



Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission MINUTES July 21, 2020

The Commission meets the THIRD Tuesday each month from 6:30pm through 8:30pm. Agenda items and supporting info should be mailed to HCF&GAC; PO Box 922; Ferndale, CA 95536; Phone 707.786.4902 or 707.407.5747 email: nkaytis4@gmail.com up to two weeks following previous meeting. Online meeting via ZOOM.

Attendance: James Clark, John Clark, (ab)Loren Furber, Phil Grunert, Hollie Hall, Yadao B. Inong, Rhiannon Lewis-Stephenson, Denver Nelson, Kenny Priest, Ted Romo, (ab)Brad Smith, Jeff Stackhouse, Harry Vaughn, Mike Zamboni, Nancy Kaytis-Slocum. (ab)=absent. Guests: Joan Romo, Shawn Fresz, Carrington, Emma Lantz and Kristin Denryter.

Meeting called to order by Vice-Chairman Ted Romo (Chairman John Clark having difficulty with his internet connection) at 6:34 pm.

Shawn Fresz, Biologist, Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) introduced the rest of his team: Dr. Emma Lantz, DFW Veterinarian, Kristin Denryter, Carrington. Dr. Emma Lantz started the presentation regarding Elk Hoof Disease (Treponeme-associated Hoof Disease (TAHD)). It appeared in the 1990s in Washington State. DFW is still investigating this disease, which can only be confirmed post mortem. This is a bacterial disease, which could be caused by genetics, immune system function. One can look at an animal and say it is limping, but there are a lot of reasons that may be happening. Collection and diagnostics take a long time with this disease. As far as California goes, we had a confirmation in early April, this year. Lantz showed pictures of Elk with the disease. The first papers we saw on this in Washington were in 2007. Then it was confirmed in Oregon and Idaho. Shawn Fresz spoke about surveillance. There are three main categories that they are looking at: hunter harvest sampling, targeted surveillance, and opportunistic sampling. They will have staff out during the entire hunting season. With targeted surveillance, it will potentially remove sick animals from the herd. Opportunistic sampling includes road kill, other scientific sampling, depredation, and predation. It is important for the department to find out where the disease is, how it is spreading. There is a public portal on their web page for the public to enter their observations. Statewide, they have adopted a surveillance plan. Now we'll talk about management: We can reallocate tags. Removal is our primary tool, in addition to hunter harvest. A big topic for us is animal welfare. Removing sick animals minimizes spread and population density decreases. Collection of samples is very important. Regulated harvest is by the Department only. Hunter harvest is just a tool. Fresz fielded questions from the commission regarding educating hunters, regulated harvesting and co-morbidity. TAHD has been confirmed in Rocky Mountain and Roosevelt Elk, not in Tule Elk. Kristin Denryter, Elk Coordinator spoke next: There is a risk in asking hunters to target lame animals, because the animal may have some other systemic disease. The Department couldn't advocate for that. Lantz: we don't have a lot of information on this disease, as far as we know (because we only know for sure after the animal is dead), the Elk could have another disease. Certainly, if a hunter notices a sick animal, we would like to know so we can investigate. There is no age limit as to when an animal can have TAHD – we've seen it as young as three months. We are reasonably sure that this is a new disease. Testing is very difficult. There are more cases in the counties that are wet than those that are dry. We have not discovered anything that will cure this disease, we can only try to manage it. Fresz: getting infected animals out of the herd is a way for us to manage the disease. Habitat enhancement is something we continue to work on. Carrington: Anecdotally we are seeing increases in all herd populations. Fresz: we have

Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission MINUTES

July 21, 2020

changed tags to more cows because that's how you control the population. The bulls have gone to the SHARE program, and that's how we control the bull to cow ratio. We have had extensive outreach through Elk Stakeholder Meetings to all the tribes in the area. All of our field work has ceased due to COVID. Denryter: we have some authority to increase hunts (to collect scientific information) but we'd have to prepare environmental documents. It's something we could pursue, especially if we have public support. As to how we could help, Denryter suggested promoting their web page to help educate people. In the short term, we have funding, but are limited as to how many people can be working together in the field due to COVID. Carrington: As to what the population goal is for North Western Elk, one of the goals of the Stakeholders meetings would be to re-evaluate the population numbers. The target population for the North West Zone is 2400 to 4000 and the count now is 1600. If you have questions or want to be involved in the stakeholder meetings, contact Shawn.fresz@wildlife.ca.gov

Commissioner Yadao Inong reported on his experience with lead-free bullets. The big thing that people have to realize about lead free bullets is the way that they're constructed, and due to those construction methods, they have to perform differently than lead bullets. And so there're two main types of lead free bullets: bonded type that are designed to retain most of their weight as they punch through, and retain 90-95% of their weight as they go through. There is another type, more recent and they are typified by say Cutting Edge, which are designed to lose weight, in order to mimic a lead bullet. So you have to adjust your line of thinking. The heavier bullets open up a little slower and they don't impart that shock, they just can't. Inong then fielded questions from the Commission. He also said he would write a summary of his findings and send it out to the group.

The minutes from the May 19, 2020 and June 16, 2020 meetings were accepted.

Area Rivers: Commissioner Denver Nelson: Klamath Dams – Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) ruled that Pacific Corps owns the dams and cannot give them to Klamath River Restoration Council (KRRRC) to get rid of Pacific Corps' liability. The power plant that PG&E owns makes 163 megawatts; the Klamath Dams (the four that they want to take out) make 169 megawatts, which will of course be lost when the dams come out. The whole FERC decree puts it all in limbo. The other part is that it is going to take \$450 million to take the dams out, and they only have about \$20 million. Because of the state of the economy, he thinks dam removal will not be done in the next two years. On the Eel River, the two-basin solution, which I thought was a way to continue diverting water from the Eel to the Russian River. Interestingly, the Two-Basin people said you had to take out Scot Dam, which will require a great deal of money and Lake County, where Lake Pillsbury is, is very much against taking out Scot Dam, because their lake will be gone. The Trinity River is tied into Sites Reservoir, which is supposed to be a 1,500,000 acre foot reservoir. It was going to take water from the Sacramento River in the winter and put it in this reservoir, and then in the summer, take water from the reservoir and put it back into the Sacramento River, which is basically an irrigation conduit for water in the central valley. The Trinity River is tied into that because the Trinity River is diverted to the Sacramento River., and so it turns out that our Board of Supervisors voted against endorsing the Sites Reservoir because the theory is that when you fill up the Sites Reservoir in the winter, you mess up the water that is in the Trinity River Reservoir, and so therefore, there is less water available for fish. This is very complicated. In the big picture, I think the Sites Reservoir is a good idea because we

Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission MINUTES

July 21, 2020

seem to be running short of water in the central valley, which is where all the money is. Anyway, nothing is going to happen soon about that.

Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge: Commissioner Phil Grunert reported that they are moving dirt around to try to create more habitat for springtime nesting, and one of the problems is that the dike has broken in three spots, right there at White Slough by College of the Redwoods, now that whole piece gets flooded when we get those big winter tides, and it's still not solving the problem. There is a percentage of a Federal Refuge that you can hunt, and according to them, the hunt area is now larger than what is mandated. It would be a good idea to invite the refuge manager to talk with us. Her name is Cashell Villa 733-5406.

Oak and Meadow Management: Commissioner Harry Vaughn: This project is through a Natural Resource Conservation Grant. We had that closure for the birds that ends on August 1st, so we can start our chainsaws again. In answer to Commissioner Phil Grunert, they didn't have to do an owl hooting on this project. Stackhouse: if you are taking any measurable trees off the site, you must do an owl hoot. If you aren't selling the trees, there isn't a problem. Commissioner Hollie Hall said that a different biologist may be able to find mitigations to allow Phil to do his project. Commissioner Jeff Stackhouse mentioned exemptions.

Salmon Habitat: Commissioner Harry Vaughn reported Allen Ranger had contacted him in reference to South Fork Eel River Restoration Priority Plan is going to be out for public comment in September.

Crab Fishing: Commissioner Mike Zamboni reported that they are trying to make five different management zones in the Northern Management area. This is so they can close areas with whales. Sounds good except if you have to move 500 crab pots, 50 at a time in different directions. Longlining is still banned by Fish and Wildlife.

Elk Herd: Commissioner Zamboni asked Commissioner Hollie Hall to show the video that was taken in his front yard of a herd of Elk (about 83). He thinks there are so many that they have to be constantly moving to access food. This is all the anecdotal evidence I have that the Elk herds population has increased.

Hunting and Fishing Access: Commissioner Mike Zamboni: The Samoa boat ramp has been opened up. RV camping and boat launching is now allowed.

Cannabis: Commissioner Hollie Hall will be going out to two grows that have recently received enforcement due to partial compliance and I've been told that some of the accusations reported in the newspaper are false, related to water diversion and pollution so I will go and examine the on the ground situation. Commissioner Jim Clark had made inquiries to the county about clean up of grow sites, and I followed up with a public information request to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife: what is the status of cannabis eradication, what is the status of clean up on those lands, and I have not heard back. Commissioner Jim Clark: on May 31st I sent an inquiry on behalf of the Redwood Region Audubon Society on a specific parcel, they confirmed my email, thanked

Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission MINUTES

July 21, 2020

me, and I haven't heard since. I also called and got no return call asking for information on the status of their clean up. I also put in a public information request of the County Sheriff asking what parcels were involved and how many. I got a reply that the records are not available for public viewing. Then on July 7, I got a request to please indicate the dates for which I want the information, but haven't heard back. The Regional Board said there are 3452 cleanup sites that are an additional 1360 backlogged, as of July 13, 2016. It is very difficult to find out what is going on. He will continue to try to get information about abatement or write a letter of concern about the inability to get the information. Commissioner Zamboni read about a state law getting money for cleanup on grows on public lands. Eighty six sites were eradicated in the last cycle. This really doesn't impact our county specifically. Commissioner Hall: CDFW has money to do cleanup through Prop. 64. Hall: I'm interested in whether the agencies that are doing eradication are following through to be sure cleanup is also being done. Any work you (Jim Clark) can do, I appreciate, and if there is anything I can do to help, I'm happy to do so. Jim Clark: yes, I do want to get to the bottom of this and I may end up writing personally to Woods and McGuire. I want to get on the right side of the staff of the Regional Board, which is really the agency saddled with cleanup. My experience with the staff is that they want to clean up the sites, but they are overworked.

Elk Hoof Disease: Commissioner Rhiannon Lewis-Stephenson feels we just got a good update on this issue, and the Board of Supervisors is up to speed on this, so we don't have to do anything else with this issue. We can pull this off the agenda.

Announcements: Phil Grunert may have found a replacement for the secretary. Kaytis-Slocum has agreed to continue taking minutes as long as the Commission is meeting by zoom. Phil is going to check with Sherry Hornbrook to see if she may be interested in the job.

The Redwood Region Audubon Society has submitted an opinion to the CF&W service that regarding the Migratory Bird Act, we basically came to the conclusion that it is an inadequate Draft EIR Comment period ended today. We will add Migratory Bird Act for Jim Clark as a discussion item on the next agenda. We may not know for some time – they have 60 days to respond.

AB 3030, the commissioners did not have a chance to read the letter. This will be an action item on the next agenda.

Next meeting August 18, 2020.

The meeting was closed at 8:44pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Nancy Kaytis-Slocum, Secretary