

Advisory Body Name: Contra Costa County Fish and Wildlife Committee

Advisory Body Meeting Time/Location: 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6 meetings per year, 3 – 5 pm
2475 Waterbird Way, County Public Works Department Road Maintenance Division lunchroom

Chair: Daniel Pellegrini

Staff: Maureen Parkes

Reporting Period: January 2021 – December 2021

1. Activities and Accomplishments The Fish and Wildlife Committee met five times to discuss matters related to fish and wildlife issues in Contra Costa County (CCC). The Committee administered a grant program that expends the Fish and Wildlife Propagation Funds (funds that are collected by the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife for code violations). Additional details on these activities are provided below.

Grant Program: The Committee reviewed seven proposals requesting Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund grant funds. The Committee reviewed the proposals, interviewed applicants, and selected all seven proposals for full or partial funding totaling \$60,830.71 to recommend to the Board of Supervisors. Grant awards ranged from \$4,973.00 – \$16,000.00. The Committee reviewed progress and final reports from previous grant cycles and extended invitations to grantees to give presentations.

Outreach: Distributed Wildlife in Your Backyard brochure.

Volunteer Activities: Several members volunteered in the community with other organizations that are interested in fish and wildlife issues. Rhonda Gehlke – California Water Environment Association (CWEA) - State Division Chair of the Community Engagement and Outreach Committee, CWEA - San Francisco Bay Section Communications Committee; Susan Heckly - Lindsay Wildlife Experience, CCC Master Gardener, International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council and the FWC representative on the CCC Integrated Pest Management Advisory Committee; Kathleen Jennings - Co-chair of the Peyton Slough Wetlands Advisory Committee; Danny Pellegrini - Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District Board of Trustees - Secretary, Sheriff's Posse of CCC (Barbeque Captain) and the Martinez Sportsmen's Club.

Committee members were regularly updated on activities related to fish and wildlife in CCC, which included a presentation by a grant recipient and an update from County staff. The presentation and update are listed below:

- Overview of Mammalian Carnivore Activity on Protected East Bay Regional Park District Lands in California's Diablo Range. (Steven Bobzien, East Bay Regional Park District)
- Update on the activities of the Contra Costa County Integrated Pest Management Advisory Committee (IPM) (Wade Finlinson, Contra Costa Health Services Department)

2. Attendance/Representation The FWC is composed of ten members. Each County Supervisor appoints a member and the Internal Operations Committee appoints four At-large members and one At-large Alternate. The FWC met five times at which a quorum was always present. The members were: Susan Heckly (D-II), Clark Dawson (D-III), Brett Morris (D-IV), Daniel Pellegrini (D-V), Rhonda Gehlke (At-large), Kathleen Jennings (At-large), Nicole Balbas (At-large), Cass Rogers (At-large), and Felipe Solis (At-large Alternate).

3. Training/Certification All members have viewed the required Brown Act & Better Government Ordinance and Ethics Training videos. Certifications are on file for all of the members.

4. Proposed Work Plan/Objectives for Next Year

(a) FWC Operations:

- Develop and refine Work Plan (working document).
- Maintain FWC membership by advertising vacancies and forwarding applications to the Internal Operations Committee.
- Seek to coordinate with other Fish and Wildlife Committees on regional matters.
- Coordinate with the Contra Costa Watershed Forum.

(b) Make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors via the Internal Operations Committee for the appropriation of funds from the Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund to support fish and wildlife projects in the community:

- Conduct grant program to solicit proposals, evaluate their relative merits, and recommend funding for projects which will contribute most to the fish and wildlife resources of the County.
- Develop and advertise FWC grant program by: 1) reviewing past Request for Proposals (RFP), funding applications; and 2) developing new RFP, funding application deadline, and funding priorities; and 3) posting

to the County website, distributing these materials to the media, the FWC mailing list and RFP mailing list, and to anyone who requests them.

- Work with agencies, organizations, and individuals to help them plan and develop projects suitable for support from the Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund.
- Monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the grant disbursement process.
- Review funding applications received. Make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors via the Internal Operations Committee for the awarding of grants.
- Follow-up on projects that receive funding to assure that projects proceed as proposed. One way the FWC will do this is to extend invitations to prior Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund Grant recipients to future meetings to give status reports, outcomes and presentations regarding their projects.
- Send out a letter to grant recipients requesting project status reports.

(c) FWC priorities for 2021/2022:

- Make recommendations to the Board to approve Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund grant applications for projects that increase collaboration with law enforcement agencies, the court, and community cultural organizations on enforcement issues and increase education focusing on communities that may be unaware of local fish and game laws.
- Provide public forum opportunities for open discussion on wildlife issues that affect CCC residents and impact natural resources in our County, increase outreach efforts and provide advisory updates to Board of Supervisors as needed.
- Disseminate “Wildlife in Your Backyard” booklet and develop other projects for involvement of the FWC and the community in CCC.
- Develop a resource document regarding invasive species.
- Update website with information on invasive species and a list of awarded Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund grants.

(d) FWC projects (develop and prioritize a list of projects for potential FWC involvement; select projects for FWC involvement and provide appropriate support, including: initiation, planning, consultation, and/or funding):

- Make recommendations to the Board on awarding Certificates of Appreciation for significant contributions to the fish and wildlife resources of the County.
- Consider hosting a forum about wildlife.

(e) Improve enforcement of fish and game laws and regulations; increase flow of money into the Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund:

- Help assure that, when appropriate, a portion of fines from violations of laws designed to protect fish and wildlife resources is deposited in the Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund. Promote awareness of the harm caused by violation of fish and wildlife regulations and the value of enforcement.
- Host a Fall Forum with law enforcement officials (CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Sheriff’s Dept., District Attorney’s Office, Superior Court, Public Defender’s Office, the East Bay Regional Park District Police) to discuss fish and wildlife issues and enforcement (subject to County Health Officer’s Shelter Order to slow the spread of Covid-19).

(f) Monitor and advise the Board on projects that may affect fish and wildlife resources in the County:

- Attend field trips to see major restoration projects and prior Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund Grant recipients’ projects in the County.
- Consider tours of East CCC Habitat Conservancy properties, Marsh Creek Fish Ladder, Walnut Creek Drop Structure, Dow Wetlands and Chelsea Wetlands at Pinole.

(g) Develop policy recommendations (“white papers”) on fish and wildlife issues:

- Discuss impacts of invasive species.
- Discuss wildlife and human interaction / interface.
- Discuss public education on reducing the impact of free-roaming cats on wildlife.
- Discuss the Delta Conveyance Project.