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# SACRAMENTO ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

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Robert Bailey  
Mark Barry  
Dana Curran, Vice Chair  
Dr. Anthony DeRiggi  
Richard Hunn, Chair  
Diane Kindermann  
George "Buzz" Link  
Margie Namba  
Eric Rivero- Montes  
Mark White

A JOINT COMMISSION APPOINTED BY:  
County of Sacramento  
City of Sacramento  
City of Isleton  
City of Folsom  
City of Galt  
City of Elk Grove

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**MONDAY, JANUARY 25TH, 2016, 6:02PM.  
10590 ARMSTRONG AVE.  
MATHER, CA 95655**

**1 Call to Order- Vice Chair Curran**

*The meeting of the Sacramento Environmental Commission was called to order at 6:03 p.m.*

**2 Roll Call- Staff Secretary**

*Commissioners present: George "Buzz" Link, Eric Rivero-Montes, Anthony DeRiggi, Robert Bailey, Margie Namba, Dana Curran, Mark White*

**3 Introduction of Commissioners-Vice Chair Curran**

*Commissioners each took a turn introducing themselves.*

**4 Public Comment- Vice Chair Curran**

*No members of the public addressed the Commission.*

**5 Approval of October 2015 Minutes**

*1. A motion to approve the October 2015 minutes was made by Buzz Link and seconded by Robert Bailey.*

*Ayes: George "Buzz" Link, Eric Rivero-Montes, Anthony DeRiggi, Robert Bailey, , Dana Curran, Mark White*

*Noes: None*

*Abstentions: Margie Namba*

2. *A motion to approve the November 2015 minutes was made by Anthony DeRiggi and seconded by Robert Bailey.*

*Ayes: George "Buzz" Link, Eric Rivero-Montes, Anthony DeRiggi, Robert Bailey, , Dana Curran, Mark White,*

*Noes: None*

*Abstentions: Margie Namba*

**6 Approval of Web Links to Add to SEC Webpage**

*A motion was made by Mark White and seconded by Robert Bailey to approve the addition of November links to the webpage.*

*Ayes: : George "Buzz" Link, Eric Rivero-Montes, Anthony DeRiggi, Robert Bailey, , Dana Curran, Mark White, Margie Namba*

*Noes: None*

*Abstentions: None*

**7 Sandhill Crane Update- Sean Wirth, Save Our Sandhill Cranes and Mike Savigno, President of Save Our Sandhill Cranes.**

*Mike Savigno explained that the Save Our Sandhill Cranes Organization (SOS) is a local 501 (c)(3) organization founded to aid in the protection of the Sandhill Crane. SOS fulfills its mission through education, partnering with other local conservation agencies in conservation efforts, and by providing input on local land use and Environmental Impact Reports.*

*Sean Wirth continued the presentation on the Sandhill Cranes. There are 6 species of Sandhill Crane but only three of them are common in the Western region: the Greater Sandhill Crane, the Lesser Sandhill Crane and the Canadian Sandhill Crane. Greaters are currently listed as a protected species as their numbers have diminished due to loss of habitat. One other tragic cause of diminished numbers is that the Cranes were hunted excessively by hungry miners in the 1940's and were very compliant targets.*

*Before the Europeans came to the Americas and changed the hydrology of the region, the central valley had large rivers that overflowed 40% the land. This was an optimal*

*environment for the Cranes to flourish as Sandhill Cranes rest, roost and feed in shallow margins of wetlands and marshes. Modern levees, dams and changes to the landscape have caused the Cranes to adapt their roosting areas from flooded areas to agricultural fields which have replaced natural floodplains. Cranes roost by standing in 3 inches of water at the margins of flooded fields, eating the grain at the edge of the fields and then the phosphorus creatures that rise to the surface of the flooded area. They can adapt to roosting in row crop fields but cannot roost in fields with vineyards and trees. Urban expansion is also slowly encroaching on the natural resting areas of the Sandhill Cranes. By actively protecting and conserving habitats of the Sandhill Crane many other species of birds and animals are ensured a protected habitat as well because they roost and forage in the same environment.*

*The twin tunnels in the Bay Delta Conservation Plan severely impact the habitat of the Sandhill Crane, with low transmission lines estimated to kill 48 Sandhill Cranes per year. As the Cranes are fully protected and by law, cannot be killed or removed, there is no mitigation for this issue.*

*Across North America, Sandhill Cranes use 3 corridors for migration flying; the Pacific Flyway, the Central Flyway and the Eastern Flyway. The birds are very loyal to their roosting areas and do not cross over to other flyways so if one population decreases it does not necessitate that Cranes using other migration corridors will cross flyways to make up for low numbers.*

*SOS is working on determining the minimum habitat needed in our corridor, the Pacific Flyway, to support the current population of 600,000 Sandhill Cranes. Some solutions ensuring support of the population include encouraging wildlife friendly farming, planning urban expansion wisely and leaving islands instead of rebuilding all levees.*

## **8 Habitat Restoration Projects, Central Valley- Helen Swagerty, River Partners, Sacramento Valley Senior Biologist**

*Helen Swaggerty explained the River Partner's mission as creating habitat for the benefit of people and the environment. River Partners accomplishes this mission by partnering with many other agencies and working as subcontractors that restore areas to their natural state, providing homes and feeding grounds for wildlife. Two local current projects include working with the City of Sacramento on 28<sup>th</sup> Street Sutter's Landing dump as well contracting with Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency to restore habitat in the Natomas area. River Partners also completed design and restoration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest setback levee project in California, the Bear River Habitat*

*Restoration Project, in 2006, which included 625 acres of habitat restoration.*

*River Partners sometimes chooses to purchase land themselves and restore the natural habitat with the long range goal of transferring the land to state or federal agencies for conservation and public use.*

*Designing habitats takes into account vertical structure and tree canopy layers, patch size requirements of future inhabitants, hydrology, and soil components, to list a few. Maintenance of the restoration projects takes into account the topography of the project when determining irrigation methods, weeds mitigated by mowing to prevent heads from dropping seeds and how and which herbicides may be used.*

*The success of the River Partner Habitat Restoration projects can be measured by the response and approval of the inhabitants that come to live in the restored areas. Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetles have been found in 2 mitigation sites on the Feather River and the Least Bell's Vireo, thought to be absent from the Central Valley, has been sighted in the Valley for the first time in 60 years. Also taking up residence in the newly restored habitats are the Riparian Brush Rabbit and the Riparian Wood rat, which are sure signs of wildlife approval.*

**9 Sacramento County Environmental Management Director's Report-Ryan Bailey, Deputy Chief, Environmental Compliance**

**10 Commissioners Comments:**

*Vice Chair Curran introduced Chair Hunn's new initiatives for 2016 to the other Commissioners. The initiatives are:*

- 1. Planning for the production of a yearly environmental advisory report that would be distributed to the appointing authorities.*
- 2. Commissioner presentations throughout the year on the topic of their area of expertise.*
- 3. Monitoring of other local agencies with the goal of reporting back to the Sacramento Environmental Commission each month.*

*Reminders were made to reach out to possible award nominees.*

*The Awards Review Committee for 2016 is Mark White, Buzz Link, Margie Namba.*

*Action: Email past winners list to commissioners.*

*Commissioner Link was recognized and thanked for his past 2 years of service as Chair.*

- 12 **Adjournment** 8:02 p.m. *The next meeting will be held on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 at EMD, 10590 Armstrong Ave., Mather, California 95655*