



Bidwell Park Pulse

2014 Annual Report Edition

This edition of the Pulse summarizes the Parks Division progress made in Bidwell Park and other areas of Chico. For additional details, refer to the annual report presented to the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission .

The Parks Division and Street Trees Division are pleased to share this annual report with the public. We will highlight our accomplishments, and lay out new approaches to accomplish new efforts.

The year 2014 marked another year of significant challenges to the Parks, Open Spaces, Greenways, and Preserves Division (Park Division) and the Street Trees and Public Plantings Division (Street Trees).

Staffing and resource cuts initiated in 2013 and the impact to services, remained the leading challenge. The combined staffing levels for both divisions is just over half of 2009 levels. In addition, two key positions (Park Services Coordinator and Urban Forest Manager) were not hired for over a year.

With these challenges, the Divisions focused on providing basic and emergency services. We have developed new creative solutions to handle workload and redefined staff responsibilities. Some examples include:

- Use a community fund-raising model to implement the Caper Acres renovation plan. Renovations will reduce operations and

maintenances costs.

- Volunteer hours were over 28,500 hours, representing approximately \$750,000 in value. Donations held steady; and the value of in-kind services ballooned to \$284,790.
- A more streamlined tree report system reduced costs and utilize already existing information from the City's tree database.
- Continued use of Butte County Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (SWAP) and Alternative Custody Supervision (ACS) aided Park and greenways work.

As citizens, commissioners, and staff we have much work to do and we will continue to build better partnerships and ways to do things every day. We look forward to working with the community toward solutions in 2015!

~Daniel Efsaef, Park and Natural Resource Manager

Parks Division

- Administrative and Visitor Services
- Maintenance Crew
- Ranger/Lifeguard
- Volunteer Program
- Natural Resource Management
- Outreach and Education

Street Trees and Landscapes

- Street Trees (approximately 35,000 trees)
- Public Landscapes (for example, Children's Playground, City Plaza, Greenways, city parking lots, medians, landscapes around the City's public buildings, and the Airport.

Category	FY 1988-1989	FY 2007-2008	FY 2010-2011	FY 2011-2012	FY 2012-2013	FY 2013-2014	FY 2014-2015 (adopted)	Trend (2007 to present)
Operating Budget								
Park Division	\$594,148	\$1,799,037	\$1,848,137	\$1,817,833	\$1,805,759	\$1,742,016	\$1,593,492	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Street Trees Division		\$1,131,143	\$971,276	\$1,019,987	\$1,073,079	\$839,941	\$914,754	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
General Fund Budget		\$49,310,955	\$41,282,457	\$42,995,996	\$43,724,540	\$44,449,213	\$45,955,168	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Staffing^a								
Park Division	14	13.5	13	12	12	8.75		■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Street Trees	2	11	9	8	6	3		■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Inside:



RANGERS 3



STREET TRESS 4



VOLUNTEER TRAINING.....7

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 Public Works 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, Marisa Corley, Alberto Hernandez, Jim Moravec (Chair), Valerie Reddemann, Janine Rood, and Drew Traulsen. **Staff Liaison:** Shane Romain

Contact Us

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About the Banner Photograph: Rock work provides a scenic backdrop along the former flume from the diversion dam to Horseshoe Lake. The water was used to irrigate the Golf Course.

2014 Highlights:

Administrative and Visitor Services

Functions: reservations, permits, support and analysis for Commission meetings, development and management of budgets, vendor payments and contracts, and customer and visitor services.

Our efforts in customer and visitor services are an important part of providing citizens with a good experience in the park and community.

Service Requests – The majority of requests were related to street trees fallen trees, graffiti and general vandalism to park signs and infrastructure.

BPPC Support – 10 BPPC meetings, 2 Natural Resource meetings, and 4 Tree Committee meetings.

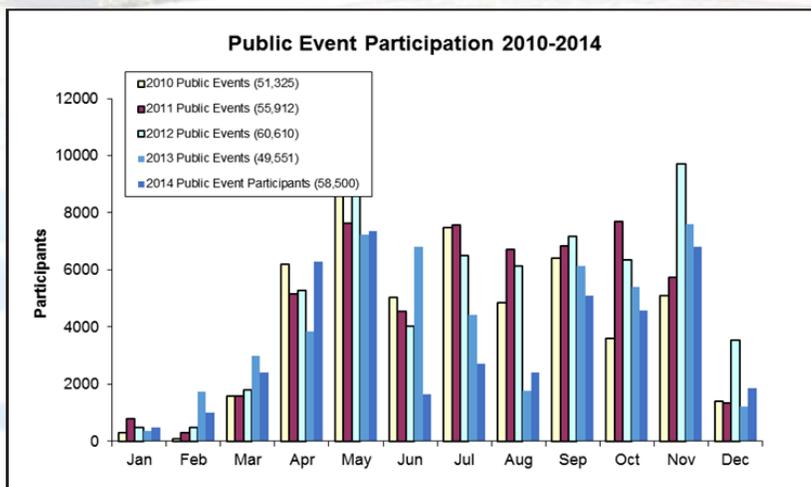
Research Tracking – Individuals from various agencies, including CSU, Chico students requested permission to conduct research projects in Bidwell Park. Some of the studies and requests include: educational field trips, vascular plant, bryophyte, and fern collections.

Park Leases – Copies of annual reports from park lessees are available in the online January packet.

Lifeguards– After a substantial delay with a dearth of candidates, Parks was able to provide lifeguards at the Sycamore Pool. We were able to get a number of good candidates after reports in the media sparked interested applicants. The California Conservation Corps will supply 3-4 lifeguards and Keith Welch (CCC) also provided certification training for a number of good candidates that did not have all required certifications.

Park Permits - Staff issued a total of 582 permits which includes 84 public events, 212 private events, and 206 reservations at Caper Acres. Public event participation rebounded in 2014 (58,500) after the first decline in 4 years (49,551 in 2013). The estimates do not include spectators, which could increase the numbers significantly.

Monthly Total of Public Event Participation



CSU Chico students collect "micro" trash in One Mile during the Cats in the Community event on Cesar Chavez Day.

2014 Highlights:

Park Ranger Program

Functions: *protect park resources and educate the community; patrol the City parks and greenways; enforce rules and laws; emergency response; visitor assistance; report damage and safety concerns; event coordination; illegal encampments; conduct educational and interpretive programs; monitor; assist with natural resource management task; open/close park gates and facilities; assist prescribed burns and vegetation management projects.*

Park Rangers complete a wide variety of important tasks to protect park resources and educate the community, although reductions in staffing, limited these efforts.

2014 was a challenging year for the lifeguard program with a shortage of qualified candidates delaying the pool opening until late June. The lifeguards provided treatment to 14 visitors for bee stings, falls, abrasions and cuts. There was 1 rescue for a near

drowning.

Community outreach and education plays an important part in Ranger duties. Rangers developed information and participate in a variety of educational programs to enhance visitors enjoyment and safety and protect natural and cultural resources.



Issues associated with homeless activities continued to increase.

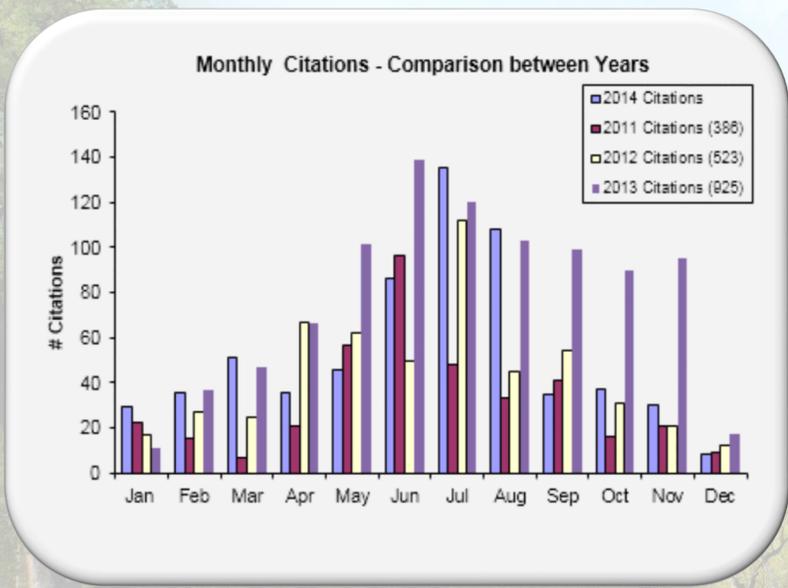
Several measures have been implemented to address homeless camp activity, including opening up densely vegetated areas and consistent, regular identification and clean-up of active camps. Rangers have taken a lead role in the program over the past two years and the result was the removal of more than 470 cubic yards or 188 tons of material from Chico's parks and greenways (additional materials were picked up during the year, including 20 tons removed during the Chico Creek s Clean-Up day). Three Rangers

During the 2014, Rangers issued 637 Citations and 2,377 Warnings.

issued 159 warnings and 81 citations for illegal camps in 2014. Chico PD also issued 142 warnings and issued 161 citations. Rangers spent more than 50% of their time on homeless encampment abatement. The time spent on camps maintains public safety; however, significant decreases the amount of time rangers spend in Bidwell Park.

Animal issues increased in 2014 with a steady rise in complaints involving dogs (including deer deaths in Middle Park and 4 incidents of dogs that drowned in Big Chico Creek).

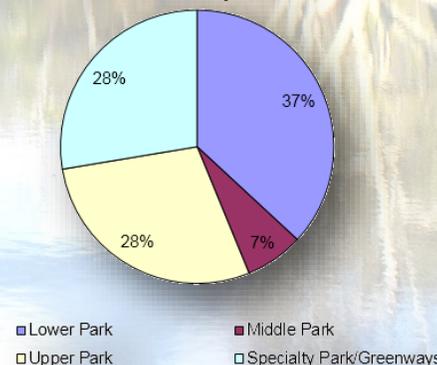
Despite the challenges of the budget and other issues. The combined enforcement and resource management efforts, coupled with a strong educational and outreach program have culminated in the rangers' ability to continue to effectively protect and promote the City of Chico's natural and cultural resources.



Total Citations in 2014 dropped to 637 reflecting a smaller ranger staff than 2013.

Violation	2014 Total Citations	%	Rank	2014 Total Warnings	%	Rank
Alcohol	99	16%	2	309	13%	4
Animal Control Violations	84	13%	4	438	18%	3
Bicycle Violation	3	0%	11	485	20%	1
Glass	32	5%	6	159	7%	6
Illegal Camping	85	13%	3	241	10%	5
Injury/Destruction City Property	8	1%	8	4	0%	11
Littering	5	1%	9	48	2%	9
Other Violations	23	4%	7	104	4%	7
Parking Violations	245	38%	1	98	4%	8
Resist/Delay Park Ranger	4	1%	10	9	0%	10
Smoking	49	8%	5	482	20%	2
Total	637	100.0%		2377	100.0%	

2014 - Citations by Place



(Background Photo Courtesy of Abram House Photography)

2014 Highlights:

Urban Forest Program

Urban Forest: *The Division cares for over 36,000 trees planted in the Public Right of Way and other city-owned areas (excluding natural areas such as Bidwell Park and Greenways).*

With the current staff and budget, the Street Tree Division provides minimal service in comparison to previous years, yet there were some positive measures in 2014. These include:

Chico named Tree City USA for 30th year – The Arbor Day Foundation recertified Chico as a 2013 Tree City USA recipient. Communities achieve Tree City USA status by meeting four core standards of sound urban forestry management: maintaining a tree board or department, having a community tree ordinance, spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry and celebrating Arbor Day.

Through a bid process we managed to hire a local tree service, Petersen Tree Care to handle our emergency work. Petersen Tree Care was utilized 307.5 hours totaling \$69,187.50 for emergency services.

In July 2014 a full time Senior Tree Maintenance Worker was rehired to full time duty. This allowed us to complete most of the highest priority requests (traffic safety pruning, elevating low limbs, formative pruning young trees, removing smaller dead/

2014 Highlights:

City Landscapes Program

This is the city's largest annual service contract and amounts to \$644,952 for services being paid out over 119 different fund accounts. The city's Landscape Inspector communicates daily with the landscape contractor, promoting contract compliance and efficient quality services.

2014 presented many challenges including the drought and increased vandalism and illegal encampments. For example, staff continued focus on implementing water conservation practices, such



dying/invasive trees for public safety, and more).

The following information on pruning was targeted toward the lower canopy of the trees for public safety. The pruning did not include a full trim of the entire canopy. In years past when the department was fully staffed they would safety prune the entire tree while they were there in an effort to save time from coming back.

Highlighted Tree Maintenance totals for 2014

- Traffic Safety Pruning - 882 trees pruned.
- School Zone Pruning- 220 trees pruned.
- Smaller dead/dying/invasive removals - 209 trees removed.
- Formative Pruning (structure pruning of younger trees) - 178 trees pruned.
- DCBA Pruning - 360 trees; Bidwell Park pruning- 22 trees.
- Storm Damage and Down Limb Calls- Responded to 642 locations.
- Call Outs - Responded to 68 emergency calls.



City staff and volunteers planted 5 October Glory red maples on the corner of W 3rd St and Chestnut for Arbor Day.

Landscapes: *The program oversees the City's City Specialty and Neighborhood Parks, Municipal buildings, Parking/Transportation facilities, and Public Plantings.*

as reducing irrigation, turning off systems, conducting an annual "start-up" irrigation system check and repairs, programming irrigation at night, weekly irrigation checks, utilizing evapotranspiration (ET) data for plantings, installing mulch and capping heads or nozzles.

Financial data for January through September show savings of \$15,986.92 due to reduced consumption.



2014 Highlights:

Volunteers & Donations

Volunteer Program Mission: *enlist the help of the local community in managing Park resources and expand volunteerism in as many aspects of enhancing Bidwell Park as possible (Bidwell Park Volunteer Manual, April 2007)*

When citizens take the opportunity to give time and energy to volunteer in Bidwell Park and our City greenways, their investment in and respect for Chico's unique resources grow deeper. The Volunteer Program enlists the help of the community to manage natural resources and enhance the community.

Volunteers participate in the Park Watch program and a variety of other efforts. Park Watchers are ambassadors of the park and provide visitors with information and advising park staff about damage, hazards, vandalism, and any concerns they encounter while in the park. Other volunteer activities include; illegal encampment clean ups, painting, litter removal, water quality monitoring, weed mapping and monitoring, providing environmental education, creek-bank restoration, trail maintenance and repair, event planning and implementation, fundraising, outreach, Park office tasks, control of invasive weeds, native plant seed propagation and planting native plants. In 2014, volunteers contributed 22,896 hours of work in Bidwell Park and City of Chico Greenways.

2014 Highlights

- Despite the absence of a Park Services Coordinator, the Park Intern, Heidi Ortiz has continued to coordinate and support volunteers in doing restoration projects.
- For years, the high priority placed on vegetation management during weekly and annual volunteer work sessions has helped supplement and offset the Park Division maintenance crew staff time.
- Also with the reduction of staff, volunteer dedication to cleaning encampments and trash has been vital for cleaning our watershed.



CSU Chico students transplant natives and clean at Park Division's native plant nursery.

(Background Photo: Young volunteers receive a safety briefing before going to work



Park Watch members volunteer during Bidwell Park Birthday Bash.

- Large annual park work days remain popular events that school students, families, individuals, CSUC and Butte College students, community service groups and church groups participate in.
- CSUChico's CAVE Adopt a Park and Upward Bound programs continue to provide reliable volunteers for the Park, greenways and open spaces
- The Park Division and Chico High School Native Plant Project completed its 6th year.

Partial Volunteers List

This list includes only a small fraction of those that donated their time to their Community. We appreciate all your service to your park and community!

Active partners include:

Blue Oak Charter School, Butte County, Butte Environmental Council, CA Urban Stream Alliance "Stream Team", CSU Chico's Upward Bound (UB) program, CSU, Chico's Community Action Volunteers in Education (CAVE), Downtown Chico Business Association, Friends of Bidwell Park, Friends of Comanche Creek Greenway, Inspire High School, Jesus Center, Kids and Creeks, Recology, Sigma Chi Fraternity, The Mount Lassen Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS), Waste Management.

Active Volunteer Crew Leaders:

Elaine Ellsmore, Elizabeth Stewart, Janet Ellner, Michael Bruhn, Michael Stauffer, Steve Overlock, Susan Mason, and Timmarie Hamill.

Notable Volunteers:

Adelei Carman, Holm and Don Holmtar, Jaydence Marsh, McCabe Family, Rangel Family, Ryan McDougale, Susan Toaspern, Thad Walker, and Wes Dempsey.

2014 Highlights:

Maintenance and Infrastructure

Maintenance Mission: *Park maintenance is responsible for the care and maintenance of Bidwell Park and other assigned parks, view sheds and greenways.*

Many citizens are surprised at the scope required to maintain city-owned areas for safety and the satisfaction of park visitors. Our staff works seven day a week (365 days a year) and is comprised of three maintenance workers, one senior maintenance worker, and a field supervisor. Park staff duties include cleaning, safety inspection, graffiti removal, and maintenance of park grounds, facilities, and play areas. Park Maintenance is also responsible for the trails program, wild land restoration and maintenance.

To provide a sense of the scope, the Parks staff duties in Bidwell Park alone include: 6 reservation areas, 36 individual picnic sites, 7 park buildings that house 25 restrooms stalls, 8 porta pottie locations, 3 shower facilities, Numerous lighting systems, 21.5 acres of irrigated lawn that is mowed and trimmed each week in the summer and leafed each week during the fall, over 10 miles of paved road ways and bike paths, and the seasonal cleaning and maintenance of Sycamore pool.

In addition to these daily tasks, Staff repairs park infrastructure (from painting, plumbing and electrical to adding, replacing or fabricating equipment or fixtures such as signs, waste receptacles, benches, picnic tables and exercise equipment). In addition, staff prepares and posts reservation areas for over 300 private and public events each year. While Bidwell Park is the main focus of Staff, they also have duties on other City properties.

2014 Highlights

Like other parts of the City, 2014 represents a year of responding to



New recycle containers made available with a state grant. The stand was designed by parks staff, is vandal resistant, secures the can and allows for efficient emptying of the cans during pick up.

issues rather than proactive work programs. In 2009, Park staff devoted over 17,000 hours to the upkeep of parks and greenways, in 2014 the number dropped to 5,655 hours. Despite that constraint, staff continued to make positive changes in the park. For example,

- Staff closed out 183 of the 404 service requests.
- Removal of Potential Hazardous Materials - Toxic telephone pole barriers removal project advanced by 620 feet of removal and 195 feet of new split rail fence for 2014.
- Native Plantings - Native Planting sites completed or reworked in 2014 include the Five-Mile levee, two sites south of the one mile bridge and one on the north side of bridge.
- Infrastructure replaced, retrofitted or removed - With help from Sign and Signal, staff switched all lights at One Mile to LED units at a cost of 5,943.44. With the change, energy usage in September dropped from \$620.09 last year to \$295 this year. Staff selected September, as that month should serve as an average month for light use. Staff also believes that we can change this rate schedule to LS-3, customer owned and metered lighting which would be another \$130 of savings for September and more during the long winter months. If that rate change is successful, annual savings could exceed \$6,000 yearly!
- Sycamore Pool repair - Staff have lined up a contractor and will prepare for repairs.



Installation of LED lights at One Mile

Natural Resources Highlights

- Completed an annual review based on 2013-2014 data and the "Adaptive Wet Weather Trail Management Plan".
- Completed fuel reduction and prescribed burns in the Wildwood Area.
- Completed the first phase of work on the path to Monkey Face.
- Continued progress on removing invasive weeds, putting in native plants and updating and painting infrastructure of the park entrances and volunteer restoration areas.
- The State announced that the City of Chico has been awarded a \$1,032,000 grant under the Housing-Related Parks Program.
- Hosted a ribbon cutting and opening for a renovated trail that connects ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) parking spots with the pier at Horseshoe Lake
- Planned for invasive plant herbicide applications on Little Chico Creek and Lindo Channel

(Background: Parking Lot D – split rail installation to protect Blue Oaks.)

Volunteer Hours



Category	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Trend
Park/Greenway Work	5,129	7,891	6,317	9,677	11,228	10,474	10,991	8035	14163	
Park Watch Patrol	11,913	10,866	10,455	10,061	8,788	6,901	8,810	10844	14400	
Total Hours	17,042	18,757	16,772	19,738	20,016	17,375	19,801	18,879	28,563	

2014 Highlights:

Donations

Citizens provided over \$11,051 in donations. Donations, both cash and in-kind, have helped save the Park Division needed financial resources.

In-kind donations skyrocketed last year to \$284,789 (from over \$40,000 in the previous year). Of note were contributions from the CA Conservation Corps, Butte County Sheriff's programs (ACS and SWAP). The value of volunteer hours exceeded \$752,336.

In-Kind Donations

Here's a fraction of the Organizations that supported the Park: Butte County Public Works Cleanup fund, Butte County Sheriff (SWAP and ACS programs), Butte Environmental Council, California Conservation Corps, Chico Tree Advocates, Costco, Friends of Bidwell Park, Friends of Comanche Creek Greenway, Home Depot, Mount Lassen Chapter-CNPS, Orchard Supply, and Recology.

Through the years, the community has contributed funds to memorial benches, plaques, vita course stations, Caper Acres bricks and toward equipment and facilities.

However, many citizens do not know that the Park Donation can accept donations to support Bidwell Park and to raise needed funds for other areas. Donations are tax deductible and may be given to separate costs centers. Staff hopes that the ease of donating will increase the community support of our parks.



Buy a Jake Early T-shirt from the Park Division—\$25!



Yes, I would like to help Bidwell Park & City Greenways!

I understand that my contribution is tax deductible (IRS Publication 526 (2012) p. 2).

- Caper Acres (99170)
- Trails (99174)
- General Donation
- Park Intern (99173)
- Park Improvements (99171),
- Park Infrastructure (99172)
- Vegetation Management (99175)

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Enclosed please find my support in the amount of: \$ _____

My check is attached (Please make payable to Chico Parks Division)

Please bill my credit Card (\$20.00 minimum)

Visa MasterCard

Card #: _____ Exp. _____

Please clip and return to City of Chico/Parks Division/Donations/965 Fir Street/ Chico, CA 95926.

For official use only 050-000-46001/ _____ -000-3990



Parks Division

411 Main Street | PO Box 3420
Chico, CA 95927

View the Annual Report Online, please visit:

http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/document_library/documents/2014_Annual_Report_14_1210.pdf

By the Numbers

4,799	Chico township population in 1900.	\$18.37	Total Spending on City of Chico Parks and other properties per resident .
86,187	Chico population in 2010.		
212,968	Chico metropolitan area population (includes Oroville and Paradise) in 2010.	28,563	Volunteer hours donated.
5,053	Total acres managed by the City of Chico.	\$752,336	Value of donated volunteer hours.
3,670	Total acres of Bidwell Park.	\$11,051	Tax-exempt donations to Parks.
14	US Ranking of Bidwell Park among municipally owned parks.	\$284,789	Value of In-kind service or material donations.
3	California Ranking of Bidwell Park among municipally owned parks.		