California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision Project

Blue Ribbon Citizen Commission and Stakeholder Advisory Group
October 19, 2011 Meeting Notes

October 24, 2011

1. Welcome, Introductions and Opening Remarks

2. Public Comment

- Utilize California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) leadership in communicating/supporting employee ideas
- Use of term "customer" may not be appropriate
- Concerns about administrator for Office of Spill Prevention and Response not having full authority over funding and DFG personnel.

3. Dialogue about Potential Recommendations for Draft Interim Strategic Vision

During meeting today, three questions: Are there any themes common to all or multiple working groups? Are there any goals that seem to be conflicting within, between, or among working groups that should be considered together? Are there any goal or problem statements that you "can't live with" as part of a strategic vision, keeping in mind that ultimately there will be both short-term and long-term aspects to the strategic vision?

Four items that Carol suggested yesterday that we can agree apply to everything we discuss: Funding, staffing, etc.

Note that during the discussion, references to specific goals will be identified first by the working group acronym and then the goal number in the table for that working group. Acronyms for the working group names are:

Communication, Education and Outreach	CEO
Governance and Mission	GM
Natural Resource Stewardship	NRS
Regulatory and Permitting	RP
Science	Sci
Sustainable Financing	SF

Partnerships

Suggestion that CEO4 does not fit under partnerships. Group concurs in general with what the 10/18 group developed. Partnerships are more formally recognized as such (i.e., memorandum of understanding, memorandum of agreement), with desire to achieve common goals.

Broadly Informed and Transparent Decision-Making

Perhaps missing from yesterday's notes is the idea of trust. SF6? Lack of trust of DFG or the decision-making process? What is the problem? Stakeholders not trusting DFG or the decision-making process is a symptom, not the problem. For trust issue: See GM5 and 6; SCi10 (table 2); and SF6.

Caution in requesting "science-based" decisions, since sometimes the science does not exist to answer questions. Sometimes decisions have to be made with best professional judgment. How to incorporate best

available science rather than… See NRS4 – sub-bullet related to use of science. Use "informed by best available science" and "adaptive management" concepts.

Potential qualities of DFG desired: Transparent, flexible, outgoing, open, trust, etc.

Potential goal (in concept; language needs work): Broadly informed and transparent decision-making informed by place-based, best available science, traditional ecological knowledge, and/or adaptive management.

Have we defined traditional knowledge? Information and knowledge passed on from one generation to the next. A member of the Karuk Tribe shared a document with a definition of traditional ecological knowledge, posted to website. Also sometimes referred to as natural history or empirical knowledge – what you observe around you. Is there a time frame associated with concept? Is four or five generations of a ranching family sufficient for traditional ecological knowledge?

Transparency in decisions is key. What is the balance among various factors that came into play in the decision-making?

Integrated Resource Management (IRM) or Cooperative Resource Management

IRM is one method for achieving the mission and goals of DFG. The language for NRS4 is not meant to be exclusive of other methods, and is intended to focus on organizational structures outside DFG: "structures among resource management agencies and organizations to…"

Cross-agency Alignment

Want to be sure we capture idea of aligning the actions of various resource management agencies. For example, creating a matrix that identifies the roles and responsibilities of various managing agencies – allows a gap analysis. Who is doing what and identify gaps or redundancies? How to avoid redundancy and conflict among agency requirements? Align interagency resource planning policies and regulations for aquatic and terrestrial…. (see NRS4 for specific language). Is this an emerging common theme?

Enforcement/Compliance

Want to recognize that employee retention is not just a problem with wardens/enforcement division. Also applies to scientists, etc. Is low pay a symptom rather than a problem? Real problem under enforcement perhaps fish and wildlife populations adversely affected by illegal activities? Enforcement can also be conducted by tribes. Compliance data informs us in a variety of ways. Enforcement is one way to achieve compliance (goal?).

Staff Development

Add employee recruitment and retention, in addition to yesterday's notes. Close to 25% of DFG employees are intermittent, which can be eliminated at a moment's notice. Intermittent traditionally used for seasonal positions; now used more widely. Issues include turnover, inconsistent customer service, inadequate staffing, increased training and recruitment costs, loss of institutional knowledge.

Perhaps inconsistent staffing? Staff development perhaps not best way to describe this category. Recruitment and retention? Institutional capacity? Sci2 and 5 (table 2) – need to rebuild staff capability. Lack of stability, similar to late 70s and early 80s. Culture of younger generation embraces career mobility; expectation of longevity may be outdated. To build organizational resiliency, add redundancy, cross-training, etc. to help

reduce the concern. Succession planning. Stability at the organizational level (resilience). Also includes retaining institutional knowledge.

Fish and Game Code

Nothing new to add to yesterday's notes and conversation.

Definition of Success/Defining and Supporting Success

NRS3 – could those become a list of attributes for success? SF notes at top – better articulate programmatic outcomes, deliverables and measures of success. Want to be careful about making DFG completely responsible for some of those attributes since some are out of its control (i.e., climate change). Sci7 (table 2) – enhance technology, measurable.

Want to be sure have captured improving fiscal accountability, better account for the revenues DFG receives.

Mandates

Outside the authority of DFG. Mandates come from legislature, governor, etc. DFG cannot say which mandates are outdated and should be eliminated or amended without implications for relationship with legislature. Can this process (CFWSV) identify which mandates are outdated or a list of criteria for determining which mandates are not appropriate for DFG (i.e., is it directly related to the stated mission). Is the potential recommendation for code review sufficient to identify obsolete or outdated mandates? What is the process now for addressing? Legislature, regulation through California Fish and Game Commission (F&GC), DFG regulations, executive orders, federal laws. Often a special interest that has supported. Perhaps identify an improved process through CFWSV; while this planning process offers an opportunity to identify some of these outdated or obsolete mandates, there is not a process in place for future assessments.

Potential recommended action: Evaluate mandates by looking at the mission statement of DFG to see if those mandates fit within the mission, and develop criteria to evaluate funded/unfunded/underfunded, ineffective or obsolete mandates.

Are mandates in alignment with DFG's mission – perhaps a goal?

Conflicting Goals

Sci2 (table 2) – expand science capacity. From the NRS original table – establish a research unit within DFG. Goals of enhanced science capacity, use of best readily available science, and capturing outside research are not in conflict.

Suggestion is that scientific capacity is not one extreme or the other, but somewhere along a spectrum. There are some things that make sense to keep within DFG and others make more sense to be "purchased" from outside. What science exists within DFG now – see report from DFG posted to vision website. Findings of previous reports stated that DFG lacked some scientific capacity; science working group table addresses. As cost-effectively as possible bring best available science to decisions and management. Is there a distinction between science and research? Being used interchangeably, when different. Don't want to put DFG in position of either/or when they might do some research, collecting data, etc. and in other instances purchase.

How define research, how define science for this process? Suggest possibly using a more encompassing definition of science.

To the extent that we can identify vision, will help attract attention and funding. At the moment, funding for science/research somewhat static, yet work being done does not necessarily build on the work being done by others.

Sci9 (table 2): Ensure separation between science and policy. Really want to insulate the policy folks from the science gathering process. Conflicts with GM10 example of how to achieve - requires F&GC to set DFG's goals and policies, hire DFG director, etc. Puts F&GC in the driver's seat for decisions – F&GC does not have the staff and expertise to do this work. Why not give those funds and staffing to DFG? GM7 is perhaps better example of this conflict. If structure and how F&GC members are chosen was different, then perhaps could revisit this concept; at moment this goal is a game-stopper.

Perhaps an alternate way of stating Sci9 (table2): Insulating mechanism to remove the political influence and pressure on the decision-making process from the methods used in scientific studies and the interpretation of those studies.

Can't Live With Goals

GM7 is a "can't live with" for several folks. Clarification that some of this authority already exists – F&GC already has some policy-setting authority over DFG, but also another section of code that limits that authority. May be true, but some don't want that expanding to absolute authority over DFG.

RP7: Not really a goal, more a method.

Sci11 (table 2): Concern that this is a slippery slope. Decision-making needs to be based on biological /physical science, not social sciences (economics, etc.). This was discussed yesterday under GM4, where "biological" was suggested to be removed from the goal. Perhaps social scientists can bring another perspective, especially since we manage people's use of resources not the resources themselves.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Follow up, Staff Direction, Future Meetings

Please send to Melissa as soon as possible, but no later than Monday any additional "can't live with" or conflicting goals in the six tables.

6. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 5:39 p.m.