



**NEWS RELEASE**  
**City of Chico**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** February 14, 2023

### **The City Works to Address Encampment Issues at Intersection of Eaton Road and Cohasset Road**

Chico, CA – (Feb. 14, 2023) - The City of Chico (City) issued the attached notice of enforcement of camping ordinances to plaintiffs’ counsel at Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC), involved in the Warren v. Chico settlement, on February 7, 2023, to begin the process of clearing that area of homeless persons who have not been assessed for placement at that location. Additionally, the notice indicates the City will be conducting enforcement operations in Upper Bidwell Park.

On February 13, 2023, LSNC objected to the City’s planned enforcement efforts. Their primary reasoning is that no enforcement should proceed because the settlement agreement that enables enforcement operations states, “If the O&E Staff determine through the Individual Assessment that there is not an Appropriate Shelter Space for a Homeless Person, the City may not Enforce its Anti-Camping Ordinances and Regulations against the Homeless Person. The City may provide, or cause to be provided, to the Homeless Person a list of at least three Public Property Locations where the City will not Enforce its Anti-Camping Ordinances and Regulations for at least 60 days and may require the Homeless Person to relocate to one of those three sites.” Further, it has not been 60 days since the City has last referred a person to the alternate site at Eaton and Cohasset.

The City’s position is that it is not in violation of the above-quoted language because its notice expressly states that the City will be enforcing on persons who entered the alternate site without being referred there, and will not be enforcing on any people who were referred to the alternate site. Moreover, the 60-day provision is clearly meant to protect homeless persons rather than the property they stay at.

Because LSNC has objected to the City’s presently planned enforcement efforts, and the parties have been unable to resolve this dispute, the City and LSNC will be meeting with the judge overseeing implementation of the settlement agreement to resolve this issue. Once that occurs, the City will proceed as authorized and will continue working to make Chico as safe and healthy as the law permits.

For more information, please contact:

City Manager: Mark Sorensen, 530-896-7200, [mark.sorensen@chicoca.gov](mailto:mark.sorensen@chicoca.gov)

Public Works O&M Director: Erik Gustafson, 530-894-4200, [erik.gustafson@chicoca.gov](mailto:erik.gustafson@chicoca.gov)

*Located in Butte County, California, Chico is the cultural and economic center of the northern Sacramento Valley and the largest city north of Sacramento. Known as a college town, the home of California State University, Chico and for Bidwell Park, one of the largest urban parks in the world. For more information, visit [www.chico.ca.us](http://www.chico.ca.us)*

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**NOTICE OF PLANNED CLOSURE OF PUBLIC PROPERTY/ENFORCEMENT OF CAMPING ORDINANCES TO LEGAL SERVICES OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA**

This notice serves as the required notice of the City's planned closure of public property / enforcement of its Anti-Camping Ordinances and Regulations pursuant to Paragraph 10(c) of *Warren, et al. v. City of Chico, et al.* Settlement Agreement.

Location of Public Property 1: the alternate site located at the northwest corner of Cohasset Road and Eaton Road.

The City has determined there are forty-five (45) people camping at this Location. Of those people, nine (9) have been referred to the alternate site. The City will not enforce on anybody who has already been referred to the alternate site through an individual assessment. Therefore, the enforcement is directed at thirty-six (36) people. Further, of the forty-five (45) persons, there are four (4) people at this location who have previously been assessed, but refused shelter, and there are six (6) people who live in RVs. The City's position is that those persons should not be included in the count because they have already refused shelter and/or are not homeless because they are living in a shelter designed for human habitation.

A map of this property is enclosed herewith.

Location of Public Property 2: Upper Bidwell Park.

The City has determined there is one (1) person camping at this location.

Maps of the perimeter of this property and the specific location of the person in this property is enclosed herewith.

The City will provide the "7-DAY NOTICE OF CLOSURE OF PUBLIC PROPERTY/ENFORCEMENT OF CAMPING ORDINANCES" to all Homeless Persons except those who have been assessed and directed to the alternate site at this location on February 14, 2023.

The City has determined there are twenty-four (24) open Pallet Shelters. Four (4) of those Pallet Shelters are available ADA units.

The City has determined there are twenty-three (23) open beds at the Torres Community Shelter. Fifteen (15) of those beds are in the men's dorm and eight (8) of those beds are in the women's dorm.

Conditions at the alternate site are becoming increasingly dangerous, and the City needs the ability to regulate who is at that location to reduce the likelihood of people being harmed. Butte County Behavioral Health, having observed this site because of its office's proximity to the location, has requested increased regulation of this site because

of the following incidents:

- A homeless individual yelling and carrying a machete around the outside of the office with self-inflicted wounds;
- Two security alerts required building lockdown procedures (the machete incident and another where a homeless person was screaming threats and profanities at people);
- Windows being shot and vehicles being vandalized;
- Dogs roaming around without owners, presenting traffic issues and the potential for a dog to be hit;
- On January 19, 2023, a homeless individual was in front of the lobby door causing employees to fear for their safety when leaving work;
- On January 20, 2023, a homeless individual told a female employee he would, "come and see you later," and laughed, making the employee feel threatened;
- One homeless individual charged at a janitorial staff person while working inside the offices;
- One homeless person became highly agitated, destroying belongings and throwing rocks at cars;
- Another homeless person repeatedly yells and throws rocks while pacing the nearby bike path;
- Numerous incidents of homeless persons coming into the office to ask for food, water, help, cashing lottery tickets, and various other requests;
- Numerous incidents of homeless persons yelling and arguing with each other;
- Large volumes of trash left around the building, including needles, urine, feces, food, liquor bottles and vomit;
- Two catalytic converters stolen;
- The glass door to a nearby restaurant was broken and a robbery occurred;
- Increased tagging and vandalism of sidewalks, a fountain, the bike path, wall, lights and buildings;
- Sprinkler lines are being vandalized and cut, and the same as to wires along the bike path;
- Homeless people frequently sleep around the building entrances and the nearby church;
- The sprinkler system to the nearby church was vandalized, causing water to run down the bike path for three days;
- On February 6, 2023, Butte County Behavioral Health's mailbox was broke into and damaged beyond use, requiring replacement and forcing pickups from the Post Office.

Because of the increasing homeless population in the area, the La Dolce Plaza has been forced to retrofit all dumpsters with and lockable lids and wire to increase their height and deter misuse.

One insurance company in the area has reported multiple troubling events over the last three months. An unhoused person entered the office nonsensically speaking about the government being after her and needing an attorney. That person refused to leave and

did not do so until another member of the public pushed them out. On another occasion, an intoxicated transient was getting dressed in the parking lot, opened door of the car he or she was in, striking another car multiple times before eventually passing out on the asphalt.

In December 2022, the insurance company referred to above witnessed a transient running over their Comcast cable box to break it open, stealing all the aluminum and copper therein. There was no internet for two days and the office had to be shut down. In January 2023, six homeless men pulled on the door while looking at a female employee, until they decided to move onto another tenant's unit and break their window. That employee is no longer able to work without the doors being locked, and the business is not likely to renew any long-term lease as a result.

On December 19, 2022, the City requested Legal Services of Northern California to agree that the following rules be implemented at the alternate site: (1) a 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. quiet time; (2) a 20 foot by 20 foot camp site footprint; (3) no unauthorized entry; (4) no unauthorized vehicles or RVs; and (5) no dogs off leash. The City understands that it is Legal Services of Northern California's position that the City may enforce its fire, noise and leash ordinances, and can keep service routes clear, but that no other regulations are agreeable. However, the City needs to be able to regulate access to this location to reduce the expansion that is leading to numerous incidents that jeopardize the safety of homeless persons and the surrounding community alike.

The City wants to avoid any catastrophic events at the alternate site. Unfortunately, the frequency of fires being set, and the large structures homeless people are building, create a significant hazard. Other communities have had fires devastate homeless communities such as in Oakland where multiple people have died in recent years (<https://www.sfchronicle.com/eastbay/article/People-are-really-scared-Why-fires-at-the-17395847.php>). The deadly fires Oakland has had to deal with are problematic precisely because of the difficult terrain that is created when people build large camping structures throughout a campsite. (*Id.*) This enforcement action is focused on avoiding such potential problems, which need to be addressed before the summer months present additional fire concerns with high heat and dry conditions.

Enforcement of fire, noise and leash ordinances at this location is not feasible because enforcing such ordinances on a large population significantly increases the risk of violent behavior, creating dangerous conditions for homeless persons and police officers alike. By resolving these issues through enforcement, homeless persons are given a way to avoid citation, dramatically reducing the threat of violence. Additionally, the City needs to maintain this area as available for those who have been assessed for the alternate site because many of those persons are the most vulnerable within the homeless population.

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You may confirm the above shelter availability by contacting:

**Pallet Shelter Contact:**

**Name: Amber Abney-Bass**

**Phone: 530-345-2640**

**Email: [amber@jesuscenter.org](mailto:amber@jesuscenter.org)**

**Torres Shelter Contact:**

**Name: Jacque Lewkowicz**

**Phone: 530-891-9048**

**Email: [jacque@truenorthbutte.org](mailto:jacque@truenorthbutte.org)**



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Non-Permitted People & Vehicles

- Campsite #1
- Campsite #2
- Campsite #5
- Campsite #8
- ... 24 more

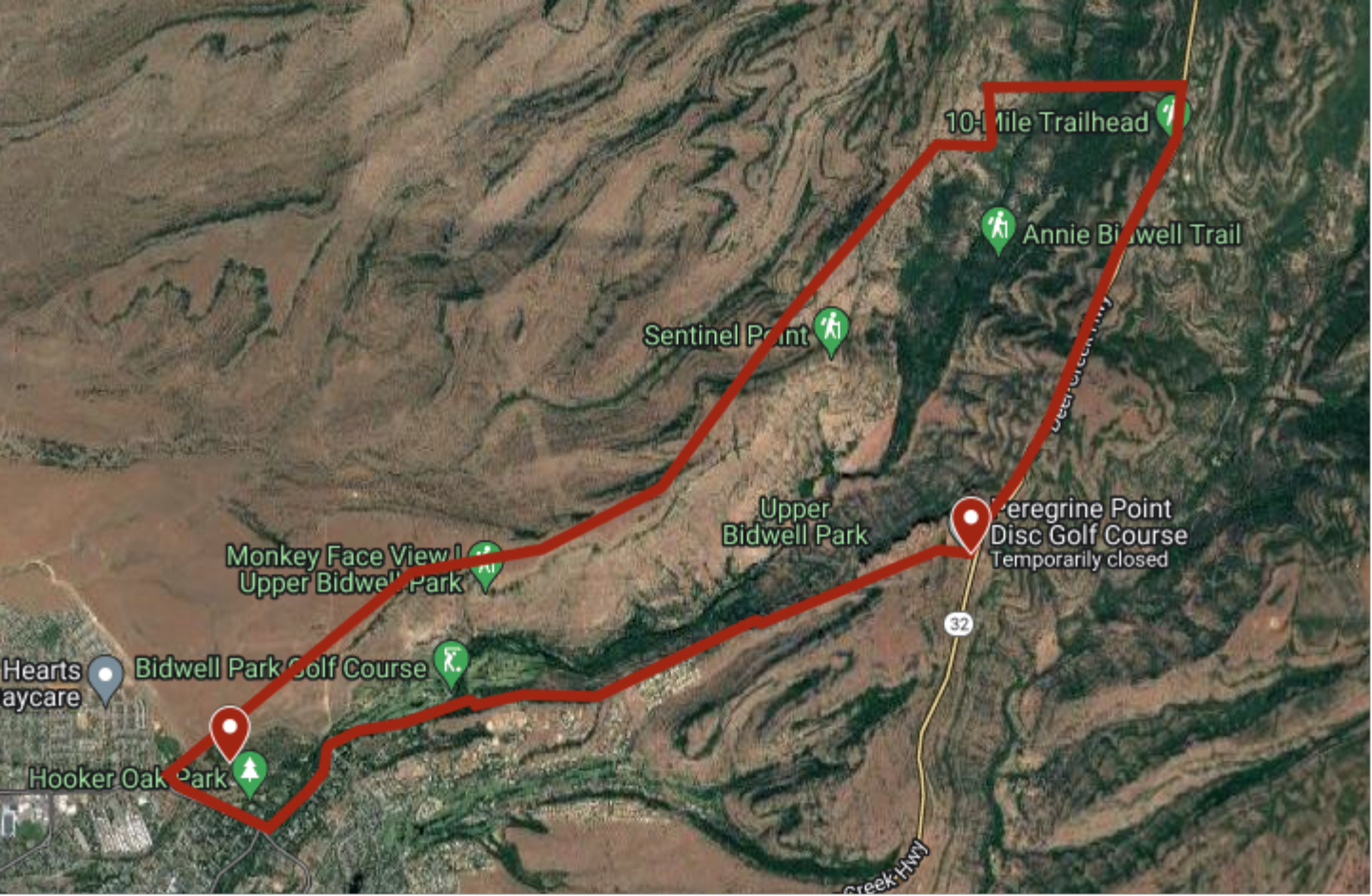
Permitted at Alt. Site

- Campsite #6
- Campsite #7
- Campsite #28
- Campsite #19
- ... 4 more

Unoccupied Sites

- Campsite #29
- Campsite #3
- Campsite #4
- Campsite #9
- ... 9 more





10-Mile Trailhead

Annie Bidwell Trail

Sentinel Point

Upper Bidwell Park

Monkey Face View I  
Upper Bidwell Park

Peregrine Point  
Disc Golf Course  
Temporarily closed

32

Hearts aycares Bidwell Park Golf Course

Hooker Oak Park

Creek Hwy



25 views  
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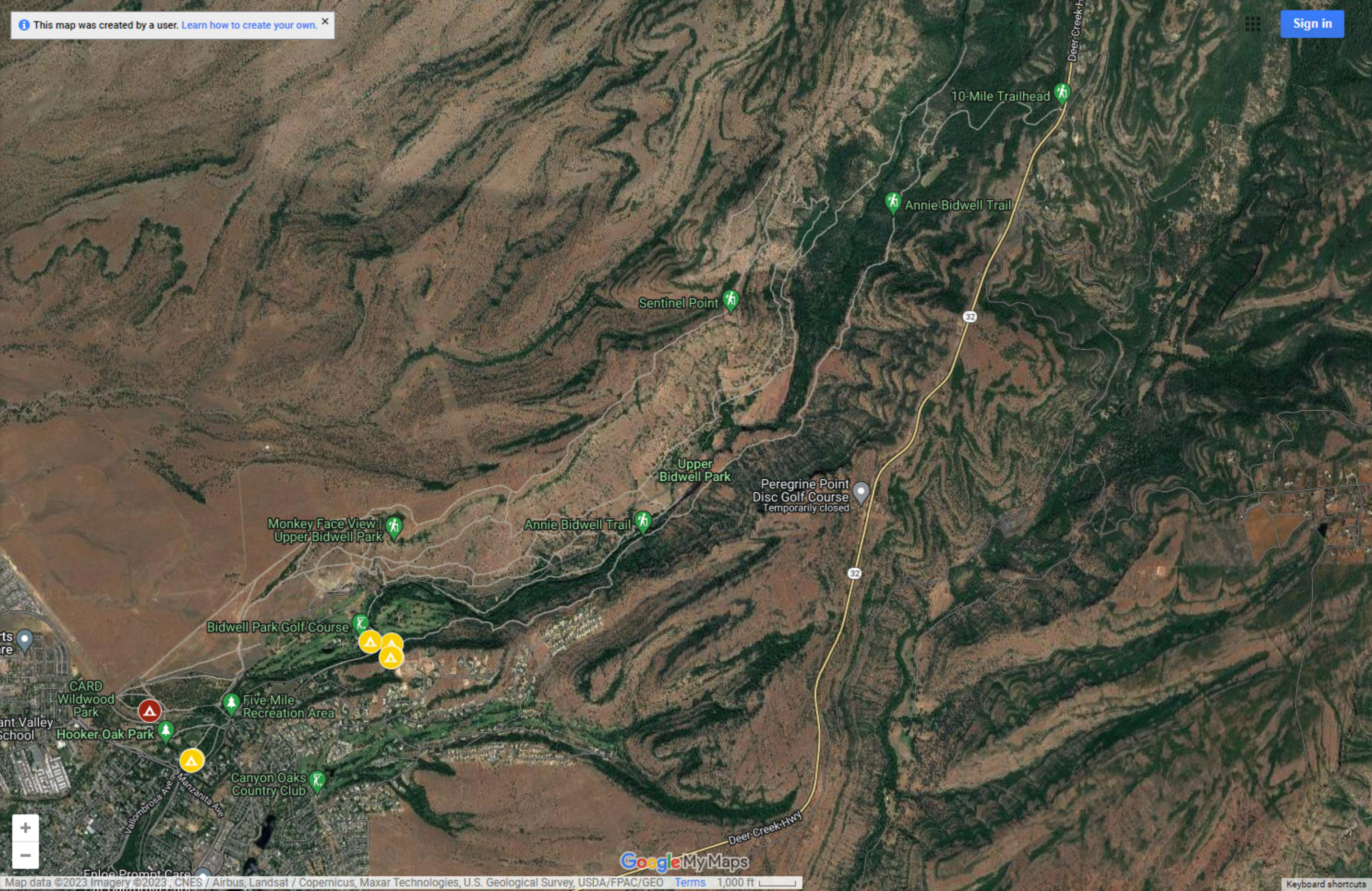
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Occupied Camps

Camp 1

Abandoned Camps

- Point 2
- Point 3
- Point 4
- Point 5
- Point 6
- Point 7



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