

Chi Council for the Clear Lake Hitch
Minutes of June 24, 2009 meeting at the Lake County Ag Center

Submitted by Victoria Brandon, Chi Council secretary

Present: Victoria Brandon, Linda Juntunen, Greg Dills, Paula Britton

Brandon chaired the meeting in the absence of Peter Windrem

The minutes of the May 28, 2009 meeting were accepted as corrected

Tom Smythe has acquired an updated copy of a DFG manual on fishes and streams that will be very useful in designing barrier mitigations. Dills: also has a copy of this manual, which he passed around; updates can be downloaded, printed, and added to the binder. All agreed that it is extremely authoritative.

Windrem recently gave a very well-received presentation about the Chi Council's work at a meeting held at Clear Lake State Park. On that occasion he had an extended conversation with Nelson Hopper, who said that our present understanding of Pomo linguistic distinctions (that hitch = hitch and chi = splittail) is incorrect, and "chi" does refer to the hitch. Windrem will follow up with him.

A very late run (May 8-11) of what looked like hitch was seen in Adobe Creek near the mouth, and reported to the Chi Council email list. On learning of this Greg Giusti raised the possibility that these fish might actually be a remnant population of splittail, which used to spawn about that time but have been presumed extinct for 30 years. This is an extremely exciting idea: next year we will keep a close eye out for a late migration and try to catch one or more fish in order to make a positive identification. Britton: saw some large fish when rescuing some landlocked fry near this location, assumed to be hitch but can't be sure. Next year the tribes will be ready to use their tagging equipment to help in the ID.

The Memorandum of Understanding that formed the Chi Council will expire in August. Dills will download the text from the website and update if needed, then prepare individual signature pages that Brandon will circulate by email. We want to get all the organizations that participate in the Council's work to sign on, and as many individual volunteers as possible.

Britton reported that based on her experiences capturing hitch for the tagging program the Middle Creek weirs won't work because the hitch do not like to jump. They evaded fish nets very easily, and when hardware cloth barricades were placed in the streams attempted to go under rather than over. The tribes want to do a barrier study, and are now submitting grant applications to cover next year's work. Water quality monitoring and analysis is continuing, and Dietrich McGinnis and Erik Ringelberg are still involved. They've learned a lot already, including the kind of barriers that hitch can tolerate and those they can't, so we should consult with them in working on the design for Kelsey Creek at Main St. The captured hitch didn't seem to be in very good shape, covered with scars

and lesions, and the downstream journey seems very hard on them. Question: are other Clear Lake fish similarly damaged? Britton will ask Erik to find out if DFG has some conclusive information.

Juntunen reports on the Lake County Community Wildfire Protection Plan now in the final stages of public comment. It is expected that it will go to the Board of Supervisors for adoption soon, and endorsements from organizations are being sought. This work has many implications for sedimentation and other water quality issues and is therefore within our sphere of interest.

Britton announces that Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar is looking for information about endangered species: the threat of extinction is getting much worse, and she wants to compile biological data related to climate change and submit it to the EPA. Juntunen: appearance of bluebirds used to mean that winter was on the way, but now they nest here and are around all summer.

There will be no Chi Council meetings in July or August: next meeting will be at 3:30PM on Wednesday September 23, at the Ag Center.