



County of Yolo

PARKS AND RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

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PARKS, RECREATION AND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Summary of Minutes

September 14, 2009

Committee Members in Attendance: Robert Beggs, Andrew Fulks, Gerald Hartwig, Carolyn Hinshaw, Jennifer Henning, Kent Lang, Kirk Alexander, Josh Martinez

Members Absent: none

County Staff in Attendance: Warren Westrup, Dimitrios Georges, Laura Bibelheimer,

Others in Attendance Who Signed In: Garrick Chang, Marilyn Jasper, Dave Pratt, Bob Schneider.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Henning called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted as proposed.

Motion: Alexander. Second: Hartwig. Ayes: ALL

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Marilyn Jasper, representing several non-profit environmental groups, addressed the PRWAC about a developing proposal by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to allow antlerless deer hunting (including does, bucks, and fawns without spots) in Yolo County for Juvenile hunters. The area may encompass the Northwest part of Yolo County. Jasper felt that the data used by DFG to propose the antlerless hunt was flawed and urged the PRWAC to reject the change in the deer hunting policy if proposed by DFG (Yolo is currently part of Zone A and D4. More information: <http://dfg.ca.gov/publications/digest/2009-big-game/32-33.pdf>). Director Westrup advised Jasper that the PRWAC does not function as the Fish & Game Commission.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

The minutes of March 2009 were adopted.

Motion: Lang. Second: Hartwig. Ayes: ALL

Minutes for the May 2009 meeting were not prepared due to lack of a quorum (staff offered meeting notes only).

5. REGULAR AGENDA

5.1 Presentation by conservation group Putah Creek Trout introducing organization to the PRWAC and ongoing conservation efforts along Putah Creek by the group. Dr. Garrick Chang, representing Putah Creek Trout (PCT) made a PowerPoint presentation outlining the challenges to the trout populations of Putah Creek between Monticello Dam and Lake Solano (interdam reach). PCT is a 501-c-3 nonprofit organization concerned with the many challenges facing the creek and the trout including low stream flows, erosion, litter, invasive species, siltation, over and illegal fishing, and a lack of law enforcement due to a reduction of game warden's by the State. Dr. Chang advised that Putah Creek is one of the most heavily used and best trout streams of its kind in the state. Fish in the creek grow quickly, and some grow to become larger brood fish, which spawn naturally in the creek.

The creek is normally stocked with thousands of catchable rainbow trout by the DFG every spring. The planting of trout in Putah Creek was halted by DFG in early 2007 after a lawsuit by the Pacific Rivers Council and Center for Biological Diversity, represented by Stanford Law students (more information: <http://dfg.ca.gov/news/news08/08131.html>). No trout have been planted in Putah Creek since the spring of 2006. The lack of planting catchable size trout by the DFG (approx 8-10" and half a pound) has put additional importance on the fish that spawn naturally in the creek. More of the larger mature trout are being taken out of the creek by anglers, consequently reducing the number of trout that spawn in the creek.

Dr. Chang advised that PCT is working with the Solano County Water Agency (SCWA), and the DFG to designate Putah Creek as a *Heritage and Wild Trout Stream*. If approved, fishing on the creek from Monticello dam to the beginning of Lake Solano would require artificial lures only, barbless hooks, and allow no take of trout. Information on the DFG program: http://dfg.ca.gov/fish/Resources/WildTrout/WT_HeritageTProg.asp.

Information on the proposed fishing regulations: http://www.putahcreektrout.org/Zero_Limit.html and http://www.putahcreektrout.org/Zero_Limit_files/PutahregsFGCsubmitted.pdf.

The public comment period for the proposed regulations ends on November 11, 2009, and must be submitted to the DFG's Fish and Game Commission: <http://www.fgc.ca.gov/>. Dr. Chang requested that the PRWAC write a letter of support to the DFG supporting the legislation to designate Putah Creek as a Heritage and Wild Trout stream.

No action was taken by the PRWAC. Members requested additional information, and may consider the issue again in October or November if a meeting is held.

5.2 Discussion of Recreation options study by the Local Agency Formation Commission: *"Madison/Esparto/Capay Valley: Summary Review of Park and Recreation Options" (May 11, 2009)*

Director Westrup advised that the Local Agency Formation Commission's (LAFCO) Executive Officer Elizabeth Kemper (now retired) commissioned the study at the request of the various communities and the county Planning and Public Works Department. The reason for the study was to explore the *"possible options for provision of park and recreational services generally from the area of Madison to the Capay Valley"* (as described in the report). Yolo County Parks & Resources Department (P&R) provides regional recreational opportunities throughout the county and is included in the study mentioned above. Director Westrup advised that the discussion at the PRWAC meeting tonight was informational and that it isn't time to bring the item before the PRWAC for any kind of action. He said that P&R would keep the PRWAC apprised of ongoing developments on the issue.

The conclusion of the study prepared by LAFCO states that further discussions, surveys, and citizen involvement is needed to determine interest by the public, and if there is willingness to publicly finance the new services.

Additional information: <http://www.yolocounty.org/Index.aspx?page=188> (look for document under special studies)

5.3 Discussion of possible names for naming of Otis Ranch, and process for naming of county parks

Fulks recommended that the name for the 617-acre parcel be re-considered since the site may have never been formally named. Staff briefed the PRWAC on the process for naming county facilities (an electronic copy of the county administrative policy regarding the naming of county facilities was provided to the PRWAC the week before the meeting and copies were made available to the public the evening of 9-14). Georges suggested that since both Otis and Camp Haswell are adjacent to each other, the name change might apply to both. PRWAC requested that staff do research into the county archives to see if Otis ranch or Camp Haswell were ever formally named by the Board of

Supervisors and report back at the next PRWAC meeting for further consideration. Hartwig offered to discuss the history of the sites with locals up in the Capay Valley and report back to the PRWAC.

5.4 Discussion of naming new hiking trail at Otis Ranch built by Yolohiker volunteers in 2009. PRWAC discussed the possibility of naming the trail and tabled the item until the next PRWAC meeting in conjunction with further discussion of item 5.3.

Additional information: <http://www.yolohiker.org/>.

5.5 Discussion of proposal by Rumsey Band of Wintun Indian's request to Yolo County to abandon county road (CR) 41 and close access to the public. The Rumsey Band is proposing the road abandonment as a protective measure for the culturally significant sites located on their property. CR 41 crosses land owned by the Rumsey Band from the existing gate approximately one mile north of Cache Creek all the way to the Colusa County line. The road is not currently maintained by Yolo County. Maps of the proposed road location were provided by PPW and distributed to the PRWAC and the public at the meeting. An existing gate across the road is owned and controlled by Yolo County. Access is restricted primarily during the winter and the gate is locked.

Georges and Fulks briefed the PRWAC and the public on the process used by the Yolo County Planning and Public Works Department (PPW) when road abandonment is proposed. Recent road closure/abandonment requests have been proposed for county roads 16, 17, 40, 41, 53, 57, 80, 88, and 117.

Members of the PRWAC commented that the road is used by bird watchers, hikers, horseback riders, and is a historical access to a visually pleasing area and there is no public benefit to abandonment. Hartwig advised that the road is used by residents of the Rumsey area as an emergency access and the road should be left as is. He felt that the Rumsey Band should fence, post, and patrol their property as many of the landowners in the area already do. Fulks stated that the state Highway Code allows for the retention of public access rights to a road that has been abandoned. Specific wording is required on the signs that relieve the county of liability. Dave Pratt stated that the gate could be closed, and the right of way and public access could be preserved.

The PRWAC requested that staff prepare a draft letter recommending that CR 41 not be abandoned, closed only to general vehicular access, and the public access retained. The letter, if approved will be signed by Chair Henning and sent to PPW.

5.6 Presentation by staff of proposed grant application to the US Department of Transportation TIGER Discretionary Grants program to fund bridge replacement at County Road 40 over Cache Creek (near location of the "low water bridge"). Director Westrup advised that the goal of the grant application is to secure funding to replace the existing low water bridge over Cache Creek. The bridge is currently closed and has been condemned by the California Department of Transportation due to water scour problems under the footings. The proposed new bridge will be located near the existing bridge at a higher elevation. The grant source has lots of competition for the limited funds. He said that Parks & Resources is also exploring funding from the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

The proposed design will allow a single lane bridge to carry the weight of emergency vehicles, school buses serving the rafting concession operators, and equipment responding to fires on the South side of the creek. Original cost estimate was approximately \$5 million. Revised estimate is for \$1.5 million. The plan calls for the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to maintain the bridge through a use agreement with Yolo County. Rafting concessionaires are also involved and will contribute funds. BLM has offered to prepare the plans, specifications, and environmental documents.

The PRWAC moved to support the grant application and pursue the funds for the project.

Motion: Fulks. Second: Alexander. Ayes: ALL

5.7 Discussion of possible locations for PRWAC's meetings in 2010: Georges advised the PRWAC that the current public meeting location at the DESS building on the second Monday of the month will become more difficult to secure in 2010 due to continued conflicts with other users. Georges said that he looked into alternative locations for the PRWAC meetings: county's Baur Building and Norton Hall. Norton Hall on Cottonwood Street was approved as the preferred location, and the PRWAC meeting date was moved to the second Tuesday of the month for the calendar year 2010.

6. STAFF UPDATE (presented by Georges unless stated otherwise)

6.1 Cache Creek Regional Park (information was provided by Jen Santos, Assistant Park Planner):

6.1.1 Upper Cache Creek Site: Work started September 8, 2009 and expected to be completed in late October or early November 2009. The site will be closed during construction, including weekends. Improvements will include renovation of restrooms, parking lot access, and associated pathways to provide improved accessibility for disabled park users. Other work includes demolition of the existing water tanks, and installation of a new kiosk. Site may not reopen until spring because it is normally closed for the winter.

6.1.2 Campground improvements: Started September 10, 2009 and expected to be completed later this winter. Work includes replacement of the existing restrooms with prefabricated concrete units, and improved access for disabled park users. Portable toilets will be provided to the public during construction, and the public will be notified of the construction on the parks web site, by staff when reservations are made by phone, and verbally by the park host on site. No construction work on weekends.

6.1.3 Lower Cache Creek Site: Same construction work and schedule as upper site (6.1.1).

6.2 Putah Creek trail project: Approx 6,500 feet of new four to six foot walking trails have been opened up to the public at sites 1-4, including 1800 LF of 4 ft wide rock dust trails at sites 1, 3 and 4. New handicap accessible vault restrooms were approved by county building dept and opened to the public at site 1, 3 and 4. Staff is now working on creekside ecological study platforms, kiosks, educational panels, monument signs, and more habitat restoration at all the sites. Yolo County park field crews are installing picnic tables and benches this winter (2009).

6.3 Putah Creek primitive camping: Pilot program initiated on Memorial Day 2009 at site 1 and 4. Office staff that handle reservations advised that approx 50 campers have used the sites on weekends to date. Site 1 is most popular. Income is approx \$150 since beginning of the program.

6.4 Prescribed burns at Correl-Rogers Pond: Kevin Schwartz, County Resource Specialist coordinated with the local RCD and the Willow Oak Fire District in late July 2009 to conduct a prescribed burn. The project helped to train a number of fire cadets from local fire districts and prepare the site for future habitat restoration projects.

6.5 Knights Landing Boat Launch facility renovation: Parks & Resources has hired BlueWater Design Group to prepare plans and specifications to renovate the boat ramp and associated facilities. Ten firms submitted qualification packets. BlueWater was approved as the most qualified, and was highly recommended by their past public agency customers. BlueWater was also approved by the Department of Boating and Waterways. Renovation of the site will include reconfiguration and re-paving of the parking lot, installation of new boarding floats, enhanced and new utilities, new permanent restrooms, a fish cleaning station, removal of navigation obstructions in the slough, and bank protection along the shore of Sycamore Slough. Design and construction is expected to be a lengthy process due to unknown future river water levels.

6.6 Other parks, recreation, or wildlife related matters: Coastal clean up day is on September 19 at various sites around the county (Cache Creek Conservancy, Putah Creek, and Clarksburg). Director Westrup advised that the new restroom and kitchen at the Gibson Museum was dedicated last month. Rotary contributed funds and helped provide recycled construction materials for the project. The improvements are a nice addition to the grounds, and it's hoped that the improvements will help increase revenue at the museum.

7. COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS/ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA'S

Fulks advised that YoloHiker will be performing more trail work at Otis Ranch later this year after the weather cools.

Beggs reported that the State has re-imbursed the Cache Creek Conservancy (CCC) for the renovation work out at their facility. He said that there is a clean up effort along Cache Creek near the CCC facility on September 19 as part of the coastal clean up day.

Hartwig advised that he visited with the California DFG Region 3 staff and discussed how they will manage their lands located in Napa County that abut to private property on the Yolo County side. He said that DFG staff is extremely shorthanded and budgets are very tight. DFG will establish buffer zones and post them to warn users where the private property is located.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Henning at 8:47 PM. The next regular meeting of the PRWAC was tentatively scheduled for **Monday**, October 12, 2009.

Respectfully submitted by,
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