



Bidwell Park Pulse

Quarterly Newsletter of the City of Chico's Park Division

Park Fall Projects

Fall in Bidwell Park: crisp quiet mornings, colorful leaves letting go of summer and fluttering to the ground, Almond Bowl runners training in Lower Park, and busy Park Crew and volunteers getting ready for fall projects.

As acorns start dropping in the Park, the conditions are right to get rolling on a number of projects.

Fall is a great time of year to plant many native plants, conduct prescribed burns to reduce forest fuels and work on trails.

Park crews have been working on planting native plants as landscaping at key entrances. For example the south side of the creek near the Manzanita Avenue Bridge was planted last winter with native plants. Such plants are low maintenance and provide a beautiful transition from landscaped areas to more natural areas. A diversity of flowering plants sustains native bees and butterflies during most of the year.

The fall trails season kicks off in September, with efforts concentrating on the Middle Trail east of Horseshoe Lake. This work has been made possible from a grant from the State of California. The work helps alleviate damage from high use and the effects of water.

The work proceeds in phases and park users will notice that the

trail evolution in the next several months.

Trail work will also begin on remedies for the eroding mass of trails to Monkey Face with a new connection to existing trails and measures to stop the damage to resources and the beauty of this beloved landmark put in place.

The cooler temperatures and higher humidity provides opportunities for our fall prescribed burns. We will conduct prescribed burns in Middle Park to reduce fire dangers, promote native vegetation, and prepare sites for native grass and other plants.

For example, to reduce the fuel load from a fire at Hooker Oak this summer, Staff have begun to pile debris, and cut fire lines in anticipation of prescribed burns this fall.

Many of these efforts will require your help. Please contact us to volunteer. The Parks Division welcomes comments or questions about the projects.



Rangers Lead Park Bike Tour as Part of Chico Experience Week!

Rangers Jessica Erdahl and Lisa Barge will lead a bike tour of Middle Park starting at Five Mile Recreation Area parking lot off of Centennial Avenue. This free, family fun activity is open to all ages and is appropriate for all bicycle types. On this easy ride, Rangers will make several stops and share history and fun facts about the park and answer questions. Come and learn about upcoming activities and volunteer opportunities in Bidwell Park.

The Bike Tour was held last year and the Rangers plan to make it an annual event as part of the Chico State Alumni Association's Chico Experience Week bringing together campus and community.

When: Sunday, October 14, 2012
Time: 1:30 - 3:00 PM
Location: Start and finish at Five Mile Recreation Area parking lot on Centennial Avenue.
What to bring: bicycle, helmet, water, and sunscreen.
Information: 530-896-7800 Park Division

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The Bidwell Park Pulse

The Bidwell Park Pulse is a quarterly newsletter of the City of Chico's Parks, Open Spaces, Greenways, and Preserves Division. The Parks Division is part of the General Services Department, and is responsible for maintaining and operating City parks, open space, and recreation areas including Bidwell Park, Children's Playground, Depot Park, City Plaza, Lindo Channel, Little Chico Creek Greenway, Teichert Ponds, and other preserves. Parks Division programs include: Maintenance, Ranger, Lifeguard, and Volunteer Programs.

**City of Chico Mission**

To protect and enhance our community's quality of life for present and future generations.

Bidwell Park and Playground Commission (BPPC)

The BPPC is vested with the supervision, control and management of many public parks and playgrounds within the City. **Commissioners:** Mary Brentwood, Clay Craig, Lisa Emmerich, Mark Herrera, Jim Mikles, Jim Moravec, Richard Ober (Chair). **Staff Liaison:** Lise Smith-Peters, Park Services Coordinator.

Contact

Questions, comments, or photo contributions?
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Web: www.ci.chico.ca.us

Cover Banner Photo Courtesy of Tom Barrett

Staff Spotlight - Five questions and answers with**Ranger Shane Romain****How many years have you been with the City of Chico?**

Shane started working for the City as a 9 month seasonal park ranger in 2007 and was promoted to full time in February 2009. Shane coordinates the Park Division's Park Watch Volunteer program that currently has over 120 active members. He also works part-time for the Community Youth Center at Rancho Esquon in Durham as an Outdoor Education Coordinator. Before joining the City, Shane worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge in Willows, CA. He earned his B.S. degree in Parks & Natural Resources Management at CSU, Chico.

What do you enjoy the most about Bidwell Park or other City Parks?

Shane enjoys the diversity of ecosystems that Bidwell Park and the City's greenways provide. He loves sharing information about wildlife, habitats and history with park visitors. Shane is always thrilled when presented with a teachable moment.

What do you see as a big challenge or challenges facing the Park Division?

"Of course there is the big challenge of doing more with less. Now more than ever, it is critical for the citizens of Chico to take stewardship of the park. I feel that if everyone who comes to visit the park just did a little something to help out, we would be in good shape. Even if everyone who visited the park simply did so respectfully, that would make a huge difference!"

Where are you from originally and what about your family?

Shane was born in San Mateo, CA. His grandparents' home was in a wooded canyon area where he often had picnics with his grandfather. Shane would get stuffed animals from his grandparents' house, set them up in the canyon and take his family on safaris when only 6 years old! That memory is why he pursued a career as a park ranger.



Shane & Bubba

Park Postcard:

Where is it?
Rock and wood create a unique window on the Park. Do you know where it is? Answer on p.4.

Shane is married to Nicole, office manager & membership coordinator for the Downtown Chico Business Association. They were high school sweethearts who reconnected after losing touch for over 10 years! They married at the White Ranch in Chico in September 2005.

What hobbies and interests do you have outside of work?

Shane loves horseback riding and dreams of owning a horse one day. He enjoys camping, fishing, visiting the ocean and pretty much any outdoor activity. Although he no longer plays in bands, he still strums a guitar or plinks around on piano. Gardening while listening to music is a favorite activity. Most of all he likes to spend time with his wife, family and friends.

Volunteers:

Bidwell Park Volunteers: Make a Difference and more!

Make a Difference Day (MDD) in Bidwell Park is a day of volunteer service celebrated nationwide on the 4th Saturday of October. In Chico it is a day to give back to Bidwell Park. This year's MDD marks the City's 7th year to host this work day and will take place on October 27th from 10 am to 1 pm at One Mile Recreation Area (north side).

volunteers will spruce up the One Mile Recreation Area and other nearby areas by removing invasive weeds, painting, and cleaning up Big Chico Creek. Participants should wear sturdy, closed-toed shoes, long pants, and weather appropriate clothing. Pre-Registration for the event is necessary if your group has more than 10 people. Please call the Park Services Coordinator at 530-896-7831 to sign up or email: lpeters@ci.chico.ca.us Volunteers will sign-in at the tent set up on the north side lawn of One Mile Pool. Also, check us out on Facebook — City of Chico — Park Division.

Invasive Plant Progress in Lower Park

Over the summer, the Park Division and **Friends of Bidwell Park** (FOBP) have held weekly volunteer sessions. FOBP focused on yellow starthistle in Lower Park and all volunteer sessions in August have been focused on removing American pokeweed (featured below).

The Park Division's **Crew Leaders** welcomed CSU, Chico freshmen back to campus by hosting the "My Service Counts" workday August 26. Students removed weeds and cleaned along Big Chico Creek in the Annie's Glen area.

Butte Environmental Council with City sponsorship hosted the annual Park and Creeks Cleanup on September 15.

At then end of September,

Bidwell Park Volunteer weekly sessions will be on most Wednesdays and Thursdays

from 1 to 4 pm and several Saturdays a month from 10 am to 1 pm. Information on these work sessions can be viewed on the City's Park Division webpage "Volunteer Calendar." Please check the website each week as locations may change as needed. Groups of 5 or more volunteers should contact the Volunteer Coordinator directly at 530-896-7831 so that planned work sessions can accommodate all sizes of groups. Water and instruction is provided. Please bring your own water bottle and wear closed-toed shoes. Volunteers under 18 must bring a parent signed release form with them the day of the session. It can be downloaded from the website.

~by Lise Smith-Peters, Coordinator



Crew Leader Michael Stauffer points out native plants to CSU, Chico freshmen as part of the "My Service Counts" workday in Annie's Glen.

Invasive Plant Profile:

American Pokeweed

Common name(s): Common Pokeweed

Scientific name: *Phytolacca Americana*

Family: Phytolaccaceae

Native To: Southeastern United States



Means of Introduction: Spread by birds that eat fruit and humans that plant as an ornamental.

Current CA Distribution: Between 0 and 3280 feet.

Status/Weed Rating:

Statewide impact: Limited (CAL-IPC)

CDFG Noxious Weed List: Not listed. [CDFG Weeds 2000]

What does it look like?

General: Perennial herb growing up to nine feet tall with large dark green alternate leaves.

Leaves: Large, oblong, alternate leaves with reddish stems.

Flowers: Greenish-white flowers are produced in long clusters.

Fruit: Small round black berries.

Reproduction & Dispersal: Spreads rapidly in disturbed/riparian areas by seed. Birds feed on the seed and then spread them.

Where is it found invading? General and in Chico.

Why worry? Pokeweed is spreading rapidly in Bidwell Park and can be found in neighboring yards. It is also poisonous if eaten by humans. There have been medicinal properties associated with the plant but more research should be conducted prior to use.

How can it be managed? Removal. They have a large deep taproot. The plant can be controlled by removing 1/4 of the crown root and ideally the whole tap root. Collection and disposal of ripe berries helps reduce the spread of the plant.

What is being done in Bidwell Park? The plant is removed throughout the summer by volunteers. Removal is best done before purple berries are formed.

Where do I go for more information?

<http://www.calflora.org/>

<http://www.cal-ipc.org/>

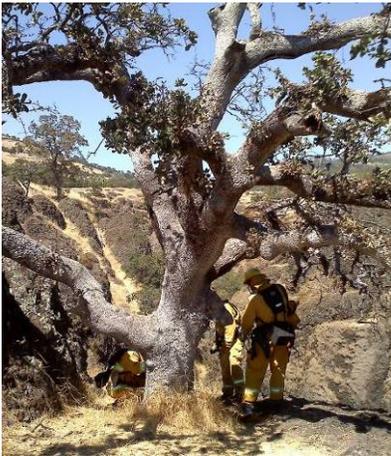
<http://plants.usda.gov/>



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Busy Park Fire Season



As wildfires burn in the surrounding mountains, we've also experienced 10 fires within Chico parks & greenways since June. No area of Bidwell Park has been spared as fire has scarred areas of Lower, Middle and Upper Park. Comanche Creek, Lindo Channel and Verbena Fields have also had fire damage. Over 30 acres have burned and all are thought to be of human origin. Quick reporting by alert citizens and prompt responses from Chico Fire Department has minimized damage.

Over the past few years, the Park Division has used prescribed fire as an effective tool to manage non-native plants, reduce fuel loads, and rejuvenate native plant communities.

Unlike wildfires, prescribed fire areas are prepared and timed with favorable weather conditions to minimize damage and meet goals. Effects of wildfire are far reaching, resulting in potential flooding, soil erosion, poor air and water quality, loss of wildlife, property and vegetation, and additional costs for rehabilitation.

When extreme fire danger is present, the Park Division may close Upper Park Road to vehicle traffic when weather and fuel conditions warrant. The public can help by complying with the smoking ban and reporting suspicious behavior or fires immediately. We appreciate your help in protecting the beauty of our parks and greenways.

Park Celebrates 29th National Night Out!

On August 7th the Park Division hosted National Night Out at One Mile Recreation Area of Bidwell Park. Approximately 100 citizens from the community came together to send the message of caring about our parks, our neighborhoods and fighting back against crime. Park staff, lifeguards and Park Watch volunteers provided information about park safety. Fire and ambulance personnel gave tours of

emergency response vehicles and helpful tips on emergency situations. Volunteers



from Target and Kids and Creeks organized fun activities for kids, including a dunk tank, watermelon eating contest and water balloon toss. The Blaze radio station provided music and MC services. Target generously sponsored the event by providing volunteer support, supplies, watermelons and gift cards for contest winners.

Answer to "Where is it?": The branch of a blue oak grows into volcanic rock just above the Diversion Dam on Big Chico Creek. This tree caught on fire in July (see picture above), likely from a careless park user. Quick response allowed most of the tree to be saved although branches had to be cut off.