

Proposed Interim Strategic Vision:

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS *for the*
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
and the CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION



CALIFORNIA FISH & WILDLIFE
Strategic Vision

Proposal for Consideration by the CFWSV Executive Committee

February 10, 2012

Introduction to the Proposed Interim Strategic Vision

The California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision (CFWSV) Proposed Interim Strategic Vision for the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the California Fish and Game Commission (F&GC) is intended to assist the dedicated current and future leaders and staff of these important organizations with visionary and cohesive guidance. A clear mission and vision are an important start, though they are not enough. Truly improving and enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of these organizations requires systemic characterization of who DFG and F&GC are, what they do and what they will consistently seek to achieve, and, ultimately, an understanding of how they will do what they do to achieve their missions, visions and goals. This document presents guidance from the CFWSV Blue Ribbon Citizen Commission (BRCC) and members of the CFWSV Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) to support this approach, for consideration by the CFWSV Executive Committee.

The BRCC and SAG have reviewed the existing vision and mission statements and held only preliminary discussions regarding potential modifications to those statements. The BRCC and SAG recognize that DFG and F&GC might have different missions but that the overall vision for both entities should be shared, or at least very complementary. There is also recognition of the importance of internal support by DFG and F&GC employees for any potential changes to their mission and vision statements.

Since only preliminary conversations have been held among BRCC and SAG members about potential changes to the visions and missions, specific recommended changes, if any, will be addressed in the third phase of the CFWSV Project. Text displaying the various proposed mission and vision statements has been moved to Appendix A. The current vision and mission statements are provided here for context.

California Fish and Game Commission **Current Mission and Vision**

Mission

The mission of the California Fish and Game Commission is, on behalf of California citizens, to ensure the long term sustainability of California's fish and wildlife resources by:

- Guiding the ongoing scientific evaluation and assessment of California's fish and wildlife resources;
- Setting California's fish and wildlife resource management policies and insuring these are implemented by the Department of Fish and Game;
- Establishing appropriate fish and wildlife resource management rules and regulations; and
- Building active fish and wildlife resource management partnerships with individual landowners, the public and interest groups, and federal, state and local resource management agencies.

Vision

The vision of the California Fish & Game Commission, in partnership with the Department of Fish and Game and the public, is to assure California has sustainable fish and wildlife resources.

California Department of Fish and Game **Current Mission and Vision**

Mission

The mission of the California Department of Fish and Game is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public.

Vision

We seek to create a California Department of Fish and Game that:

- acts to anticipate the future;
- approaches management of our wildlife resources on an ecosystem basis;
- bases its resource management decisions on sound biological information and a clear understanding of the desires of the public;
- is based on teamwork and an open and honest internal communication;
- empowers its employees to make most of the "how" decisions;
- is committed to extensive external communication and education programs;
- creates and promotes partnerships; coalitions of agencies, groups, or individuals; and any other collaborative efforts to meet the needs and management of wildlife resources.

Suggested Statements of Core Values

During discussions about the future vision of DFG and F&GC, certain values were directly and indirectly suggested; these core values represent the highest priorities of how people within the organizations should carry out their responsibilities. Values are the core ideology of the organization and how it and its employees will conduct themselves; when combined with the vision and mission, they create a framework in which decisions are made. Core values underpin policies, objectives, strategies, and procedures because they provide an anchor or reference point for all things that happen within the organization. The BRCC and SAG suggest that these values be considered core by DFG and F&GC:

Stewardship: Consistent with their missions, DFG/F&GC are responsible for holding the state's fish and wildlife resources in trust for the public, respecting that these resources have intrinsic value and are essential to the well-being of all California's citizens.

Integrity: DFG/F&GC hold themselves to the highest ethical and professional standards, pledging to fulfill their duties and deliver on their commitments.

Excellence: DFG/F&GC pursue quality, proactively assessing their performance and striving to continuously improve programs, services, and work products, as well as the efficiency and cost-effectiveness with which these are delivered. They employ credible¹ science in their evaluations of programs and policies.

Teamwork and Partnerships²: DFG/F&GC pursue productive relationships through communication, collaboration, understanding, trust and respect, engaging employees, other organizations and the public at all levels of the organizations.

Innovation: DFG/F&GC encourage creativity as they proactively meet challenges, promoting a culture of finding solutions.

1. "Credible" is used here to also represent "best-available science" also known as "best scientific information available" (BSIA), which according to the National Research Council should not be overly prescriptive due to the dynamic nature of science, but should include the evaluation principles of relevance, inclusiveness, objectivity, transparency, timeliness, verification, validation, and peer review of information as appropriate.

2. In this context, the term "partnerships" is a general concept rather than solely relationships based on a formal legal agreement. Rather, a partnership is a mutually beneficial arrangement that leverages resources to achieve shared goals between the partners, based on mutual respect and genuine appreciation of each partners' contribution. Partnerships are intended to include all forms of collaboration, both formal and informal.

Suggested Statements of Foundational Strategies

During discussions in the strategic vision process, a number of themes began to emerge. While these “themes” were common among multiple discussions, only four stood out as fundamental to everything DFG and F&GC might do in the future; these themes represent the practices or strategies that leadership and staff should use in their work. In other words, these four “foundational strategies” generally apply to almost everything DFG and F&GC expect to achieve and represent the fundamental ways in which the public should experience DFG and F&GC efforts to meet their missions.

DFG/F&GC engage in clear and compelling communication, education and outreach, both internally and externally. In all aspects of their work they exchange ideas and information to achieve common understanding or to create new or improved awareness with their colleagues, partners and the public.

DFG/F&GC are committed to formal and informal partnerships and collaboration. In all aspects of their work they will seek to utilize both formal and informal partnerships and collaboration that allows them to provide consistent, unified and optimized delivery of products and services.

DFG/F&GC use “ecosystem-based” management³ informed by credible science. When scientific or technological information is considered in decisions, the information should be subject to well-established scientific protocols, including peer review where appropriate.

DFG/F&GC engage in broadly-informed and transparent decision-making. In all aspects of their work they engage in transparent decision-making procedures and outcomes that inspire public confidence and When decisions rely on scientific or technical findings or conclusions, that information should be made available during public decision-making processes.

3. Ecosystem-based management is an environmental management approach that recognizes the full array of interactions within an ecosystem, including humans, rather than considering single issues, species, or ecosystem services in isolation (Christensen et al. 1996, McLeod et al. 2005).

Suggested Overarching Goals and Objectives

An overarching goal defines what DFG and F&GC will achieve as they pursue their missions, while an objective is a smaller, more specific goal that helps achieve each overarching goal. Goals and objectives will periodically conflict and, at times, DFG and F&GC will have to weigh the costs and benefits of pursuing one goal or objective over another. In this manner, goals are different from foundational strategies, which represent the consistent manner in which DFG and F&GC are suggested to do their work. Four overarching goals are suggested, each with a number of objectives.

Goal 1: Strong Relationships with Other Agencies, Organizations and the Public

DFG/F&GC will build strong relationships with other organizations and the public, and specifically will:

1. Increase stewardship awareness and participation by the public
2. Proactively engage other agencies, organizations and stakeholders as partners and collaborators
3. Understand stakeholder challenges and expectations
4. Provide excellent customer service
5. Embrace and support diversity among stakeholders and the public
6. Share data, processes, tools, knowledge, expertise and information
7. Engage in timely and transparent decision-making
8. Exhibit fiscal transparency and accountability
9. Find collaborative, place-based solutions

Goal 2: Highly Valued Programs and Quality Services

DFG/F&GC will deliver programs that are valued by the public and services of the highest quality, and specifically will:

1. Protect, manage, enhance and restore wildlife resources
2. Help achieve and maintain healthy ecosystems
3. Promote and support public outdoor recreation, hunting and fishing
4. Provide consistent and unified delivery of quality services and products
5. Practice adaptive management
6. Pursue local, regional and statewide recognition of successes
7. Engage in broadly-informed and transparent decision-making

Suggested Overarching Goals and Objectives (continued)

Goal 3: An Effective Organization

DFG/F&GC will achieve outcomes consistent with their missions, and specifically will:

1. Coordinate resource planning, policies, practices, processes and regulations with other agencies and organizations and statewide within DFG
2. Encourage and support strong internal, external and interagency communications and collaboration
3. Develop, align and inform clear fish and wildlife statutes, regulations and governance
4. Define and support success
5. Encourage creative problem solving and foresight into emerging challenges and issues
6. Develop knowledgeable, capable and experienced employees and commissioners
7. Demonstrate credibility
8. Delegate authority commensurate with responsibilities
9. Embrace and support diversity in employees

Goal 4: An Efficient Organization

DFG/F&GC will efficiently utilize their resources, and specifically will:

1. Align internal governance practices, processes and structures
2. Develop simple, clear and consistent governance and permitting practices and processes
3. Manage capacity/resources
4. Maximize services while minimizing costs
5. Develop and implement equitable funding mechanisms that ensure funding is directed to program priorities to the maximum extent possible

Suggested Recommendations to Help Achieve the Goals and Objectives of the Interim Strategic Vision

The recommendations presented in the following table were adopted by the CFWSV Blue Ribbon Citizen Commission on February 6, 2012 as suggested recommendations for consideration by the CFWSV Executive Committee; these recommendations are also supported by 19 CFWSV Stakeholder Advisory Committee members who participated in a meeting on February 3, 2012 and indicated they could “live with” forwarding the recommendations for consideration in the interim strategic vision for the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the California Fish and Game Commission (F&GC).

Topic	Details on Page	Recommendation	Goals and Objectives Achieve ⁴
Foundational Strategy: Commit to formal and Informal Collaboration and Partnerships	B2	DFG should create an internal culture that supports partnerships, encourages collaboration, and promotes cooperation.	
	B2	DFG and F&GC should create, foster and actively participate in effective partnerships/ collaborations with and among other agencies and stakeholders to achieve shared goals.	
	B2	Engage in effective integrated resource management (IRM) processes.	

4. The BRCC and SAG members have not yet identified all for all the recommendations in this table which goals and objectives the recommendation is intended to help achieve.

Suggested Recommendations to Help Achieve the Goals and Objectives of the Interim Strategic Vision (continued)

Topic	Details on Page	Recommendation	Goals and Objectives Achieve ⁴
Foundational Strategy: Engage in Broadly-Informed and Transparent Decision-Making	B4	DFG and F&GC will be transparent about their functions, programs, and activities.	
Science	B4	Decisions made by managers and policy-makers are informed by credible science in fully transparent processes.	<p>Strong Relationships with Other Agencies, Organizations and the Public: Share data, processes, tools, knowledge, expertise and information (Goal 1: Objective 6)</p> <p>Highly Valued Programs and Quality Services: Engage in broadly-informed and transparent decision-making (Goal 2: Objective 7)</p>

Suggested Recommendations to Help Achieve the Goals and Objectives of the Interim Strategic Vision (continued)

Topic	Details on Page	Recommendation	Goals and Objectives Achieve ⁴
Fish and Game Commission	B5	<p>Create greater stakeholder input and exchange, and a better understanding of issues by F&GC members and all involved prior to formal F&GC hearings by expanding the use of committees and holding issue-specific public workshops.</p>	<p>Strong Relationships with Other Agencies, Organizations and the Public: Proactively engage other agencies, organizations and stakeholders as partners and collaborators; Understand stakeholder challenges and expectations; Share data, processes, tools, knowledge, expertise and information; Engage in timely and transparent decision-making (Goal 1, objectives 2, 3, 6 and 7)</p> <p>Highly Valued Programs and Quality Services: Engage in broadly-informed and transparent decision-making (Goal 2, Objective 7)</p> <p>An Effective Organization: Encourage and support strong internal, external and interagency communications and collaboration; Encourage creative problem solving and foresight into emerging challenges and issues; Develop knowledgeable, capable and experienced employees and commissioners; Demonstrate credibility (Goal 3, objectives 2, 5, 6 and 7)</p>

Suggested Recommendations to Help Achieve the Goals and Objectives of the Interim Strategic Vision (continued)

Topic	Details on Page	Recommendation	Goals and Objectives Achieve ⁴
Defining Success	B6	Develop performance metrics to define success, tie performance to DFG's and F&GC's mission statements, and match DFG's and F&GC's goals with funding (priorities).	
Statutes and Regulations	B7	All DFG policies are in writing and employees are trained in the proper implementation of policies.	<p>Highly Valued Programs and Quality Services: Engage in broadly-informed and transparent decision-making (Goal 2, Objective 7)</p> <p>An Efficient Organization: Develop simple, clear and consistent governance and permitting practices and processes (Goal 4, Objective 2)</p>

Suggested Recommendations to Help Achieve the Goals and Objectives of the Interim Strategic Vision (continued)

Topic	Details on Page	Recommendation	Goals and Objectives Achieve ⁴
Permitting	B7	Establish an inter-agency coordination process in the review of CESA incidental take permit applications, streambed alteration agreements, and other appropriate permits and agreements.	<p>An Effective Organization: Coordinate resource planning, policies, practices, processes and regulations with other agencies and organizations and statewide within DFG. (Goal 3, Objective 1)</p> <p>An Efficient Organization: Develop simple, clear and consistent governance and permitting practices and processes (Goal 4, Objective 2)</p>
	B7	Make the application review and permit preparation process more consistent and transparent to applicants.	<p>An Effective Organization: Coordinate resource planning, policies, practices, processes and regulations with other agencies and organizations and statewide within DFG (Goal 3, Objective 1)</p> <p>An Efficient Organization: Develop simple, clear and consistent governance and permitting practices and processes (Goal 4, Objective 2)</p>

Suggested Recommendations to Help Achieve the Goals and Objectives of the Interim Strategic Vision (continued)

Topic	Details on Page	Recommendation	Goals and Objectives Achieve ⁴
Permitting (continued)	B8	Remove permitting barriers to “small scale” restoration and other appropriate projects.	Highly Valued Programs and Quality Services: Help achieve and maintain healthy ecosystems (Goal 2, Objective 2) An Effective Organization: Coordinate resource planning, policies, practices, processes and regulations with other agencies and organizations and statewide within DFG (possibly Goal 3, Objective 1)
	B9	Develop a set of criteria and implementation guidelines for “beneficial” projects.	
Enforcement	B10	Ensure successful recruitment and retention of California fish and game wardens.	Highly Valued Programs and Quality Services: Protect and manage, enhance and restore wildlife resources (Goal 2, Objective 1)
	B10	Establish a state wildlife crimes prosecutorial task force (including DFG, California Attorney General’s Office, California District Attorneys’ Association, U.S. Attorney General’s Office, etc.) to identify new approaches to shared or specialized adjudication of environmental/wildlife crimes.	



CALIFORNIA FISH & WILDLIFE
Strategic Vision

California Fish and Wildlife Vision Project.
Proposed Interim Strategic Vision: Suggested Recommendations for the California Department of
Fish and Game and the California Fish and Game Commission

February 10, 2012

Potential Interim Strategic Vision

Appendix A: Various Proposed Vision and Mission Statements

To capture and display the feedback received on the draft interim strategic vision, staff prepared a document on January 19, 2012 that compiled suggestions for rewording text. The text in this appendix was originally found at the beginning of the January 19 document and under Section 1: Suggested Mission and Vision Statements. The mission and vision statement suggestions are presented here in succession, each version having an identifying number.

Since only preliminary conversations have been held among BRCC and SAG members about potential changes to the visions and missions of DFG and F&GC, specific recommended changes, if any, to the existing DFG and F&GC vision and mission statements will be addressed in the third phase of the CFWSV Project.

In one instance, a suggested change can only be manifested in multiple locations. Such explanatory notes are set off in {curly brackets} to prevent their being mistaken for suggested wordings.

It is worth noting that for the visions and missions portion of the draft interim strategic vision, at least one comment on each called for no changes to the text. It was not clear whether such a response represented (a) a belief that the existing wording was the best possible, (b) merely the absence of an idea for superior wording, or (c) no opinion on the matter. For example, if a survey respondent answered “no change” regarding the current DFG mission statement, this may mean the respondent actively supports the current wording, does not have a suggestion for better language, or simply has no opinion on the matter.

Suggested Mission and Vision Statements

Suggested DFG Mission Statement

Current DFG Mission Statement:

The mission of the California Department of Fish and Game is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public.

DFG Mission Suggestion 1:

The mission of the [Department of Wildlife] [Department of Fish and Wildlife] is, in partnership with other resource agencies and organizations, to protect, restore, and manage California's environment, with focus on its diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their sustainable use and enjoyment by the public.

DFG Mission Suggestion 2:

The mission of the *California Department of Fish and Game* is to manage California's wildlife resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public.

DFG Mission Suggestion 3:

The mission of the *California Department of Fish and Game* is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their sustainability to the global natural ecosystem.

DFG Mission Suggestion 4:

{See F&GC Mission Suggestion 2, below, which incorporates a suggestion that DFG and F&GC have a single mission statement.}

Suggested F&GC Mission Statement

Current F&GC Mission:

The mission of the *California Fish and Game Commission* is, on behalf of California citizens, to ensure the long term sustainability of California's fish and wildlife resources by:

- Guiding the ongoing scientific evaluation and assessment of California's fish and wildlife resources;
- Setting California's fish and wildlife resource management policies and insuring these are implemented by the Department of Fish and Game;
- Establishing appropriate fish and wildlife resource management rules and regulations; and
- Building active fish and wildlife resource management partnerships with individual landowners, the public and interest groups, and federal, state and local resource management agencies.

F&GC Suggestion 1 {all "by" bullet points removed, to be moved to the vision}:

The mission of the California Fish and Game Commission is, on behalf of California citizens, to ensure the long term sustainability of California's fish and wildlife resources by overseeing and setting policy for the California Department of [Fish and] Wildlife.

F&GC Suggestion 2 {DFG and F&GC share a single mission}:

The California Department of Fish and Game and the California Fish and Game Commission share a single mission: to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public.

Suggested DFG Vision Statement

Current DFG Vision:

We seek to create a California Department of Fish and Game that:

- acts to anticipate the future.
- approaches management of our wildlife resources on an ecosystem basis.

- bases its resource management decisions on sound biological information and a clear understanding of the desires of the public.
- is based on teamwork and an open and honest internal communication.
- empowers its employees to make most of the "how" decisions.
- is committed to extensive external communication and education programs.
- creates and promotes partnerships; coalitions of agencies, groups, or individuals; and any other collaborative efforts to meet the needs and management of wildlife resources.

DFG Vision Suggestion 1:

We seek to create a California Department of Fish and Game that:

- acts to anticipate the future.
- approaches management of our fish, wildlife and habitat resources on an ecosystem basis.
- acts to protect and restore ecosystems.
- bases its resource management decisions on sound biological information
- is based on teamwork and an open and honest internal communication.
- empowers its employees to make most of the "how" decisions.
- is committed to extensive external communication and education programs.
- supports staff involvement in field research and the publication of scientific papers
- creates and promotes partnerships; coalitions of agencies, groups, or individuals; and any other collaborative efforts to meet the needs and management of wildlife resources.
- makes its policy and management decisions openly and transparently.

Suggested F&GC Vision Statement

Current F&GC Vision:

The vision of the California Fish & Game Commission, in partnership with the Department of Fish and Game and the public, is to assure California has sustainable fish and wildlife resources.

F&GC Vision Suggestion 1:

The vision of the California Fish & Game Commission, in partnership with the Department of Fish and Game and the public, is to ensure California has sustainable native and desired non-native fish and wildlife resources.

F&GC Vision Suggestion 2:

The vision of the California Fish & Game Commission, in partnership with the Department of Fish and Game, other resources agencies and organizations, and the public, is to assure California has sustainable, healthy and resilient fish and wildlife.

F&GC Vision Suggestion 3:

The vision of the California Fish & Game Commission, in partnership with the Department of Fish and Game and the public, is to assure California has healthy functioning native ecosystems.

F&GC Vision Suggestion 4:

The vision of the California Fish & Game Commission is, through its oversight and direction of the Department of Fish and Game, to ensure California has sustainable plant and wildlife resources, by the maintenance of healthy habitats.

F&GC Vision Suggestion 5:

The vision of the California Fish & Game Commission, in partnership with the Department of Fish and Game and the public, is to ensure that California's citizens will have continued use and enjoyment of sustainable fish and wildlife resources.

F&GC Vision Suggestion 6:

The vision of the California Fish & Game Commission, in partnership with the Department of Fish and Game and the public, is to conserve California's wildlife resources for future generations.

F&GC Vision Suggestion 7:

The vision of the California Fish & Game Commission, in partnership with the Department of Fish and Game and the public, is to protect, enhance, and ensure the sustainability of California's fish and wildlife resources.

F&GC Vision Suggestion 8:

The vision of the California Fish & Game Commission, in partnership with the Department of Fish and Game and the public, is to fulfill its mission by:

- Guiding the ongoing scientific evaluation and assessment of California's fish and wildlife resources;
- Setting California's fish and wildlife resource management policies and insuring these are implemented by the Department of Fish and Game;
- Establishing appropriate fish and wildlife resource management rules and regulations; and
- Building active fish and wildlife resource management partnerships with individual landowners, the public and interest groups, and federal, state and local resource management agencies.

Proposed Interim Strategic Vision

Appendix B: Suggested Recommendations to Accompany the Interim Strategic Vision

The California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision (CFWSV) Blue Ribbon Citizen Commission (BRCC) and Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) met on February 3, 2012 to discuss revisions to chapter 3 of the draft interim strategic vision as the potential basis for a suggested interim strategic vision for the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and California Fish and Game Commission (F&GC), as well as potential recommendations to accompany the suggested interim strategic vision.

At the February 3 meeting, the 19 participating SAG members indicated that they could “live with” forwarding for consideration the recommendations in this appendix for how the goals of the strategic vision could be achieved. SAG participants represented a wide variety of interests: Agriculture and ranching, business and industry, commercial fishing, forestry, hunting, local government, marine resources, non-consumptive recreation, nonprofit conservation, private land ownership, sport fishing, state government, and water. Not all participants were present for the entire meeting.

On February 6, 2012 the BRCC met separately and adopted as its own recommendations much of what was discussed on February 3. In addition to the suggested core interim strategic vision, the BRCC also adopted the accompanying recommendations presented in this appendix. Two additional recommendations were supported by the SAG members but not adopted by the BRCC; those are not included in this appendix.

Foundational Strategies Recommendations

Foundational Strategy #1: Engage in clear and compelling communication, education and outreach, both internally and externally

Implementation actions include:

- A. Develop a communications plan
 - i. Internal
 - ii. External
 - iii. Identify high-level branding and recognition strategies to enhance recognition of DFG by the general public
- B. Designate a communications person in each region. Not only would this person be responsible for generating media stories and answering media calls, but they will also be an “expert” of sorts in the region and know all about projects, programs, etc. This person will communicate regularly with headquarters
- C. Enhance Education and Outreach
 - i. Develop an outreach and education plan that includes using partnerships
- D. Improve community relations with the help of organizations such as the Natural Resource Volunteer Program to educate the public on issues such as Keep Me Wild, Conservation

Education, marine protected area boundaries, enforcement information, regulation clarification, etc.

Foundational Strategy #2: Commit to Formal and Informal Collaboration and Partnerships¹

Description and Definition

Throughout SAG and BRCC discussions during the strategic vision process, there has been a consistent emphasis on the value of partnerships and collaboration; these concepts are included in chapter 3 of the draft interim strategic vision as a core value, as a common theme, and under goals 1 and 3. DFG would significantly benefit from improving both its internal culture of collaboration and external forms of collaboration with a wide range of partners. The SAG defines a partnership as a mutually beneficial arrangement (whether formal or informal) that leverages DFG resources to achieve shared goals between the partners. Partnerships should be based on mutual respect and genuine appreciation of each partners' contribution. DFG staff members have noted that partnerships require staff time and resources, labor contracts may preclude the use of 'volunteer' labor in some instances, and that insurance and liability issues may create further barriers to some types of partnerships. Nonetheless, the SAG believes that improved collaboration and increased use of partnerships is critical to the long-term success of DFG.

Collaboration and Partnerships Recommendation #1: DFG should create an internal culture that supports partnerships, encourages collaboration, and promotes cooperation.

Collaboration and Partnerships Recommendation #2: DFG and F&GC should create, foster and actively participate in effective partnerships/collaborations with and among other agencies and stakeholders to achieve shared goals.

Collaboration and Partnerships Recommendation #3: Engage in effective integrated resource management (IRM²) processes.

Description: Current processes fall short and result in inefficient or unsatisfactory results. The intent of this action is for DFG and F&GC to support and participate in "targeted" multi-agency collaboratives that will effectively promote IRM among state and federal natural resource permitting, and action agencies and/or multi-agency/user natural resource stakeholder groups to achieve: Improved sharing of data, information, tools and science among agencies; better alignment of planning, policies and regulations across agencies; coordinated and streamlined permitting; regulatory certainty; increased

¹ In this context, the term "partnerships" is a general concept rather than solely relationships based on a formal legal agreement. Rather, a partnership is a mutually beneficial arrangement that leverages resources to achieve shared goals between the partners, based on mutual respect and genuine appreciation of each partners' contribution. Partnerships are intended to include all forms of collaboration, both formal and informal.

² For these purposes IRM is defined as "A planning and decision making process that coordinates resource use so that the long-term sustainable benefits are optimized and conflicts among users are minimized. IRM brings together all resource groups rather than each working in isolation to balance the economic, environmental, and social requirements of society." [Nova Scotia, Canada, Department of Natural Resources, from California Natural Resources Agency, "The Future of Natural Resource Management", December 2010]

coordination with all levels of government agencies (federal, tribal, state, local), stakeholder groups, private landowners, and others; and increased effectiveness through leveraging of existing networks, relationships, and multi-agency venues.

Multi-agency collaboratives, whether formally established or ad hoc “task forces”, have structural and functional characteristics that make them more effective in furthering the mandates and missions of each participating agency and employing integrated resource management in achieving natural resource stewardship. Some of the selected characteristics include:

- A clear statement of purpose and development of short- and long-term goals and objectives; action plan and specific strategies; ongoing evaluation of work and attainment of goals; and continual review of progress and new opportunities.
- A shared recognition of the benefits accrued through joint action(s), especially when faced with limits on individual organizational resources.
- Sufficient alignment, information sharing, and mutual understanding of core values, resource planning, policies, and regulations of the collaborating agencies.
- Clear, strong, and sustained political support and direction from leadership at the federal, state, and local levels (e.g., executive orders that articulate policy direction largely common to all participating agencies and/or legislation).
- Agreements, such as memoranda of understanding or agreements, reflecting policy direction that clearly describe mutually agreed on commitments, roles and responsibilities, dispute resolution, objectives, and statements of mutual support and collaboration.
- A stable cadre of professionals from each agency that is dedicated to multi-agency collaboratives, which receives sustained and adequate support, even in the face of budget cycles and leadership changes, to achieve objectives stated in multi-agency agreements such as MOU/MOAs.
- A “targeted” or focused resource or use sector (e.g., wildlands, agriculture, water, oil and mineral development, urban growth, transportation, energy) that is geographically focused (e.g., ecoregion, coastal areas, Central Valley, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, urban areas, desert region) in which the collaborating agencies engage.
- A designated lead agency while shared leadership is maintained; an executive committee; and interagency/inter-disciplinary structure that helps collaboratives move forward toward attainment of group goals.
- Internally aligned agency hierarchical structures, including policy/leadership, management and planning, and technical levels, with clear demarcations of roles and responsibilities.
- Sufficiently frequent meetings of agency representatives at various levels to provide forums for identifying problems and barriers, monitoring progress, and documenting success.

IRM opportunities that were presented during SAG meetings and discussions, but were not deliberated upon by the SAG, include:

- a leadership role on the steering committee for the National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaption Plan,
- a leadership role in Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) committees,
- participation on the State Agency Steering Committee for preparing California Water Plan Updates, and
- participation in the Renewable Energy Policy Group established by the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, the Governor’s Office and the California Natural Resources Agency as well as under its aegis, the Renewable Energy Action Team, comprised of USFWS, BLM, CEC, DFG and the California Natural Resources Agency, among others.

Ties to Strategic Vision: Goal 1 (Strong Relationships with Other Agencies, Organizations and the Public), Objectives 2 (Proactively engage other agencies, organizations and stakeholders as partners and collaborators) and 9 (Find collaborative, place-based solutions); Goal 2 (Highly Valued Programs and Quality Services), Objective 2 (Help achieve and maintain healthy ecosystems); Goal 3 (An Effective Organization), Objective 1 (Coordinate resource planning, policies, practices, processes and regulations with other agencies and organizations and statewide within DFG)

Foundational Strategy #3: Use “ecosystem-based” management³ informed by credible⁴ science.

Implementation actions include:

- A. DFG and F&GC use EBM to inform resource management decisions. Examples:
 - i. Manage ecosystems as a whole rather than an individual species
 - ii. When dealing with endangered species take into account the effect on other species.

Foundational Strategy #4: Engage in Broadly-Informed and Transparent Decision-Making

Recommendation: DFG and F&GC will be transparent about their functions, programs, and activities

Implementation actions include:

- Identify the science and information used throughout the decision-making process (and communicate that information used to inform those decisions)
- DFG and F&GC provide timely public access to data collected or used by DFG and F&GC

³ Ecosystem-based management is an environmental management approach that recognizes the full array of interactions within an ecosystem, including humans, rather than considering single issues, species, or ecosystem services in isolation (Christensen et al. 1996, McLeod et al. 2005).

⁴ “Credible” is used here to also represent “best-available science” also known as “best scientific information available” (BSIA), which according to the National Research Council should not be overly prescriptive due to the dynamic nature of science, but should include the evaluation principles of relevance, inclusiveness, objectivity, transparency, timeliness, verification, validation, and peer review of information as appropriate.

Science Recommendation

Recommendation: Decisions made by managers and policy-makers are informed by credible science in fully transparent processes.

Implementation actions include:

- Managers and policy-makers use science that employs the standard protocols of the profession (peer review, publication, science review panel, etc.).
- Decision-making incorporates adaptive management to the extent possible (i.e., outcomes are tracked and new knowledge permits course corrections).
- Where the body of credible science informing the topic is in disagreement or is incomplete, those uncertainties or differences of opinion are identified, and an explanation is provided for the science selected.
- Scientific professionals in DFG are held to and protected by a DFG Science Quality Assurance and Integrity Policy

Ties to Strategic Vision: Goal 1 (Strong Relationships with Other Agencies, Organizations and the Public) Objective 6 (Share data, processes, tools, knowledge, expertise and information); Goal 2 (Highly Valued Programs and Quality Services) Objective 7 (Engage in broadly-informed and transparent decision-making)

Fish and Game Commission Recommendation

Vision: Successful natural resource stewardship will depend upon a capable and representative California Fish and Game Commission.

Recommendation: Create greater stakeholder input and exchange, and a better understanding of issues by F&GC members and all involved prior to formal F&GC hearings by expanding the use of committees and holding issue-specific public workshops

Description: The five volunteer members of the F&GC are expected to make complex public policy decisions on numerous and diverse issues at their meetings that occur only once per month. Because so much must be accomplished in such a short time at these meetings, there is limited opportunity for stakeholders and the public to be heard, and the potential for constructive interaction between F&GC members and the public is severely constrained. Currently, two (sub)committees at F&GC have proven successful—marine resources, which is focused on marine issues and is mandated by law, and AI Taucher Preserving Hunting and Fishing Opportunities, which was created administratively by F&GC to address the concerns of hunters and fishermen. Each of these (sub)committees has one or two assigned F&GC members, allowing them to build a better understanding and expertise in the area of the (sub)committee. In addition, stakeholders are appeased by participating in a process where all can be heard outside of a formal public hearing where time is compressed. These outcomes also could be

accomplished with focused, issue-specific public workshops on controversial issues that are coming before F&GC if an ongoing (sub)committee process is infeasible or unnecessary.

Ties to Strategic Vision: Goal 1 (Strong Relationships with Other Agencies, Organizations and the Public), objectives 2 (Proactively engage other agencies, organizations and stakeholders as partners and collaborators), 3 (Understand stakeholder challenges and expectations), 6 (Share data, processes, tools, knowledge, expertise and information) and 7 (Engage in timely and transparent decision-making); Goal 2 (Highly Valued Programs and Quality Services), Objective 7 (Engage in broadly-informed and transparent decision-making); Goal 3 (An Effective Organization), objectives 2 (Encourage and support strong internal, external and interagency communications and collaboration), 5 (Encourage creative problem solving and foresight into emerging challenges and issues), 6 (Develop knowledgeable, capable and experienced employees and commissioners) and 7 (Demonstrate credibility) *(need to reduce to more specific goals and objectives to be achieved)*

Defining Success Recommendation

Recommendation: Develop performance metrics to define success, tie performance to DFG's and F&GC's mission statements, and match DFG's and F&GC's goals with funding (priorities).

Description: Measuring success is not just a matter of staff development, such as job descriptions, work plans and performance evaluations, although staff development is important for enabling employees to have a sense of purpose and to ensure that the employees are pursuing departmental goals, not individual goals.

In the big picture, defining how to measure success by developing high quality performance measures that are relevant, specific, consistent and timely will enable DFG to provide information that will assist in determining the extent to which DFG's many statutory responsibilities are being fulfilled and what resources it is using to do so.

From the Legislative Analyst's Office Report dated July 21, 2011 --

Department of Fish and Game: Budget and Policy Overview

"Planning and Evaluation of DFG's Activities"

"The Issue: The department issued a strategic plan in 1995 and has issued updates periodically. The plan identifies goals and strategies to meet those goals, but the plan's impact on the activities of the department is unclear. In addition, prior LAO analyses have identified a lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of those strategies and of the department's activities generally. The department has historically had difficulty providing information to the Legislature on the workload it is accomplishing, making it difficult to determine the extent to which the department's many statutory responsibilities are being fulfilled and what resources it is using to do so."

From the Legislative Analyst's Office Report dated September 14, 2011

Fish and Wildlife Agency Structures and Best Practices: A Study of Florida, Texas, Washington and New York

“Program Evaluation Requires High-Quality Performance Measures”

“Criteria for high quality performance measures are relevance, specific, consistency and timeliness. Identifying measures that are unambiguous and relevant to the desired outcomes can be particularly challenging for fish and wildlife agencies... Current performance measures do not often meet the criteria that they be relevant and specific. Using multiple measures to track a single objective can mitigate the negative effects of poor measures.”

Statutes and Regulations Recommendation

Recommendation: All DFG policies are in writing and employees are trained in the proper implementation of policies.

Description: Currently there seems to be significant differences between regions on permitting standards. There are also instances of policies changing seemingly overnight when employees change. This is concerning to stakeholders and diminishes trust in DFG and its decisions. Ensuring all policies are in writing will improve transparency and improve the permitting process by allowing regulated entities to understand what will be asked of them when they apply for a permit.

Implementation actions include:

- Identify all unwritten policies
- Formalize all policies in writing.
- Make written policies accessible to the public, including posting to the Internet and allowing for public comment during policy development.

Ties to Strategic Vision: Goal 2 (Highly Valued Programs and Quality Services), Objective 7 (Engage in broadly-informed and transparent decision-making); Goal 4 (An Efficient Organization), Objective 2 (Develop simple, clear and consistent governance and permitting practices and processes)

Permitting Recommendations

Permitting Recommendation #1: Establish an inter-agency coordination process in the review of CESA incidental take permit applications, streambed alteration agreements, and other appropriate permits and agreements.

Implementation actions include:

- A. Use or create where necessary joint state, federal, and local review teams that bring all the permitting agencies to the table at the same time to review a proposed project and any associated permit applications.

- B. Develop legislation that encourages the formation/use of such joint review teams that either offers incentives or requires agencies to come to the table.

Permitting Recommendation #2: Make the application review and permit preparation process more consistent and transparent to applicants.

Description (note that portions of this text may apply to both 2a and 2b; may ultimately need to be split): Review of permit applications and preparation of permits such as state incidental take permits and streambed alteration agreements (for DFG) consumes the time of the agency project lead, leaving little time for advanced coordination. In addition, applicants find it difficult to plan projects that meet the needs of all permitting agencies (state, federal, and local) given that staff from different agencies often give conflicting requirements, in part due to differences between the various applicable laws. Improving the coordination between the various permitting agencies, allowing the applicant to engage with all of the permitting agencies simultaneously, and making the permit requirements more transparent to the permittee would realize great efficiency. One model of a multi-agency review group that has proven successful is dredging permits in the San Francisco Bay where permit applications are reviewed by all permitting agencies at one time. There is a perception that DFG staff handles the permitting process inconsistently. Having a training program in place would aid in consistency and would give applicants more confidence in staff determinations.

Constraints (note that portions of this text may apply to both 2a and 2b; may need to be split): Agencies are often unwilling or unable to come to the table, and setting up a joint review process may take several years and may require formal encouragement. The state is not able to force the federal agencies to participate and may not be able to force local agencies to participate in a joint review process. Instituting and maintaining an online tracking system would require funding/staffing and time. Ongoing training requires staff time and some expense. Established timelines under statute may limit ability to convene joint review teams.

Implementation actions include:

- A. Have DFG develop and maintain an online permit tracking system so that applicants are able to follow their DFG permit through the review process.
- B. Provide CESA and permit issuance training for DFG staff to ensure consistent review of permits.

Ties to Strategic Vision: Goal 3 (An Effective Organization), Objective 1 (Coordinate resource planning, policies, practices, processes and regulations with other agencies and organizations and statewide within DFG); Goal 4 (An Efficient Organization), Objective 2 (Develop simple, clear and consistent governance and permitting practices and processes)

Permitting Recommendation #3: Remove permitting barriers to “small scale” restoration and other appropriate projects

Description: Proponents of small scale restoration projects often have difficulty in obtaining the necessary permits despite the environmental benefits associated with such projects; this is due in part to the timelines and expense of the CEQA process and associated document preparation. While there is an existing categorical exemption (CE) under CEQA for small scale (<5 acres) restoration projects, a

CE cannot be used if there is a potential for significant environmental impacts, including but not limited to potential impacts to special status species. Since issuing a streambed alteration agreement pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et. seq. is a discretionary action under CEQA, a CEQA analysis and associated document preparation either by DFG as a lead agency or as a responsible agency is necessary. There is currently not a Programmatic Streambed Alteration Agreement under Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et. seq., and master streambed alteration agreements are cost prohibitive to entities like resource conservation districts who often are trying to obtain programmatic type permits to facilitate small landowner restoration projects on private property.

Discussion: The statutes and regulations discussion participants suggested that the description include new language: “The fee for programmatic agreements needs to be low and DFG needs to keep its costs low on these agreements. The costs of the programmatic agreements should not be passed onto other users.” Participants also suggested the possibility of merging the two descriptions. Additional description language from the former (Jan. 18, 2012) Potential Statutes and Regulations Recommendation #6:

“There is currently a categorical exclusion under CEQA for small scale habitat improvement projects. However the exclusion is not useable in areas in or near the habitat of listed species. Many of these improvement projects are designed to improve habitat for listed species rendering the categorical exclusion useless. The statutory exemption would need to include a much wider range of improvement projects to make it worthwhile. There are other projects permitted by DFG where discussion would be valuable regarding agreement on other targeted statutory CEQA exemptions.”

Constraints: Legislative process and associated timelines. There may be environmental group opposition to such an approach because of the inability to participate in the environmental review (CEQA) process.

Implementation actions include:

- Create a statutory exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for small scale restoration projects
- Create a Programmatic Streambed Alteration Agreement and associated process under Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et. seq.
- Create an affordable fee structure for restoration projects pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et. seq.
- Investigate other projects where a targeted CEQA exemption would be valuable.

Ties to Strategic Vision: Goal 2 (Highly Valued Programs and Quality Services), Objective 2 (Help achieve and maintain healthy ecosystems); possibly Goal 3 (An Effective Organization), Objective 1 (Coordinate resource planning, policies, practices, processes and regulations with other agencies and organizations and statewide within DFG)

Permitting Recommendation #4: Develop a set of criteria and implementation guidelines for “beneficial” projects.

Description: DFG projects on DFG properties are often restoration, habitat enhancement, maintaining or protecting species or habitat and can fall under a general descriptor of “beneficial projects.” Beneficial projects are also often proposed by private landowners in conjunction with grants received, and where not part of a compensation or mitigation effort, should be considered differently than a project that is impacting a species or habitat and causing a loss or a take. Methods, timing of projects, best management practices and a post-project greater value should be considered during the permitting stage of the project.

Implementation actions include:

- DFG to work with the California Coastal Commission on those projects in the Coastal Zone that meet criteria for beneficial project so that permitting timelines and permit conditions are not so onerous that the projects cannot be accomplished.

Enforcement Recommendations

Overarching desired outcome: Effective Enforcement

Enforcement Recommendation #1: Ensure successful recruitment and retention of California fish and game wardens

Description: The current pay structure for game wardens is significantly lower than that of other California law enforcement agencies of similar or greater in size. This discrepancy is further exacerbated by the fact that DFG’s sworn officers are required to have a college education and have greater level of independent responsibility in completing their duties. An example of this discrepancy is illustrated by the fact that the DFG chief of patrol, who has responsibility for the management of almost 400 sworn officers annually earns less than a first-line supervisor (sergeant) in the CHP; to further illustrate, an assistant chief earns less than a rank and file traffic officer with the CHP.

Justification for pay parity and benefits include but are not limited to:

- To allow for more commutative recruitment of highly qualified applicants.
- To attract and recruit highly qualified law enforcement professionals for employment.
- Maintain retention of highly qualified and trained officers
- Minimize the migration and improve retention of officers leaving high cost living areas.
- Allow new officers who gain experience in high cost coastal areas dealing with complicated marine regulations to remain in the area and provide for consistent and knowledgeable service to the public.
- Improve and enhance the recruitment of diversified workforce.
- Minimize the need for secondary employment of existing officers.
- Improve and enhance interest in upward mobility of highly qualified personnel.

- Motivate enforcement personnel to maintain and improve their educational skills and abilities for the benefit of DFG.

Implementation actions include:

- Move California fish and game wardens into a peace officer only labor union
- Develop equitable pay and benefit formulas

Ties to Strategic Vision: Goal 2 (Highly Valued Programs and Quality Services), Objective 1 (Protect and manage, enhance and restore wildlife resources)

Enforcement Recommendation #2: Establish a state wildlife crimes prosecutorial task force (including DFG, California Attorney General's Office, California District Attorneys' Association, U.S. Attorney General's Office, etc.) to identify new approaches to shared or specialized adjudication of environmental/wildlife crimes.

Description: There is a tremendous disparity across California in the adjudication of environmental/wildlife crimes, with some jurisdictions either incapable (due to workload or lack of familiarity with the codes) or unwilling to process FGC violations to the level desired by Californians. The CDAA's circuit prosecutor project functions to support district attorneys (DA) in a number of counties for such crimes, but its staff is limited both by the short supply of prosecutors and by the necessity for invitation by a DA. The task force would be convened to review and evaluate the existing situation and to propose and implement improvements in prosecutions. The task force should include public participation and targeted outreach.

Ties to Strategic Vision: Goal 2 (Highly Valued Programs and Quality Services), Objective 1 (Protect and manage, enhance and restore wildlife resources)