

Mono County Fisheries Commission

Regular Meeting

Monday, November 6, 2013 ~ 10:00 a.m.

June Lake Community Center

June Lake ~ California

Minutes of Meeting

I CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

II Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III ROLL CALL

Present were Commissioners Steve Marti, John Webb, Dan Anthony, Gaye Mueller, Bob Dunn, and Gary Jones. Staff present was Jeff Simpson and Nancy Alaniz. Also present were Supervisor Fesko and Supervisor Hunt (departed 11:20 am.)

IV COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Webb asked for clarification regarding an email that was sent out acknowledging the service of certain County volunteers serving on various commissions, committees, etc. Fesko clarified that this was a proposed, attendee funded event (dinner/dance) to honor the service of these persons. There was an error in its distribution and not everyone received it that should have.

V APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October 2, 2013

Motion by Webb to accept the October 2, 2013 minutes. Second by Mueller. Passed unanimously.

VI STAFF/COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Simpson presented a public comment letter written by the BOS in response to the frog/toad issue. Additionally, he presented a map for the Sage Grouse habitat designation and reported that there were public meetings being held to discuss the issue. Regarding an issue that was raised at the last meeting about campers on Conway Ranch, he reported that he contacted the Sheriff's Department and they contacted the campers. The campers were asked to leave and advised they could not camp there in the future. Last, he mentioned the countywide boat raffle fundraiser sponsored by the Eastern Sierra Fishing Coalition.

Webb commented about the need for an agricultural well at Conway Ranch. A derby was held at Conway Ranch to reduce the fish stock, but there are still many fish on the ranch. And there is still a threat of low water levels due to reduced flows. He was concerned about the impact on the trophy trout program. Marti responded that the electrical issue needed to be addressed prior to drilling an agricultural well. Frederickson stated concern that the SCE direct burial line that supplies power to the Conway Ranch is past its service life and according to SCE it will not be replaced, only repaired. Alaniz was directed to contact SCE to invite them to a meeting to discuss the issue.

Dunn stated that the F&G Commission's adoption meeting for new regulations was being held this date and the West Walker River fishing regulation change is included in the proposed regulations.

VII F&W UPDATE

A couple thousand fish were rescued from Junction Reservoir and moved to pens at June Lake. They had to be moved due to low water levels. Erdman also reported that next year's stocking allotments will be reduced 10-15%.

VIII FUND BALANCES

The F&G Fine Fund balance was reported by the Finance Department as \$16,728.47 (\$7500 encumbered-\$4000 BFEF/\$3500 ESWC) The MCFC regular budget is \$10,586.29. The Conway Ranch Fund was reported as \$17,876.62.

Alaniz explained that there was a significant drop in the discretionary fund balance due to three expenditures that were approved in June 2012 and not processed through the Finance Department until July 2013, causing disbursement to occur in the current fiscal year.

IX BUSINESS MATTERS

1. Presentation Ref: Biodiversity Project – Erdman

Erdman gave a presentation which was a continuation of his presentation from two months ago. This presentation delved further into the study and addressed the area specific to the West Walker Management Unit.

2. BFEF Status Update – Alan Pottasch

Pottasch reported that BFEF is working toward more community support. In July they hatched 100,000 eggs of which 90% were unfortunately lost in August due to an electrical issue. During the time following when the troughs were empty they were renovated. Bridgeport was voted the "ultimate fishing town" by the World Fishing Network, and as such BFEF received a \$3500 donation. BFEF also raised money during the June tournament and in September from a donation by Fishin' Mission. Thousands of fish and fry were release into Bridgeport reservoir and Virginia Creek. BFEF's future goal is to raise more fish but at a smaller size. They currently have several hundred large fish that will be stocked in the future.

3. Discussion of the BOS direction for the Fisheries Commission, Its Future, and Purpose – Hunt/Fesko/Marti/Webb

This items stemmed from last month's BOS meeting during which the reinstatement of FC commissioners was postponed due to various concerns of the BOS.

Marti

- Marti felt FC was suspect of something, but did not know what and it appears the atmosphere has changed since the IAG lawsuit.
- Marti and Jones are members of the Eastern Sierra Fishing Coalition
- Weighting of commissioners from North/South changes with appointments, South was weighted when he came on
- Commissioners have been involved in many projects, dedicated to Mono Co. fishing
- Conway Ranch and Trophy Trout important to local economy
- Does not understand BOS surprise at lawsuit because IAG was told by County Counsel to seek legal counsel. County had opportunity to remedy prior to lawsuit
- Found it difficult to maintain business as usual in light of lawsuit, especially since no information was shared with FC

Hunt

- Complimented FC and their work
- Agreed North/South weighting alternates
- Desires a partnership between BOS and FC, dismayed by lawsuit and constraints on open discussion
- Disheartened by FC members sitting on plaintiff's side at court proceeding

Fesko

- Staff reported that FC members were at court proceedings fraternizing with the plaintiff, no BOS were there, contacted Dunn and Webb upon hearing report
- Was told commissioners did not know there were assigned courtroom sides and commissioners and plaintiffs were just being friendly
- Needs to be open communication and updating of FC mission
- Agreed the balancing of the commissioners areas of representation varies.

Webb

- Felt Hunt's comments were detrimental to the FC
- He and Dunn did not know there were "sides" in courtrooms and the only County personnel he recognized there was John Vallejo.

Dunn

- In past assisted Frederickson with two County contracts that were conflicting. Helped rewrite and renegotiate.
- Went to court to gather information. Did we go in support of IAG? Probably because they have reached out so many times and we wanted to help them.

4. Discussion/Possible Approval of CCC Contract for Ditch Clean Out – Marti/Webb

Webb was concerned that he still had not received a response from anyone in County administration regarding the hiring of the CCC to clean the ditches on Conway Ranch. Simpson said he would check its status and attempt to move it forward.

5. Discussion of IAG's Trophy Trout Sell Off - Webb

Webb mentioned the need for an agricultural well again. He asked Sup. Fesko why the BOS did not approve it. Sup. Fesko responded that the Vaught report needed to be considered prior to drilling the well. There were several areas of the report that needed to be addressed as well as the electrical status at the ranch. Marti commented that based on prioritizing the components of the Vaught report, a well should be one of the first items completed.

Angeles reported that the "Fish Out" derby at Conway Ranch was a success. This derby was held to reduce the amount of fish at the ranch due to concerns about the availability of water. They also reduced stock through sales. Angeles said none of this would have happened if they would have had the agricultural well running.

Webb asked about the status of next year's trophy trout program. Angeles said there will be trophy trout, but not to this year's standards. Additionally, Mammoth Lakes' request for trophy trout for a derby was declined due to the uncertainty of availability due to the lack of water.

6. Discussion ref: Trophy Trout Account Balance - Staff

Simpson reported that the Finance Department alerted Lyster that the balance to the fish enhancement (102) fund was lower this year than last year at this time and there was a concern whether there would be enough funds left for the remaining stocking. Alaniz explained the fund balances and comparisons to the commissioners.

Angeles said IAG is following the County stocking schedule and there are enough funds for The scheduled Spring stocking.

Fesko commented that the new Mono County budget goal is to have an approved budget in place at the start of the fiscal year, July 1.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:14 pm.

The next regular meeting of the MCFC will be held in the June Lake Community Center, June Lake on Wednesday, December 4, 2013 at 10 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Alaniz, Secretary