

**California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision Project**  
**Additional Recommendations Supported by SAG Members on February 3, 2012 for**  
**Potential Inclusion in the Interim Strategic Vision**  
*Revised February 9, 2012*

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 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 help achieve the goals and objectives of that vision.

At the February 3 meeting, the participating SAG members indicated that they could “live with” forwarding for consideration the core elements of a suggested interim strategic vision and a number of recommendations for how the goals of the strategic vision could be achieved. SAG participants at that meeting 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 adopted a series of recommendations that included all but two of the recommendations forwarded by the SAG members. This document contains the two additional suggested recommendations forwarded by the SAG but not adopted by the BRCC.

### **Suggested Name Change Recommendation**

***Recommendation: Ask the DFG director to conduct an analysis for a potential DFG name change to inform further SAG discussions***

Description: While there was significant discussion among the SAG/BRCC about the pros and cons of changing DFG’s name, additional information is still needed before a recommendation can be made. As such, the SAG/BRCC is requesting specific information regarding costs and benefits (tangible and intangible) associated with a possible name change in order to inform further SAG/BRCC deliberation.

#### Implementation Assessment

- Method: DFG administrative
- Timeline: Short-term (requested deadline of 60 days)

#### Description of Previous Discussions Related to a Name Change

There was general agreement during discussions that the name “California Department of Fish and Game” reflects the historical origins of DFG (and F&GC) as an agency primarily concerned with managing hunting and fishing. The existing name does not accurately reflect the modern, broad mandates of DFG to manage species and habitats for a variety of purposes both ecological and utilitarian. DFG manages seven major program areas: biodiversity conservation; hunting, fishing and public use administration; management of department public lands; enforcement; communications, education and outreach; spill prevention and response, and the California Fish and Game Commission. Clearly this range of responsibilities extends far beyond regulation of hunting and fishing as the current

name implies. Notably, AB 2376 itself establishes a process to develop a California Fish and *Wildlife* Strategic Vision. DFG is supported by the California *Wildlife* Foundation and the National Fish and *Wildlife* Foundation. California is one of only a small number of states that continue to use the term “game” with most state resource management agencies having replaced the game with the more inclusive term “wildlife.” Potential names that have been suggested include Department of Wildlife Conservation and Management, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Wildlife and Habitat, or Department of Wildlife.

Implementation benefits include:

- Improved alignment between DFG’s name and the DFG’s current broad range of duties (see above).
- Improved understanding from the wider public of the mission and work of DFG,
- Improved appreciation and increased support for DFG from the public.
- Future financial support (via future bond, sales tax or other funding measure on ballot, etc). Any broad scale funding mechanism will require significant public support. DFG’s name (and the impression it gives of DFG’s responsibilities being limited to managing hunting and fishing) would be a significant impediment to the success of any future public funding campaign. Polling efforts, leading up to the 21 campaign (November 2012), demonstrated that the term “wildlife” and protection of wildlife attracted wider support from diverse constituency groups than virtually any other term/concept.

Implementation drawbacks include:

- Questions whether a name change was necessary or a high priority for the strategic vision process.
- Potential public confusion between DFG and the USFWS if the DFG changed its name to use the term “wildlife”.
- Costs involved in making a name change.
- A risk of alienating DFG’s hunting constituency if a name change is viewed as agency movement away from the agency’s historic support of hunting and fishing.

Miscellaneous: Some noted that both the Natural Resources Agency and CalFire recently changed their names and suggested exploration of why, how and any costs associated with these recent name changes could be helpful as DFG considers this issue. CalFire, in particular, structured its name change process to minimize costs by allowing a gradual replacement of the name and logo on vehicles, signs, buildings, and elsewhere. Also, much of the funding for “re-branding” could be potentially be raised outside DFG from diverse groups – further underscoring the breadth of support for a more inclusive term to communicate the work of the agency.

Implementation Assessment from Previous Discussions

- Method: The California Constitution does not mention the Department of Fish and Game, but DFG's name is established by statute. Specifically, Fish and Game Code section 700 states:

"There is in the Resources Agency a Department of Fish and Game administered through the director." For this reason, a change in DFG's name would require the California State Legislature to amend the Fish and Game Code, but would not require any changes to the Constitution. Article 4, Section 20(b) of the California Constitution states: "There is a Fish and Game Commission of 5 members...." Because the Constitution specifically defines the official title, it would require a constitutional amendment to change it.

- Timeline: Medium-term as it would require legislative action

Ties to Strategic Vision: Goal 1, objectives 1 and 2; Goal 2, objectives 1 and 2; Goal 4, Objective 5

### **Suggested Enforcement Recommendation**

***Recommendation: Increase the number of DFG warden positions by 50 per year until the force totals 1,000.***

Description: California has a population of 37 million people yet our warden force remains at 1970s level when our population was 20 million. California's population has a great effect on the resource. Hunter and angler numbers may have decreased, but that has been replaced by greater population impact on the environment. California is confronting increased human-wildlife conflicts, depredation, development, renewable energy, non-consumptive recreational use, and pollution and water quality issues. Additionally, with more awareness of environmental issues the legislature has, on a yearly basis, passed more laws and mandates such as the MLPA, condor lead shot ban, and mandatory pollution response that have affected our law enforcement staff.

More and more with increased communication and improved technology there is an expectation on the part of the public and other department employees that DFG provide 24/7 year-round service. Without adequate warden staffing levels this is all but impossible. To even approach this level of public and department service and, without a staffing study, we believe we would need 1,000 sworn officers who are adequately supported administratively. These officers will provide immediate relief to current staff and allow for more timely response, the ability to focus on more investigations, greater permit compliance monitoring and an increased capacity to work with department staff to ensure regulatory mandates are carried out.

With current staffing levels, there has been created a situation where wardens, other DFG employees and the public are frustrated with the level of enforcement response and resource protection. Officers feeling obligated to DFG and the community cancel vacations, work extended shifts in excess of 18 hours, and create situations where supervisors are forced to give mixed messages such as get it done but manage your time. These extended hours and canceled vacations lead to burned out employees, anger, lower morale and, in some cases, diminished performance; this leads to more personnel complaints to the legislature and DFG and a breakdown in communication between law enforcement and other department functions.

An increase in wardens would also allow wardens to work with biologists and environmental scientists on projects that require long-term, concentrated efforts due to the complexity and investigation time required to put together a strong case. Without an adequate number of officers, the constant demand of day-to-day calls does not allow adequate time needed to follow up on more complex investigations.

In states like Texas and Florida, the warden force is already in the 700-1200 officer range. California's natural resources deserve comparable protection.

Ties to Strategic Vision: Goal 2, Objective 1