

## **California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision Project**

### **Notes from the March 8, 2012 Workshop on Funding and Efficiencies for the California Department of Fish and Game and the California Fish and Game Commission**

*March 12, 2012*

This document contains notes from the March 8, 2012 workshop where participants discussed potential recommendations for the final strategic vision related to funding for the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the California Fish & Game Commission (F&GC). The notes in this document do not reflect the evolving and sometimes meandering nature of the discussion; some notes that appear early in the document may have, in fact, been discussed later in the workshop and vice versa.

The potential recommendations in this document were presented in a document prepared specifically for the workshop, unless otherwise identified. Suggested additional text identified during the workshop is in underlined text (like this) while suggested deletions are in strikethrough text ~~(like this)~~.

These potential recommendations will be discussed on March 15, 2012 during meetings of the California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision (CFWSV) Blue Ribbon Citizen Commission and CFWSV Stakeholder Advisory Group.

### **Proposed New Funding Recommendation Submitted by SAG Member Jay Ziegler, The Nature Conservancy (March 6, 2012)**

#### **DFG Sustainable Funding Overview**

DFG and F&GC have taken on increasingly important roles in the management and conservation of natural resources and their habitats. Initially, they were primarily responsible for administering the state's hunting and fishing programs. However, habitat and non-game wildlife protection has become an important role of DFG in wildlife management and conservation. The transition to F&GC's and DFG's new roles has been difficult because funding has not kept pace with the expansion of responsibilities.

DFG has been underfunded for the last three decades, limiting the ability to meet its responsibilities (Treanor Report, 2009). The public and stakeholders recognize that DFG does not have the resources they need to meet its responsibilities. There is a need to review the adequacy of existing funding streams and broaden the base of funding. Disagreement over the extent of the DFG's underfunding should also be resolved.

DFG's funding is complex with multiple special funds and accounts that limit its ability to manage its fiscal resources. The convoluted funding sources undermine confidence in DFG to effectively use available resources to meet its responsibilities. Simplifying and consolidating accounts will help remedy these problems.

### **Current Funding: Fiscal Year 2012-13**

DFG currently relies on funding from the general fund, the federal government and a number of special funding accounts.

FY2012-2013 California Department of Fish and Game Funding	
General Fund	\$62,141,000
Fish and Game Preservation Fund	\$109,096,000
Federal Trust Fund	\$ 78,461,000
Total Budget	\$390,885,000

The Legislative Analyst's Office has a number of reports that highlight the funding challenges of DFG and discussion of funding responsibility (A Review of the Department of Fish and Game [1991], A Ten-Year Perspective: California Infrastructure Spending [2011]).

- Proliferation of special funds within DFG's structure creates significant administrative burdens and limits the effective use of available resources.
- Growing backlog of deferred maintenance at DFG for maintaining the roads, parking lots, dams, water delivery systems, and buildings necessary to provide the public with access to its wildlife conservation sites.
- Over the last decade, the state has provided more than \$13 billion for state and local resources-related infrastructure. Most of this funding has come from bond funds – and funding from bond revenues now comprises approximately 20% of DFG's budget. [NOTE: Given the expiration of available general obligation bond funding by 2015, there will be a significant impact on the scope of work conducted by DFG.] About three-fourths of the \$13 billion in spending over the last decade came from general obligation bond funds.
- The California State Legislature has stated its policy intent that the costs of a resources-related program or project should, to the extent possible, be paid by its direct beneficiaries. Expenditures with broad public benefits, on the other hand, are appropriately funded with state public funds (such as General Fund monies and general obligation bond funds). Where the benefits of an activity are shared between public and private beneficiaries, the application of the beneficiary pays funding principle would allocate the funding responsibility for its costs proportionally between these two sets of beneficiaries.

### **Proposed Recommendation**

The Nature Conservancy has one important clarifying additional recommendation to the BRCC and SAG proposals. "The BRCC recommends that the number of special funds be substantially reduced through elimination of particular accounts, consolidation of accounts, or both" with the goal of promoting wider understanding of DFG's funding/budget expenditures among direct user constituencies,

policymakers, opinion leaders and the public. Additionally, we believe DFG should become less dependent on the general fund, consistent with the “beneficiary pays” principle from the LAO report.

The SAG proposals include identifying program costs, identifying potential stable funding options, and evaluating program efficiencies. However, to reform and simplify DFG funding programs, legislation should be introduced to reconcile the complex and poorly understood funding of DFG programs.

We would propose sponsoring legislation that would create a one year charter to produce a funding plan that identifies comprehensive fiscal reform across the DFG’s budget. We believe that an appropriately chartered “DFG Budget Reform Commission” should undertake a detailed review of DFG’s budget; recommend specific revenue sources aligned with program functions; and overall, simplify and streamline the DFG’s budget and accounting.

In light of the multiple demands of different stakeholders, it is likely that this undertaking would fail unless viewed as a comprehensive reform and restructuring of DFG’s functions. Consequently, we believe that this legislation should be designed to empower the DFG Budget Reform Commission to offer detailed reform proposals and simply allow the legislature to take a “direct vote” on the proposal – without considering amendments to the plan. Such an approach would encourage all constituencies to look towards a higher performing DFG overall.

The process could be based on the federal Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (or BRAC) process. In this process, the federal government directed the Department of Defense to realign inventory and reduce expenditures on operations aimed at achieving increased efficiency in line with Congressional and Department of Defense objectives. The BRAC commission prepared their recommendations with the condition that it could only be approved or disapproved in its entirety.

This recommendation combines recommendations 2, 3 and 4 in the funding and efficiencies document dated March 6, 2012 (see below under Potential Recommendations Related to Funding and Efficiencies). Funding and Efficiencies Recommendation: Establish legislation to reconcile funding issues. [NOTE: The proposed “DFG Budget Reform Commission would be charged with development of a sustainable funding path that incorporates recommendations 6, 7, and 8]

**Workshop notes:** A SAG member shared that this process is coming to the end and we don’t have a strong recommendation that can be completed in next two weeks. Another member likes the TNC recommendation and was planning to suggest something similar for commercial fisheries. Suggested amendment to the TNC recommendation is to have a sub-group focused on commercial fisheries.

Jay Ziegler provided some contextual comments. BRAC model? Small, workable, senior-level group to look at all funding of DFG as well as regulatory mandates. Six or nine month process, conducting public meetings, ultimately submit to legislature for an “up or down” vote (no piecemeal tinkering). That work should not interfere with ongoing DFG reforms. If there were an opportunity to pursue a particular funding source as moving forward, this “BRAC” effort should not hold up the opportunity.

Need better understood, better supported, integrated funding for DFG; stakeholders need to all come together rather than pursuing individual interests in order to create a better overall system. Key to success will be who is on that commission.

This proposal solves the problem of one interest pursuing funding for its program at the expense of others. Must work together to find an overall package that is voted up or down; requires all interests to gain something. Need more than three stakeholders to represent the various interests, maybe even ten. Would be important to include the mandate element as part of this process; need a holistic view of what DFG does and then how to finance.

Debbie Byrne mandate evaluation table; clearly will not be able to complete during the strategic visioning process, but would like to see it completed as part of any future process. Combined both funding and mandates questions, so agree that both funding and mandates should be considered together.

Size of group? Small enough that can accomplish the task, broad enough to represent various interests. Suggest no more than 30 people based on sociology, but need more than a half dozen. Perhaps start with the 17 “interests” identified for the CFWSV SAG and work from there. Perhaps a smaller, highly functional group (five to seven) that does the ‘homework’ in developing a funding plan. Important that there is a public process so that multiple interests have an opportunity to provide input and suggest under 10 members.

Need legislative mandate to keep carrot and hammer pressures. This kind of task is beyond what a “SAG” type of body can accomplish; needs a very different membership with different expertise. Propose to discuss membership of the proposed commission (criteria) on March 15; anyone who can develop some draft ideas in preparation for that meeting? Some participants are requesting stakeholder “interests” be members of the commission and others are requesting funding/mandates “experts” as members.

***Potential New Funding and Efficiencies Recommendation:*** Establish legislation to create a commission to reconcile funding, statutory and regulatory mandates. The integrated reform plan for DFG’s work would be subject to an up or down vote by the California State Legislature.

Mandates mostly come from the legislature. What is the scope of considerations that the commission must be competent in addressing/answering? Point is not to have all the stakeholder interests represented on the commission. Most important is proper expertise and balance, as well as the ability of the individual commissioners to be able to meet with members of the public. Don’t see same commission dealing with the funding question as the mandates; mandates conversation should happen after the mission conversation within DFG. Discussion of funding should then follow mandates conversation since how much you need is dependent upon what DFG is required to do/accomplish.

One SAG member suggested that she would like to see something added to the recommendation about accountability. Address accountability by better defining the commission – who will be doing the

decision-making? Those who fund DFG now (at least majority of funding) should be at the table (i.e., commercial fishing); commission would combine both stakeholders and experts.

Who is selected to be part of this proposed commission is critical. Don't want former legislators who need to be parked somewhere until the next election. Need strong stakeholders who can represent their constituency in the decision-making process. Less about who has been put on recent task forces and committees, but more about who was NOT put on those bodies.

Homework volunteers to develop ideas for commission membership: Jay Ziegler, Diane Pleschner-Steele and Bob Bertelli will work together (Rick Copeland and Noelle Cremers will send ideas to Jay). Anyone else with suggestions is asked to send them to Jay for inclusion in a document that can be discussed on March 15.

## **Potential Recommendations Related to Funding and Efficiencies**

***Vision: Successful natural resource stewardship depends upon stable, adequate funding.***

### ***1. Funding and Efficiencies Recommendation: Reform and Simplify Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Funding Programs***

The BRCC recommends that the number of special funds be substantially reduced through elimination of particular accounts, consolidation of accounts, or both. In this way, for example, special funds meant for management of game species and hunting and fishing programs could be consolidated into one fund, thereby protecting the integrity of the funds, affording a measure of flexibility, and achieving substantial administrative efficiencies.

The proliferation of special funds within the DFG structure creates significant administrative burdens and limits the effective use of available resources. (See, for example, Legislative Analyst's Office, *A Review of the Department of Fish and Game* (1991).) There are now literally scores of special funds imposing significant limitations on DFG's ability to manage its fiscal resources effectively. Many of these funds are longstanding, single-focus programs that are outdated and often contrary to sound, state of the art, ecosystem based management practices.

**Workshop notes:** Make recommendation #1 a bullet as part of the TNC proposal; include only the second paragraph of this recommendation as part of the descriptive text for the TNC recommendation.

### ***2. Funding and Efficiencies Recommendation: Identify program costs (noting funding authorities, and stability of funds over time, and implications of adequate versus optimal levels of service) and identify where current feesfunding does not cover costs.***

**Workshop notes:** Is this perhaps automatically part of recommendation #1 (as a subset)? Needs to happen first before doing #1. Director Bonham still working with his executive team to define the

strategic planning effort, so not certain whether it will include identifying where fees do not cover costs. Include both here as a separate recommendation as well as a bullet under the potential recommendation for a "BRAC" process.

There are some programmatic funding problems that can/should be addressed independent of any commission process. Don't want the proposed commission to have so broad a mandate that the important task (stable funding) is lost. Power of the idea of a commission is that it is very high level and keeps everyone's feet to the fire; don't want this to be interpreted to be mutually exclusive of other improvements while the commission is working. Intent is that commission task is alignment and stabilization of DFG funding with mandates/mission.

In the past the legislature has not been enamored with recommendations from a commission on controversial issues. Is there another pathway that might be more effective? Can we as stakeholders come together and make the case that such a commission is important and we will support since our common goal is an improved DFG, for everyone?

**3. Funding and Efficiencies Recommendation: DFG should work with stakeholders to evaluate the potential stable funding options (see below appendix for list of ideas that have been suggested in this process and/or used elsewhere).**

**Workshop notes:** Include both here as a separate recommendation as well as a bullet under the potential recommendation for a "BRAC" process.

**4. Funding and Efficiencies Recommendation: Require open and transparent accounting within DFG to build public confidence in how funds are managed.**

**Workshop notes:** Include both here as a separate recommendation as well as a bullet under the potential recommendation for a "BRAC" process. Noelle will double-check the funding and efficiencies recommendations text to be sure they include descriptive text as it was suggested on February 3, 2012; proposed changes to this recommendation (below in tracked changes) are from the February 3 suggested version.

Description: As noted in the Treanor Report (page 26-27), the California State Legislature realizes that DFG has been underfunded for at least the last three decades. (See Fish and Game Code Sections 710, 710.5, 710.7). Fish and Game Code Section 711 states "It is the intent of the legislature to ensure adequate funding from appropriate sources for the department." Unfortunately, while there appears to be near universal recognition that DFG and F&GC do not have the resources they need, increasing funding is politically challenging. There is a need to both review the adequacy/appropriateness of existing funding streams and broaden the base of funding for DFG to include additional funding sources to include all who benefit from DFG's programs.

Specific funding streams each have their own limitations: general funds can vary from year-to-year, bonds are also variable and can only be spent on capital costs, and fees are typically constrained to very specific uses and can result in very high administrative costs. DFG staff identified the burden of

administering multiple, highly specialized accounts and noted that it would be preferable to consolidate ~~them~~ fees into relatively fewer accounts with more flexibility in terms of how monies can be spent. Public support for continued (or increased) DFG funding depends on both transparent accounting and the sense that funds are being used efficiently. SAG participants therefore believe it is important that the stable funding and efficiencies recommendations work in concert and be advanced together.

#### Implementation Assessment

- Method: Administrative, regulatory, statutory
- Timeline: Long term

Ties to Strategic Vision: Goal 4, Objective 3

~~Note that if this recommendation moves forward, the three lists of specific funding mechanisms that could be explored is suggested as an appendix.~~

#### PROPOSED APPENDIX – FUNDING IDEAS

This list includes ~~P~~potential new funding mechanisms that have been suggested in this process or elsewhere but inclusion on this list does not imply SAG support. It should also be noted that that there was no detailed discussion by the SAG during any of its deliberations regarding any of the potential mechanisms listed below.~~include:~~

#### General Funding

- Sales tax on outdoor gear (could be statewide or at local or regional level).
- Water fee or tax (all wildlife needs water, and water transport and delivery fuels development and associated wildlife impacts).
- Wildlife tax on license plates, vehicles, or fuel due to mortality of wildlife on roadways and the impact on habitat.
- Boating or shipping fee (similar to above for cars).
- Dedicated portion of state sales tax.
- Real estate transfers fee.
- Develop campaign around nominal (\$1), voluntary (or opt out type fees) for hotels, aquaria, natural history museums, zoos, outdoor gear retailers (REI), etc. that focus on wildlife and/or habitat preservations. For example, ask each visitor to an aquarium if they'd like to contribute \$1to help preserve California ocean habitat (or 50 cents, to be matched by aquarium!). Similar hotel room based programs have been successful in areas around national parks, the Smithsonian Museums use this approach in their gift shops, etc.
- Develop a mechanism whereby DFG can easily accept donations of money, land or equipment – potentially using the California Wildlife Foundation or other support foundation.

## Fee Based Funding

- Fee for service to support the Conservation Banking Program.
- Develop fee to support Natural Communities Conservation Planning Act Program.
- Fee for California Endangered Species Act (CESA) compliance.
- Fee or tax on large vessels to help fund invasive species work.
- Fee to be paid by certain appropriate industries that generate spill response activities to fund DFG's water pollution investigation and cleanup program or authorize diversion of a portion of the Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) fees/funds to non-OSPR pollution cases (based on nexus of fuel as significant portion of inland spill responses). Note: SAG/DFG concerns raised about 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' and need for NEW funds versus redistributing existing insufficient funding.
- Develop a campaign to encourage non-hunters to purchase stamps (e.g. duck stamp) to support wetland conservation activities at DFG, even if they're not required to have the stamp on their person to conduct non-hunting activity (e.g. bird watching). Note: this may not be a major money maker and changing the name of the stamp to "wetland restoration stamp" might be necessary.
- Develop fee on bird seed/bird feeders and other non-consumptive wildlife type products. Could be a huge money maker but past attempt met with opposition from bird groups.
- Require users to pay for parking/use of wildlife areas or ecological reserves. The state of Washington passed legislation for a "Discover Pass" program ("Your ticket to Washington's great outdoors!") and expects to raise \$10-20 million annually. Georgia also recently instituted its Georgia Outdoor Recreational Pass, which is now required to access certain wildlife management areas. The most visited California-managed outdoor areas are likely to be state parks which also need stable funding, but the DFG share from such an initiative might still be significant. Might look at that model as an option (see <http://discoverpass.wa.gov/> for more information) or other state department's funding sources. Note, important to make it EASY to pay such fees. Requiring non-consumptives to provide a copy of their driver's license, purchase such passes in person, etc. is a major disincentive. Such items must be easily available on-line and day passes must be available on-site.
- Create user fee of some kind (stamp, entry fee, fee on SCUBA tank refills, etc) to help fund marine protected areas (MPAs)/marine programs. Note: the challenge in obtaining fees from non-consumptive users is the cost necessary to assess fees or enforce the need for stamps or licenses on non-consumptive users.
- Fees on scientific collecting permits/research users.
- DFG is not funded for nuisance wildlife efforts. Consider a development fee or building permit fee in areas that are newly developed. (Given the new wildfire fee for urban/rural interface homes, this proposal could be politically challenging).

- Southern California has been hit hard in the recent past by wildfires. Consider an OSPR-type program that would include a team of experts to assess impacts associated with wildfires and tap fire related fees to fund (potential use of special assessment districts). Revisit Fish and Game Commission and Board of Forestry joint policy on pre-, during, and post-fire consultation and actions.
- Fines and/or legal settlements for harmful acts in marine environments should be directed to DFG for marine conservation.
- Costs to enhance marine life should be part of any new or renewed license or other regulatory permission for industrial activities with identified adverse impacts to the marine environment.
- Once-through cooling mitigation funds. (Note: this program was established by the State Water Resources Control Board).

Potential enhancements of existing funding streams:

- Continue to pursue federal conservation funding. Note: usually requires state match.
- Pursue additional bond funds.
- Raise California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) fees to recover DFG costs.
- Adjust user-based fees to ensure they are set appropriately and structured to keep up with inflation. Note: some on SAG think this should be responsibility of DFG (administrative) others think it should be done legislatively.
- Ensure fees cover costs of administrating program.<sup>1</sup> For example, commercial fishing fees currently only cover an estimated 25% of the costs of managing commercial fisheries in California, scientific collecting fees do not cover management costs, non-consumptive users fund DFG through general funds monies but not directly via user fees, etc.
- Review and adjust fines and develop fine schedule that automatically keeps up with inflation.
- Increased waste discharge fees, access State Water Resources Control Board pollution funds for DFG activities with a nexus to this fund.
- Increase use of big game fundraising tags.
- Mitigation bank contributions should provide adequate ongoing operation and management funds through endowment or otherwise.

Ties to Strategic Vision: Goal 2, objectives 2, 4, 5 and 7; Goal 4, Objective 5

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<sup>1</sup> See Fish & Game Code, § 711 (2) The costs of commercial fishing programs shall be provided out of revenues from commercial fishing taxes, license fees, and other revenues, from reimbursements and federal funds received for commercial fishing programs, and other funds appropriated by the Legislature for this purpose. (3) The costs of hunting and sportfishing programs shall be provided out of hunting and sportfishing revenues and reimbursements and federal funds received for hunting and sportfishing programs, and other funds appropriated by the Legislature for this purpose. These revenues, reimbursements, and federal funds shall not be used to support commercial fishing programs, free hunting and fishing license programs, or nongame fish and wildlife programs.

**5. Funding and Efficiencies Recommendation: DFG will Evaluate and implement program efficiencies, level of service delivery (adequate versus optimal), and viable funding, and share those program efficiencies with the proposed commission.**

Implementation actions include:

- Create workgroup of DFG/FGC staff and stakeholders to evaluate program efficiencies, level of service delivery, and viable funding.
- Implement new, innovative ways to improve program efficiencies.
- Work with other state and federal agencies to investigate coordination of programs to improve program efficiencies.

Description: DFG's broad mandates have, at times, prevented it from reviewing programs with the intent of improving efficiencies. It is necessary to review DFG's programs to improve efficiencies, ~~determine the appropriate level of service for each program, and identify viable funding sources to operate these programs.~~ Such an analysis should include identification of DFG/FGC capabilities given current resources, including staff and funding. These efficiencies could be found both through internal changes and through improved coordination with other agencies and departments.

Implementation Assessment

- Method: Administrative, regulatory, statutory
- Timeline: Mid-term, long-term

Ties to Strategic Plan: Goal 3, Objectives 1; Goal 4, Objectives 3 and 4

**Workshop notes:** Make this a recommendation that DFG do this work as part of the strategic planning process? Not sure how you separate out the conversation about funding without knowing what level of service you want to provide and how much that will cost. One way of approaching this task is to identify multiple levels of funding depending on tasks included (add X more dollars and we could now accomplish A and B; add Y more dollars and you could now accomplish A, B, and C).

Have DFG take the lead and then provide the information to the proposed commission. Include both here as a separate recommendation (with DFG as the lead and taking the information to the commission) as well as a bullet under the potential recommendation for a "BRAC" process.

**6. Funding and Efficiencies Recommendation: Increase efficiency of DFG science programs by improving processes for hiring and retaining seasonal employees within state government.**

**Workshop notes:** Suggest deleting this recommendation and let DFG address through its strategic planning process, if it so chooses. Recognize that this is a problem that DFG has identified.

## Discussion Points for Mandates and Funding Submitted by SAG Member Debbie Byrne (March 6, 2012)

Potential SAG Recommendations:

1) In the future, when the legislature enacts legislation, it identifies a specific means by which the new mandate can be paid for.

**Workshop notes:** Has been discussed in previous meetings, but no recommendation to date. New mandates, new funding source? Not appropriate to say the costs will be borne with existing resources; heaping responsibilities on DFG without providing adequate resources. Sounds logical, but the devil is in the details; not comfortable moving this forward without better understanding the “on the ground” implications. Legislature may continue to place mandates without identifying the funding source, but at least have called out the issue. DFG staff suggested that highlighting the “may” versus “shall” exercise is not very helpful since some responsibilities say “may” and yet it is clear that DFG is obligated to perform those functions (i.e., nuisance mountain lions); there is a long list of “may” provisions of this type. SAG member has asked the question for long time, “How does DFG prioritize its mandates?” This chart was an attempt to get at this information; if not a valid way to evaluate, that’s fine, but then what is a more appropriate method? Need recognition of the problem. If the legislature is going to ask DFG to do something new, it needs to also indicate from where the funding will come or else identify what other program should not be implemented. Want to call out the legislature on this issue; not likely to go far in reality (like the F&GC appointments), but at least have shined.

*Workshop participants agree that this recommendation(above)regarding the legislature should move forward for discussion on March 15; will eventually need some descriptive text to accompany the recommendation.*

2) Reconstitute a SAG to help evaluate the existing mandates and make recommendations to the legislature to refocus mandates on the DFG mission.

Identify:

- Redundant mandates (those done by other agencies)
- Obsolete mandates
- Conflicting mandates (Hopefully the Law Review Commission will do this)

Evaluation should include

- How each mandate pertains to DFG’s mission
- How much funding there is for each mandate (source of the funding)
- Department’s priorities in actually meeting the mandates

Budget requests indicate what priority DFG is giving to any particular mandate.

Evaluate what the sources of funding are for each mandate:

- Permits & fees
- Tags & licenses
- Bonds (expiring?)
- Federal funds (Pittman-Robinson, NOAA, SFRA, etc.)(matching?)
- Grants
- General fund
- Funds borrowed from other dedicated sources

Can't really do this evaluation until:

- DFG does its mission statement in the strategic planning process
- Law Review Commission finishes its work

**Workshop notes:** This recommendation may be part of the discussion during the mandates workshop. The evaluation of the mandates should include how much funding there is for each mandate and the source of that funding. How DFG spends its money in a way shows what are its priorities. DFG does plan to hear from and report back to a stakeholder group during the strategic planning effort, but not necessarily the SAG as it is currently formed; there may be a larger group of people who would like to be part of that effort. There is a core group of SAG members who have regularly participated in this process and perhaps they can form the core of a new group? Currently no recommendation on the table for a SAG-type group to continue into the future. Don't even necessarily need quarterly meetings for such a group; perhaps even once or twice a year may be sufficient. More of a liaison group? Advocacy group with the legislature and constituents. Can contribute to greater transparency, collaboration, preventing future problems, etc.

Question, is this item on the F&GC workshop discussion list, the idea of an organization like the State Parks Foundation to run in parallel with and support DFG and F&GC? A SAG member indicated that this concept is under the F&GC workshop topic. Practically this idea could also fit under the funding topic. Essentially a not-for-profit organization that can provide funding and partnerships to assist DFG, but also suggesting that it could play an advocacy role.

Discussions among groups that are often at odds with one another can benefit from a SAG-like group – can work out issues prior to going to the legislature, administration, etc. Recommend an open and transparent process for these kinds of discussions.

**New potential recommendation:** *Following the CFWSV process, the SAG recommends that a stakeholder group continue as an advisory body to DFG and F&GC. Membership would potentially include existing SAG members and others with an interest in DFG and F&GC activities. The purpose of the group would be to:*

1. *Facilitate enhanced communication among DFG, F&GC and the diverse stakeholder community;*

2. *Provide guidance and recommendations on issues of mutual interest and importance; and*
3. *Serve as an advocate for DFG and F&GC to the legislature and other decision-making bodies.*

*The group could meet once or twice a year to discuss issues of importance, or to be convened as needed to present information on critical issues.*

**Workshop notes:** Use “other interests” as opposed to “others with an interest”? Add text about open meetings for the public. Who convenes? Create by statute or administrative? Ad hoc committee? Who will be appointed to the group and by whom? Don’t necessarily want DFG to make the appointments. Ad hoc versus public invitation – representatives of those diverse interests that interact with DFG on a regular basis, with an opportunity for the general public to interact. General public as an “interest” category?

**Workshop notes about Nick Konovaloff message related to payments in lieu of taxes (PILT):** This is a glaring example of something that is not being funded and instead being carried by the counties that do not really have the ability to cover. Don’t see specific language proposed in the letter. When acquiring lands, there is not always monies included for long-term management and payment of in lieu fees. Suggestion that either DFG stop acquiring lands or identify long-term management funding before lands can be acquired. Lengthy discussion about what the numbers presented as attachments really mean related to property taxes and revenues generated on such properties; does this include income on the properties that is being diverted without paying the PILT? DFG puts this in its budget each year, but it is taken out each year through the budgeting process.

The PILT topic should be taken up by the proposed “BRAC” body. *Suggestion to include this topic under the proposed commission, with language about this being an example of an “unfunded” mandate:* “The failure of DFG to meet its in lieu fee obligation to counties pursuant to California Fish and Game Code Section 1504 remains a major concern. This shortfall in funding from DFG to the counties has led to frustration at the local level, where county officials continue to bear the burden of providing mandated services to public lands that are not subject to local property tax.”