California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision Project

DRAFT Stakeholder Advisory Group Ground Rules

Revised September 30, 2011

This document outlines the draft operating ground rules for the California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision (CFWSV) Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG). The draft ground rules have been informed by the applications of the SAG nominees and ground rules used in other stakeholder planning processes. These draft ground rules are intended to foster and reinforce constructive interaction and deliberation among SAG members, emphasizing clear communication, trust building, respect for divergent views, creative thinking, collaborative problem solving, the pursuit of mutual gains, and the importance of having a "safe haven" for deliberation.

1. Participation and Collaboration

a. **Active, full participation**. Every SAG member is responsible for communicating his/her perspectives and interests on the issues under consideration. Voicing these perspectives is essential to achieving meaningful dialogue. Everyone will participate; no one will dominate.

b. **Focused participation**. SAG members will come to the meetings prepared and will focus their discussions on the topics at hand. SAG members are asked to refrain from participating in outside conversations via cell phone, email, etc. Everyone will help keep the meetings on track.

c. **Respectful interaction.** SAG members will respect each other's personal integrity, divergent viewpoints, values and legitimacy of interests. SAG members will listen courteously while others are speaking. Only one person will speak at a time. SAG members will refrain from using deliberate misinformation, any personal attacks or stereotyping.

d. **Integration and creative thinking.** In developing, reviewing and revising work products, SAG members will strive to be open-minded and to integrate each other's ideas, perspectives and interests. Disagreements will be regarded as problems to be solved rather than battles to be won. SAG members will attempt to reframe contentious issues and offer creative solutions to enable constructive dialogue. Where SAG members do not support a specific solution or recommendation, they are asked to offer their own solution.

e. **Satisfy mutual Interests**. SAG members will work to satisfy not only their constituency's interests but also those of other SAG members. SAG members are encouraged to be clear about their interests and to recognize the important distinction between underlying interests and fixed positions.

2. Commitment to the Process

a. **Good faith effort**. SAG members will make a good faith effort to achieve the goals of the project within the identified schedule.

b. **Meeting attendance**. All SAG members will make every effort to attend all of the SAG meetings and will not have alternates. Meetings will start on time. SAG members who know that they will be absent, late, or have to leave early will inform CFWSV Project staff in advance and coordinate with other SAG members to ensure that their ideas are brought to the table and that they are informed regarding SAG deliberations and decisions.

c. **Come prepared**. SAG members will review meeting materials in advance and come prepared to address the meeting objectives. If specific "homework" is assigned, SAG members are expected to have the homework completed by the start of the meeting.

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d. **Commitment to ground rules**. SAG members commit to adhere to these ground rules, as a set of mutual obligations. SAG members are encouraged to help uphold and enforce these ground rules. If a SAG member consistently deviates from these ground rules, that member may be replaced by another person by the chair of the executive committee. Prior to a SAG member being dismissed, the SAG member will meet with the facilitator and program director to discuss the reasons for the dismissal. Flagrant personal attacks or repeated violations of the ground rules may be cause for immediate removal.

3. SAG Meeting Formats and Working Groups

a. **Public meetings**. SAG meetings will be formal, public meetings that will be simultaneously webcast. Video archives of the meetings will be available through the CFWSV website one to two days after each meeting and will serve as the formal record of the body; written meeting summaries may also be made available. These meetings will include formal public comment periods (see also section I below).

b. **Informal meetings or work sessions**. Some informal meetings of SAG members ~~will be informal~~may be gatherings (face-to-face or electronically) with less than a quorum of members. The purpose of ~~work sessions~~such interaction is to provide SAG members with focused opportunities to ~~pursue their charge of providing advice, support and recommendations to the executive committee and blue ribbon citizen commission (BRCC)~~gather information that may be shared with the larger group in the context of a noticed meeting. Such meetings or work sessions are not intended as formal, noticed meetings of the SAG or working groups unless otherwise required by law ~~and, as such, will not be noticed or videotaped~~.

c. **Cross-interest working groups**. Six cross-interest working groups have been assigned to develop constructive, integrative products during and between SAG meetings. SAG working group meetings are public and will be simultaneously webcast. Video archives of the meetings will be available through the CFWSV website one to two business days after each meeting and will serve as the formal record of the body; written meeting summaries may also be made available. The aim of the working groups is to encourage integrative ideas and potential recommendations rather than products put forward by a single interest group. The working groups may be reconstituted by the executive committee as necessary. The six working groups are: (1) Communication, Education and Outreach; (2) Natural Resource Stewardship; (3) Regulatory and Permitting; (4) Governance and Mission; (5) Science; and (6) Sustainable Financing.

d. **Working group spokespersons**. Each of the six working groups ~~will~~may select spokespersons to provide updates at SAG meetings and make presentations to the executive committee or blue ribbon citizen commission; duration of the spokespersons' responsibilities shall be determined by each working group. Other working group members are encouraged to support their spokespersons in addressing questions that may be raised during updates or presentations. If a working group is unable to select a spokesperson, individual members may volunteer or staff may take on that responsibility.

4. Decision Making Process

a. **SAG decision making**. Formal decision items before the SAG will be presented verbally and/or in writing, and SAG members will be allowed sufficient time to consider them. SAG members will be

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invited to indicate whether they support or not an item under discussion. Support here is defined as "can live with".

b. **Strive for broad based support for recommendations**. SAG members will strive to achieve a high level of agreement in developing and advancing potential recommendations, but will not seek absolute consensus. The intent here is to strive for recommendations that earn broad-based, cross-interest support from SAG members. The SAG is not intended to function as a representative voting body and no single SAG member will prevent recommendations from moving forward.

5. Cooperation with the Executive Committee and BRCC

a. **Advice and support**. The SAG will advise and support the executive committee and BRCC in their work products. The executive committee may provide guidance to the SAG on developing potential recommendations.

b. **Briefings**. SAG representatives will have an opportunity to present focused briefings to the executive committee and/or BRCC. In cooperation with the chair of the executive committee, staff may plan for joint meetings of the SAG with the executive committee or BRCC.

6. Information Sharing and Joint Fact-Finding

a. **Information gathering and sharing**. Staff encourages information sharing within the SAG and to be as specific as possible in the types of information that will support the development of potential recommendations. Accordingly, SAG members are encouraged to contribute their own first-hand knowledge to support the work of the SAG.

b. **Best readily available information**. The CFWSV relies on using the best readily available information. Developing potential recommendations will not be delayed in order to fill any real or perceived information gaps.

~~**Confidentiality issues**. SAG members and staff will refrain from sharing with the full SAG or public specific information explicitly provided in confidence by individual SAG members to less than a quorum of the membership.~~

c. **Handling apparently conflicting information**. In the event that information or interpretations appear to conflict, SAG members will work collaboratively with staff to narrow or clarify the basis of disagreement. The executive committee may also offer guidance on how to address and resolve disagreements over information or interpretations.

7. Media Contact

a. **Webcast**. SAG meetings are public and will be simultaneously webcast. Video archives of the meetings will be available through the CFWSV website a day or two after each meeting.

b. **Media contacts**. Media contacts regarding the project from a "big picture" perspective will be handled by California Natural Resources Agency staff. First contacts should be directed to Clark Blanchard, assistant director for communications (Clark.Blanchard@resources.ca.gov or 916.653.5656), or Richard Stapler, deputy secretary for communications (Richard.Stapler@resources.ca.gov or 916.653.5656).

c. **SAG media contact**. On occasion, reporters may contact individual SAG members for comment about a particular issue. Members who are contacted by the media will speak only on behalf of their

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group or constituency. After commenting, the stakeholder will provide the media entity with contact information for the CFWSV communications staff person and request that the media entity contact that person for further information.

d. **Representation to media**. SAG members recognize the need to maintain a balance between providing timely information to constituents and making statements to the media that could undermine the success of the CFWSV Project. SAG members agree to avoid: a) making statements to the media that may prejudge the project's outcome, b) representing another group's point of view or characterizing others' motives, or c) stating positions on preliminary ideas or potential recommendations while they are still being developed or refined by working groups or the SAG.

e. **Media subcommittee**. SAG members will refer requests for additional contacts to ~~CFWSV Project~~California Natural Resources Agency staff identified above or the SAG contact list. If needed, the SAG may convene a multi-interest media subcommittee to work with staff to develop briefings for the media.

f. **Use of meeting summaries**. In briefing constituents, SAG members are encouraged to rely primarily on meeting summaries to be produced for the meetings.

8. SAG Communication

a. **List server**. Staff will create a list server to support the work of the SAG and SAG working groups. The focus of the list server will to be to ~~support SAG work related to developing recommendations~~distribute meeting materials and for meeting logistics, not to serve as a more general communication function about other fish and wildlife resource issues. SAG members will not be able use the list server to communicate with the full SAG; any communications to the full SAG or a SAG working group should be sent to ~~Carol.Baker~~Melissa Miller-Henson (~~Carol.Baker~~Melissa@resources.ca.gov) or Clark Blanchard (Clark.Blanchard@resources.ca.gov). The SAG list server may include members of the public.

b. **Effective communication**. SAG members acknowledge the importance of communicating with other SAG members regarding potential recommendations, including communications outside of formal SAG meetings. SAG members commit to bring concerns about adherence to the ground rules, potential recommendations, or other process matters to the facilitator or staff rather than expressing such concerns in a manner that undermines the respect of any individuals or the process.

9. Public Comment

a. **Public comment at SAG meetings**. Designated times at SAG meetings will be agendized for public comment. Efforts will be made to schedule public comment at consistent time slots and keyed to important SAG discussions, and to be held at the time agendized. At all other times of the meeting, comments and discussion will be only among SAG members, staff and the facilitator.

b. **Key purpose of verbal public comment**. Verbal public comment provides an important opportunity for the broader public to inform SAG deliberations. As such, to the extent possible, public comments will be directed toward the work effort, products, or process of the SAG. Comments on subjects external to the SAG should be directed to other forums.

c. **Other opportunities**. Members of the public are encouraged to convey their comments to relevant colleagues who serve as SAG members. Members of the public are also encouraged to submit comments in writing (preferably via email to StrategicVision@resources.ca.gov) at least five days

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before a meeting. Written comments will be distributed to SAG members electronically on a regular basis.

d. **Speaking time**. Comment cards will be counted and, at the discretion of staff or the facilitator, the time allocated to each speaker will be based on the total available time and the number of individuals wishing to speak. Additional guidelines for providing public comment will be made during each meeting.

e. **SAG response**. Other than clarifying misinformation, staff, the facilitator and SAG members will not directly respond to the public during public comment periods.

f. **SAG public comment opportunities during meetings**. SAG members may provide public comment at CFWSV Project meetings (e.g., executive committee, blue ribbon citizen commission), except where SAG members are formal participants in that meeting (e.g., joint meetings).

10. Role of Facilitator

a. **Neutrality**. The SAG facilitator is non-partisan, has no stake in any particular set of recommendations, and will not advocate for a particular outcome. The facilitator will strive to ensure that all SAG members clearly articulate their respective interests and to assist members to complete their charge in a well-informed, respectful, and timely fashion.

b. **Foster alternatives with mutual benefit.** The facilitator will seek to foster approaches to meeting management, and to identifying and considering multiple recommendations that can maximize mutual benefit.

c. **Efficient use of time**. The facilitator will strive to structure and manage meetings and discussion so as to make efficient use of SAG members' time. This includes providing any materials in advance of meetings, keeping the discussion focused, and monitoring discussions so that no individual or idea dominates.

d. **Facilitator's discretion**. The facilitator will use his/her discretion in guiding meetings and may propose agenda adjustments.

e. **Meeting summaries**. The facilitator will work with staff to prepare meeting summaries that identify the main results of the SAG meetings, including key decisions, issues discussed, and next steps for moving the project forward. The meeting summaries will not serve as a meeting transcript. The facilitator and staff will strive to prepare meeting summaries within three~~10~~ days of the meetings.

11. Role of California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision Project Staff and Consultants

a. **Neutral support**. Staff and consultants to the SAG ~~is~~are non-partisan; staff and consultants have~~s~~ no stake in any particular set of recommendations nor will advocate for a particular outcome. Staff's and consultants' primary role is to provide neutral process support and best readily available information to the process.