

General Services Department, Park Division  
965 Fir Street  
(530) 896-7800



**CITY OF CHICO**  
**BIDWELL PARK AND PLAYGROUND COMMISSION (BPPC)**

Regular Meeting Agenda  
November 28, 2011, 6:30 p.m.  
Municipal Center - 421 Main Street, Council Chamber

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*Materials related to an item on this Agenda are available for public inspection in the Park Division Office at 965 Fir Street during normal business hours or online at <http://www.chico.ca.us/>.*

**SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION TO ITEM**

**4.1 Bidwell Park Flyers South Rim Paragliding Launch Proposal**



DATE: 11/28/11  
TO: BPPC  
FROM: Dan Efseaff, Park and Natural Resource Manager  
SUBJECT: 4.1 Bidwell Park Flyers South Rim Paragliding Launch Proposal – Revised Recommendations

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## Report in Brief

Staff provides a revised recommendation for conditional approval of paragliding at the South Rim launch site. The revised recommendation may be stated as follows:

Staff recommends conditional approval of paragliding from the South Rim for one year subject to the following restrictions: 1) allowed only between August to January at only the alternative launch site; 2) the Bidwell Park Flyers shall proceed with additional educational signage about Peregrine falcons to be approved by the Park Division; and 3) subject to an annual review submitted with annual report of paragliding in the Park.

Revision of the dates or building in flexibility in the launch dates (for example, based on fledgling progress), and review of additional information may be considered next year.

The original staff report provides background information about the proposal.

**Attachments:** None.

**Lise Smith-Peters - 11/28/11 BPPC Meeting-Paragliding/Peregrine Point**

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**From:** Josephine Guardino <joguardino@sbcglobal.net>  
**To:** Lise Smith-Peters <lspeters@ci.chico.ca.us>  
**Date:** 11/26/2011 8:25 PM  
**Subject:** 11/28/11 BPPC Meeting-Paragliding/Peregrine Point  
**CC:** Dan Efseaff <defseaff@ci.chico.ca.us>

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Hello Lise, 11/27/11

Unfortunately I cannot attend the meeting. Thank you for forwarding my letter to the BPPC for their Monday meeting (11/28/11).

Dear Commissioners,

As you have heard from others, including authorities on avian biology, I too am disappointed with the decision by staff to allow paragliding off cliffs where the only two Peregrine Falcons in Bidwell Park attempt to nest and breed. This decision is contrary to the body of knowledge indicating the uniqueness, rarity and sensitivity of this species.

Seeing a Peregrine Falcon in flight is a very special experience and the citizens of Chico are fortunate to have a breeding pair residing in Bidwell Park. Having recovered recently from near extinction, they are still very rare in California. It is unfortunate that park management is considering allowing activities that have high likelihood of disturbing these nesting raptors. What if these disturbances result in the pair abandoning the site entirely and they leave Bidwell Park forever?

Which peer-reviewed studies from experts did staff use to support the contention that Peregrine Falcons nest successfully when adjacent to recreation activities of one kind or another?

We all have responsibility to help protect the natural qualities of Bidwell Park for future generations to see and appreciate. I hope the BPPC takes this opportunity to remind staff that more should be done to accommodate the ecological needs of the Park's most sensitive species such as the American Peregrine Falcon, even if that means saying "no" to certain park activities at certain locations.

Paragliders already have access to 3 launch-sites on the north side of Bidwell Park. Please leave the cliffs on the south side as refuge for Peregrine Falcons and other wildlife species for the citizens of Chico to enjoy.

Sincerely,

Josephine Guardino

PO Box 6

Los Molinos, CA. 96055

**Lise Smith-Peters - Proposed Paragliding Launch Sites on South Rim of Upper Bidwell Park near Peregrine Point: Monday Nov. 28, 2011 BPPC meeting**

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Lise: Please forward this message with attachments to the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission prior to their upcoming meeting this Monday evening, November 28, 2011 at Chico Municipal Center. Thank you.

All:

The Bidwell Park Flyers have proposed using the rim of the cliff near the Peregrine Point Disc Golf Course for launching paragliders (see their attached proposal). Their main launch site would be Peregrine Point. They propose an alternative launch site from February through May, the peregrine "nesting season", from the cliff above the gray pine tree where peregrine falcons often roost, west of Peregrine Point and north of the Disc Golf Course (see attached map).

This use of this alternative site does not conform to best management practices for peregrine nesting success throughout North America and Europe. The combined efforts of myself and others this past nesting season documented that this gray pine tree and the nearby cliff face from Observation Point (OP) 1 through OP 5 (see attached map) was almost constantly used by a pair of peregrines who did not produce nestlings or even occupied a nest.

I believe that launching paragliders at any place along this cliff face during the nesting season could be a self-fulfilling prophesy. If disturbance during the nesting season is allowed as long as nesting is not occurring, the disturbance may cause nesting to never occur. The proposed additional disturbance of paraglider launching and flying from and adjacent to the cliffs would contribute to the

adverse cumulative impact of all other recreational activities that occur on the South Rim and Guardian Trails above and below the cliff face (potential nesting sites), respectively. Thus, launching paragliders during the nesting season at the alternative launch site or at any site on the south rim should not be allowed no matter how small the expected number of participants.

Dan Effeaff, the Chico's Natural Resource Manager, recommends approval of the paragliders' proposal.

At the meeting next of the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission (BPPC) on Monday evening - Nov. 28, 2011, I will request that the Commission **not** approve the use of the Alternative Launch Site or any Launch Site on the South Rim of Upper Bidwell Park by paragliders from February through May.

Do any of you have other recommendations to make to the BPPC about the proposal from the Bidwell Park Flyers? Please join me next Monday evening at Chico's Municipal Center (City Hall) as I express my frustration about the lack of logic behind the City's recommendation (BPPC Agenda Attached). The more persons who show similar concern, the more likely the Commissioners and City Staff will seriously consider how the potential negative effects of human disturbance on peregrine falcons are being discounted by Bidwell Park Flyers and City Management.

Thanks for your interest.

Woody Elliott, Certified Wildlife Biologist  
287 Pinyon Hills Dr.  
Chico, CA 95928

Home Phone: (530) 342-6053  
Cell: (530) 588-2555

28 Nov 2011

Dear Park Commission,

With regards to the proposed Paragliding off Peregrine point proposal, I think we have to go back to the Master Plan introduction which says that the community's responsibility is to share the park with wildlife and for future generations to enjoy. It would be a travesty if you allowed paragliding in an area inhabited by Peregrine Falcons. I have seen them and I am convinced they are nesting nearby.

If you do an internet search, you will find that paragliding has interfered with Peregrine Falcons in their daily activity as well as during nesting. There are numerous instances cited of peregrines attacking paragliders, indicating the birds' perception of them as a threat. There is even one instance of a bird (not a peregrine) bringing down a paraglider.

Clearly, paragliding is a threat to the well-being of the Peregrine Falcons that grace Peregrine Point, and not just during nesting season. Priority should be given to the nature of the park rather than to every special interest group that wants to take a piece of it for their own recreational activities. Thanks for listening.

Roger Lederer  
Ornithologist  
Emeritus Professor of Biological Sciences  
4798 Songbird Lane  
Chico, CA 95973

## Lise Smith-Peters - Park Commission tonight: Para glider permit expansion proposal

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**From:** Randy Abbott <randyxabbott@gmail.com>  
**To:** Lise Peters <lpeters@ci.chico.ca.us>  
**Date:** 11/28/2011 10:15 AM  
**Subject:** Park Commission tonight: Para glider permit expansion proposal

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Dear Commissioners,

It has come to my attention that the paragliding community is asking for additional launch sites in Upper Bidwell Park.

I am concerned that sensitive natural resources may be affected by the proposed expansion, and that the City of Chico does not have the resources to scientifically monitor the effects of the proposed increased use area for the SPORT.

At issue, I believe, is the successful nesting/reproductive pattern by the (known, established) Peregrine Falcons on the cliff face below disc golf. Unless the City is willing to prioritize the successful reproduction of future generations of Peregrine Falcons at the site, and base their decisions on the best current biological sciences available from known experts in the field of raptor study, and unless the City is willing to monitor the site using a biologist who specializes in raptor biology, I am objecting to the proposed expansion of launch sites.

I want to remind the Commission also, that enforcing designated landing sites, well set back from sensitive habitat, is also crucial to the Paragliding program's success.

From the Master Management Plan:

### **Objectives:**

- O. Upper-1. Manage Upper Park as open space set aside to remain in its natural state.
- O. Upper-2. Formalize the role of Upper Park as a protected area for non-intensive recreational uses.
- O. Upper-3. Consider creating a more restrictive resource protection area designation for all or portions of  
Upper Park.
- O. Upper-4. Future uses should be similar to and consistent with those currently permissible in Upper Park,

with the exception of Disc Golf.

### **3.6.3.1 P**

#### **PERMISSIBLE USES IN UPPER PARK**

Permissible uses in Upper Park include a variety of primarily non-intensive recreation activities such as hiking,

biking, swimming, walking, horseback riding, running, off-leash dog use (where currently permitted), fishing,

rock climbing, nature study, and other similar activities, and minimal amounts of more intensive uses. In addition,

disc golf is currently proposed as an official use in its current location.

(Take Off and Launching sites for manned flying vehicles, or anything like that, does not appear on the list. )

Thinking of the evolution of Disc Golf, I am reminded that an activity that was, while enjoyed by a relative few, relatively benign, became an intensive use with direct impacts to resources, as numbers of users increased, and unmonitored impacts to soils and plants occurred over time.

Unfortunately, the application to expand Paraglider use must be seen as an example of how very limited, permit conditional use - limited due to concerns over environmental impact - may step by step become something far from 'limited'. Please respect the limitations that were established before you, so that you do not set a precedent for those who come after you, impacting the environment of Upper Park, step by step, until the impacts displace the life that the Park was established to protect.

Please consider the role Upper Park plays in the Community, offering a chance for us city dwellers to get in touch with a wilderness environment. I believe the vast majority of Upper Park users understand the need to willfully restrict their own behavior, in order to preserve the quality of the environmental conditions in Upper Park.

Think wild things,  
Randy Abbott



**Lise Smith-Peters - comments regarding the Proposed Paragliding Launch Sites on South Rim of Upper Bidwell Park near Peregrine Point**

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**From:** Dawn Garcia <mel.dawn@sbcglobal.net>  
**To:** Dan Efseaff <DEfseaff@ci.chico.ca.us>, Lise Smith-Peters <LSPeters@ci.chico.ca.us>  
**Date:** 11/28/2011 10:42 AM  
**Subject:** comments regarding the Proposed Paragliding Launch Sites on South Rim of Upper Bidwell Park near Peregrine Point  
**CC:** Woody Elliott <woody.elliott@gmail.com>

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Hi Dan, please forward my concerns to the BPPC.

Dear Dan, Lise and Bidwell Park and Playground Commission, as a avian ecologist and volunteer monitor of the peregrine falcons in Bidwell Park, I disagree with the proposal by the Bidwell Park fliers in accord with Dan Efseaff, the City Park and Natural Resource Manager, to use Peregrine Point as an alternative launch site for paragliding. I am sorry that I will be out of town but would like you to consider the following facts:

1. The Bidwell Park fliers already have designated launch sites in the park.
2. The park is to be managed for natural resources and wildlife as well as recreation (see Terrestrial Wildlife Objectives O. TW-1-4 below. These objectives directly relate to the presence of peregrines.
3. Dan Efseaff contacted me and 3 others in 2010, due to his concern regarding disturbance to the potentially nesting peregrines by proximate recreational use. Based on this meeting we agreed that it was prudent to set up a monitoring plan for the peregrines.
4. Department of Fish and Game's staff Environmental Scientist, Ms. Jenny Marr, was consulted in 2010 and she expressed concern of the potential sensitivity of this pair to cumulative recreational activities, and suggested monitoring.
5. Based on our volunteer monitoring, we determined that a peregrine pair was present through from from **November through early March** and courtship behavior was observed, but no nesting occurred. A single bird was observed from mid-march through June, when our observations ceased. Our observations have been shared with Dan and are available to the Commission.
6. Based on research into anecdotal sightings and review of Gregg Payne's photos from previous years, we determined that at least one juvenile peregrine was documented in 2005, concluding that breeding did occur that year.
7. Breeding peregrines are an uncommon occurrence in high use parks- ecologists, biologists, birders, hikers and recreationalists feel privileged to have their presence in the park.

As I am aware, there has been no discussion of, nor is their a continued falcon monitoring plan for the park; it would be difficult for unskilled or unaware observers to know if falcons are nesting. Due to the lack of monitoring, we don't know what disturbances might impact the falcons incentive to breed. How will the paragliders and City determine the status of the birds to know if it is OK to launch during during the designated nesting season?

Management guidelines for the peregrines should be discussed before additional recreational uses are sanctioned in the only known nesting peregrine aerie in the Park and along the Big Chico Creek drainage.

**From the Bidwell Park Master Plan**

**Terrestrial Wildlife**

**Objectives:**

- O. TW-1. Protect sensitive (or special-status) wildlife.
- O. TW-2. To the extent possible, provide opportunities for nesting, foraging, hunting, and other essential wildlife activities for those species found within the Park.
- O. TW-3. Maintain Bidwell Park as a wildlife corridor between the Valley floor and the surrounding foothills.
- O. TW-4. Minimize disruption of wildlife activity patterns

Thank you for your consideration,

Dawn Garcia MS  
Avian Ecologist  
6372 Harvey Road  
Paradise, CA  
95969  
530-513-1785

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