



**COUNTY OF PLACER  
FISH & GAME COMMISSION**

Ed King  
Deputy Agricultural Commissioner  
County Contact

**FISH & GAME COMMISSION MEMBERS**

<b>DISTRICT 1</b> Don Gould	<b>DISTRICT 2</b> Mark Fowler
<b>DISTRICT 3</b> Gregg McKenzie	<b>DISTRICT 4</b> Gary Flanagan
<b>DISTRICT 5</b> Kari Freidig	<b>DISTRICT 5</b> Marc Wyatt
<b>DISTRICT 5</b> Mickey Daniels	

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**PLACER COUNTY  
FISH & GAME COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**TIME/DATE:** 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, May 27, 2015  
**LOCATION:** PLACER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING ROOM  
Community Development Resource Agency, DeWitt Center, Auburn  
3091 County Center Drive (corner of Bell Road and Richardson  
Drive)

The Placer County Fish & Game Commission is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities are provided the resources to participate fully in its public meetings. If you are hearing impaired, we have listening devices available. If you require additional disability-related modifications or accommodations, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the Recording Secretary at (530) 889-7372. If requested, the agenda shall be provided in appropriate alternative formats to persons with disabilities. All requests must be received at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting for which you are requesting accommodation. Requests received after such time will be accommodated only if time permits.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Gregg McKenzie, Chair
- II. **ROLL CALL**  
**Present:** Fowler, Gould, Flanagan, Daniels, McKenzie, Wyatt, Freidig  
**Absent:** N/A
- III. **APPROVAL of May 27, 2015 AGENDA and APPROVAL of April 22, 2015 MINUTES**  
**Agenda:** McKenzie requested that Non-Action Items be moved to right after IV. Public Comment to accommodate presenter.  
Gould/Fowler/MPUV  
**Minutes:** Flanagan requested a revision to the draft minutes.  
Flanagan/Fowler/MPUV
- IV. **PUBLIC COMMENT**  
Individuals may address the Commission on items under the jurisdiction of the Fish & Game Commission not included on this agenda for no longer than five (5) minutes. ***No action can be taken on items addressed under Public Comment.***  
  
No public comment

## NON-ACTION ITEMS

### **VII. Pacific Gas & Electric Fuel Load Reduction Projects in Placer County**

Jeff Mussel, who oversees electrical distribution vegetation management activity for Placer, Sierra, Nevada, and El Dorado Counties, discussed how PG&E is taking action to mitigate fire hazards. They have enhanced their normal activities of vegetation controls and identifying dead and dying trees, and have added redundant ground and air patrols. PG&E works with local fire control agencies by reaching out to communities and funding grants to councils seeking to reduce fuel buildup and create fuel breaks. They've also been training staff to look out for early fire indicators (sparks and smoke) and are gathering volunteers to assist staffing fire towers, as well as paying for upkeep of those towers.

PG&E is also increasing public outreach, letting people know what they're trying to do, and asking the public to contact them when dead, dying, and diseased trees need removal, or before they plan to do property maintenance that might damage PG&E lines. Since it affects maintenance access, they also support post-fire tree cleanup.

Mussel was asked if they used mechanical means for fuel cleanup; specifically, whether they used ruminant animals for clearing brush. Mussel stated that they are of limited use; areas are very large and a large herd would be needed, plus they aren't able to get them in to areas with limited access, but he acknowledged they have their uses. Freidig stated that she prefers using goats or non-mechanical brush removal, as machines are noisy and will impact wildlife and their habitat.

McKenzie stated that the discussion reminded him about transfers of PG&E and other public-use property to various land trusts or other non-profit groups, and stated he would like the stewardship council to give a presentation to the commission in the future.

Flanagan asked if a decision had been made regarding the property near the Yuba headwaters, west of Highway 20, in the Bear River valley. Mussel stated he didn't know what was planned, only that it was under the stewardship council's jurisdiction. McKenzie stated he thought that it might be going to a local land trust.

In regards to post-fire tree cleanup, Freidig stated that she had seen photos of the devastation from the King fire. Mussel described the challenges of going in to clean up after, and acknowledged the assistance from the Eldorado National Forest staff. Mussel stated that just under 11,000 trees were destroyed in that area alone.

**V. FINANCIAL REPORT – Ed King**

Expenditures through April 30, for FY 14/15 total \$8,254.40 including \$1,020.00 in commissioner's fees, \$998.24 in mileage reimbursement, and \$5,000.00 in grant awards. Budgeted expenditures for the remainder of the fiscal year total \$2,731.60.

Revenues through April 30, total \$1,952.27, including \$1,158.34 in fines, \$695.91 in penalty assessments and \$98.02 in interest. \$188.23 in fines and \$112.93 in penalty assessments were deposited into the Fish & Game Fund in April.

In comparison, total fine, penalty assessment and interest revenues in FY 13/14 were \$729.76.

King commented that the Commission should consider creating an action item for June or July regarding grants; whether to award grants using FY 14/15 revenue available now or wait until it increases next year.

**VI. AGENCY REPORTS**

**A. Commission Updates**

Wyatt attended the Central Sierra Association Commissioners meeting; eight counties were represented. He learned that all counties pretty much have the same issues we do, with money, support from Board of Supervisors, fine revenue (court process is the same). Additionally, many counties are noticing a decrease in hunters and fishers, and want to get more youth involved. Many counties are trying activities to attract young people, such as more free fishing days or junior hunts for kids.

In the meeting it was suggested that, instead of writing letters to county boards of supervisors, commissioners should attend meetings and present recommendations; since boards are often swamped with information, a live presentation would have a greater impact than a letter.

Wyatt said they discussed the Governor's office at the meeting. He reported that there have been two open California Fish & Game Commission positions since 2011, but that the Governor won't find time to appoint new members. The Governor was also behind the lead ammunition ban, which was implemented without a lot of thought or research. Many at the meeting believed it's another attempt to chip away gun rights. There is also a proposal to manage coyotes as game animals; it's perceived there are few coyotes because CDFW hasn't got the time or money for tracking them.

Wyatt invited John Turner to discuss the history of the Central Sierra Association. Efforts were made to set up a group since 2004; in 2005, a statewide meeting was held to get all of the county commissions together. There was a lot of enthusiasm at the meeting, but nobody stepped up to lead, so the first attempt fizzled and died. Efforts continued later, and the CSA was formed, focusing on

the area that is roughly Region 2 of the State Fish and Game jurisdiction. Seven counties participated, three more wished to but couldn't. One of the participating counties was not from Region 2.

The idea was to reinvent participating commissions to be more effective in raising money, creating infrastructure, and figuring out how to do things better. Turner said that he liked that the participating rural counties belong to the Rural County Representatives of California. Every board of supervisors has a member that sits on the RCRC. Turner says that it's kind of a lobby group, and its members report on state-level commissions to the boards. Turner hopes to be able to use the RCRC members to communicate county-level commission concerns back to the state, which Turner believes isn't happening now. He likes how Placer County's commission is under its Agriculture department; El Dorado County, for example, does not have that oversight. Turner is compiling meeting minutes and can provide them to Wyatt and King for the Commission.

Flanagan spoke about the Big Game Management Advisory committee meeting in Sacramento with Craig Stowers, and commented on the good programs and projects seeking grant funding. Approximately \$10 million in revenue was brought in this year from big game tag sales. One issue that came up is how they're not using up all of the money. Currently there is \$8 million in the reserve, which keeps growing every year. The reserve money can only be accessed after a ton of paperwork and approvals, and its use is limited to big game projects, but the amount of money is getting attention from other groups, who may try to get the legislature to make it available to other programs.

Flanagan reported the desire to reduce funding for university studies. Once a funded project is completed, the universities declare that the information they discovered is proprietary, and will not share the results.

Flanagan reports that the committee is having trouble getting wildlife enforcement to report how they're spending their portion of the money.

Gould reported on the success of the annual Placer Sportsmen's Fishing Derby. There was a decrease in attendance this year, probably because it rained continuously the day before until 3:00 AM. There were still 250 kids attending. Gould thanked the Commission and the community for their support.

**B. State Wildlife Conservation Board Subcommittee** – Gregg McKenzie  
McKenzie reported that at the last meeting, the subcommittee approved \$189,000 toward a Placer Land Trust ranch acquisition.

Flanagan asked about the possibility of the Placer Land Trust hosting fishing tours by trained anglers, in groups of ten or so along the Bear River within the Harvego Preserve. McKenzie said that the idea had been discussed, and that the

board of directors supports the idea. However, accessing the river requires a strenuous hike.

**C. State Fish & Game Commission Subcommittee – Mark Fowler**

Fowler reported that May is Bear Aware Month, and CDFW reminds people to stash food and trash correctly to prevent attracting bears. CDFW is also investigating why pheasant numbers are decreasing, and hosted a Pheasant Ecology Workshop, looking at possible causes like ag practices, habitat change, climate change, and predation by ravens. They're working with Pheasants Forever to try to alter the trend.

There has been an increase in turtle rescues, but CDFW wants people to just leave them alone, especially the western pond turtle, which is known to travel on land between ponds. People see them and assume they're in trouble, but they aren't.

CDFW is looking at reintroducing spring run Chinook salmon to the Sierras in the North Yuba River, in cooperation with NOAA, Yuba County Water Agency, Trout Unlimited, and California Sportfishing Protection Alliance. CDFW is looking into collection and transport of fish temporarily to get them started.

CDFW is holding public meetings regarding the state wildlife action plan update to conserve fish and wildlife in their natural habitat. \$36 million is budgeted in part from federal funding.

CDFW would like to remind everyone that suction dredge mining is currently illegal in California for everyone.

CDFW and California's salmon industry will be restricting ocean fisheries this year by shortening seasons for sport and commercial fishing and decreasing catch limits.

The next CDFW meeting will be held June 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> at Mammoth Lakes to address inland fisheries regulations, develop a process to temporarily close rivers to fishing, and propose changes to bobcat tracking regulations.

The new rules for non-lead ammunition go into effect on July 1, 2015; it will be required for hunting on all CDFW regulated lands, and for hunting Nelson bighorn sheep.

Big game tag drawings will be announced on June 2.

**D. California Department of Fish & Wildlife – Lt. John Lawson**

Lt. Lawson stated that the workload for his team is slow right now, as it is too cold to fish for trout and turkey season ended. Bears continue to be an issue, and

there's numerous cabin break-ins, especially in Nevada County. Mountain lion calls have increased, possibly due to the drought; he has received around 12 calls in the last month. In Alta Sierra, a homeowner reported two mountain lion kittens looking inside the residence through the glass door.

Lt. Lawson explained that weekly reports haven't been received lately because the patrol chief is looking to either get rid of them or change them to report on big cases only. This will occur statewide, not just for Placer County. Their original point was to inform about significant cases anyway.

Flanagan asked who had replaced Mike as Chief of Enforcement. Lt. Lawson reports that the new chief is Dave Bess, who came over from the academy, and who the lieutenant considers very intelligent.

Wyatt reported that he had spoken with a Fish and Game biologist about local deer contracting a type of louse that's new to the area; she had told Wyatt that she wants to know about any cases. Wyatt wondered to whom he should refer people. For lice, call the biologist. For a bear, call wildlife management unless it's a public safety issue, in which case call enforcement. Lt. Lawson stated that his team will take samples from dead animals, since they're out in the field anyway. There is also a new type of mange seen on deer in the area; it's of a type originally seen on Sitka deer that has spread.

Flanagan asked what CDFW does with suction dredge violators. Lt. Lawson answered that his team has been told to take photos, collect evidence, write reports, and submit them to the DA for a charging decision. His team does not issue citations or arrest anyone. Whether or not the perpetrator is charged depends on the county. Placer County will prosecute violators; Sierra County won't. Flanagan stated that the news will get out that CDFW won't confiscate equipment, and that some jurisdictions won't prosecute, which may encourage more people to try it. Lawson stated that he believes the judge will rule in favor of the miners, but that until he does, his office will keep doing what they're doing now. He stated that he had heard that the Placer County DA's office would hire an environmental specialist. Freidig hoped that the judge won't cave in to pressure, and commented that with the low water levels, it would be easier to retrieve gold. McKenzie stated that whatever the decision would be, it will probably be appealed.

An audience member thought that there used to be a circuit attorney for CDFW. John Turner said that there used to be; in fact, the current Sierra County DA used to be a circuit rider. The program died out because it ran out of money, although one or two positions may still exist. Lt. Lawson said that he knows one of them. Turner stated that he hopes that the Central Sierra Association can help bring that program back.

Lt. Lawson was thanked for his report.

Wyatt asked King about the status of the Placer County bear video. King said that there was nothing to report at this time.

### **E. NID & PCWA Reports**

Sue Sindt was unable to attend the meeting, but submitted the following report. PCWA usually gives a report to the Agriculture Commission, but will also provide one to King from now on.

#### **NID Report:**

- Storage = 209,900 AF; 96% of average for this date; 79% capacity.
- Precipitation = 47.81"; 70% of average for this date. May = 3.00"; 83% of average
- Mandatory restrictions are in place for treated water customers and are targeting a 36% reduction in use as compared to 2013.
- Agricultural reductions are targeting a similar reduction but are voluntary.
- The District is targeting 75% of average carryover storage.

#### **PCWA Report:**

- Precipitation is about 2.7 inches for May (81% of normal) and about 44 inches for the water year (67% of normal).
- Snowpack in American River basin is record low and is about 0.4% of normal.
- Combined storage at French Meadows and Hell Hole is about 170,000 ac-ft (out of about 340,000 ac-ft) and about 50,000 ac-ft lower than last year. Reservoirs will end up lower this year than last year unless there is substantial fall/early winter rain.
- The State Water Board issued a storage curtailment on May 1 (about a month earlier than last year), which means PCWA cannot store any new water.
- Boats can be launched but boat ramps are already out of the water (I've heard, but haven't confirmed myself).
- Middle Meadows Group Campground will not have water again this year. The spring source will be rehabilitated this summer.
- Big Meadows Campground likely will be closed all summer due to hazard tree remediation (resulting from King Fire).

- White water boating flows (~1000 cfs from 9am – noon with about a 2 hour ramp up and 2 hour ramp down) will be provided below Oxbow Powerhouse (Tunnel Chute Run):
  - -Weekends in June
  - -Tues, Fri, and weekends in July through (and including Labor Day)
- Folsom Reservoir will likely be below 400 ft elevation in late June/early July = 5 mph speed limit.
- PCWA has a state-mandated 32% conservation target. Please see [www.pcwa.net](http://www.pcwa.net) for more information.
- Latest PG&E allocation for Zones 1 and 3 is 68% (about 75,500 ac ft).

McKenzie mentioned that they're holding the reservoirs high because of the drought.

**VIII. Next meeting**

June 24, 2015 at 6:00 PM.

**IX. Adjournment**

7:18 PM