

SAN BENITO COUNTY FISH & GAME ADVISORY COMMISSION

Commissioners:

***Gregg Zanella, (Vice-Chairman), David Castro Bruce, Tom Nino, Tim Scagliotti,
Robert Earl Groeling, Robert Scagliotti, Scott Adessa, Marty Martinez***

MINUTES MONDAY APRIL 26, 2021 6:00 P.M.

San Benito County Administration Building
Board of Supervisors Chambers
481 Fourth Street, Hollister, California

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Vice-Chairman Gregg Zanella in the San Benito County Board of Supervisors Chambers, 481 Fourth Street, Hollister, California.

6:00 P.M. CALL TO ORDER

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Lead by Vice-Chairman Gregg Zanella.
2. **ROLL CALL.** Commissioners T. Scagliotti, Adessa, Castro, R. Scagliotti, Nino, Martinez, Zanella, and Groeling were present.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** There were no comments from the public.

REGULAR AGENDA

4. **NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF NEW CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN:**
Motion to elect Gregg Zanella as Chairman by Commissioner Groeling and seconded by Commissioner Nino. (8/0 vote)

Motion to elect Robert Scagliotti as Vice-Chairman by Commissioner Nino and seconded by Commissioner Zanella. (8/0 vote)
5. **APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 27, 2020 REGULAR MEETING:**
Motion by Commissioner Scagliotti and seconded by Commissioner Zanella to approve the minutes as presented. (8/0 vote)
6. **BUDGET REPORT:**
The Clerk of the Board provided the final balance from the Final Budget Report.

7. **DISCUSSION OF ZEBRA MUSSELS AT RIDGEMARK:**

Commissioner Martinez gave information regarding the zebra mussels at Ridgemark. He suggested the water should be tested to make sure the zebra mussels are there and then a discussion can be had with the property owner on how to treat it.

Commissioner Zanella asked since it is private property, why is it their concern.

Management Analyst Graciela Rodriguez provided background information on the history and status of the San Justo Reservoir and what is needed to eradicate the Zebra Mussels from both the reservoir and the pump at Ridgemark.

Commissioner Martinez asked how the reservoir is monitored.

Ms. Rodriguez explained that the reservoir has been closed to the public so that there is no public contact with the zebra mussel. She also provided updates from the Bureau of Reclamation, San Benito County Water District and the office of Congressman Panetta.

Commissioner Nino asked what happens in 2035 when the agreement with the federal government ends. Does the federal government take back possession of the reservoir and not reopen it for recreation, because the reservoir is a great asset to the community.

Commissioner Martinez asked what the timeline is for funding to be available to eradicate the zebra mussels from the reservoir.

Ms. Rodriguez explained it is an ongoing process and the office of Congressman Panetta will be providing information soon.

Commissioner Zanella asked if the eradication would also include the zebra mussels at Ridgemark.

Ms. Rodriguez stated it would include Ridgemark because the San Benito County Water District doesn't want a re-infestation.

8. **DISCUSSION OF FUNDING AN OPERATION ON "TAKING OUT THE TRASH" USING EXPENDITURES TO REDUCE ILLEGAL DUMPING, SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO CAMERAS, BATTERIES, AND SD CARDS. AUTHORIZE EXPENDITURES FROM THE F&G FUND IF DESIRED, IN AN AMOUNT TO BE SPECIFIED:**

Commissioner Martinez provided background information regarding the illegal dumping that has been occurring across the county of San Benito and requested that 30 cameras be purchased and be disbursed around the county at popular dumping sites to catch the people who are illegally dumping.

Commissioner Zanella asked if this process would work with the Sheriff's office.

Commissioner Martinez stated he had spoken with the sheriff about getting cameras but Captain Eric Taylor hadn't been able to find any donations or funds for cameras.

Commissioner Zanella argued that this does not fall under propagation of wildlife.

Commissioner Martinez argued that thanks to the clean up at Buena Vista, there is now wildlife.

Commissioner Scagliotti stated he believes restrictions on farmers should be eased up so that they can clean up the dumping.

Leutenant Heitzenrater explained that in cases of illegal dumping the Judge will determine if there will be a fine or not. He volunteered to speak with the sheriff and the District Attorney to see how willing they are to prosecute.

9. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

There were no commissioner reports.

AGENCY REPORTS

10. **BUREAU OF LAND MANGEMENT (BLM) REPORT:**

Field Manager Benjamin Bloom provided an update. San Benito County has had an increase of visitation. Campgrounds at Laguna Mountains have been full almost every weekend. Also a lot of increase of recreational target shooting. AmeriCorps crew went out to Laguna Mountain for two weeks, connecting the Laguna Mountain Trailhead and Sweet Water Trailhead. Condor Peak has been closed since the January storms, but the roads should be open in the next couple of weeks. A prescribed burn is scheduled at the corner of Clearcreek Rd. and Coalinga Rd. for the first week of June.

A large increase in new gun owners and target shooters at BLM land. BLM recently had a tour with the California Rifle and Pistol Association about what can be done to enhance the experience for everyone that goes out there. One thing they are working on is trying to establish shooting reference areas.

BLM is coordinating with County Public Works on a grant to do some road improvements in the area.

No questions or comments by the commissioners.

11. **PINNACLES NATIONAL PARK REPORT:**

Daniel Ryan from Pinnacles National Park reported that visitation has been really high. The campgrounds have been full every weekend and often times during the week. They

have not been able to collect any fees since last March. The park is building a new entrance, a fee collection station, to be able to collect fees in the future.

Since the precipitation has been low the grass has been at a low mark. Most wildlife populations have not seen a major issue because of the low precipitation. Everything seems pretty healthy right now.

There was an outbreak of canine distemper in the fox population but it has seemed to burn out and have not seen any more issues. Caudors are nesting right now, so there are some climbing advisories.

Commissioner Martinez asked who decides when fees can begin to be collected.

Daniel Ryan stated that it has to do with internal policies and staffing, not having to do with federal COVID restrictions or the county but does not have a date when that will start.

12. **FISH AND WILDLIFE ADVISORY REPORT.**

Jeff Heitzenrater provided an update in activities. Worked with land owners and caught some trespassers. A few saturation patrols in the county have given reports of nefarious activities happening in a certain area. They have had a few land use cases in creek beds and are working with the DA's office on those. They are also working with Hollister Hills and they are reporting that they are seeing condors at Hollister Hills.

They have a new Captain, Steve Shinler, he had been their Watsonville Warden close to 15 years. He will be covering San Benito, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, Monterey, and San Luis Obispo.

The San Justo Reservoir does get patrolled from time to time. They make it a point when they are in the area to stop and drive up there and take a look around. It has been relatively quiet from what they have seen.

13. **SAN BENITO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT:**

Captain Eric Taylor gave an overview of the early planning stages of a homeless encampment clean up at Hospital Rd. to Highway 156 in the creek bed. They did a census and there are about 55 encampments, some are actual structures, down there. They have good legal opinion now to be able to clear up the riverbed for public and environmental health with public funds.

Captain Taylor will reach out to RMA regarding acquiring cameras and reach out to the District Attorney's office to come together with a plan regarding dumping in the county.

Commissioner Martinez asked if the homeless were red tagged.

Captain Taylor informed the Commission that they went to the encampment and gave people an eviction notice because they are trespassing on private property.

Commissioner Martinez asked if the county needs to be able to provide a place for the homeless.

Captain Taylor explained the precedent set by the decision of the case that came out of Boise, Idaho which limits what the police can do with people suffering from homelessness. Many actions that a regular person would be prosecuted for, like defecating in public, urinating in public, the people who are homeless cannot be prosecuted for. The homeless also can not be removed from public land.

Commissioner Nino thanked Captain Taylor and the sheriff's department for their work and their report.

14. **SAN BENITO COUNTY WATER DISTRICT:**

No one was present.

15. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

Commissioner Martinez would like to put a presentation from CHEER for the next agenda regarding the river and wildlife.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting is scheduled to be held on Monday, July 26, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Nino and seconded by Commissioner Groeling moved to adjourn to the July 26, 2021 meeting.

JENNIFER FRECHETTE, CLERK OF THE
BOARD, County of San Benito