

Chi Council for the Clear Lake Hitch

Minutes of April 28, 2006 meeting at Lake County Courthouse

Present: Peter Windrem, Jody Larson, Pam Francis, Victoria Brandon, Charles Gitchell, Robert Geary, Jonathan Ambrose, Stan Schubert, Steve Devoto, Mary Manning, Norm Longoria, Pam Knispel

Minutes from the March 24 meeting were accepted as presented.

Sightings since the last meeting. Windrem passed out a chart of February precipitation, showing no rain at all for most of the month, then downpours beginning on February 25: hitch sightings ceased abruptly at that date and haven't resumed until very recently. In the past couple of weeks there have been scattered sightings all over the county, not just in Adobe Creek as in February. Gitchell describes very recent sightings in Forbes creek, clear up to the freeway. Manning: "I can smell them" at her location near the mouth of Adobe creek, but sees none during the daytime, although they are abundant at night when revealed by floodlights. Geary: Diana Hershey made an observation in Kelsey Creek a few days previously (so far the only one this year). Devoto describes the culvert at Bell Hill which acts as an obstruction by changing the outflow and creating too much velocity, and gouging out a pool below. Windrem: the back current at this location "literally flips them." Although hitch have been seen upstream (letter from Rick Macedo: "good numbers of hitch have made it upstream of this crossing and are successfully spawning"), they got there in between the periods of heavy stream flow; Geary says he moved some manually as well. Windrem: still large numbers at Adobe at Soda Bay. Devoto: nothing at Bell Hill this morning, nor Hill creek or McGaugh slough, "they have satisfied their spawning urge and gone back to the lake". Gitchell: now that the weather is getting hot the chi in Forbes seem to like shade, and are clustering in deep pools. Geary: shad are eating chi eggs. Knispel: none have been seen in Middle or Clover creeks, but they are running in ditches beside the road. Geary has seen a lot of dead shad near Elem. Francis: shad are very sensitive to temperature changes. There have been two reports of fish kills this year, one in February with cold snap, another very recently with warm snap. Windrem: the big question is whether runs will begin in Kelsey & Middle now.

Stream temperature gauges. Manning: hers has held through all the high water. Francis: one of the Adobe placements is inaccessible; maybe it's time to remove them. Windrem: we should have at least a couple more weeks of observation. Geary is conducting ongoing scientific observations (temperature, turbidity) as part of Robinson's grant-funded project. Devoto: could pheromones trigger migration? Geary and Devoto have both observed fingerlings accompanying the adults. Geary: young ones are able to move downstream within 80 days (Peter Moyle says much sooner: more research is needed.) Windrem: it might be adaptively important that the hatching is scattered over such a long period of time.

Windrem: it's time to look more extensively, for example at Seigler Canyon creek. Geary: has been making regular observations there, seen no chi. Knispel: aerial maps of Middle creek show lots of silt, maybe that's why there have been no chi observed there. Gitchell: Forbes water table is so high that a chunk of concrete under Main St that normally creates a waterfall has been leveled out. The chi have to jump, but the water pressure is moderate, and there's a quiet pool just upstream where they can rest. Smooth water flow up to Martin St.

Francis: Tom Smythe visited the Middle Creek weirs installed last summer and thinks they will all work, although no hitch have been observed. The Kelsey creek detention structure is normally closed after the migration for groundwater recharge, but the site has just been

vandalized so it will be left open this year. Windrem: is the protocol for closure a specified number of days past the last sighting? Devoto asks that the Council be shown the agreement..

Action focus: many barriers have been corrected, or are now in the process of being corrected. Francis: the non-functioning fish ladder at Main Street on Kelsey Creek is scheduled for repair this summer; Fish & Game won't allow concrete in streambeds. Geary: tribal consultant Dietrick McGinnis says that ladder won't work, because there's too much velocity, but has ideas for making it functional. Knispel: Dietrick has a fish biologist & a hydrologist on staff. Windrem suggests that on his next visit he check out Adobe, where there's a constant gradient in the streambed and a much stronger run than anywhere else, and also that he try to attend a Council meeting. Geary: the fish ladder in Schindler looks good, although the big rocks in the streambed might help explain the total absence of hitch. Devoto: the worst barrier of all is the old soil conservation dam at Decker bridge in Scotts creek. Windrem: this is a great time for a kayak observation trip up Scotts (Windrem and Devoto agree to do this the next day.)

Manning: what about obstructions in Manning Creek (where there have been a few recent observations)? Windrem: there's a peculiar kind of algae there, but only minor brushy obstructions.

Field trip: this will take place a week from Saturday, May 6; everyone who wants to participate should assemble at Studebaker's coffee shop in Kelseyville at 9AM. Knispel: Dietrick will be here that day, and she will try to arrange for him to participate,

Next meeting: Friday May 19, 2PM, conference room C in the courthouse.