



**COUNTY OF LAKE  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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**To:** Grant Review Committee

California Wildlife Conservation Board

1700 9<sup>th</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

Sacramento, CA 95811

(916) 445-8448

**Subject:** Letter of support for the Lake County Watershed Protection District's request for Wildlife Conservation Board funding to conduct a Clear Lake Hitch Habitat Improvement Planning and Assessment for Tule Lake, Scotts Creek and Adobe Creek.

Dear Grant Review Committee,

On behalf of the Lake County Board of Supervisors ("Board"), sitting as the board of directors for the Lake County Watershed Protection District ("District"), please accept this letter of support for the Clear Lake Hitch Habitat Improvement Planning and Assessment for Tule Lake, Scotts Creek and Adobe Creek Project.

As you may be aware, this Board passed a resolution declaring a Clear Lake Hitch emergency on Feb. 7, 2023, which remains in full effect. This project is essential to the continued survival of the Clear Lake Hitch, an endemic fish species that is on the brink of extinction in the Clear Lake ecosystem. Known as *chi* to native Pomo peoples who inhabit tribal lands and other lands within the County of Lake, the Clear Lake Hitch has great importance for the preservation of Pomo cultural practices and food security. Each of the tasks within the project has been identified by state, local, federal and/or tribal sources as being necessary to improve *chi* habitat, management, education and public outreach in native and non-native communities.

This Board is informed that a Fish Passage and Hydrological Assessment of Tule Lake and Scotts Creek (Task 2.0) would be an ideal project to be funded by the Wildlife Conservation Board. There is a strong need to better understand the Scotts Creek sub-watershed and how Scotts Creek, Hendricks Creek and other tributaries can be improved to provide habitat for the hitch while also providing benefits such as erosion reduction, flood protection, and improved water quality flowing to Clear Lake.

If awarded funding by WCP, the District will be able to update and complete the Adobe Conjunctive Use Project (Task 3.0), which will provide for long-term sustainability of the Adobe Creek and Highlands Creek stream system, a prime spawning ground for hitch. The Bell Hill Road crossing, downstream of the Adobe and Highland Creek confluence, presents an especially difficult obstacle to fish passage. WCB grant funds will allow for proper planning and design to replace the Bell Hill Road culvert (Task 4.0), to help enhance and improve access to hitch habitat throughout the Adobe Creek system.

The District is well situated to effectively utilize WCB grant funds should they be awarded. County staff in Water Resources and other departments are dedicated individuals who respect and care for the land and water resources of our county held in public trust, including lands and navigable waterways essential for the survival of Clear Lake Hitch. During FY 2023-24 budgeting, this board added two Water Resources positions to enhance the District's ability to effectively respond to the hitch emergency.

In sum, we wholeheartedly support the project being proposed by the Lake County Watershed Protection District titled "Hitch Habitat Improvement Planning and Assessment for Tule Lake, Scotts Creek and Adobe Creek" for full funding by the Wildlife Conservation Board. We greatly appreciate your timely attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

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Jessica Pyska, Chair  
Lake County Board of Supervisors