

STAFF SUMMARY FOR APRIL 15-16, 2020

3. Executive Director's Report**Today's Item****Information** **Action**

Receive the executive director's report, including response to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff recruitment, service-based budgeting, and 150th anniversary.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background*****COVID-19 Pandemic Response***

During the early part of March as global recognition of the pandemic reached California, staff experienced constant change with our evolving understanding and knowledge about the virus; the impact on workload was significant and ability to focus on normal tasks put to the test. Within a week of Governor Newsom's March 19 stay at home order, nine of FGC's eleven staff (including our Sea Grant contractor and legal counsel) were teleworking under agreements that outline expectations for work products and communication. Staff continues to be available (email is best) during normal business hours (8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.), following guidelines from the public health agencies. Two staff who live nearby regularly visit the office to provide support to the team. Anywhere from a few days to a few weeks prior to the executive order, three new staff all began working for the Commission, making onboarding and training particularly challenging. To date, no staff or their co-habitants have reported coronavirus-related illnesses, for which we are grateful.

While the transition has not been without its bumps, as two meetings in recent weeks illustrated, staff continues to show incredible dedication to the mission of the organization through tremendous efforts to be flexible and adapt to the unprecedented circumstances, including committing numerous nights and weekends, in an effort to keep the work of the Commission advancing. Given the externally-facing nature of our organization, staff is investigating a full suite of technological possibilities to ensure a stable and secure method for the level of public engagement our commissioners and stakeholders have come to expect. Staff appreciates the broad support it has received during this particularly difficult time, including from our colleagues at DFW.

Staffing and Recruitment

Since the last FGC meeting, significant staff time has been dedicated to recruiting, interviewing, and selecting candidates to fill several vacancies at FGC. The hiring efforts have paid off, and by the end of Apr 2020 will have resulted in rebuilding FGC staff to fill all current positions with outstanding new team members.

Deputy Executive Director. Rachel Ballanti joined FGC in Mar 2020 as the deputy executive director where she focuses on implementing administrative priorities and advising the executive director on resolving administrative issues, aiding in strategic planning, overall FGC meeting preparation, and directing the activities of a professional staff. Prior to joining FGC, Rachel served as a section chief and program manager for the California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) Financial Assistance Branch. Previously, she held several positions at

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DWR and the California Water Commission, including assistant executive officer and acting executive officer.

Staff Services Analyst: Cynthia McKeith began in Mar 2020 and is quickly making an impact on our work, through a variety of analytical, administrative, consultative, and executive-level support duties. Cynthia joins us from the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, performing similar duties, and is excited to put her talents toward the goals of FGC. Cynthia's prior experience includes administrative support at the California Air Resources Board and many years as an account administrator in the banking industry.

Regulatory Analyst: After a robust recruiting effort, including two rounds of interviews, staff is pleased to announce that Jennifer Greaves will join FGC as our new regulatory analyst. She comes to us from the California Department of Social Services, Research Services Branch, where she works with California's counties on gathering and analyzing social services data. Her first day will be Apr 27.

Service-Based Budgeting

As directed by the legislature, DFW has embarked on a comprehensive review of its budget from a services delivery standpoint. Service-based budgeting (SBB) is a budgeting approach that identifies what specific tasks and personnel are needed to accomplish the organization's mission; the approach is task-based, labor-focused, and organized by services provided to the public.

Because FGC's budget is embedded in DFW's, FGC staff is assisting in the SBB effort. The work is being done in annual phases. Last year, staff spent significant time gathering data for two areas of FGC workload, *mission-level* and *current state*, to help determine the gaps between the two state of being. Currently, staff is compiling its time estimations for the annual *current state* data analysis for 2020-21. Data gathered and analyzed through the SBB process will be used to inform future annual budget preparations, beginning in 2021. The full SBB review report is due to the legislature in 2021.

Has it Really Been 150 Years?

On Apr 2, FGC reached a significant milestone in its history as it marked 150 years since the California Board of Fish Commissioners, the first iteration of the organization, was established. (By the way, that makes it our sesquicentennial, as well as a special milestone for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, which also originated from the board.) Staff has long been preparing for what was to be a variety of activities to celebrate this special year in the organization's history. Alas, the circumstances of the global pandemic have redirected our attention.

In the midst of the current worldwide crisis, it's humbling to even begin thinking about from where this organization has come and how we want to shape its next 150 years. While our attention is necessarily first and foremost focused on health and safety, we are confident that Californians—and their state government, including the Commission—will emerge stronger and more flexible. When we do reach the other side, we can begin planning how we can do even better in the years to come. We're all in this together.

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Significant Public Comments (N/A)

Recommendation (N/A)

Exhibits

1. [Staff Report on Staff Time Allocation and Activities](#), dated April 12, 2020

Motion/Direction (N/A)

California Fish and Game Commission
Staff Report on Staff Time Allocation and Activities

April 12, 2020

Commission staff time is a tangible and invaluable asset. Especially since the Commission's staff is so small, where and how staff members spend their time is important. This report identifies where Commission staff allocated time to general activity categories and to specific activities during February and March 2020. The general allocation table summarizes time across all staff classifications, though some classifications require a greater emphasis on certain task categories than others. For example, advisors can spend 25% or more of their time on special projects due to committee project assignments, while regulatory analysts spend up to 70% of their time on regulatory program tasks.

In this reporting period, time increases in the administration category was due to recruiting, onboarding and training of new staff. Conversely, the percentage of staff time in unfilled positions fell. With the arrival of a new regulatory analyst at the end of April, we will have existing positions filled, with only the part-time seasonal clerk remaining vacant. While time-consuming, good recruiting practices resulting in quality staff members is one of the best things we can do as an organization.

As noted in the staff summary and the table below, staff departures resulted in vacancies in approximately one quarter of our positions. With a small staff, even one departure has a tremendous impact on staff workload, so swiftly refilling positions is a high priority.

General Allocation

Task Category	February Staff Time	March Staff Time
Regulatory Program	12%	11%
Non-Regulatory Program	3%	1%
Commission/Committee Meetings	27%	22%
Legal Matters	5%	4%
External Affairs	6%	5%
Special Projects	7%	9%
Administration	15%	28%
Leave Time	10%	12%
Unfilled Positions	27%	15%
Total Staff Time ¹	112%	107%

¹ Total staff time is greater than 100% due to overtime

Activities for February 2020

- Prepared for and conducted one publicly noticed meeting (Feb 21 Commission)
- Began preparations for two publicly noticed meetings (Mar 5 Wildlife Resources Committee, Mar 17 Marine Resources Committee)
- Conducted interviews for the staff services analyst position
- Advertised and recruited for the regulatory analyst position
- Began onboarding new Sea Grant State Fellow
- Conducted bullfrog stakeholder meeting
- Coordinated and participated in falconry demonstration conducted by California Hawking Club
- Participated in Hunting and Conservation Coalition meeting
- Participated in Plastic Pollution Steering Committee meeting
- Participated in the 2020 California Department of Fish and Wildlife Science Symposium
- Participated in Red Abalone Fishery Management Plan Project Team and Administrative Team meetings

Activities for March 2020

- Conducted three publicly noticed meetings (Mar 5 Wildlife Resources Committee, Mar 17 Marine Resources Committee, Mar 23 Commission)
- Began preparations for one publicly noticed meeting (April 15-16 Commission)
- Began onboarding new deputy executive director and new staff services analyst
- Conducted interviews for the regulatory analyst position
- Continued onboarding Sea Grant State Fellow
- Received training on next round of annual service-based budgeting exercise
- Began participating in daily COVID-19 taskforce calls with CA Natural Resources Agency
- Responded to requests from the CA Natural Resources Agency for data and information related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Participated in Tribal Marine Watchmen Pilot Planning Meeting
- Participated in chronic wasting disease taskforce calls
- Participated in Red Abalone Fishery Management Plan Project Team and Administrative Team meetings
- Participated in Annual Fisheries Forum at State Capitol
- Celebrated the impending arrival of Baby Castleton!

General Allocation Categories with Sample Tasks

Regulatory Program

- Coordination meetings with DFW to develop timetables and notices
- Prepare and file notices, re-notices, and initial/final statements of reasons
- Prepare administrative records
- Track and respond to public comments
- Consult, research and respond to inquiries from the Office of Administrative Law

Non-Regulatory Program

- DFW partnership, including jointly developing management plans and concepts
- Process and analyze non-regulatory requests
- Develop, review and amend Commission policies
- Research and review adaptive management practices
- Review and process California Endangered Species Act petitions

Commission/Committee Meetings and Support

- Research and compile subject-specific information
- Review and develop policies
- Develop and distribute meeting agendas and materials
- Agenda and debrief meetings
- Prepare meeting summaries, audio files and voting records
- Research and secure meeting venues
- Develop and distribute after-meeting memos/letters
- Make travel arrangements for staff and commissioners
- Conduct onsite meeting management
- Process submitted meeting materials
- Provide commissioner support (expense claims, office hours, etc.)
- Process and analyze regulatory petitions

Legal Matters

- Public Records Act requests
- Process appeals and accusations
- Process requests for permit transfers
- Process kelp and state water bottom leases
- Litigation
- Prepare administrative records

External Affairs

- Engage and educate legislators, monitor legislation
- Maintain state, federal and tribal government relations
- Correspondence
- Respond to public inquiries
- Website maintenance

Special Projects

- Coastal Fishing Communities
- Fisheries Bycatch Workgroup
- Streamline routine regulatory actions
- Strategic planning
- Aquaculture best management practices

- Website accessibility issues

Administration

- Staff training and development
- Purchases and payments
- Contract management
- Personnel management

Leave Time

- Holidays
- Sick leave
- Vacation or annual leave

- Service-based budgeting

- Budget development and tracking
- Health and safety oversight
- Internal processes and procedures
- Document archival

- Jury duty
- Bereavement