



Bidwell Park Pulse

Quarterly Newsletter of the City of Chico's Park Division

Park Volunteers Kick-off Training Program

Park Division Staff presented an overview of new volunteer program efforts to a packed house on the evening of March 15. Over 50 people attended the training that combined volunteers from various Division Programs. Participants also attended more in-depth follow-up sessions.

After an overview, volunteers were split into three groups: Park Watch Members, Trail Volunteers, and Crew Leaders:

- **Park Watch Members** - serve as ambassadors and provide visitors with information and advise park staff on damage, hazards, vandalism and other



safety concerns.

- **Crew Leaders** - learn the art of working with volunteers on Bidwell Park and greenway projects. They also assist the

Crew Leaders guide Park volunteers during work sessions.

Volunteer Coordinator to plan and support Park workdays.

- **Trail Volunteers** - help work on Bidwell Park's trails.



Volunteers will work alongside Park crew on scheduled Trail Days throughout the year. The volunteers will learn about the unique soils, vegetation, cultural resources of the park and will provide input into the new Park Division's Trail Plan.

"We feel that this is a good start to a program that will grow and mature over the next few years," says Dan Efseaff, Park and Natural Resource Manager.

So when you see our hard working volunteers out in the Park; patrolling, leading a work session; or repairing trails; be sure to say a big Thank You for their time and effort to keep the Park healthier, safer and more sustainable for future generations.

- Lise Smith-Peters, Volunteer Coordinator.

"The trail training showed the complexities of our park environment ... good science...we will pay more attention to geologic and geographic setting of the Park."

Park Talk: June 14th at One Mile



Photo Courtesy of Abram House Photography

The Park Division will host the next "Park Talk" at Bidwell Park's One Mile Recreation Area on June 14, 2012, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Staff will be on hand to answer questions about the Park Division's Lifeguard Program and the operation of the Sycamore Pool as well as any questions about park programs. Staff will also tour the Sycamore Restoration Area, and collect public input on Lower Park Trail needs. These meetings provide an informal opportunity for the public to learn about management, outreach, and volunteer efforts in the Park. A subsequent Park Talk is scheduled for September. For more information, contact the Park Division at 530-896-7800.

Inside:



▶ PLANTINGS 3



▶ NATURE CENTER 4



▶ SENSE OF SPRING 8

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, Management Analyst

Contact

Questions, comments, or photo contributions? Contact us:

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General Services Department
965 Fir Street | P.O. Box 3420
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Fax: (530) 895-4731

Email: parkinfo@ci.chico.ca.us

Web: www.ci.chico.ca.us

To Volunteer, check out the webpage calendar!



Above: CA Conservation Corps support Earth Day in Bidwell Park. Below: Fencing marks test planting at Horseshoe Lake.



Staff Spotlight:

Park Maintenance Field Supervisor Jimi Logsdon

Five questions and answers with a staff member of the Chico Park Division.

How long with the City of Chico?

Jimi Logsdon has worked for the City of Chico since 2002. He first served on the Tree Crew and then joined the Park Crew six years ago. Jimi was promoted to Park Field Supervisor in October 2011. Before joining the City, Jimi worked at Pullins Cyclery for 10 years and also had his own woodworking and furniture business, Logsdon Woodworking.

What are Jimi's favorite things about Bidwell Park?

Jimi enjoys Bidwell Park's central location and easy access to the public. He rides his bike often and he loves CA native plants and has enjoyed studying them.

What are the biggest challenge facing the Park Division?

"With the city's budget reductions, the Park Division maintenance staffing has been a major challenge over the past year as the workload of caring for Bidwell Park and the City's greenways and other Parks is spread amongst a smaller staff," Jimi notes. "The Park's infrastructure is older and with increased visitor use, there are more repairs needed and more staff time is devoted to fixing problems."

Where did he grow up?

Jimi was born in Charleston, Illinois, but his family moved to Southern Colorado (Canyon City/Lincoln Park) when he was an infant. His family's home was on 10 acres of peach orchards, which is how Jimi developed his love of making and eating peach cobbler (he makes the best!) and jams.

Jimi is married to Katie Zukowski, a massage therapist, and they have two children, Sophie 13 and Garrett 10. The kids attend Blue Oak Elementary, where both Jimi and Katie volunteer many hours for field trips, helping with maintenance and other school projects.

What hobbies and interest do you have outside of work?

Jimi loves to fly fish and gets to a few times a year (new year's resolution: more fly fishing!); backpack, camp; sail and repair his sailboat; and he has a green thumb, maintaining a large vegetable garden year round.

Park Postcard:



Where is it? Do you know where it is? Answer on p.8.



Jimi Logsdon somewhere in Bidwell Park.

Native Plantings:
Restoration Underway!

Driving along Upper Park Road past the golf course, you may have noticed circles of wood chips festooned with milk cartons. *What are they?* You may have wondered. *Crop circles?* You might call them that. *What is being grown?* Milk? No not milk, but you may find milkweed poking up through the cartons that protect native plantings. The plantings also contain young seedlings of blue oak, live oak, grey pine, manzanita, scrub oak, buck brush, button bush, red bud, deer grass, purple needle grass, and more.

Wander over to the observatory parking lot, you'll find those plants as well as flowering plants such as yarrow, aster, fuchsia, grindelia (gum plant), milkweed, ceanothus, and lupin.



Planted Deer Grass thriving at the corner of Centennial and Manzanita



Golf course plantings include native species to test what will grow on this challenging site with minimal care. .

On the backside of Horseshoe Lake, you'll find another native planting test area corralled inside orange fencing. Here you'll find water-loving willows and cottonwoods, along with button bush and deer grass.

Plants for these projects come from various places: Floral Native Nursery, the City of Chico's small nursery, Chico High School's Ag. Department greenhouse, and still others represent donation from individuals such as local arborist, Seth Myers, who contributed scrub oaks.

These efforts spruce up highly visible sites in the park with low maintenance native vegetation. The plantings serve as test sites and wildlife habitat. We also hope that the sites inspire community members to consider low maintenance, wildlife friendly native plants in their own yards.

Over the past year, many of the park's entrances have received a similar make-over. The Madrone Avenue bike entrance had its cypress tree removed, and now nurtures a madrone tree. Likewise, manzanita is now found near Manzanita Avenue. As for Forest Avenue... It has yet to be planted.

-Peggy Henry, Maintenance Worker



Flowering natives are planted at the observatory parking area.



Scrub oak, donated by Seth Myers.

Partner Profile:

Spring has Sprung at the Chico Creek Nature Center



Just in time for spring, the Nature Center is bursting with new ideas, new programs and new community connections. The Nature Center has undergone a transformation in its leadership, with a new executive director and a revitalized board of directors. With the help of its dedicated staff, the Nature Center is definitely open for business.

“The Nature Center is such an amazing resource to the community,” states, Courtney Farrell, Executive Director. “Our staff and board are generating innovative ideas, new programs and different ways to outreach to the community.” The overall goal this year is to increase awareness, increase membership, and increase the number of visitors and volunteers that the Nature Center sees each day.

Collaboration is key to achieving these goals. The Nature Center is looking forward to sustaining its current partners as well as bringing new ones into the fold. One of the ways it is doing this is by hosting an informational fair and fundraising event on Saturday, April 21. Groups and organizations affiliated with Bidwell Park have been invited to showcase their activities and services that day. “We want to stay true to our mission and be the information center for Bidwell Park. By inviting everyone to the Nature Center, we give the community the opportunity to be reminded of all the great things that are here and how to ensure they remain for generations to come,” Farrell comments.

Staying true to their mission is also reflected in the expanded programs that Nature Center naturalist Jon Aull is heading up. “It is important that we provide science-based educational experiences for the youth in our community. We must maintain the integrity of our natural systems and begin teaching how to accomplish that at an early age,” Aull stated. The Nature Center’s curriculum strives to complement the current schedules at local elementary and junior high schools. Currently, Aull and the staff are working on expanding their science curriculum to include more programs and reach larger audiences.

If you haven’t been by the Nature Center lately – you should stop by. Keep an eye out for new things happening at the Nature Center.

-Courtney Farrell, CCNC Executive Director

For more information:

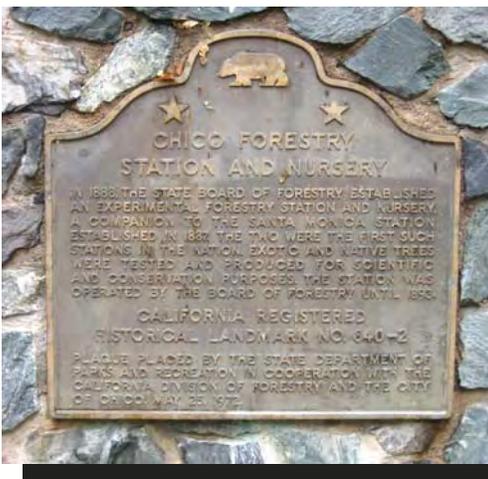
Web: www.bidwellpark.org

Phone: (530) 891-4671.

Hours: Wednesday - Sunday
11:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Bidwell Park History:

Birthplace of Scientific Forestry in California



State Historical Landmark 840-2 notes the Chico and Santa Monica Forestry Stations as the first in California—and the US.

Forestry Station provided and tested trees for planting throughout Northern California. A companion station was also started in Southern California in the same year. In 1890, nearly 16,000 trees were planted and some 30,000 seedlings started in the nursery.

Nestled behind Cedar Grove in the World of Trees is a historical site known as one of the first forestry stations and nursery sites in the state of California. In 1888, General John Bidwell gave 37 acres to the State for use as a forestry and nursery station.

The Chico

Shortly thereafter, the University of California took over operations and eventually sold the nursery to the City in 1921.

Tucked away in a corner of the area, bordering Parkview Elementary and East 8th Street, is a four-acre Cork Oak grove planted in 1904. This grove was once the largest of its kind in the United States. Native to Portugal, Spain and Northern Africa, Cork Oaks have a life expectancy of roughly 250 years and have done well in Chico’s Mediterranean climate.

Cork oak’s unique features make it a sustainable tree, as cork can be harvested without harming the tree. Strippings to harvest the cork occur roughly once a decade. The Park oaks went through two experimental strippings during World War II. The Cork Oak’s thick insulating bark may be the tree’s evolutionary answer to forest fires. The branches protected by cork are able to re-sprout and regenerate the canopy quickly.

Stop by the World of Trees Trail to see living remnants of the past and the beginnings of Chico’s distinction as a “city of trees.”

Contact or stop by the Park Division for an informative brochure about the World of Trees.

-Lisa Barge, Park Ranger

Native Plant Profile:

Blue Oak

Common name: Blue Oak

Scientific name: *Quercus douglassi*

Family: Fagaceae

Native to: California - Endemic

Current CA Distribution:

Sierra Foothills and other low lying hills

above valley floors, or where the water table drops below 30'.

What does it look like?

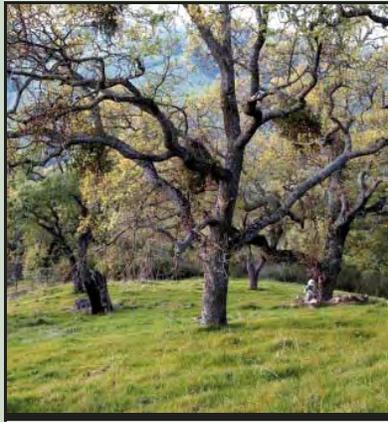
General: Medium to large tree, with full spreading canopy. Slow growing. Height usually to 40', may reach 60 in excellent growing conditions. Girth rarely exceeds 2' to 3' in diameter.

Leaves: Deciduous, with 3 to 7 lobes that are irregular in shape and size.

Flowers: Catkins, in spring

Fruit: Acorns, ¾" to 1 ½", in a shallow cup, with warty scales. Form and ripen in a single year.

Reproduction and Dispersal: Birds and squirrels disperse the



seeds, often burying them as a cache for winter.

Why worry? Blue oaks are not regenerating naturally in most of Bidwell Park. Effort to replant have also been of limited success. A few patches of regeneration can be seen south of Upper Park Road between Parking lots A and B, where intense fires have occurred in the past.

How can it be managed? Efforts at management have focused on getting new regeneration established. Successful regeneration is difficult to find, and usually occurs after a fire or heavy grazing. Success appears to depend upon subsequent removal of grazing and control of ground squirrel and rodent populations. Deer browsing will impact survival as well. Special attention to weed control and providing supplemental irrigation for 1 to 3 years helps improve the success rate for young seedlings.

What is being done in Bidwell Park? A few test sites have been planted over the years, with very limited success. The new prescribed burn program may help regeneration by discouraging competition with non-native plants, such as star thistle. New young trees are being planted by the Park's Division at this time – while they are doing well, it will take at least 3 years to assess their ultimate success.

Where do I go for more information?

<http://www.californiaoaks.org/html/reference.html>

http://ucanr.org/sites/oak_range/Oak_Regeneration/

<http://www.hastingsreserve.org/OakStory/Problem2.html>

Image: Denice Britton

Safety:

Rattlesnake Season

As the spring weather turns warmer, Park Rangers remind visitors that rattlesnakes will become more noticeable in the Park and to use caution when hiking, biking, or walking.



Photo Courtesy of Dr. James Wood.

Rattlesnakes are a beneficial and natural part of Bidwell Park and will usually flee if not cornered or threatened. As effective predators, rattlesnakes control rodent populations and help maintain a healthy ecosystem.



Visitors can take several safety measures to reduce the likelihood of an encounter with a rattlesnake:

- Walk on designated trails.
- Stay away from thick brush.
- Step or place your hands where you can see them.
- Wear long pants and boots.
- Keep dogs on leash.
- If you happen to come upon a snake, back away slowly.
- If bitten, call 911 and seek medical attention immediately.

Remember, snakes benefit the Park and bites are rare. Just look where you step and give them a lot of room!

Feature:

Volunteer-Highlights!

Little Chico Creek Privet Tree Removal

Recently, active, park volunteer John noticed a dense infestation of trees between Little Chico Creek (LCC) and Humboldt Road, east of Highway 99. John knew from many hours in Bidwell Park to remove Japanese privet tree (*Ligustrum japonicum*), that this was not a native plant and was spreading at an alarming rate. While the tree he noticed looked similar to Japanese privet, there were some key differences. Glossy privets (*Ligustrum lucidum*) have multiple trunks, much larger roots and brushier branches.

After meeting with the Park Division, work started in early February to remove the trees. The Park Division recruited volunteers and Friends of Bidwell Park supplied tools and coordinated numerous work sessions. Among others, Community Action Volunteers in Education students, California Conservation Corps members and Gamma Zeta Alpha fraternity have participated with about 500 hours spent on the project to-date.

Debris disposal required the need for four 30-yard roller bins. The efforts have paid off, with about 1,600 seedlings and saplings removed and approximately 150 trees (25-50 ft long) now gone a substantial threat has been removed.



During Earth Day, volunteers Aiden & Savannah learned about native plants and removed Bur Chervil from Cedar Grove!!

Visitors to the area have noted appreciation for the newly uncovered views of Little Chico Creek, and neighbors who have pulled hundreds of privet seedlings from their yards every year, were especially appreciative of the work.

Earth Day in Bidwell Park!

Over 125 volunteers celebrated the 6th annual Earth Day in Bidwell Park on April 21 in the Cedar Grove-Nature Center area. Volunteers contributed a total of 454 hours to beautifying the Park. New Park Division volunteer Crew Leaders worked with volunteers on a number of projects. Community groups participating included: the CA Conservation Corps; Friends of Bidwell Park; A.S. Community Action Volunteers in Education; Starbucks' staff & families; CSU's Phi Kappa Tau fraternity; Durham Intermediate School; Butte College Communications class; CSU's Sigma Alpha Ag Sorority; Sierra Club Yahi Group; CAVE/City's Adopt-A-Park students; Shasta 4-H; Park Watch; Recology staff; and lots of individuals and families, including city staff!!

Volunteers completed a Big Chico Creek Clean-up; East Eighth Street weed removal; native plant garden weeding at the Nature Center; ivy removal from Valley oaks and around the area; olive tree removal from the World of Trees; weeding and native plant planting at picnic site 8; planting baby cedars in pots and in the process had lots of fun.

A Big Thank You to all volunteers who helped on Earth Day in Bidwell Park!!

THANK YOU Sponsors:
CA Conservation Corps; Costco; Home Depot; Recology Zero Waste; & Starbucks Coffee!



CAVE students clean up along E. Eighth St. near the World of Trees on Earth Day.

-Lise Smith-Peters, Volunteer Coordinator

RECYCLE BAGS FOR DOG WASTE



Park Staff installed an experimental dog waste bag station in the parking lot at Five Mile. The station provides an opportunity for park users to donate plastic grocery bags, produce bags, etc. to be reused by dog owners for picking up after their pets.

If successful, installing similar dispensers throughout local parks could save the City thousands of dollars per year while reducing waste and providing recycling opportunities for park users.

Park Pop Quiz #42

Question: What is the right thing I should do with my doggie's doo-doo?

Answers (Choose one):



- A) Squirrel! Look up in the sky and be not concerned with my Dog's deeds.
- B) Carry a plastic bag, carefully bag the feces, tie a decorative knot, set it by the trail and wait for the "Poop Fairy."
- C) I pay a \$250 dollar citation. People sneer at me. My dog is ashamed.
- D) Pack it in, pack it out. It's my dog, it's my responsibility. I bag it, I carry it out, I dispose of it. People love me.

Right Answer!

How did you score?

1 correct: Great, thank you! Please share info with others!

0 correct: *FailReally?* No, seriously....*really????*



For Tutorials or Questions, Contact:

City of Chico General Services Department – Parks Division

Phone: 530-896-7800 Web: www.chico.ca.us Email: parkinfo@ci.chico.ca.us



Park Division
General Services Department

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Signs of Spring

Hundreds of thousands of birds are either leaving the Sacramento Valley, stopping in or returning during their Spring Migration. Now is an excellent time to take in the vibrant plumage of a large variety of bird species.

Neotropicals (birds that nest in North America but winter in South American regions) are arriving daily after their long journeys. Take a walk along the woodland trails of Middle Park and you may encounter any number of dazzling Hummingbirds zipping from flower to flower. Continue to the grasslands and be greeted by cheerful Western Bluebirds or the feisty lemon-colored Western Kingbird. If you are in the mood for a vacation, then hike the Yahi Trail. Let your imagination wander and all of sudden you are in Central America. The incredible orange of the Bullock's Oriole or the

impressive mix of hot red and yellow feathers adorning the Western Tanager will convince your eyes that you might not be in Chico after all!



The last remnants of winter are melting away like a full moon washed away by a brilliant sunrise. Inhale deeply and become enraptured by the sweet fragrances of spring blossoms. Look down and see the first wildflowers emerging through the warm, damp soil. Take a moment and listen to the cheerful songs of returning Neotropical birds. Notice the farewell honks, barks, quacks and purrs of migrating waterfowl, and Sandhill Cranes. Feast on the gift of color that spring delivers, especially on the wings of our feathered friends.

If your internal, seasonal clock has yet to ring that spring is here, then get out into our parks and let nature fill your senses.

- Shane Romain, Park Ranger