

Chi Council for the Clear Lake Hitch
Minutes of October 26, 2011 meeting at the Lake County Ag Center

Submitted by Victoria Brandon, Chi Council secretary

Present: Peter Windrem, Tom Smythe, Victoria Brandon, Dean Rogers, Greg Dills

The minutes of the September 28, 2011 meeting were approved as corrected.

Current projects and grants. Smythe reported on modifications to the Middle Creek weirs. Approximately 320 tons of large rocks have been used to turn the uppermost weir into a ramp, and to construct a fifth weir downstream of the concrete wall at the bridge to eliminate the jump at that point. A few more rocks may be needed. Costs for the project work out to \$6000 for permits, just under \$10,000 for rocks (including delivery), and about \$4-5000 for labor and equipment. The watershed protection district paid for the permitting, Smythe's time, and half the cost of the rock; US Fish & Wildlife paid for the other half of the rock in the form of a grant to Habematolel; and the county road department provided the labor and equipment for installation. To function properly the weirs have to fill in with gravel, which will take at least a year. Windrem: would this technique be applicable to Kelsey creek Main St bridge? Smythe: yes, but that job would involve about 8 weirs 8 inches in height or shorter and require 3-4000 tons of rock. There are several local suppliers who would bid on the job.

Dills: the ravenna grass infestation on Cache Creek has been treated: it was necessary to float men and gear into the project area, which is remote, rugged, and includes designated wilderness. The project involved two boats and a couple of overnight camps; the workers encountered some illegal marijuana grow sites and three poached bears with paws and gall bladders removed. There is still have a little money left in the grant for followup treatment and evaluation next spring. Dills has finally been able to start eradicating scotch broom on Pyle Rd above Robinson Rancheria. The Scotts Valley tribe got a grant for project design to do erosion control in 8-mile valley on Cow Mt, and an RFP for a consultant will be issued in early November. They will seek implementation money later. This grant has a hitch component because 8-mile valley is the headwaters of Scotts Creek

Rogers: Robinson Rancheria's US Fish & Wildlife grant has run out but, the tribe has gotten a BIA grant for hatchery maintenance that will pay for some equipment and a little staff time. The eggs that were collected last spring didn't hatch.

Brandon: maybe it would be better to collect fry, a lot of which gets trapped in puddles and dies anyway. Next spring the Chi Council will put out an alert asking for help identifying suitable locations. Robinson intends to hire a wetland biologist to help with hatchery design, and is seeking additional grants for wetlands mapping and a species survey. Rogers hopes to meet with UC Davis fish biologist Peter

Moyle to get advice on the best person to do this work. A comprehensive annotated bibliography on Clear Lake (302 references, mainly dealing with fish) has been prepared by Kristina Weber, Greg Giusti, Lisa Thompson, and Ryan Keiffer, and is available at <http://calfish.ucdavis.edu/files/122184.htm>, with a link from the Chi Council website.

Other topics. Windrem: Mike Stevenson has been seeing schools of 2-3 year old hitch in the lake, with bass feeding on them and bass fishermen providing information. Terry Knight has an article in today's Record-Bee on blackfish and sculpin that he observed with the underwater camera that he demonstrated at the February Chi Council meeting.

Smythe: the temperature of the lake has dropped about 20 degrees in two weeks, Weeds are gone from north end of lake, where strong winds uprooted the plants and deposited silt on top of them.

Windrem: continued discussion of instream pumping for frost protection. Some years ago Jon Ambrose helped design screening for his location on Finley East Rd, and is being consulted again. That site contains a reservoir constructed during the severe drought in the 1970s that could be filled with well water if necessary. No news about the special status fish report in preparation.

Smythe: the USGS website contains stream flow information, with a link from the county water resources website. Data on Kelsey creek is available back to 1946. This information is used to figure out how bad flooding will be, what constitutes a 100 year event, and Clear Lake nutrient and sediment loading by calculating flow and amount of solids. Lake County soils naturally have an unusually high level of phosphorus.

Windrem: how can we improve observations in 2012? We need to work on getting better monitoring coverage in more creeks, and to continue to encourage observers to send in reports even when they don't see any fish. Smythe: Paula Britton says that during fish tagging last year runs tended to occur early in the morning, to fall off dramatically in the middle of the day, and to start up again about 4PM. Some volunteers may be looking for fish at the wrong times. The possibility of setting up motion-sensitive cameras for automatic observations was discussed.

Next meeting: 3:30PM on Wednesday January 25, 2012, at the Ag Center. There will be no Chi Council meeting in November or December.