is a huge issue because the feds do not have any type of mitigation agreement.

Phil Havlicek – The Committee needs an advocate to promote the Committee's interest on issues that can not be addressed through this committee. The DFG has already told us that we are not going to address state policy and we certainly will not address any federal issues. We as a committee will not be able to address water policy. Why waste our time on things we cannot do?

Neil Manji – The gray area is getting enough information you need to make decisions on expenditures. It seems like we have these discussions, like the 4-Pumps Agreement frequently. We need to know what information is needed in order to determine if this is an important issue and if it is valuable information for expenditures.

John Beuttler – Things that go onto the agenda need to be appropriate. It is the crafting of the agenda that determines what information we need. Marty could put something together in writing and address Carter's question about a striped bass hatchery. I think the chair should work with staff on creating the agenda.

Ken Jones – The educational component is important and it can have value.

Jim Edgar – I am scratching my head. We are all frustrated. We want an answer to the question of where can we spend this money that would be most helpful. It isn't clear who is supposed to figure that out. It would be helpful if DFG could say this is what the priorities are and give us advice. We need DFG input on priority projects.

Bob Strickland – This has gone on for a couple of years about the advocate for us. We need to have three people bid on it and then make a decision. Our first duty is to determine what we want them to do. We need to come up with a list of things for them to do.

Sturgeon Forensics Proposal (Neil Manji, Fisheries Branch Chief)

The Director approved this project for \$170,000. With this approval, the Director wanted to emphasize that in addition to the money for other sturgeon work (i.e.,

increased enforcement, punch card), this will be a tool to ensure that some of the cases are upheld in court and will increase our ability to catch the bad guys. We need to be able to identify sturgeon flesh and caviar and be able to track it. There were late discussions on funding the full amount, but the Department did not want the BDSFES to fund the full amount. So we are looking at other units that would benefit from this equipment to help pay for the rest of the project. Currently, UCD will collect and run the samples and we will be able to use DNA evidence.

Phil Havlicek – We should do a press release. You should also get PR for these accomplishments. Do the press release to show people that it is a positive enforcement tool.

Jim Crenshaw – Put out a press release to let poachers know that we're funding this and beware – the Department is going to put people in jail.

Jim Edgar – A press release can be written to show stamp funds are being used to improve the sturgeon situation through warden overtime, the poaching bust, sturgeon punch cards, and this new enforcement tool. We should support this program.

Sturgeon Punch Card Production (Neil Manji, Fisheries Branch Chief)

The Department has not decided how to pay for the 2008 Sturgeon Punch Card. The Department is leaning towards charging a minimal cost to the angler. When you don't provide a cost there is no way to track merchandise. We need to be able to track the punch cards and the chief of LRB told me that it's impossible to track the cards if no money is associated with the cards.

Jim Edgar – It is important for these funds to pay for the printing of the sturgeon punch cards. If it is a question of us allocating a little more money to pay for this, I would like this committee to consider the additional costs. The anglers are already frustrated by all the license fees and then all the stamps.

Neil Manji – For tracking purposes, the LRB needs to charge a minimal price. If you want Maria with the LRB to come in and explain it, that can be arranged.

Jim Crenshaw – We need to hear all the information so we can make an informed decision.

Neil Manji – We need to look into how to address the three components: printing, tracking costs, and analysis. The Department would like the Committee to come and fund the production and distribution of the cards. Whether the Committee will be asked to pay for the analysis of the data from the cards; you might get a proposal for that. This is just a heads-up that these discussions are being held.

Phil Havlicek – When the sturgeon punch card was discussed on the Coastside website, it was highly negative. Anglers would be furious if they had to pay for the sturgeon punch card.

Jim Edgar – If we do not turn in the book at the end of the season we get dinged. This book is free of charge, but I suspect the problem is that if we don't get the book back with a check for the amount of licenses that have been sold they automatically assess a penalty. If we do the same thing for the sturgeon book, because there is no cost, they can't penalize the agent.

Economic Analysis of Striped Bass, Steelhead & Salmon Fishing in California (Neil Manji, Fisheries Branch Chief)

The Department would like to know the Committee's thoughts on a cost-share for the Economic Analysis that the Striped Bass Stamp Fund is going to fund.

John Beuttler – We need to be able to put a value on what the sport fisheries are worth and what the declines are costing us. Does this committee want to assist with this project and would the Committee like to do a cost-share with the Striped Bass Stamp Fund to fund this economic analysis?

Gary Adams – Include black bass and other sport fisheries in the economic analysis.

Jim Edgar – I worry about this one because it is in the "nice to know" category. How would it stand up to agricultural interests? We need to understand what the anticipated results are and why we think these results will happen.

John Beuttler – This study would show that there is an economic importance to the sport fisheries. There is no quantifiable evidence on what the economic value of sport fish is to the state. We need to use the numbers from the fed reports and the Meyer report (Admin report 85-09). The other side is always arguing that cotton is part of the economy; well, we need to be able to add that fish are of economic importance too and get fish into the conversation. Expenditure on cotton is the least of our worries; we need water for fish. We need to quantify what the fish are worth. It is quite staggering when you look at the recreational salmon value.

There has only been one report, the Meyer report, which looked at the value of striped bass, steelhead, and salmon in the Central Valley and the Delta. We have probably lost \$8 billion over the last 20 years due to lost fisheries.

Carter Fickes – Water contractors have the power. We need a foundation to fight the battle on both the economic and biological fronts! It is important and it is part of our committee's charter.

John Beuttler – There is also a parity issue. Fish need to be included in the water discussions.

Phil Havlicek – We need this ammunition.

- ACTION ITEM: Provide the Draft Economic Analysis Proposal to the Committee.
- ACTION ITEM: Add economic analysis to agenda for next meeting.

Status of AB 1270 and AB 1187 (Karen Mitchell, DFG)

There is a July Legislative Report, but we didn't get it in time for this meeting.

- ACTION ITEM: Send Committee the July Legislative Report.

AB 1270 is dead.

John Beuttler – FYI, The bill is dead because the appropriations committee is not going to change any state department's budget. The bill may still be alive?

Karen Mitchell – AB 1187 is currently being amended and then it will go to appropriations.

New Business

- ACTION ITEM: Keep #97, Fisheries Consultant, on the Action Log and place the item on the next agenda.
- ACTION ITEM: Send Jim Edgar, John Ryzanych and Ken Jones hardcopies of the proposals.
- ACTION ITEM: Send Committee green sturgeon abundance estimates.

Jim Crenshaw – How is the DFG going to mitigate for losses of green sturgeon at Red Bluff Diversion Dam?

- ACTION ITEM: The Department will look into how it mitigates for the loss of green sturgeon at Red Bluff Diversion Dam.
- ACTION ITEM: Provide the Committee with the TRT rankings for the proposals before the next Advisory Committee meeting.

Tom Mordue – Black bass need to be in the discussion of issues addressed by this committee.

- ACTION ITEM: Provide meeting material on the website for public access.

Next Meeting: September 27, 2007. The purpose of this meeting is to score the project proposals submitted to the BDSFES Program for funding in 2008. The next business meeting will be in October/ November.