

Chi Council for the Clear Lake Hitch
Minutes of October 28, 2009 meeting at the Lake County Ag Center

Submitted by Victoria Brandon, Chi Council secretary

Present: Peter Windrem , Tom Smythe, Victoria Brandon, Linda Juntunen, April Hargis, Hardy Rodriguez, Bernie Butcher

The minutes of the September 23, 2009 meeting were accepted as amended.

Detention structure modification. Smythe reported on the work that took place on October 9: a morning's work resulted in the modification of two notches, and enlargement of the place where high velocities were recorded last spring. The creek is dry now but water ran through the area for a day or two after the big rain.

Species of special concern. There has been no new information recently about the possibility of a change in the status of the hitch to Threatened or Endangered. If this takes place many issues would become more complicated, especially at first. For example, farmers would probably be prevented from taking water out of creeks for frost protection, and various kinds of permits could become harder to obtain. On the other hand, listing could markedly increase opportunities for grant funding for barrier mitigation and scientific studies. Rodriguez: Big Valley isn't going to find out till the spring whether their grant application has been approved, but they will check for tagged fish in any case. Habematolel also intends to go ahead with their work whether or not funding is renewed. Dietrick McGinnis and Erik Ringelberg will be back here in the winter to oversee.

MOU update. Signatures have been coming in (list is being kept by Greg Dills): all volunteers are encouraged to sign on.

Additional monitoring assistance. Greg Giusti has been encouraging organized bass fishermen to assist with in-lake monitoring by keeping track of schools of hitch in the springtime, and also by checking for indications of spawning on beaches, behavior which has been reported but not confirmed. Recruiting a grad student to conduct scientific observations continues to be an objective, and in the meantime perhaps Mendocino college instructors could encourage biology students to observe hitch migration as part of their "lab" work. Brandon will speak to Michelle Scully and Windrem will discuss with Andrew West. It would also be a good idea to connect with high schools, although the curriculum requirements are so rigid these days that there's almost no time for any extra activities no matter how valuable they might be from an educational perspective. Butcher: Upper Lake high school is considering reinstating a community service (or work) project as a graduation requirement. Hargis: will attempt to get some Mendocino National Forest rangers to do some monitoring. It was suggested that the Chi Council could conduct a another workshop on monitoring techniques, perhaps on Middle Creek, where very few hitch have been seen during the past several years.

Hitch Festival. We're definitely going to make sure this happens. Unfortunately it's impossible to predict the run with any precision, but two weeks notice should be sufficient, and as little as one week would be possible. Tribal participation is very important.

Next meeting: 3:30 PM on Wednesday November 18, at the Ag Center. No meeting will be scheduled in December, and we'll resume in January.