

Chi Council for the Clear Lake Hitch
Minutes of the May 22, 2019 meeting at the Lake County Ag Center
Submitted by Victoria Brandon, Chi Council secretary

Present: Peter Windrem, Victoria Brandon, Dean Rogers, Marina Deligiannis

The minutes of the April 24, 2019 meeting were approved as presented.

Hitch observations to date. Rogers: recently saw a few in Robinson near the Bell Arbor bridge. Deligiannis: posted a sighting of about 30 in Clover creek via the CLERC online reporting system that hasn't yet been entered into the main database because there's no obvious way to download a spreadsheet. Question: how long can hitch live? Not known how long they can live in the wild but Rogers has some in captivity that are at least 7 years old.

CLERC. Brandon will connect with Will Evans and find out to access their data, which needs to include the name of the creek at least. We will add a field to the main database for GPS waypoints.

USFW. The official 12-month review has begun. Windrem will prepare Chi Council comments for submission. Rogers: participating in hitch strategy process, and working with Ben Ewing on impacts of introduced species. Windrem: federal listing could do a great deal to prioritize the Middle Creek Wetlands Restoration Project. Deligiannis: perhaps the Chi Council could host a public meeting to get input from the community and collect personal stories such as native traditional uses and fish drying methods. This kind of evidence could be very moving. We should send out a request to our email list for stories about what the hitch migration was like in the past and also send out a press release. Deligiannis offered to help with social media.

CDFW. Rogers: is collaborating with Ben Ewing. Did another hitch rescue on Thompson creek a couple of weeks ago and then went out electrofishing with Ben and other CDFW staff.

Blue Ribbon Committee: Brandon: the Technical Advisory Subcommittee (which includes a number of experts who do not sit on BRC itself) recently held a productive initial call. The next meeting is scheduled for 1-5PM on June 5, at Clearlake city hall; it will be preceded by a tour of the Sulphur Bank superfund site.

County Department of Water Resources. Deligiannis: DWR held an initial meeting with contractors on April 19 to talk about the permitting process and Oct 15 –Dec 31 work window, and will have a follow up meeting the week of June 3-7 with CDFW participation. They want to work collaboratively to figure just which parts of dock construction could pose a threat and which are safe. It's important to protect habitat which is defined as native tules; in areas where this native vegetation has already been replaced by seawalls CDFW isn't as concerned. Question of possible sonic impact from pile driving needs to be addressed.

Middle Creek Restoration Coalition. Windrem: MCRC has made some real progress, and has a meeting with Army Corps on May 30 in Sacramento with participation from a Garamendi staffer.

Tribal Activities. Rogers: is planning to check the creeks again for juvenile hitch, and is trying to connect with CalTrans to find out the status of the disfunctional fish ladder in Schindler creek.

USFS. On May 9 they held a workshop at the Lucerne senior center to gather public input about a 45,000 acre Ranch Fire remediation project on the North Shore. Most of the project is in the Clear Lake watershed and some in the North Fork of Cache Creek. Both Windrem and Brandon attended.

Next meeting: 3:30PM Wednesday June 26, 2019, at the Ag Center.