

Kern County Wildlife Resources Commission

Kern County Parks and Recreation Department
Administration Office
2820 M Street
Bakersfield CA 93301

July 13, 2016
6:00 P.M.

MINUTES

The Kern County Wildlife Resources Commission met on Wednesday, July 13, 2016. Chairman Bakman presided. Commissioner Stenson was absent.

Present: Dave Freeland, District 1; Bob Bakman, District II; Dave McArthur, District III; William Cooper, District V; Fred Kinoshita, at Large and Tom Stenson, at Large.

Advisors: Robert Lerude, Kern County Parks and Recreation Department.

Others: There were 6 others present.

NOTE: Ba, Co, Fr, Ki, Mc, and St are abbreviations for Commissioners Bakman, Cooper, Freeland, Kinoshita, McArthur, and Stenson. As an example, St-Ba denotes Commissioner Stenson made a motion and Commissioner Bakman seconded the motion.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. **Flag Salute**

2. **Approval of the Minutes of April 13, 2016**

Co-Mc motion to approve the minutes of April 13, 2016. All ayes, motion carried.

3. **Public Presentations**

None.

4. **Correspondence – Receive and File**

Mc-Co motion to receive and file all correspondence. All ayes, motion carried.

5. **New Business**

- a. The Commissioners welcomed David Freeland as a returning Commissioner for District I. We are very pleased to have him return.

- b. A funding request from Andrew Halverson, California Department of Fish and Wildlife for a bedded down deer decoy in the amount of \$1,846.60 was discussed. Mr. Halvorson stated that it would be a very valuable tool for catching out of season hunters. Other areas have used them with great success.

Co-Mc motion to approve. All ayes, motion carried.

- c. A funding request from Benjamin Lewis, California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the annual Women's Pheasant Hunt in the amount of \$825.00 was discussed. Mr. Lewis stated the hunt would be in the same location as in past years on the Stockdale Ranch. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife will pay a matching amount.

Fr-Ki motion to approve. All ayes, motion carried.

- d. A funding request from Benjamin Lewis, California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the annual Family Pheasant Hunt in the amount of \$1,650.00 was discussed. Mr. Lewis stated the hunt would also be in the same location as in past years on the Stockdale Ranch. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife will pay a matching amount.

Fr-Ki motion to approve. All ayes, motion carried.

- e. A funding request from Jenna Stanek, Southern Sierra Research Station for a camera, battery pack, & extendable pole to view nesting Flammulated Owls in the amount of \$995.00 was discussed. Ms. Stanek stated that the Southern Sierra Research Station is a small non-profit from Weldon. Flammulated Owls are very small owls, adults are only about 6 inches tall. They are secondary cavity nesters and usually will use the former nest of woodpeckers or flying squirrels. The Research Station is studying their nesting and breeding habits. The optimal time for the study is between the last week of June and the first week of July. Currently the Research Station has only 1 modified endoscope camera. Jenna works with Wendy Runnels at the Forest Service, who receives the data for the Greenhorn and Breckinridge mountain areas. The Research Station was started in 2000 and was previously known as the Kern River Research Center. That research center was established in the 1990's. All of the studies are done in the Sequoia National Forest in an approximate 11 mile area, as the crow flies.

Co-Mc motion to approve. All ayes, motion carried.

6. Advisory Report

Ben Lewis gave a report on the bird counts in Ridgecrest. They counted approximately 60 each, quail and chukkar. It is a little below average but better than the last few years. He stated that the chukkar reproduction rates are up this year. Due to increased rain fall this past year, the bear issues are not as bad as last year. It has been a very dry year again. They have been doing surveys on bats in the Painted Rock and Chimineas Ranch areas in Eastern Kern County.

The Kern County biologist has been on maternity leave but should be returning soon. The biologist from Tulare County has been filling in during her absence.

Bill Asserton reported that the under ocean noise caused by boat activity and in particular sonar activity, has been greatly effecting the ocean ecosystem. Whale and dolphin migration is being disrupted. This is a very wide spread problem because of the amount of ocean traffic. Different organizations have been working with the Chief of Naval Operations to try to work thru this issue.

Tim Holloway reported that there was a good turnout for the trout fest this year in Kernville. He went to Hot Creek in June for their trout fest. The kids caught mostly brown and rainbow trout. There will be another kid's fishing fest in Mammoth soon. He stated their vehicles were maintained and ready for the State Commissioners meeting in Bakersfield. The budget has been approved, they hope to use some of the money for truck maintenance. The bat survey is going to happen soon.

Andrew Halverson reported that they are staying busy. They have been short staffed. They have 2 staff members assigned to the various marijuana growers. Mr. Fox from the State Fish and Wildlife met with them in Bakersfield 2 weeks ago. They received some Pittman-Robertson Act money for a deer hunt. The 10% tax on ammunition goes toward habitat efforts then some of the money can be used to buy bullets.

7. Staff Report

Eric Covington from Wildlife Services reported to Director Lerude that 26 raccoons and 42 skunks had been recently eradicated from BVARA. The department used to relocate the animals but it was later discovered that the relocated animals spread disease to the native animals.

The fishing should improve this year because of more rain and increased snow pack.

The County budget is not good. Some County departments are implementing layoffs even though there are vacant funded positions.

We are looking at the OHV program. Funding come through the Parks & Recreation Commission then goes to the Board of Supervisors for approval. We are only 1 of 2 counties that are funded thru green sticker funds, Kern and San Luis Obispo. There is a hearing next Tuesday to discuss restructuring.

We need to decide if the Wildlife Resources Commission will do a field trip this year. Last year we were going to take a field trip to Chimineas Ranch near Cuyama but it didn't work out.

Director Lerude introduced Bret Haney from General Services. There is discussion in the County that the Parks Department may merge with General Services.

8. Commission Comments

Commissioner Freeland lives in Squirrel Valley. About 60 of his neighbors lost their homes in the recent fire.

Commissioner Kinoshita has been very concerned about the Erskine Creek and Squirrel Valley fires.

The drought and pine bark beetles have contributed to approximately one million dead pine trees in our local forest. The density in the National Forest is much higher than it was several years ago. There is no way to harvest the dead trees. The fir and cedar trees have greatly multiplied.

Director Lerude mentioned that we have not had the problem as much with pine trees in Greenhorn Mountain Park and Tehachapi Mountain Park like surrounding areas have because we have thinned out most of the dead trees.

The duck reproduction numbers are up a great deal this year.

Commissioner Bakman reported that the California Wildlife Conservation grants for Walker Basin were approximately \$214,000. The Kern National Refuge has invested quite a bit of money into wildlife conservation.

Ben Lewis and Commissioner Stenson volunteered to work on coordinating a field trip to Chimineas Ranch in October.

9. Date and Location of Next Meeting – October 12, 2016

10. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.