

Chi Council for the Clear Lake Hitch
Minutes of September 23, 2009 meeting at the Lake County Ag Center

Submitted by Victoria Brandon, Chi Council secretary

Present: Peter Windrem , Tom Smythe, Victoria Brandon, Linda Juntunen, Greg Dills, Greg Giusti, Pam Francis, Paula Britton

The minutes of the June 24, 2009 meeting were accepted as presented

"hitch" vs "chi" Windrem: Garth Murphy, a DFG biologist who has worked in the area since the fifties, reports that tribes on the south and east side of the lake used "chi" and those on the north and west shores used "hitch" -- so both usages are "correct."

Pending grants. Both Robinson Rancheria and Upper Lake Habematolel have submitted applications (separately), and the Chi Council has written support letters. UL includes funding for stream restoration work on the Middle Creek weirs as well as updated surveys; Robinson is dealing with water quality measurements and a fish hatchery. Smythe: DFG has \$11 million in funding for fish on the Threatened and Endangered lists, very little for others. Britton: funds left from last year will go for more tagging, this year will do some infill work on Middle Creek weirs. Very hopeful about grant, and has allocated an additional \$20,000 for monitoring. Water quality data from last spring will be ready for release to county soon.

Species of Special Concern. Under supervision from Peter Moyle, Jacob Katz is reevaluating the list, which could result in changed status for the hitch. A draft was sent around for review some time ago, but there has been no word from him in the past few weeks. Giusti: would "higher" status lead to impacts on landowners? Smythe: yes. Adds that we don't have solid data on recent apparent decline, which could be part of a cycle rather than a trend. All agreed that the long term population decline is indisputable.

Additional observation possibilities: Windrem: suggests recruiting bass fishermen to do observations on the lake, plotting schools and recording gps data. Giusti: the current club president would be very agreeable, but the question is the best mechanism for recording and reporting observations? Maybe they could add a regular item to the club agenda. He will follow up with the club. Windrem: can schools of hitch be distinguished from other fish in the lake? Giusti: it's easy when they're spawning size but a problem with immatures. He suggests checking Vector Control data since they trawl fish seines four times annually and have information from many years back. Britton: schools look bigger than the actual count when captured. What do divers see? Francis: in contact with quite a few, will inquire. Windrem: what about fish finders? Giusti: at certain times of the year schools can be observed easily from the surface, and a (very expensive) "side view sonar" exists that can distinguish species easily when visibility is poor. Some underwater cameras are very good. Giusti: hitch get stranded in Adobe creek by low water: is there any chance of opening Highland Springs dam to increase flow for their benefit? Smythe: proposed Adobe Creek "conjunctive use" projects reserved 200 acre-feet for this purpose in addition to 700

acre-feet for groundwater recharge. Currently releases are not legal because the use wasn't in the water right. Withdrawals could also result in lack of water in the park later in the year, affecting not only visitors but two households.

MOU. Brandon will attach a pdf of the MOU to the next email announcement and request that signed copies be returned by mail. Windrem offers to send out a postal mailer to the volunteer list with a stamped return envelope.

Next season. Windrem reports that Denise Rushing has suggested holding a hitch festival in the spring. Giusti: how about working with the Kelseyville business association? It's important to get kids involved, especially tribal kids. Britton: this would be a natural for a PG&E educational grant for education (deadline soon). Windrem: we should try to get grad student participation. Giusti: it's necessary to provide some funding, at least minimal living expenses, plus money for equipment etc. Francis: people might be willing to put a student up in their homes. Giusti: might be able to get a couple of AmeriCorps personnel to do sustained monitoring during the spawning season. Maybe we could tap into Wine Auction money?

Other topics. Smythe will be conducting a work day on Friday October 9 to reconstruct the rockwork immediately downstream from the Kelsey Creek detention structure to make it less of an obstacle to migration. He has tracked down the necessary equipment; volunteers will assemble at 8AM.

Giusti: don't forget that the county Fish and Wildlife Advisory Committee may be a source of funds. Their next meeting (6:30PM on Thursday November 19) will consist of a special public presentation on the destructive impacts illicit marijuana production is having on natural resources.

Smythe: has worked on a design for the structure needed to allow fish passage over the concrete obstruction on Kelsey Creek at the Main St bridge. This will be very expensive because of the width of the creek, and because the rock work will have to extend completely across it.

Next meeting: Wednesday October 28, at the Ag Center.