



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 8/12/2025

File #: 25-871

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Clerk of the Board

Agenda Section: Departmental

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Consider Changes to the Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive and file the report; and
2. Consider changing the number of commission members; and
3. Discuss and consider other desired changes; and
4. Direct the Clerk of the Board to return with an Ordinance to formalize any changes to the Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Sustainable Natural Resources & Infrastructure Stewardship

Strategic Plan Category: 9999 - Core Services/Other

DISCUSSION:

At the Jan. 7, 2025, Board of Supervisors meeting, the Board directed the Clerk of the Board's office to review the Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission and bring back recommendations about its membership, the commission's focus and provide any other information to help the Board determine if the commission needed to be disbanded or changed to meet the Board's needs and expectations.

Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission Background

The Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Committee was formed by Ordinance 682 titled "Ordinance Establishing the Fish & Game Advisory Committee of the County of Humboldt" on July 8, 1969 (Attachment 1). This included establishing membership at 15 total members with two being appointed by each district supervisor and five members being at-large appointments for staggered terms. Upon a second appointment, a member's four-year term expires on June 30 of their final year. The purpose of this committee was "to serve in the advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors in all matters concerning fish and game within the County of Humboldt." In addition, it established a monthly meeting schedule and a removal of members with a failure to attend clause.

On Oct. 30, 1984, Ordinance No. 1660 titled "An Ordinance Amending Sections 224-2 and 224-5 of the Humboldt County Code, increasing the membership of the Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Committee and Making Related Changes" (Attachment 2) was approved. This ordinance only updated the term end dates to reflect the 1984 end dates for terms.

On Dec. 18, 1984, Ordinance 1665 titled “An Ordinance Amending Section 224-2 of the Humboldt County Code: Regarding Membership of the Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Committee” (Attachment 3) was approved. This changed the membership to three appointments for each Supervisor and removed the five at-large members.

Lastly, on Sept. 13, 1994, the Board approved Ordinance 2050 titled “An Ordinance Amending Chapter 4 of Division 2 of Title II of the Humboldt County Code Related to the Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission” (Attachment 4). This changed the name of the committee to commission and allowed for the Board to appoint five additional at-large members to the commission if they so choose. It also set that any member missing three consecutive meetings in a row could be removed by the chair of the commission upon notification of the appointing Humboldt County District Supervisor.

Chapter 4 of the Humboldt County Code (Attachment 5) captures all these changes and is current for this commission.

Review Process and Data Received

To evaluate the Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission, the Clerk of the Board attended a monthly meeting and discussed possible changes with the commission. The Clerk of the Board reviewed the commission’s purpose and structure and researched attendance and quorum challenges. The Clerk of the Board also interviewed each member of the Board of Supervisors and reviewed the current commission membership composition, purpose and function. The Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission also began to invite members of your Board to attend their meetings as guests to keep your Board updated on items they are reviewing.

Membership

Membership on this commission has experienced some quorum challenges. There are currently 15 members, and a quorum requires eight members be present. There are currently four vacant seats on the commission. Feedback received about the number of the commissioners suggested possible revisions to the membership as there have been several last-minute meeting cancellations due to lack of a quorum. Some members of the Board of Supervisors have expressed that the consideration of reduction of members on this commission may be helpful.

Other Challenges

While there were some basic meeting structure and agenda management challenges, those have been advised on by the Clerk of the Board and will continue to be monitored through this transformation.

While the Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission brings agenda items to the Board of Supervisors, including letters of support and discussion items of needs or concerns in the county, the commission has been lacking to provide their required annual report to the Board. The Clerk of the Board has discussed this with the commissioners, and they have agreed make improvements in order to meet this requirement.

The Fish & Game Advisory Commission has its own budget unit, 1700-290 that is managed by the County Administrative Office (CAO). Monies deposited in the Fish & Game Fund (1700) are revenues collected from specific fish and game violations. Fish and game violations are distributed differently based on code section. More details can be found on the California State Controller’s website, Manual of Accounting and Audit Guidelines for Trial Courts. Monies deposited to this fund can be used for grant awards for projects that promote education, conservation, protection, propagation or preservation of fish and wildlife in Humboldt County and for administrative costs for the commission’s secretary.

During the county budget process, the CAO’s office and the commission review fund balance to determine the amount of grant funding available for distribution. The fund (1700) has seen a steady decline of collection revenue. Therefore, in some years, the commission has elected to not offer grant opportunities to let the fund build. Additionally, the commission has discussed assigning the secretarial position to a member on the commission. Currently the secretary is an independent contractor who has provided services for an annual fee. There has also been a discussion to cap the number of hours that the secretarial position can bill. Either or both ideas would potentially save on that expenditure and allow the fund (1700) to build for larger grant opportunities in the future.

Conclusion:

The Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission is an energetic committee who are invested in and have a passion for the future of fish and game activities in Humboldt County. The commission has an engaged membership who track local issues and are

very knowledgeable about state legislation and situations that could affect Humboldt. The commission has several subcommittees that present at their meetings and the commission engages with guest speakers relating to escalating topics.

Your Board may consider changing the number of commission members, direct the Clerk of the Board to explore other options, or leave the commission as is. Any changes that the Board of Supervisors would like to make to this commission will have to be done through a new ordinance and follow the ordinance protocol of two agenda items in the future. Additionally, the Clerk of the Board will work with the Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission to create a set of by-laws using the Board's decisions to guide the commission in the direction desired by the Board of Supervisors.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Fish & Game Advisory Committee Fund (1700)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is minimal financial impact to reviewing and updating the Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission. Costs associated with this item are primarily in staff time to evaluate and prepare the staff report.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

None

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Your Board could direct the Clerk of the Board to further explore other options or leave the commission as is. However, this is not recommended as the review of the commission has led to a better understanding of the current commission's structure, the needs of the commission and of the expectations of the Board for improvements.

ATTACHMENTS:

Ordinance 682
Ordinance 1660
Ordinance 1665
Ordinance 2050
Humboldt County Code- Chapter 4

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: Jan. 7, 2025
File No.: File #25-95