



# Memorandum

Date: October 19, 2010

To: Fish and Game Commissioners:  
Mr. Jim Kellogg, President  
Mr. Richard B. Rogers, Vice President  
Mr. Michael Sutton, Member  
Mr. Daniel W. Richards, Member  
Mr. Jack Baylis, Member

From: John McCamman  
Director  
Department of Fish and Game

Subject: **Department of Fish and Games-Top Priorities**

“The Legislature finds and declares that the department has in the past not been adequately funded to meet its mandates. The principal causes have been the fixed nature of the department’s revenues in contrast with the rising costs resulting from inflation, the increased burden on the department to carry out its public trust responsibilities, and additional responsibilities placed on the department by the Legislature. This lack of funding has prevented proper planning and manpower allocation. The lack of funding has required the department to restrict warden enforcement and to defer essential management of lands acquired for wildlife conservation. The lack of funding for fish and wildlife conservation activities other than sport and commercial fishing and hunting activities has resulted in inadequate wildlife and habitat conservation and wildlife protection programs.”

--Fish and Game Code, Section 710

In 2006, the code section above was added to the California Fish and Game Code, proving that the state Legislature acknowledges that the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has limited resources and ever increasing mandates, most of them without a funding source to enforce or implement the mandate. There are many examples in the DFG budget of programs for which the fees charged do not cover the cost to maintain the program. Nearly a decade of budget information for DFG can be found online at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/budget/>.

Over the past decade and based on these limited resources, DFG leadership has had to make strategic decisions on which programs and mandates will be priorities and which will be delayed or sacrificed. These priorities are fluid and change frequently. DFG staff is often redirected to focus resources on the priority projects.

In 2006, DFG leadership convened to identify certain properties of its programs and mandates that would serve as a structure to create priorities. These were called Strategic Initiatives, and were intended to ensure that the priorities chosen achieved one of seven goals: develop statewide land stewardship based upon resource needs, develop strong water resource management program, develop/enhance partnerships, improve regulatory programs, enhance organizational vitality by focusing on employees and internal systems, expand scientific capacity, and enhance communications, education and outreach.

While these initiatives serve as a structure, the breadth and depth of issues faced by DFG is daunting. DFG is wholly or in part responsible for alteration or diversion agreements on streams and rivers, restoration of marshes, recovery of abandoned boats, improving farming and agriculture practices to slow or stop habitat degradation, permitting for construction of new homes and businesses, ensuring habitat connectivity (or animal corridors) for roadway construction and improvements, siting for solar power plants, and the list goes on.

The core mission of the department has changed from when DFG was created more than 140 years ago. DFG's dedicated employees do their very best to provide vital services to our traditional constituencies, hunters and anglers. But the constituencies have grown over the years, and DFG also has to provide necessary and mandated conservation and protection programs to essentially all Californians, including animal rights groups, other law enforcement agencies, business and industry, farmers, boaters, local governments, and countless others.

DFG's mission statement says: *The Mission of the 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.* It is a broad and lofty goal to achieve. It requires hard work, compromise and extensive sacrifice.

Within these pages is a snapshot of what DFG leadership has determined to be top priorities today. It is provided in the hope of giving the Commission and the public an idea of the comprehensive scope of work done within the Department of Fish and Game.