



**San Diego County
Fish & Wildlife Advisory Commission**

5510 Overland Ave, Suite 270, Sycamore Conference Room
San Diego, CA 92123

(858) 565-3600
www.sdparks.org

FWAC MINUTES

DATE: January 8, 2026

TIME: 11:30 a.m.

PLACE: **Department of Parks and Recreation
5510 Overland Ave, 2nd Floor, Sycamore Conference Room
San Diego, CA 92123**

Commissioner	Present	Absent	Late	District	Supervisor
Mark Kukuchek	X			1	Aguirre
Janeen Reed	X			1	Aguirre
Ed Stovin	X			2	Anderson
Andy Paluczak	X			2	Anderson
Tashi MacMillen	X			3	Lawson-Remer
Wayne Kotow	X			3	Lawson-Remer
Matthew Craig	X			4	Montgomery-Steppe
Samantha Guzzardo	X			4	Montgomery-Steppe
Jim Conrad	X			5	Desmond
Steve Turigliatto	X			5	Desmond

Call to Order-The meeting was called to order at 11:38AM.

A. Introductions-The Commissioners introduced themselves and the following guest was present: Jesus Amial-DPR

B. Approval of Minutes-A motion was made to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2025 meeting. Motion made by Commissioner Kukuchek Seconded by Commissioner Conrad, Passed unanimously with 10 Ayes,

C. Public Comment - on any subject matter within Commission jurisdiction, but not on the agenda (No discussion or action may be taken by the Commission.). No Public comment.

D. Chairperson's Report The chair stated that Commissioners are doing a good job of encouraging grant application as evidenced by the large volume of grant applications for the current round. He is also communicating with other counties to form their own FWAC Commissions thru his membership on the CALTIP Advisory Board.

E. Administrative Items

1. Funds available and any funding status – A total of \$21,795 is available for this round of grant funding.

2. Name Plates for new Commissioners – All Commissioners now have their nameplates.

F. Old Business

No Items

G. New Business

1. Grant Awards for Round 2 of Fiscal Year 2025-26. The Commissioners performed a detailed analysis and discussion of each individual grant application. Due to the large difference in grant requested amounts and the amount available for award the Commission made grant awards to make the best use of grant monies to support Commission priorities and best practices. As always grant applicants that did not receive their requested grant amounts are encouraged to reapply for further grant awards. The grants applications were awarded as follows:

Grant 25/26-6 was awarded \$2,500. Motion made by Commissioner Kukuchek Seconded by Commissioner Turigliatto passed with 9 Ayes and one reclusion (Commissioner Paluczak)

Grant 25/26-7 was awarded \$1,000, Grant 25/26-8 was awarded \$0, Grant 25/26-9 was awarded \$2,000. Motion made by Commissioner Craig Seconded by Commissioner MacMillen passed unanimously with 10 Ayes.

Grant 25/26-10 was awarded \$3,500. Motion made by Commissioner Turigliatto Seconded by Commissioner Reed passed with 9 Ayes and one reclusion (Commissioner Kotow)

Grant25/26-11 was awarded \$3,000, Grant 25/26-12 was awarded \$0, Grant 25/26-13 was awarded \$0, Grant25/26-14 was awarded \$3,000, Grant 25/26-16 was awarded \$3,100, Grant 25/26-17 was awarded \$3,695. Motion made by Commissioner Guzzardo Seconded by Commissioner Paluczak passed unanimously with 10 Ayes.

Grant 25/26-15 was awarded \$0. Motion made by Commissioner Craig Seconded by Commissioner Turigliatto passed with 9 Ayes and one reclusion (Commissioner Conrad)

2. Updates to the grant application – Commissioner Craig was appointed as chair to a newly formed Ad hoc committee to review existing FWAC website, Grant application forms and other documentation to ensure uniformity, continuity and prioritization on all Documentation. Commissioner's MacMillen and Stovin were also appointed to the committee. They will bring forth any changes recommended at a future meeting.

H. Commissioner's Corner

Another friendly reminder for all commissioners to continue contacting their community members and colleagues to encourage grant applications.

Commissioner Turigliatto stated that the NWTF Spring Turkey Tuneup will be held On February 21 at Lake Henshaw. He also requested if another Commissioner could man a FWAC booth at the event.

I. Adjourn-The meeting was adjourned at 12:58 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Jesus.Amial@sdcounty.ca.gov Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission Web Page:
<https://www.sdparks.org/content/sdparks/en/AboutUs/fwac.html>

The next meeting is June 11, 2026, at 11:30 am.

ATTACHMENT 1

FWAC Grants FY 25-26 Round 2						
Grant App #	Project Name	Organization	Project Description	Project Start Date	Grant Amount Proposed	Grant Amount Awarded
25/26-6	2026 SoCal Jr. Bass Anglers Youth Fishing Initiative	SoCal Jr. Bass Anglers	<p>My name is Sean Howarter. I have the privilege of Directing the SoCal Jr. Bass Anglers in San Diego County. We have over 40 youth anglers along with many others, (boaters and families), in the fishing community that are involved in some form or another.</p> <p>Our Club Charter stands on the premise of developing young men and women into amazing character driven human beings that not only thrive out on the water but in society as well. Youth anglers, elementary through High School, get an opportunity to experience the tournament fishing world through our club that has been in existence nearly 20 years. We are unique in that the tournament experience is facilitated through relationships with our local bassing community that give of their time and resources to captain these anglers on their private bass boats.</p> <p>We conduct 6 club tournaments annually at a cost of \$2500 per event. Costs associated with each tournament come from permits (state and local), insurance, launch and fishing at each city lake, food, awards and memberships.</p>	2/1/2026	\$7,500	\$2,500
25/26-7	Sr. Anglers of Escondido Youth Day	Sr. Anglers of Escondido	<p>Youth Day events which began in 2006 and happened each year until 2019. Youth Day was a cordinated outside event between the Escondido Union School District (EUSD), the Escondido YMCA, the City of Escondido Rangers, the Friends of Daily Ranch, and sponsored by the Sr. Anglers of Escondido (SAE). When COVID shutdown prohibited the use to the activites, and schools were instructed to limit outside activities, the program closed. With the Loss of the YMCA during that period, it was some time before we got the Escondido Boys and Girls Club (B&GC), the EUSD, the City of Escondido Rangers, and SAE on board to recreate the experience. Youth Day involves 25 5th and 6th grade children chosen by EUSD and B&GC to participate in an all day experience at Lake Dixon Escondido. All children will experience fishing on the lake, and a hike learing the ecosystems that make this lake beneficial to the citys of Escondido and Valley Center. Each tour will be supported by Sr. Anglers, Rangers, Naturalists, Rangers, and Councilers. The all day event will include games and crafts with an all american lunch provided</p>	1/12/2025	\$1,000	\$1,000

25/26-8	Trout Stock San Diego City Lakes	Friends of the San Diego Lakes	Its been decades since we have had true trout stocking within the San Diego City lakes.	11/17/2025	\$22,000	\$0
25/26-9	Nature Explorers Program	County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation	<p>The Nature Explorers Program is offered through the Spring Valley and Lakeside REC Clubs through curriculum-based program designed to expose youth to local wildlife areas throughout San Diego County and California, with the goal of increasing knowledge and awareness of nature, biodiversity and sustainability. This program encourages outdoor participation, nature exploration and historical discovery. Nature Explorers Program provides participants opportunities including but not limited to: follow a trail, play in a safe place, camp under the stars, explore bays and beaches, how to recycle and leave no trace, plant a tree, and sustainable fishing.</p> <p>Nature Explorers Program staff and hired guides are trained in interpretive skills, experiential learning, group dynamics, leadership techniques, and knowledge to lead youth safely and ethically in wilderness areas. Staff are trained to make decisions with confidence and are versatile enough to guide a variety of nature excursions. They are certified in Wilderness Advanced First Aid and are able to provide commercial transportation for smaller local excursions. They have the technical and academic expertise to deliver the highest quality experiences by interpreting wildlife area ecology and history, as well as managing group dynamics. During wildlife area activities, staff focus on identifying learning opportunities for youth by using the curriculum and lesson plans.</p> <p>County of San Diego will use this grant to expand offerings in the Nature Explorers Program. With \$4,000, the Spring Valley and Lakeside REC Clubs will be able to offer 8 outdoor adventure activities in 2026, with 4 events provided at each location. This offering will provide 120 youth the opportunity to gain hands-on experience outdoors, with having 15 participants attending each offering. County of San Diego will use \$500 for each event to use on various program supplies and equipment, entrance and parking passes, and food for participants. In order to promote participation, each event include outdoor education and recreation activities. Participants will engage in activities that promote active hobbies and encourage healthy lifestyles such as hiking, camping, rock climbing, fishing, kayaking, surfing, or mountain biking.</p>	3/1/2026	\$4,000	\$2,000

25/26-10	Taking Kids Fishing	Captain Rollos Kids at Sea	<p>Our organization is entirely focused on introducing youth to a Saltwater fishing experience. Many of our youth in California have never been on an ocean fishing adventure. They have not experienced catching a fish, or observing the marine life such as seals, dolphins and whales. Our organization has been introducing kids to the ocean since 1999, and we have had over 150,000 kids go out on a Captain Rollo's sponsored fishing trip. We focus on underprivileged children as a primary goal. we also have many children from various schools and youth organization's that we service. We are proposing three trips in total for this grant. Typically, a trip in San Diego costs us approximately \$3500 per trip. This includes the cost of the boat, a lunch for each child and their rental tackle. We are requesting a \$7000 grant so that we may co-sponsor four trips. The cost of four trips is \$14,000, our organization would pay half and partner with Sand Diego Fish and Wildlife for the other half.</p>	4/1/2025	\$7,000	\$3,500
25/26-11	Wounded Warriors Saltwater Fishing Events	San Diego Anglers Foundation	<p>Our Foundation specializes in getting kids and wounded warriors out on the ocean on the charter boats. These trips, as we have quickly discovered are much needed in the wounded warrior world. We get our warriors from Project Wounded Warrior (San Diego chapter), Freedom Station Temporary Housing project. Our local PTSD branch called the Aspire Center, the VA hospital and the Vet Center. We were told by Balboa Naval hospital in the past that the most requested event by wounded warriors is to go fishing! We use our expertise to take 45 warriors at a time on our local charter fishing fleet boats (New Seaforth, Mission Belle, Liberty, San Diego) to take them on a wonderful day on the water. CDFW also provides a Free Annual group license to take them fishing. It is very satisfying to hear the guys and gals said they they have had the best fishing day of their lives or they caught their biggest fish ever! We even pick up the galley food bill for everyone on board and pay to have their fish cleaned.</p>		\$3,000	\$3,000

25/26-12	2026 U.S. Kayak Qualifier Tournament	Fishing Initiative for Stewardship & Habitat (F.I.S.H.)	<p>The San Diego Bay Kayak Tournament (US Angling sanctioned) is designed not only as a recreational and competitive event but also as a platform to highlight the importance of healthy aquatic habitats for wildlife survival. By engaging anglers, conservation partners, and the public, the tournament will promote stewardship of San Diego Bay's diverse ecosystems, including eelgrass beds, tidal marshes, and near shore habitats that support fish, birds, and marine mammals.</p> <p>Tournament rules emphasize responsible recreation, including mandatory catch-and-release practices, eco-friendly gear guidelines, and restrictions on fishing in sensitive areas. These measures safeguard existing habitats from degradation while modeling sustainable use of the Bay's resources.</p>	1/15/2026	\$5,000	\$0
25/26-13	Hookup Baits GROM Academy Program	Hookup Baits, Inc.	<p>The Hookup Baits GROM Academy Program is designed to support and inspire the next generation of young anglers. A GROM is simply a young, up-andcoming angler-typically ages 8-17-who shows enthusiasm for fishing, willingness to learn, and positive sportsmanship on and off the water.</p> <p>Our program provides these youth anglers with mentorship, fishing education, product support, and opportunities to grow within the fishing community. GROMs learn proper handling of fish, conservation ethics, rigging and tackle skills, and how to represent themselves and the sport in a positive manner. Many go on to become skilled, respectful anglers who contribute to a healthier fishing culture.</p> <p>Supporting the Hookup Baits GROM Academy Program means investing directly in the future of fishing. Your support helps us provide gear, educational materials, youth events, and hands-on guidance that builds confidence, responsibility, and love for the outdoors. By empowering GROMs today, we help ensure a stronger, more respectful, and conservation-minded generation of anglers tomorrow.</p>		\$5,000	\$0

25/26-14	Mataguay Waterway Improvement 2025-26	San Diego-Imperial Council Scouting America	<p>In this grant cycle, we are focusing on Lake Dan Henry and some needed repairs to keep it clean and help improve the life of fish and other animals that utilize the lake. Over the past year, Lake Dan Henry has experienced its largest algae bloom to date, preventing youth from fishing, canoeing, rowing and other activities vital to their aquatic education. The excess of algae negatively affects wildlife, and particularly the fish. To negate these effects, we plan on investing in/designing a lake rake that can be pulled by cable across the whole lake to remove the algae. This summer was rough on the waterway of Matagual Creek. Several trees have fallen and damaged existing infrastructure. There are many shifters and strainers that need to be removed, but a power pole that delivers power to our nearby ranges has fallen into the entrance of Lake Dan Henry. We plan on using part of the grant money to rent an auger and replace the pole. This prevents it from being a hazard and contaminating the waterway. The last project for which we would use this funding is to repair a retaining wall that has fallen partially into the lake. It has caused a tripping hazard in front of the boat house, and if not repaired, it will allow debris to continue to fall into the lake. To repair it, a Mini excavator will be required. We would use funding to rent the equipment and to reposition the retaining wall so it will be the most effective. We believe these repairs will help improve the lake and the lives of the wildlife that use it.</p>	1/3/2026	\$3,850	\$3,000
25/26-15	San Diego River Park Foundation	Wildlife-Friendly Fencing at Eagle Peak Ranch Pond	<p>Upper Temescal Creek is protected habitat as part of the San Diego River Park Foundation's 450+ acre Eagle Peak Ranch Preserve. It is an essential wildlife corridor, with downstream sections of the creek on the preserve assessed to be a "reference creek" for how a healthy stream should function. However, this freshwater lifeline for the San Diego River watershed's wildlife is threatened. At the headwaters of the creek, habitat disturbance and trampling of the creekbed by regular unauthorized cattle grazing have been identified as a significant threat to this creek. While grazing is not permitted on the property, cattle belonging to adjacent landowners cross into the preserve as there is no access control at the property boundaries. The cattle eat vegetation, disrupt the sediment and introduce bacteria that create poorer habitat for wildlife.</p> <p>We are seeking a grant to install ~1,500 feet of wildlife-friendly fencing to protect a 3 acre pond on Temescal Creek. Fencing design will allow wildlife to access the creek habitat while excluding unwanted cattle trespass. Fencing nearest gathering areas and recreational trail will be more attractive lodgepole fence</p>	1/1/2026	\$4,646	\$0

			and will include interpretive sign. FWAC funds will be matched by a local family foundation.			
25/26-16	2026 Anglers4Kids Program	Oceanside Senior Anglers	OSA provides saltwater sport fishing trips for local San Diego North County youth groups during the summer. We seek groups like, but not limited to Boys and Girls Clubs, Boys and Girls Scouts and recreational programs. We especially seek, but are not limited to organizations that serve low income youths. Our goal is to provide kids an otherwise not affordable, safe, fun fishing experience where they learn proper boat procedures, ocean safety, fish and game regulations and enhance their exposure to oceanic ecology and respect for our natural resources. Oceanside Senior Anglers volunteers supervise and provide hands-on instruction. Many of them, like myself, have spent a lifetime learning, using and respecting our local fishery. By exposing kids to the pleasure of sport fishing, we seek to share our appreciation of the marine environment, the value of conservation plus the great joy that nature presents. Our over twenty year history of these on-the-water experiences have given our community over one thousand youths that have received lifetime benefits from a single day on the ocean. The program is extremely fiscally efficient. Our trips over the past several years have been aboard the Sea Star out of Oceanside Sea Center in Oceanside. Captain Joe Cacciola has discounted his charter prices for our program so we have been able to include greater numbers of kids to participate.	1/15/2026	\$7,500	\$3,100
25/26-17	Carlton Hills Fishing and Marine Conservation Club	Carlton Hills School	The Carlton Hills Fishing and Marine Conservation Club provides hands-on outdoor education for students in the Santee School District, focusing on responsible fishing, marine habitat preservation, and wildlife awareness. The club engages 4th–8th grade students in field-based experiences, including the annual Lake Cuyamaca Kids’ Derby and Captain Rollo’s Kids at Sea trips, which provide opportunities to learn about local marine ecosystems, conservation ethics, and sustainable fishing practices. The school will also have its 29th annual 4th grade fishing trip to Lake Cuyamaca in May 2026. Through partnerships with local organizations such as Hookup Baits and Lake Cuyamaca, students learn about native fish species, aquatic food webs, and responsible angling techniques. The program also includes classroom lessons on ocean stewardship and waste reduction, linking to California Science and Environmental Education Standards.	1/15/2026	\$3,950	\$3,695
				Total	\$74,446	\$21,795