

## STAFF SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 11-12, 2019

**12. DEPARTMENT INFORMATIONAL ITEMS (WILDLIFE AND INLAND FISHERIES)****Today's Item****Information** **Action** 

This is a standing agenda item to receive and discuss informational updates from DFW.

- (A) Director's report
- (B) Law Enforcement Division
- (C) Wildlife and Fisheries Division and Ecosystem Conservation Division
  - I. Inland salmon 2019 season update and water flow
  - II. Update on Wildlife Waystation closure transition (Exhibit C1)

**Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)****Background**

Verbal reports on items of interest since the last FGC meeting are expected at the meeting for items (A) through (C). DFW news releases of potential interest are provided as exhibits B1 and C1.

**Significant Public Comments (N/A)****Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

- B1. [DFW news release: Wildlife Officers Shut Down Illegal Cannabis Grows on CDFW Property, dated Nov 15, 2019](#)
- C1. [DFW news release: New Wildlife Care Fund Established for Animals at Wildlife Waystation, dated Nov 25, 2019](#)

**Motion/Direction (N/A)**



## Wildlife Officers Shut Down Illegal Cannabis Grows on CDFW Property

November 15, 2019

*Trash, poached deer and numerous environmental violations discovered*

In October, wildlife officers at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) shut down several illegal cannabis grows in Kern and Tehama counties. The properties are owned by CDFW and set aside as protected wildlife habitat.

Support for the different missions was provided by several entities, including the California Department of Justice, the National Guard, the Kern County Sheriff's Office and the Tehama County Sheriff's Office.

In Kern County, wildlife officers eradicated nearly 10,000 illegal cannabis plants. One grow was discovered on the [Allensworth Ecological Reserve](#) with approximately 509 plants. Four subjects were arrested for felony cultivation, conspiracy, possession of methamphetamine, possession of a stolen firearm and numerous environmental violations. During the course of

that investigation, officers located and eradicated another two plots adjacent to the ecological reserve with another 6,799 plants.

A third illegal grow site was discovered on CDFW land in western Kern County. Approximately 2,270 plants were eradicated and six search warrants were served all within a quarter mile of each other. There were no suspects at the locations.

“Sadly, discovering thousands of illegal plants on CDFW property demonstrates the extent those involved in illegal cultivation will go to grow their product,” said David Bess, CDFW Deputy Director and Chief of the Law Enforcement Division. “Those individuals engaged in this egregious behavior have no respect for the unique species of plants and wildlife that depend on these protected areas to live and thrive.”

In Tehama County, an illegal grow was discovered along Antelope Creek in the **Tehama Wildlife Area**. Approximately 2,500 fully budded plants were eradicated and nearly 250 lbs. of processed cannabis was seized. Evidence of a poached deer was also discovered. No suspects were onsite or arrested. Each property contained numerous environmental violations including litter, pollution, habitat destruction, illegal water diversions, alteration of a streambed, sediment discharge and other serious environmental crimes.

All these illegal cannabis grows were located in counties with sensitive wildlife habitat which are home to several important species of plants, birds, mammals and fish found nowhere else in the world.

CDFW encourages the public to report illegal cannabis cultivation and environmental crimes such as water pollution, water diversions and poaching to the CalTIP hotline by calling (888) 334-2258 or texting information to “TIP411” (847411).

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## **New Wildlife Care Fund Established for Animals at Wildlife Waystation**

November 25, 2019

After 40 years of caring for abandoned and surrendered exotic and domestic animals in Southern California, the Wildlife Waystation closed its doors earlier this year.

With the aid of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), nearly half of the 500 animals at the Waystation have found homes at other sanctuaries, including grizzly bears, black bears, African lions, tigers, bison, hyenas, primates, exotic small cats, birds, reptiles and horses.

But the remaining animals – including 39 chimpanzees that will need to be kept together in a number of family units – are in critical need of help. Thanks to a partnership with the Santa Monica-based non-profit Seventh Generation Advisors (SGA), a new fund has been established to accept tax-deductible donations from members of the public who would like to contribute to the costs for vital veterinary care, feeding and housing for the wild animals that are still at the Wildlife Waystation.

CDFW assumed oversight of the care and placement of the wild animals on-site when Wildlife Waystation's board of directors voluntarily surrendered its restricted species permits in August 2019. CDFW and Los Angeles County, in coordination with remaining Wildlife Waystation staff and board members, are collaborating to rehome the animals and ensure that they are being properly cared for in the interim.

However, there are particular challenges for about five dozen magnificent animals that require very specific handling. In some cases, specialized sanctuaries have agreed to take the animals, but will need time to build additional enclosures. The animals may remain at the Waystation for many months until those facilities are ready.

“Many members of the public have indicated they would like to commit specifically to the animals who are still waiting for permanent homes,” said Wildlife Waystation board member Kate Thompson. “We are grateful for SGA’s expertise in receiving and managing public donations, and we hope that their involvement will help ensure that the animals’ transition goes smoothly and they receive the resources they need without delay.”

CDFW, SGA and the Wildlife Waystation board would like to recognize the dedication of existing Wildlife Waystation staff, who have developed relationships with the animals over the decades and have continued to report to work since the permits were surrendered in August.

“These are animals that are used to being around humans to some degree, and that continuity of care is key to their safety and comfort,” said Ed Pert, CDFW’s South Coast Region Manager. “There is definitely no shortage of concern for their welfare, but until now, we lacked the ability to meet the growing public desire to provide financial support for these animals. With SGA’s participation, each entity can focus on the role for which they’re best suited, and donors can be confident that their contributions will be earmarked for the direct care of the animals.”

“We are pleased to help by establishing this special Wildlife Rescue Fund and providing services at no cost to the teams that are protecting these animals and ensuring their care and wellbeing in their new homes,” said Terry Tamminen, SGA President.

SGA, Wildlife Waystation and CDFW are coordinating closely to identify and meet the animals’ most pressing needs and to approve all expenditures from the new Wildlife Rescue Fund. Seventh Generation Advisors is a 501c3 non-profit corporation (Tax ID: 20-8771636). Donations are tax-deductible to the extent provided by state and federal law and no goods or services will be provided to donors in return for contributions.

**More information about the chimps at Wildlife Waystation** can be found on SGA’s website. If you would like to make a donation toward the care of Wildlife Waystation animals, please visit <https://7thgenerationadvisors.org> or email SGA Programs Director Kristina Haddad at [kristina@sgadvisors.org](mailto:kristina@sgadvisors.org).

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