



MEETING MINUTES

January 23, 2025

3800 CORNUCOPIA WAY, ROOM H&I, STANISLAUS BUILDING MODESTO, CA
95358-9494

(Agendas can be found online at <http://www.stancounty.com/parks/fish-wildlife-committee.shtml>)

COUNTY FISH & WILDLIFE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Sexton, D1
Ed Ayers, D2
Ken Meidl, D4
Philip McKay, D5
Michael Hart, D4
Tim Fitzgerald, D3
Jim Atherstone, D3

STATE FISH & WILDLIFE REPRESENTATIVE(S):

Bernard Aguilar CDFW
Sarah McCulloch – CDFW
La Grange Field Office

PARKS & RECREATION STAFF PRESENT:

Michelle Roberts – Fish and Wildlife Secretary
Diego Casillas – Manager
Laura Delgadillo – Staff Service Technician

EXCUSED/ABSENT:

Vernon Gladney, D1
Brian Mallard, D2
Kern Hunewill, D5

GUESTS PRESENT:

Jazmine Velazquez - Field Representative for
Buck Condit, D-1
Hillary Mack – Tuolumne River Trust
Julie Stephens – Tuolumne River Trust
Bob Bashaw

1. CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS	ACTIONS & REPORTER
Phil McKay called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm, and introductions were made of all those in attendance.	All
2. WOODWARD RESERVOIR – Invasive Golden Mussel	ACTIONS & REPORTER
Local reservoirs are being impacted by the invasive Golden Mussel. It is a small mollusk that is golden brown in color and native to southeast Asia. The Golden Mussel can disrupt the ecosystem in waters as it competes with native species for food and habitat, alters the nutrient cycles, and reproduce quickly. It thrives in low calcium waters. It has been found in Sacramento, San Joaquin River, Delta, San Luis and various other reservoirs. It was discovered in October 2024 at the Stockton Rough and Ready Island. It was most likely brought in from cargo ships from South America or Asia. The Golden Mussel form dense clusters that clog irrigation systems and damage infrastructure. Some methods of treatment are costly and may have unintended environmental consequences. Addressing the issue will require a combination of prevention, research and long-term management efforts including educating the public. Stanislaus County is working with partners to implement an inspection and detection program including quarantining the waters and the use of K-9s to inspection watercraft prior to entering the water. Other strategies include a banding program which consist of putting a band on watercraft that have been cleared to enter the water. Working on whether the banding program would be an individual water or regional program are in the discussion stage.	Diego Casillas

3. TUOLUMNE RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT – La Grange	ACTIONS & REPORTER
<p>There are multiple agencies working on planning and implementation various projects to oversee the restoration of the Tuolumne River. Tuolumne River Trust is working on the Basso and La Grange salmon habitat projects. The area has declined due to mining and other activity. This area is critical because it is furthest upstream spawning habitat for the Chinook salmon and Steelhead trout before they reach the elder creek dam. Fish count have declined to only a couple thousand in the fall. Working with engineers to complete phase one - plan and design phase - to determine objective of the project. Some objectives are to bring back the flood plain, create more spawning habitat, reduce predatory non-native fish habitat, restore geomorphic function, ensure sediment transfer, and increase aquatic food habitat. Phase one was over two million. Currently seeking funding for phase two and three which will be 15 million for phase two and phase three will be approximately 17 million. Barriers and prevention that were overcome included the endangered Crotch Bumble Bee monitors on site, preventing toxins such as mercury from going into the river through testing, and continuous monthly toxin testing in the river over the course of the next year. In 2025, an old bridge will be demoed and removal, revegetating maintenance, and mercury sampling. Pending funding, upcoming phase two is downstream and phase three is upstream which consist of building a floodplain, channel meanders, and new ripples.</p>	<p><i>Julia Stephens</i></p>
4. 2024 SALMON FESTIVAL REPORT	Actions & Reporter
<p>The 14th annual festival was held on November 9, 2024, and attendance was estimated at 3,300 people which is more than prior year. Forty-eight exhibitor and vendors which is also more than previous years. There were 98 children who participated in the calendar drawing contest. Sixteen winners were chosen to have their art displayed in the calendar and an awards ceremony was held at the festival. Winners received a calendar, a donated pass to the great valley museum, and a donated certificate for a scoop of ice cream from Knights Ferry Creamery. All entries were displayed at the festival. The cost of printing 300 the calendars was paid by the Stanislaus County Fish and Wildlife Committee in the amount of \$1,085. One hundred and twenty-five calendars were sold at the festival with revenue of \$772.50, 16 calendars were given the winners of the drawing contest and remaining 159 calendars were given to teachers to use in the classroom. This year's projection is to purchase 200 calendars with an estimated cost will be \$800. There is an anticipated higher participation due to expressed interest in addition to a probable higher festival attendance this year.</p>	<p><i>Sarah McCulloch</i></p>
5. FISHERIES REPORT	ACTIONS & REPORTER
<p>Spawning surveys on the Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and the Merced Rivers indicated the peak period was mid- November. Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers have the highest number of salmon during this time. Merced River did not have as much salmon as the previous rivers, but again the peak period was at around the same time in November. There is an anticipated trip on Merced River with Cramer Fish Sciences.</p>	<p><i>Bernard Aguilar</i></p>
6. ENFORCEMENT REPORT	ACTIONS & REPORTER
<p>No Enforcement Report. - Lt. Justin Gaioran was not available to attend.</p>	<p><i>Phil McKay</i></p>
7. MINUTES – OCTOBER 24, 2024 MEETING	ACTIONS & REPORTER
<p>Tom Sexton made the motion to accept July 25, 2024, minutes. Jim Atherstone seconded. The motion was unanimously carried.</p>	<p><i>Phil McKay</i></p>
8. TREASURER REPORT	ACTIONS & REPORTER
<p>Current balance is \$58,079.49. Expenditure for Salmon Festival calendars in the amount of \$1,181.29. Revenue for the quarter was \$55.24.</p>	<p><i>Phil McKay</i></p>

9.	CORRESPONDENCE REPORT	ACTIONS & REPORTER
	<p>California Endangered Species Act is going through procedural clarity to modify criteria of endangered plants or animals based on the population trend, range, distribution, abundance, life history, habitat necessary, ability to survive and reproduce, degree of threat, impact of existing efforts, future management, availability of information, and distribution map by petition by commission to reject or accept.</p> <p>The proposal to list the monarch butterfly as a threatened species. The count was up in the 1000s but now down to about 400. Could be a normal trend as seen in the 60's but could be a trend that would put the butterfly at risk. Finalization and approval by Fish and Wildlife set for later this year. No anticipated effect to Stanislaus County.</p>	Jim Atherstone
10.	WOOD DUCK PROJECT REPORT	ACTIONS & REPORTER
	<p>Last year, 26 were monitored. This year an additional seven boxes were added. Twenty-seven are at Dos Rios and remaining six at the police range along the San Joaquin River. The boxes will be checked next week. Potential plan to make or buy additional boxes and put them up in various areas in the regional at the end of the year after the nesting season ends in May.</p>	Phil McKay
11.	VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR	ACTIONS & REPORTER
	<p>Nothing to report. Modesto Junior College and Stanislaus State did not generate individuals who were willing to volunteer.</p>	Michael Hart
12.	WOODWARD RESERVOIR FISH HABITAT PROJECT	ACTIONS & REPORTER
	<p>Checklist to complete the project has been revised since speaking to the general manager at SSJID. Topographic map is now available and illustrates the layout of the land underwater which details the deep area and barriers for upstream. Copies of the map will be available for the committee to mark potential locations for the fish habitats. The habitats must be inorganic. The box would be approximately four feet square with eight-inch perforated drainpipe intertwined where fish can hide. The habitat will eventually grow moss. Habitat boxes can be purchased although there is a significant cost saving if we build them. An ad hoc committee of approximately four members will need to be assembled. Possible members could be Bernard, Phil, Jim, Brian, and any other who interested in joining. The SSJID board approval will need to be acquired. Diego, representing Parks and Recreation, will be responsible to present the project with a detailed map marking the proposed areas to place the habitats to the SSJID board as an agenda action item. Reservoir biologist would be a good source to assist in deciding locations for potential spots to put the habitats. The locations are selected based on water temperature and depth and will need to be places upstream away from watercraft and where fishing is permitted.</p>	Jim Atherstone
13.	KNIGHTS FERRY KID FISHING DAY	ACTIONS & REPORTER
	<p>Will need to connect with the Army Corps on a day in March. The Tuolumne River Trust has fishing equipment. An alternative option would be to hold a fishing event at the Modesto Rec Fest Day in April. A pool could be purchased to hold the fish. This would be an inexpensive alternative. Will need attain a pool and fish. Could get fish from the hatchery and give away what is not caught.</p>	Tom Sexton
14.	ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD 2024	ACTIONS & REPORTER
	<p>The Fish and Wildlife Environmental Award 2023 was presented last year, and consent to once again present the award this year was given at the last meeting. There is a significant number of groups qualified to receive the award. Will need to assemble a subcommittee to evaluate potential groups. New groups to consider can be brought forward. There will be a possible revision to the set of questions or other criteria that evaluate the list of potential candidates. Groups do not need a long history, just to be active in Stanislaus County. Will discuss further at the next meeting.</p>	Phil McKay

15. STANISLAUS COUNT PHOTO CONTEST**ACTIONS &
REPORTER**

Initial phase would be to put contest out to as many groups as possible. Groups such as schools and photography enthusiast would be a place to begin. Per guidelines, pictures can be submitted to a Parks and Recreation email. County Parks personnel could judge, make a decision, and winners would be awarded a prize. Cannot give away monetary award but can give away ribbons or possible donations and the pictures would be posted on the internet. Possible focus could be on contestants who are youth as opposed to professional photographers or possible categories for judging to allow the younger or amateur contestants a chance of winning.

*Phil McKay***16. OTHER BUSINESS****ACTIONS &
REPORTER**

No plans to go back to Del Puerto at this time.

*Phil McKay***17. ADJOURNMENT & NEXT MEETING****ACTIONS &
REPORTER**

There being no further business, Ken Meidl motioned to adjourn the meeting and Tom Sexton seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.
The meeting was adjourned at 5:26 pm. The next regular meeting of the Fish and Wildlife Committee will be held on:

Phil McKay

Next Meeting: April 24, 2025, at 4 PM
Rooms H&I, Stanislaus Building
3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto, CA 95358

Prepared by: Phil McKay, Chair

Agendas can also be found online at subject to staff's ability to post prior to the meeting. Materials related to an item on this agenda submitted to the Commission after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection during normal business hours at the main office of the Department of Parks and Recreation, 3800 Cornucopia Way, Suite D, Modesto, CA 95358



STANISLAUS COUNTY
PARKS & RECREATION

Tera Chumley, Director
Phil McKay, Chair