



Public Works Department, Park Division
965 Fir Street
Chico, CA 95928
(530) 896-7800

Agenda Prepared: 12/10/2020
Agenda Posted: 12/11/2020
Prior to: 6:00 p.m.

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

Regular Meeting Agenda
December 14, 2020, 6:00 pm
Remote Meeting via City's WebEx Platform

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

This meeting is being conducted in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20. Members of the public may virtually attend the meeting by using the City's WebEx platform, by calling into the meeting, or by sending an email to the following email address. ***This meeting will not be televised on Comcast Channel 11.***

*Emailed public comments will be accepted with the subject line **PUBLIC COMMENT ITEM _____**, sent to **parkpubliccomment@chicoca.gov** during the meeting prior to the close of public comment on an item. The public is encouraged not to send more than one email per item and not to comment on numerous items in one email. For any emails received during the meeting, the names of the people submitting the email will be read, but not the email itself. However, emails will become part of the public record and available to the public for review after the meeting.*

WebEx public participants may use the following information to remotely view and participate in the Bidwell Park & Playground Commission meeting online:

Event Name: **BIDWELL PARK & PLAYGROUND COMMISSION MEETING 12-14-2020**

Date/Time: Monday, December 14, 2020 at 6:00 pm

WebEx Event URL <https://chico.webex.com/chico/onstage/g.php?MTID=e1729b000dd5d51759a1ce98b6024e113>

Event #: 146 230 3836

Public Password: Chico1214 (Case Sensitive)

Call-in Number: 1-844-517-1442 Call-in Password: 146 230 3836

1. REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

1.1. Call to Order

1.2. Roll Call

2. CONSENT AGENDA

All matters listed under the Consent Agenda are to be considered routine and enacted by one motion.

2.1. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Action: Approve minutes of BPPC meeting held on 10/26/20.

3. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT – IF ANY

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS NONE

5. REGULAR AGENDA

5.1. CONSIDERATION OF COMMISSIONER MOORE’S AND HAAR’S REQUEST TO DISCUSS FIRE RISKS IN BIDWELL PARK.

At its 10/26/20 meeting, the BPPC approved requests from Commissioners Moore and’ Haar to agendize discussion regarding fire risks in Bidwell Park and requested that representatives from Chico Fire Department attend tonight’s meeting. (*Report – Linda Herman, Park & Natural Resource Manager*)

Recommendation: The BPPC is requested to provide direction on whether to send recommendations to the City Council regarding this discussion.

5.2. INTRODUCTION OF THE DRAFT PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (PEIR) FOR THE DRAFT VEGETATIVE FUELS MANAGEMENT PLAN (VFMP).

The Bidwell Park & Playground Commission (BPPC) will receive an update and presentation from the City’s consultants on the draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report for the City’s Draft Vegetative Fuels Management Plan. (*Report – Linda Herman, Park & Natural Resource Manager*)

Recommendation: None this is an informational item only at this time. The Commission and the public will be able to provide comments on the PEIR at the Natural Resources Committee and the BPPC meetings in January 2021, and throughout the 45-day public comment period.

5.3. CONSIDERATION OF THE FINAL RESTORATION PLAN FOR THE NATURE CENTER AREA

On 11/25/19, the Bidwell Park & Playground Commission (BPPC) reviewed a draft plan for the tree-clearing area near the Nature Center area in Lower Bidwell Park to restore the area as a Valley Oak Woodland demonstration site. The plan was also reviewed by the Natural Resources Committee (NRC). The BPPC will consider the final restoration plan prepared by the City’s consultant Dempsey Vegetation Management to achieve this goal. (*Report – Linda Herman, Park & Natural Resource Manager*)

Recommendation: The Commission is requested to approve the final restoration plan.

6. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Members of the public may address the Commission via WebEx or by email at parkpubliccomment@chicoca.gov at this time on any matter not already listed on the agenda, with comments being limited to three minutes or as determined by the Chair. The Committee cannot take any action at this meeting on requests made under this section of the agenda.

7. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

These items are provided for the Commission’s information. Although the Commission may discuss the items, no action can be taken at this meeting. Should the Commission determine that action is required, the item or items may be included for action on a subsequent posted agenda.

7.1 Parks Division Report – Linda Herman, Park and Natural Resources Manager

7.2 Street Tree Division Report – Richie Bamlet, Urban Forest Manager

8. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourn to the next regular meeting on **1/25/21 at 6:00 p.m.** at a location or format to be determined.



Please contact the Park Division Office at (530) 896-7800 if you require an agenda in an alternative format or if you need to request a disability-related modification or accommodation. This request should be received at least 3 working days prior to the meeting.

CITY OF CHICO
BIDWELL PARK AND PLAYGROUND COMMISSION (BPPC)
MINUTES OF
OCTOBER 26, 2020 MEETING
Remote Meeting via City's WebEx Platform

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: *This meeting was conducted in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20. The public was able to view the meeting via the City's WebEx Platform. Public comments were also accepted by email sent to parkpubliccomment@chicoca.gov before and during the meeting, prior to the close of public comment on an item.*

1. REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

1.1. Call to Order

Called to order by Chair McReynolds at 6:00 p.m.

1.2. Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Anna Moore
Garrett Liles
Lise Smith-Peters
Jeff Glatz
Aaron Haar
Elaina McReynolds

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Erik Gustafson (Public Works Director O&M)
Linda Herman (Park and Natural Resource Manager)
Richie Bamlet (Urban Forest Manager)
Shane Romain (Park Services Coordinator)
Melissa Beck (Admin Analyst II)

2. CONSENT AGENDA

All matters listed under the Consent Agenda are to be considered routine and enacted by one motion.

2.1. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Action: Approve minutes of BPPC meeting held on 9/28/20.

A motion was made by Commissioner Smith-Peters and seconded by Vice-Chair Haar to approve the consent agenda.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Commissioner Moore, Commissioner Liles, Commissioner Smith-Peters, Commissioner Glatz, Vice-Chair Haar, Chair McReynolds

NOES: None

3. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT – NONE

4. **PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE**

5. **REGULAR AGENDA**

5.1. **UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE UPPER BIDWELL PARK ROAD SEDIMENT REDUCTION PROJECT**

The Bidwell Park & Playground Commission (BPPC) will receive an update and presentation from the City's consultants on the status of the Upper Bidwell Park Road Sediment Reduction Project and the environmental review for the project. **(Report – Linda Herman, Park & Natural Resource Manager)**

Woody Elliott addressed the Commission and emailed comments.

5.2. **CONSIDERATION OF COMMISSIONER MOORE'S REQUEST TO DISCUSS SEEKING FUNDING FOR ADDITIONAL PARK DIVISION STAFF.**

At its 9/28/20 meeting, the BPPC approved Commissioner Moore's request to agendaize discussion regarding requesting City Council approval of funding to hire additional maintenance workers, a natural resource manager, and a development director for the Parks Division. **(Verbal Report – Anna Moore, Commissioner)**

The BPPC discussed Commissioner Moore's request for additional maintenance worker positions, and a new natural resource manager. Commissioner Moore requested that the Commission send a letter to the City Council requesting funding for these additional positions. Commissioner Moore will draft a letter and bring it back to the next meeting for further discussion.

Woody Elliott addressed the Commission.

6. **BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

Members of the public may address the Commission via WebEx or by email at parkpubliccomment@chicoca.gov at this time on any matter not already listed on the agenda, with comments being limited to three minutes or as determined by the Chair. The Committee cannot take any action at this meeting on requests made under this section of the agenda.

Email comments were received from Dr. Norm Rosene.

7. **REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

These items are provided for the Commission's information. Although the Commission may discuss the items, no action can be taken at this meeting. Should the Commission determine that action is required, the item or items may be included for action on a subsequent posted agenda.

7.1 **Parks Division Report – Linda Herman, Park and Natural Resources Manager**

7.2 **Street Tree Division Report – Richie Bamlet, Urban Forest Manager**

8. COMMISSIONER REQUESTS

Pursuant to AP&P 10-1, a majority vote of the commission will be needed in order to agendize these items for discussion at a future meeting. If agendized, public comment will be taken at that meeting. Speaker cards will not be accepted for these items.

- 8.1.** By emails dated 9/16/20 and cc respectively, Commissioners Moore and Haar request to agendize discussion regarding addressing fire concerns in Bidwell Park.

Commissioner's Moore stated she requested this agenda item to hear from the Chico Fire Department or other individuals who can help provide a clear assessment on the actual fire risks in Lower Bidwell Park.

Commission Haar agreed and is concerned said he requested this item to address tall grasses and other potential fire risk vegetation in the park.

A motion was made by Commissioner Moore and seconded by Commissioner Glatz to agendize this item and to invite the Chico Fire Chief or pertinent others to the meeting.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Commissioner Moore, Commissioner Liles, Commissioner Smith-Peters, Commissioner Glatz, Vice-Chair Haar, Chair McReynolds

NOES: None

9. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 8:06 p.m. to the next regular meeting on 11/30/20 at 6:00 p.m. at a location or format to be determined.

Date Approved: ___/___/___

Prepared by:

Melissa Beck, Admin Analyst II

Date



Bidwell Park & Playground Commission Report

Meeting Date 12/14/20

DATE: 12/10/20
 TO: Bidwell Park & Playground Commission (BPPC)
 FROM: Linda Herman, Park and Natural Resources Manager
 SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF COMMISSIONER MOORE'S AND HAAR'S REQUEST TO DISCUSS FIRE RISKS IN BIDWELL PARK.

REPORT IN BRIEF:

At its 10/26/20 meeting, the Bidwell Park & Playground Commission (BPPC) approved requests from Commissioners Moore and Haar to agendaize discussion regarding fire risks in Bidwell Park and requested that representatives from Chico Fire Department attend tonight's meeting.

Recommendation: The BPPC is requested to provide direction on whether to send recommendations to the City Council regarding this discussion.

DISCUSSION:

In April 2019 after the Camp Fire, Chico Fire Chief Steve Standridge provided a presentation to the BPPC regarding potential fire risks in Lower Bidwell Park. In his presentation, Chief Standridge explained that there are three basic components that affect wildfires - weather, topography, and fuel loads. Topography in the form of terrain, aspect, and upslopes directly affect the spread of fires. Weather, such as humidity, temperature, and particularly wind, are also major contributors. Lastly, he stated fuel loads in the form of size, distribution (e.g. large continuous thickets of brush), and type (deciduous vs conifers) play a key role as well. He also emphasized that clearing of understory "duff" and ladder fuels are helpful in mitigating fire.

Given the fact that many areas of Bidwell Park are characterized by high fuel loads and steep, irregular topography, many parts of the Park are ranked by CalFire as having the potential for extreme wildfire events (CAL FIRE 2007). Potential wildfire behavior in Bidwell Park is summarized in the table below.

POTENTIAL WILDFIRE BEHAVIOR WITHIN BIDWELL PARK			
	LOWER PARK	MIDDLE PARK	UPPER PARK
Surface Fire	10%	60%	25%
Torching Fire	73%	35%	45%
Crown Fire	16%	5%	30%

Surface fires are low to high intensity fires that burn on the surface of the ground. The tree canopy may be scorched but does not burn to the extent that it will carry a fire. A crown fire occurs during fires of extreme intensity. A crown fire is when fire burns and spreads through the crown or canopy of trees. A torching fire is the ignition and flare-up of a tree or small group of trees, usually from bottom to top due to ladder fuels.

As noted in the Fire Risk Assessment section of the Vegetative Fuels Management Plan (VFMP), the areas of highest concern to many are those in Lower Park. At the July 20, 2020 BPPC meeting, Deer Creek Resources (DCR) described how under the right weather conditions, a hot fire could move from Lower Park to adjacent neighborhoods and potentially burn several homes. Based on the LiDAR data and the standards in the VFMP, a new Lower Park Thinning project was added as a project in the plan.

Although there may be differing opinions on the risks of fire in Lower Bidwell Park due to conditions not normally conducive to catastrophic wildfires (e.g. no north canyon type winds or slopes, more deciduous vegetation etc.), there is a growing concern regarding the potential for human-caused fires in Lower Bidwell Park, particularly with the illegal camping situation. As was stated by DCR in July, these current conditions could be categorized as a low probability, but high-risk fire scenario.



BPPC Staff Report

Meeting Date 12/14/20

DATE: 12/08/20
TO: Bidwell Park & Playground Commission
FROM: Linda Herman, Park and Natural Resources Manager
SUBJECT: INTRODUCTION OF THE DRAFT PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (PEIR) FOR THE DRAFT VEGETATIVE FUELS MANAGEMENT PLAN (VFMP).

REPORT IN BRIEF:

The Bidwell Park & Playground Commission (BPPC) will receive an update and presentation from the City's consultants on the draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the City's Draft Vegetative Fuels Management Plan.

Recommendation: None this is an informational item only at this time. The Commission and the public will be able to provide comments on the PEIR at the Natural Resources Committee (NRC) and the BPPC meetings in January 2021, and throughout the 45-day public comment period.

FISCAL IMPACT:

With assistance from the Butte County Resource Conservation District (BCRCD), the City applied for and was awarded a \$158,907 Community Wildfire Prevention grant from Cal Fire to develop the VFMP. The grant does not include funding for the implementation of the VFMP, and the project specific environmental review and implementation of the proposed projects identified in the Plan. The City also pledged a local match of \$55,828 for a total project cost of \$214,735.

BACKGROUND:

At its 7/20/20 meeting, the BPPC considered the first Draft of the Vegetative Fuels Management Plan (VFMP), which allowed the BPPC and public to provide comments on the draft plan. A second Draft of the plan, which incorporated comments received, was reviewed and considered by the BPPC on 8/31/20. At this meeting, the BPPC was provided a project timeline (updated and attached as Attachment 1) emphasizing that the VFMP and all other associated planning work, including California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review, must be completed by March 2021. The Commission approved moving forward with the CEQA process and preparation of a PEIR for the VFMP.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15082(a), a Notice of Preparation (NOP) requesting comments on the scope and content of the PEIR was prepared and circulated for the required 30-day public comment period on 9/9/20. The BPPC Natural Resources Committee (NRC) reviewed and provided comments on the NOP on 9/16/20, and the BPPC reviewed it on 9/28/20.

DISCUSSION:

The public review period for the NOP ended on 10/9/20. In addition to comments from members of the public, comments were received by the following regulatory agencies. These comments are summarized and incorporated in the PEIR:

- CAL FIRE
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Valley Flood Protection Board
- Butte County Air Quality Management District
- State of California Native American Heritage Commission

During the NRC and BPPC meetings regarding the VFMP, comments were received by both the public and Commissioners regarding the need to add the removal of nonnative invasive vegetation in Lower Bidwell Park as an implementation project. Although this work was already within the scope of the VFMP's programmatic vegetation management work, a new seventh project (called Key Projects in the PEIR), was added to a 3rd Draft of the VFMP. This 3rd Draft is included as Appendix B in redlined form and is the draft being analyzed in the PEIR.

Programmatic Environmental Impact Report Overview:

The draft PEIR was developed by consultants from BCRCD, CSU, Chico Ecological Reserve, Deer Creek Resources, and Dempsey Vegetation Management. Additionally, cultural and biological experts and representatives from the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Butte County Fire Safe Council helped develop the PEIR.

The PEIR is intended to serve as a program EIR, as defined by the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15168, for the adoption and implementation of the City of Chico Vegetative Fuels Management Plan. Section 15168 of the State CEQA Guidelines describes the procedural approach to the use of program EIRs. It states that a program EIR may be prepared on series of actions that can be characterized as one large project or program and are related either:

1. Geographically,
2. As logical parts in a chain of contemplated actions,
3. In connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, or
4. As individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar way(s).

All of the scenarios described in Section 15168 apply to the VFMP. Therefore, activities proposed in the VFMP receive general environmental review in the PEIR, e.g. analyzing their cumulative impacts as a program after considering their standard project requirements (SPRs), and then spelling out mitigation measures (if needed) that would be expected to reduce their environmental impacts below a threshold of significance. Components of the draft PEIR are as follows:

Chapter 1: Executive Summary
Chapter 2: Program Description
Chapter 3: Proposed Vegetative Fuels Management Plan
Chapter 4: Environmental Impacts, Standard Project Requirements (SPRs), and Mitigation Measures for the following environmental resources or issue areas:

- Air quality
- Aesthetics
- Agriculture
- Biological Resources
- Cultural/Tribal Resources
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Geology and Soils
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and housing
- Public services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Utilities and service systems
- Wildfire
- Mandatory findings of Significance

Chapter 5: EIR Preparers List
Chapter 6: References
Appendices A: Project Consistency Checklist
B: 3rd Draft VFMP
C: Standard Project Requirements List
D: Biology and Soils Maps and Tables
E: High Priority Invasive Species List

Due to the length of the PEIR, only Chapter 1 – Executive Summary is included with this report. The full PEIR and appendices are available on the City's website at: <https://chico.ca.us/post/2020-agendas>, under the 12/14/20 BPPC meeting date. Copies will also be available on the Butte County Records Office and the State Clearinghouse websites once the draft PEIR is recorded and released for public comment. Hard copies will also be available for public review at the Butte County Library, and the City of Chico Park Division Office at 965 Fir Street by appointment only. Information on the availability of and how to access and review the PEIR will be announced in a press release and advertised in the local newspaper.

Attachments: Attachment 1: Updated VFMP Project Timeline
Attachment 2: Draft Programmatic EIR Executive Summary (Chapter 1)

Phase 1: VFMP



Phase 2: CEQA



You are here
(December 2020)



I.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The City of Chico is proposing to implement a comprehensive program of work known as Vegetative Fuels Management Plan (referred to as the “Plan” or “the VFMP” or “the program”) to protect lives and property and enhance natural resources in the City of Chico. The Plan covers all land owned and managed by the City, including parks, greenways, and open spaces (henceforth referred to collectively as “Chico parklands”). It identifies high fire hazard areas in greatest need of treatment, describes how fire can best be managed in each of Chico’s five main vegetation communities, and develops policies and actions focused on reducing the harmful impacts of wildfire in the community, while protecting and in many cases enhancing Chico’s natural resources, including by redressing the adverse effects of long-term fire suppression. The proposed Plan is attached as Appendix B. To analyze the environmental effects of implementing the Plan and its component projects and activities, the City has prepared this programmatic EIR (PEIR). The "project" under CEQA, analyzed by this PEIR, is the multi-year program of work described in the VFMP. This work was funded by a CAL FIRE Community Wildfire Protection Grant (5GA18210).

People involved in developing this Plan The Parks Manager has the authority to identify parkland areas within the City’s jurisdiction that are vulnerable to hazards, including fire, and to apply appropriate policies and strategies within these areas to protect life, property, and natural resources. In December, 2018, the Parks Manager submitted a grant to CAL FIRE to support VFMP development and environmental review. The grant agreement was executed summer 2019.

The VFMP was then developed by the City of Chico Public Works Department, Parks Division, with the help of numerous qualified consultants. The Butte County Resource Conservation District (BCRCD) provided project management and a wide range of environmental review services. The CSU, Chico Enterprise Foundation and the CSU, Chico Ecological Reserves provided a registered professional forester (RPF) experienced in designing ecological and effective fuels reduction activities; the Reserves also provided an intern who perform fuels surveys on City parcels scattered across the program area. Deer Creek GIS conducted a comprehensive LiDAR analysis of the program area, creating the most detailed and accurate digital vegetation layer ever developed for the City and generating a wildfire risk map that identifies the areas of greatest fire danger based on ladder fuels density, likely conditions during hazardous weather, and proximity to homes, among other factors. Dempsey Vegetation Management provided Plan design and review especially as it pertains to management of invasive species that pose a fuels risk.

The Plan was reviewed by the the Bidwell Park and Playgrounds Commission (BPPC) and by the public. Comments were incorporated. The revised Plan was reviewed by the BPPC and the public a second time. The BPPC is a seven-member board with the power and duty to operate and maintain all parks and playgrounds owned by the City; provide for the care of the trees and shrubbery on the streets and along the sidewalks of the City; and enter into leases and contracts for up to 15 years, among other duties (Charter Sec. 1006.1). Due to delays related to the COVID-19 crisis, several BPPC and Natural Resource Committee meetings were canceled in spring/summer

2020. However, the dates of VFMP review were as follows: the first-draft VFMP was reviewed by the BPPC on July 20, 2020 and an initial round of comments incorporated by staff before the BPPC voted to forward the second-draft Plan to the environmental review stage on August 31, 2020, initiating the preparation of this PEIR. After August 31, 2020, comments and suggestions on the Plan were still accepted and incorporated, including an additional Key Project being added (Project 7, Lower Park thinning) because studies and comments emphasized the urgency of this project. The “new” project consists of work that was already within the scope of the VFMP’s programmatic vegetation management work and does not represent new impacts.

Development of this PEIR The VFMP analyzed in this PEIR is a third draft. (This redlined draft is attached to this PEIR as Appendix B.) It was developed by the contributors listed in 5.0, “EIR Preparers”. Additionally, experts from the NRCS and the Butte County Fire Safe Council donated their time to help develop or review the Soils, Wildfire, Noise, and Utilities sections of this EIR.

Objectives and contents of the Plan The objective of the Plan is to establish and implement strategic management actions on City-owned lands to reduce the likelihood of unwanted ignitions in the wildland-urban interface; reduce the negative effects of parkland fires on structures, lives and natural resources; and create conditions under which fire, when it does occur, can have beneficial effects in Chico’s parkland ecosystems. To that end, the Plan identifies and characterizes the City’s existing high fire hazard areas, presents policies and management actions to reduce parkland fire hazards and impacts in each of the City’s five main vegetation communities, and provides a framework for seeking funds, coordinating efforts with agencies and private landowners, and prioritizing work efforts. Although the primary driver of the Plan is the need to improve wildfire safety, the City believes the Plan should and does enhance other values that are meaningful to Chico’s residents and visitors, including recreation values; community safety; Chico heritage and historic values; tribal cultural values; ecosystem services such as water supply, conveyance and quality; native biodiversity (i.e., parklands relatively free from invasive species); and habitat for wildlife (including agricultural pollinators) and wildflowers.

The City Public Works Department (Parks Division) will be responsible for implementing the management actions in the Plan, in cooperation with other City Departments, other fire-related agencies, individual landowners where applicable, and the general public. This DEIR serves as a program EIR, as defined by the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15168, for adoption of the Plan. Adoption of the Plan and its program of work is the “project” evaluated by this PEIR. In other words, this PEIR analyzes what environmental impacts could result if the Plan were fully implemented, and it specifies how those impacts will be reduced to the lowest level possible.

The Plan outlines a suite of vegetation management methods (a “toolbox”) to reduce parkland fuel hazards. These methods will be applied to selected treatment areas on a case-by-case basis, not as a one-size-fits-all approach. The Parks Division has prioritized the areas to be treated based on the level of hazard. However, implementation of the vegetation management work is largely dependent upon funding. (Also, if the work would not be effective unless adjacent private property was also treated, then implementation could depend on private landowner permission). The Parks Division estimates that full implementation of the Plan will take 5 to 10 years. The Plan will not expire, although it can be modified as conditions and priorities change. Whether the Plan is modified by BPPC action in the future or not, future activities could require additional environmental review, an eventuality which is planned for in the structure of this PEIR and its attached Project Consistency Checklist

(Appendix A). There is no set term or expiration date associated with a Program EIR under CEQA.

Implementation of the proposed Plan will require formal adoption of the Plan and this PEIR by the Bidwell Park and Playgrounds Commission and the Chico City Council. Permits required for some future activities under the Plan are as follows:

- Burn permit and smoke management plan from the Butte County Air Quality Management District for prescribed burning of vegetative debris and landscape restoration units as proposed under the Plan;
- Burn permits from CAL FIRE for prescribed burning occurring in-season;
- A limited amount of work would occur in creeks; as such, a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSA or “1600” permit) would be required;
- Any and all vegetation management work outside of City-owned lands would require landowner permission, and the execution of a Letter of Agreement between the Division and the affected landowner(s).
- No 404 permit would be required under the Clean Water Act (CWA) because vegetation management activities adjacent to Waters of the U.S. would “involve only the cutting or removing of vegetation above the ground (e.g., mowing, rotary cutting, and chainsawing) where the activity neither substantially disturbs the root system nor involves mechanized pushing, dragging, or other similar activities that redeposit excavated soil material.” (CFR §232.2(2)(ii).)
- No formal consultation with USFWS or CDFW for take of endangered or threatened species would be required for projects within the scope of this EIR, because take would be avoided through programmatic mitigation measures and/or standard project requirements (SPRs), as specified in this EIR. Future activities will be reviewed for consistency with this EIR to determine whether they are (a) entirely within its scope or (b) require additional review.

I.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The City of Chico manages almost 6,400 acres -- fully ten square miles -- spanning a variety of vegetation communities, including grassland, riparian forest, Valley oak woodland, blue-oak-gray-pine woodlands, and the mixed oak-chaparral community known here as Upland Mix. All these vegetation communities, like the rest of the Sierra-Cascade foothills, are fire-adapted. That means each acre managed by the City needs fire in order to be optimally healthy, biodiverse, and safe to live in. Every vegetation community in Butte County has a native fire return interval: some shorter, some longer. If fire cannot be safely applied to these lands before their fire return interval runs out, then a fire surrogate will need to be applied in order to do some of the work fire would have done. Fire surrogates include almost any technique that reduces or kills vegetation, including hand cutting, mechanical mastication, grazing, mowing, or herbicide use.

A trait shared by fire and all fire surrogates is that a single entry (treatment) is not enough. Follow-up treatments (i.e., maintenance) are crucial to keeping land healthy. This work is never done. The ongoing nature of vegetation management work makes it a *program* of work, not merely a collection of projects. Therefore, it is best reviewed and authorized as a program. Adoption of the VFMP and implementation of its program of work is the Project analyzed in this PEIR.

I.2.1 Programmatic Vegetation Management on City Lands

This EIR serves as a program EIR, as defined by the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15168, for adoption and implementation of the City of Chico Vegetative Fuels Management Plan. Activities proposed in the Plan receive general environmental review in this EIR, e.g. analyzing their cumulative impacts as a program after considering their standard project requirements, and then spelling out mitigation measures (if needed) that would be expected to reduce their environmental impacts below a threshold of significance based on the particular resources known or expected to be found in the treatment areas.

Section 15168 of the State CEQA Guidelines describes the procedural approach to the use of program EIRs. It states that a program EIR may be prepared on series of actions that can be characterized as one large project or program and are related either:

- (1) geographically,
- (2) as logical parts in a chain of contemplated actions,
- (3) in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, or
- (4) As individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar way(s).

All of the scenarios described in Section 15168 apply to the VFMP. The VFMP identifies proposed management activities and facility improvements geographically located on City-owned parklands and open space. The Plan approval is the first in a sequence of contemplated actions, followed by subsequent approvals to implement the proposed Projects and other future activities consistent with the VFMP. These future projects or activities, as they are designed, will undergo additional, site-specific review pursuant to CEQA. If the City finds that a future activity would have effects that were not examined in this program EIR, a new initial study would need to be prepared leading to either an EIR or a negative declaration. If, however, the City finds that pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15162, no new effects could occur or no new mitigation measures would be required, then the City can approve the activity as being within the scope of the program EIR, and no new environmental document would be required (§15168(c)(1) and (2)).

To determine whether future activities in the VFMP are really within the scope of this PEIR, additional surveys and impact analyses will still be needed. Based on the results of these analyses, new impacts not covered in this PEIR could be identified, and new mitigation measures could be needed. If so, new environmental documents under CEQA would be required before implementation of those activities. To determine whether a future activity/project is entirely or partially within the scope of this PEIR or not, the City will use the Project Consistency Checklist attached in Appendix A.

The Plan would involve reducing the amount of flammable vegetation within designated areas of City-owned lands. Some areas would see a 90% reduction, similar to what could be experienced after a wildfire (e.g., certain very overgrown brushy corridors along evacuation routes or surrounding legacy black oaks in Upper Park). Other areas would see about a 40% reduction (e.g., many denser riparian corridors, where invasives would be removed before any native vegetation is removed). A large majority of acres would see no reduction (e.g., most grassland and blue oak-gray

pine areas most years). The objectives and method of vegetation management (both first entries and follow-up treatments) would be selected from the menus of tools and techniques described in section 4 of the VFMP and summarized below in 2.2.

1.2.2 The Key Projects

As a deliverable of the CAL FIRE grant, the Plan also contains seven key Projects which are high priorities for the City and stakeholders. Making these projects “shovel-ready” (i.e., fully reviewed and permitted) was one of the goals of the grant. Therefore, these seven projects have received more detailed planning, mapping, and/or resource surveys using funding from this grant.

However, site-specific biological resources and cultural resources surveys sufficient for defining project-level environmental effects for these seven projects have, in most cases, not been completed at the time of this DEIR release. (Continuing to develop these surveys is within the scope of the CAL FIRE grant and the Parks Division will continue to use that funding to develop these surveys through mid spring 2021.) Therefore, this EIR serves as a program EIR for the seven Key Projects. Programmatic mitigation measures for these projects are included in the PEIR for those resource topics where implementation of the proposed projects could result in potentially significant impacts before mitigation. These mitigation measures, if they are found to apply, are to be implemented prior to or as part of approval of the final design or alignment and implementation of these projects. After more detailed planning and design of the projects are completed and the projects are considered for implementation by the City, they will undergo additional review, consistent with Section 15168(c) of the State CEQA Guidelines. They will be reviewed in light of the information in the program EIR. If a detailed analysis using the Project Consistency Checklist can document that their impacts are within the scope of the information in the program EIR, additional environmental documentation will not be necessary. If new effects are identified that were not addressed in the program EIR, the Project Consistency Checklist would then serve as an Initial Study to determine the appropriate environmental documentation the City would need to prepare.

Finally, for the 7 Key Projects and indeed any future activities under this PEIR, it's important to note most areas will still receive some last-minute surveys right before implementation: for example, nesting bird surveys must be conducted within 30 days of implementation start.

There is no expectation that the seven projects will be implemented “in order” or that one will need to be completed before another can begin or before programmatic vegetation management (i.e., vegetation management that is not associated with a “key project”) can proceed.

1.2.3 Vegetation Management in Cooperation with Private Landowners

Sometimes, vegetation management objectives cannot be completed without the cooperation of neighboring landowners. This is particularly true of arundo eradication efforts along creeks. Arundo (*Arundo donax* or giant reed) is a highly flammable invasive weed which spreads easily by rhizome or fragment and quickly grows to 10-15' high walls of vegetation which will readily burn even when green. While all vegetation has some potential to act as fuel for fires, arundo is considerably more flammable and volatile than the native streamside vegetation, e.g. willow and mulefat, it often crowds out. Arundo cannot be effectively eradicated from a City-managed stream channel as long as it is harbored on privately managed parcels that are adjacent to, or upstream from, City-managed lands. Therefore, this EIR analyzes the likely environmental effects of addressing and removing arundo on some private lands. Even though agreements have not yet been developed or executed with most private landowners who would be eligible to participate, it is appropriate to review the cumulative or general impacts from performing this work on private lands and to develop standard project requirements and/or mitigation and monitoring measures to reduce the likely effects of this work below thresholds of environmental significance.

I.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS

I.3.1 Less than significant impacts

In section 4 of this PEIR, preparers analyzed the environmental impacts of fully implementing the Plan. This analysis, similar to the analysis commonly performed in an Initial Study (IS), determined that either no impact, or no significant impact, would occur related to the following environmental resources or issue areas:

- Air quality – emission related impacts associated with vegetation management (e.g., chain saws, chippers, smoke) would be minor, temporary, and less than significant.
- Aesthetics - the impacts on scenic views would be less than significant or would be beneficial.
- Agriculture – the proposed Plan would have no impact on agricultural activities or on timberland.
- Cultural resources - surveys and design features built into the program would sufficiently protect cultural, historical and archaeological resources.
- Energy - the program would not use energy wastefully or in conflict with an adopted energy efficiency plan.
- Geology and Soils – the proposed Plan would not affect, or be affected by, geological hazards such as seismic ground shaking, fault rupture, landslides, or subsidence.
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions - the project’s influence on the production or sequestration of greenhouse gases in the area would not be significant or adverse and would not conflict with an adopted greenhouse gas reduction or climate resilience plan.
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials – design features built into the program would sufficiently prevent the release of hazardous substances and would not expose the public to health hazards
- Land Use and Planning – the proposed Plan would not alter existing land uses nor would it conflict with City General Plan policies
- Mineral Resources - the program would not cause any change in the availability of any mineral resource
- Noise – noise impacts related to vegetation management (i.e., chain saws, chippers) would be temporary, localized, and less than significant
- Population and housing – implementation of the Plan would not affect population growth

or available housing

- Public services – implementation of the Plan would not significantly affect the amount and availability of fire, police, school, or park services
- Recreation - implementation of the Plan would neither develop new recreational opportunities or infrastructure that could harm the environment, nor will it have a significant adverse impact on existing recreational opportunities or infrastructure
- Transportation - implementation of the Plan would not have a significant adverse impact on existing transportation networks, access, or evacuation; the impact of additional traffic or delays associated with work crews performing vegetation management near local roadways and intersections would be minor and localized
- Tribal Cultural Resources- surveys and design features built into the program would provide a clear and explicit framework for government-to-government collaboration between the City and local Tribes to sufficiently protect tribal cultural resources.
- Utilities and service systems – the Plan would not significantly affect, or cause a significant demand for, water supply, waste treatment, wastewater treatment, or drainage facilities

1.3.2 Potentially significant impacts that can be mitigated to below a level of significance

The City’s analysis determined that implementation of the Plan over many years could result in a potentially significant impact related to the following environmental resources or issue areas, but that these impacts could be mitigated to below a level of significance:

- Biological Resources - Although it is not expected, direct, indirect or cumulative impacts to special-status plant or wildlife species could occur from Plan implementation activities and/or the habitat alterations resulting from them. Therefore, a framework for compensatory mitigation has been developed (**MM-BIO-1**) that would (with CDFW and/or USFWS concurrence) reduce these impacts to below a level of significance. If compensatory mitigation was not feasible to offset significant biological impacts of a future activity, then that future activity would not be under the scope of this PEIR and a new EIR would be required for that activity.
- Hydrology and Water Quality - Removing all the vegetation in a streamside area can result in bank instability. In most streamside areas, the Plan would not remove all or even most vegetation. However, in parts of the Little Chico Creek greenway, *Arundo donax* may be the only streamside vegetation or could be the only streamside vegetation by the time implementation begins. If work removes all the *Arundo donax*, it could possibly result in eventual instability of the bank that causes hydrological impacts after the *Arundo donax* root ball dies and begins to separate from the soil. To reduce this impact to below a level of significance, while also avoiding the area’s re-colonization by weeds that present a relatively

high fire hazard, a low-density riparian revegetation mitigation measure has been developed (**MM-HYDRO-1**). Because streamside work needs to be carried out under the terms of a 1600 permit from CDFW (**SPR BIO-10**) as well as potentially an encroachment permit from CVFPB, this mitigation measure would still need to be reviewed by CDFW and potentially CVFPB. If CDFW and/or CVFPB stipulated more stringent mitigation measures, those agencies' mitigation measures would be applied.

1.3.3 Cumulative impacts and potentially significant impacts remaining after mitigation

The proposed Plan represents a long-term program that affects a wide geographic area in the City of Chico. Impacts would be dispersed over time and space. The impacts of the program have the potential to interact and combine with similar impacts from other land disturbing actions in and around the City, such as residential land development on individual lots, small subdivisions, road and other infrastructure improvements, flood control channel maintenance, and discretionary land development projects in the unincorporated portions of the County surrounding the City. The proposed Plan has the potential to overlap in time, and in effect, with these other types of projects, resulting in potential cumulatively significant impacts to biological resources, as described above. Cumulative impacts related to other resource areas are not expected to be significant.

After mitigation, the City concludes that no cumulative impacts nor potentially significant impacts would remain.

1.3.4 Significant unavoidable impacts and irreversible impacts.

Because the "project" in this case is approval of a Plan, CEQA requires the City to disclose any significant unavoidable impacts and any significant impacts that would be irreversible (§21100(b)(2)). Since the City finds no significant impacts would remain after mitigation, there are no irreversible nor unavoidable significant effects.

1.3.5 Growth inducing impacts

The proposed program would not result in any growth inducing impacts.

<p style="text-align: center;">Table 1 - Key to Impact Levels</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NI = No Impact LTS = Less than significant PS = Potentially significant</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LTSM = Less than significant with Mitigation SU = Significant and unavoidable</p>			
4.4 Biological Resources			
Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure	Significance After Mitigation
<p>Impact BIO-a: Project activities could have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, or through cumulative impacts, on a <i>wildlife</i> species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.</p>	<p>PS</p>	<p>Mitigation Measure BIO-1a: <i>Compensatory Mitigation to Special-Status Wildlife, If Applicable</i></p> <p>If the provisions of SPR BIO-5a cannot be implemented and additional mitigation is necessary to reduce significant impacts, the project proponent will compensate for such impacts to species or habitat by acquiring and/or protecting land that provides (or will provide in the case of restoration) habitat function for affected species that is at least equivalent to the habitat function removed or degraded as a result of the treatment. Compensation may include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Preserving existing habitat outside of the treatment area in perpetuity; this may entail purchasing mitigation credits and/or lands from a CDFW- or USFWS-approved entity in sufficient quantity to offset the residual significant impacts, generally at a ratio of 1:1 for habitat; and/or 2.) Restoring or enhancing existing habitat within the treatment area or outside of the treatment area (including decommissioning roads, adding perching structures, removing existing perching structures, or removing existing movement barriers or other existing features that are adversely affecting the species), and/or 3.) In lieu of the measures described above, compensatory mitigation may be satisfied through compliance with permit conditions, or other authorizations obtained by the project proponent (e.g., incidental take permit, if required), if these requirements are equally or more effective than the mitigation identified above. <p>The project proponent will prepare a Compensatory Mitigation Plan that identifies the residual significant effects that require compensatory mitigation and describes the compensatory mitigation strategy being implemented to reduce residual effects. The project proponent will consult with CDFW and/or any other applicable responsible agency prior to finalizing the Compensatory Mitigation Plan in order to satisfy that responsible agency's requirements (e.g., permits, approvals) within the plan. For species listed under ESA or CESA, the project proponent will submit the mitigation plan to CDFW and/or USFWS for review and comment. For other special-status wildlife species (not listed under ESA or CESA) the project proponent may consult with CDFW and/or USFWS regarding the availability and applicability of compensatory mitigation and other related technical information. The Compensatory Mitigation Plan will include:</p> <p>For preserving existing habitat outside of the treatment area in perpetuity, a summary of the proposed compensation lands (e.g., the number and type of credits, location of mitigation bank or easement), parties responsible for the long-term management of the land, and the legal and funding mechanisms for long-term conservation (e.g., holder of conservation easement or fee title). The project proponent will submit evidence that the necessary mitigation has been implemented or that the project proponent has entered into a legal agreement to implement it and that compensatory habitat will be preserved in perpetuity.</p> <p>For restoring or enhancing habitat within the treatment area or outside of the treatment area, a description of the proposed habitat improvements, success criteria that demonstrate the performance standard of maintained habitat function has been met, legal and funding mechanisms, and parties responsible for long-term management and monitoring of the restored habitat. If the loss of occupied habitat cannot be offset, and as a result treatment activities would substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of listed wildlife species, then the treatment will not qualify as within the scope of this PEIR.</p>	<p>LTSM</p>

4.4 Biological Resources

<p>Impact BIO-a: Project activities could have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, or through cumulative impacts, on a <i>plant</i> species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.</p>	<p>PS</p>	<p>Mitigation Measure BIO-1b: <i>Compensatory Mitigation to Special-Status Plants, If Applicable</i> If the provisions of SPR BIO-5b cannot be implemented and additional mitigation is necessary to reduce significant impacts, the project proponent will compensate for such impacts to species or habitat by acquiring and/or protecting land that provides (or will provide in the case of restoration) habitat function for affected species that is at least equivalent to the habitat function removed or degraded as a result of the treatment. Compensation may include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Preserving and enhancing existing populations outside of the treatment area in perpetuity (first priority). If that is not an option because existing populations that can be preserved in perpetuity are not available, 2.) Creating populations on mitigation sites outside of the treatment area through seed collection and dispersal (annual species) or transplantation (perennial species) and/or <p>Purchasing mitigation credits from a CDFW- or USFWS-approved conservation or mitigation bank in sufficient quantities to offset the loss of occupied habitat; and/or</p> <p>If the affected special-status plants are not listed under ESA or CESA, compensatory mitigation may include restoring or enhancing degraded habitats so that they are made suitable to support special-status plant species in the future.</p> <p>Finally, in lieu of the measures described above, compensatory mitigation may be satisfied through compliance with permit conditions, or other authorizations obtained by the project proponent (e.g., incidental take permit for state-listed plants), if these requirements are equally or more effective than the mitigation identified above.</p> <p>The project proponent will prepare a Compensatory Mitigation Plan that identifies the residual significant impacts that require compensatory mitigation and describes the compensatory mitigation strategy being implemented and how unavoidable losses of special-status plants will be compensated. The project proponent will consult with CDFW and/or any other applicable responsible agency prior to finalizing the Compensatory Mitigation Plan to satisfy that responsible agency's requirements (e.g., permits, approvals) within the plan. If the special-status plant taxa are listed under ESA or CESA, the plan will be submitted to CDFW and/or USFWS (as appropriate) for review and comment. The Compensatory Mitigation Plan will include: (continued on next page)</p>	<p>LTSM</p>
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Bidwell Park & Playground Commission Report

Meeting Date 12/14/20

DATE: 12/09/20
TO: Bidwell Park & Playground Commission (BPPC)
FROM: Linda Herman, Park and Natural Resources Manager
SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF THE FINAL RESTORATION PLAN FOR THE NATURE CENTER AREA

REPORT IN BRIEF:

On 11/25/19, the Bidwell Park & Playground Commission (BPPC) reviewed a draft plan for the tree-clearing area near the Nature Center area in Lower Bidwell Park to restore the area as a Valley Oak Woodland demonstration site. The plan was also reviewed by the Natural Resources Committee (NRC). The BPPC will consider the final restoration plan prepared by the City's consultant Dempsey Vegetation Management to achieve this goal.

Recommendation: The Commission is requested to approve the final restoration plan.

BACKGROUND:

At its 5/20/19 and 6/24/19 meetings, the BPPC approved the NRC's recommendations to conduct a baseline vegetation survey, to treat invasive non-native weeds, and prepare the Oak Woodland restoration plan for the tree-clearing area near the Nature Center in Lower Bidwell Park. The City retained Jim Dempsey dba Dempsey Vegetation Management, who has vast experience and expertise in vegetation management and restoration, to complete these tasks.

At its 11/20/19 meeting, the NRC reviewed a draft restoration plan with the intent to:

1. Restore the area as a native vegetation site to make it more fire resistant and climate change resilient.
2. Provide desirable native plants without irrigation, if possible, and to control undesirable plants.
3. Foster the growth of existing desirable native volunteers on site
4. Plant additional natives to complement and augment existing vegetation to:
 - a. Re-establish shade canopy
 - b. Achieve a shaded fire fuel break spacing standard
 - c. Improves existing species diversity, and
5. Provide a 3-year plant establishment period and long-term maintenance schedule.

The Committee directed Staff to consult with the Mechoopda Tribe regarding the plan, to begin CEQA review for the project, and report back to the Committee at the next NRC meeting. The BPPC concurred with this direction at its 11/25/20 meeting. The completion of the plan was also discussed at the 2/24/20 BPPC meeting as part of the NRC Work plan agenda item.

DISCUSSION:

As directed, the plan was submitted to the Mechoopda Tribe and they did not have any changes to the plan other than to encourage that herbicide use be limited if possible. On November 17, 2020, Staff also filed a CEQA Notice of Categorical Exemption under §15333 -"Small Habitat Restoration Project (< 5 acres)" with the Butte County Clerk Recorder for this restoration project.

Since much time has passed due to COVID, I reviewed the 11/25/20 meeting DVD. It appears final approval of the plan was pending input from the Mechoopda Tribe. Staff consulted with the Tribe and their response was that they appreciated the project and encourage the City to minimize its use of herbicides if possible. So, we are now seeking final BPPC approval of the attached plan so that the planting can move forward later this month or in early January 2021 to hopefully take advantage of future wet weather.

Attachments: Exhibit A: Final Nature Center Restoration Plan

10/17/20

**CITY OF CHICO PARK DIVISION
FINAL RESTORATION PLAN FOR NATURE CENTER PROJECT AREA.**

PURPOSE

Restore the project area and surroundings (total two acres) to native Oak Woodland vegetation. Within the tree canopy opening (of ~0.7 acre), plantings will complement existing volunteer natives such that intended spacing is consistent with a shaded wildfire-fuel break vegetation spacing standard¹ after 10-15 years. All non-natives will be controlled over the entire two acres during the three years of establishment following initial plantings.

SITE LOCATION

The two acre area is delimited by Cedar Grove Way, the bike path on north side of East 8th Street, a line following the west roof line of the Nature Center to the large Valley oak between Nature Center and Lab, a line from that Valley oak to trunks of two walnut trees west of the Lab, and the paved road on the north side.

MEANS

1. Restoration consists of establishment of desirable plants without irrigation and control of undesirables.
2. Establishment of desirable plants involves finding native volunteers on site (selecting for species variety and structure at the shaded fuel break spacing standard) and encouraging their successful growth over three years. This may include placing temporary protection (staked tree tubes, wire mesh) from animals (deer, rodents, people) and wood chip mulch, and removing competing plants including natives within the mulch perimeter of 24"+ radius from each selected plant.
3. Additional natives will be needed to complement volunteers for several reasons: lack of distribution of trees to reestablish shade canopy; expected mortality ('crop failure' to weather or pathology, herbivory, human damage); and the opportunity to add native species diversity value in the course of restoration (ecological succession from sunny opening herbs/shrubs to

¹ Shaded wildfire fuel break standard for this purpose: individual tree canopies separated by $\geq 15'$ of open sky after 10-15 years growth= canopy ~20' diameter for Valley oaks; shrubs separated by open space that is 2x their mature height from adjacent shrubs or tree trunks or herbaceous patches; herbaceous vegetation planted in patches of 100-400 sq. ft. by species.

shaded forest) of this future shaded Valley oak forest stand. Blue and interior live oak (10% of trees to be established) are suggested to hedge/adapt for climate change future (e.g. lowering of ground water table affecting Valley oaks).

4. Herbicide weed control will be needed for the three seasons of establishment: typically this may be early March and mid May for winter-spring control of annual weeds, May for follow up on resprouting stumps, and fall for treating additional mature trees to be phased out as plants grow out in the project area.
5. Irrigation is not necessary, however manual irrigation during the first year or two can help ensure establishment, and this might be weekly to extend the spring growing season (until temperatures are 85-90degF), and thereafter only once a month deeply (e.g. 5 gallons/tree) until fall/winter rain.

FOLLOW UP WORK AFTER YEAR 3 OF PLANT ESTABLISHMENT

1. It may take 4-8 years for Valley oaks (from acorns) to grow sufficiently above deer browse height plus develop free standing trunk support before removing tree tubes and stakes.
2. Recommend phasing out of remaining exotic trees remaining on the site (Catalpa, hackberry, incense cedar, black walnut, pistache) after the project area has sufficient growth to keep the area from looking too bare, perhaps starting in fall 2023. If any of these individuals do not pose a potential fall hazard and are >7" diameter at 12' they might be left standing dead as a snag wildlife habitat (for bole nesting birds, bats, or perches), or if felled then the bole positioned on the site as whole as possible (minimize bucking up) with full ground contact as downed coarse woody wildlife habitat (insects important to food chain, reptiles, amphibians). Neither dead snags nor ground contact coarse wood contribute to wildfire fuels hazard with respect to fire spread on this flat site.
3. As a value-added restoration site, vegetation should be monitored ongoing for invasives and promptly treated to prevent spread.

ESTIMATED COSTS

The following table provides estimated costs for nursery stock and protection materials, planting labor/tools, and weed control labor/materials.

¹ *Shaded wildfire fuel break standard for this purpose: individual tree canopies separated by $\geq 15'$ of open sky after 10-15 years growth= canopy $\sim 20'$ diameter for Valley oaks; shrubs separated by open space that is 2x their mature height from adjacent shrubs or tree trunks or herbaceous patches; herbaceous vegetation planted in patches of 100-400 sq. ft. by species.*

Planting materials cost estimate:			
	#	\$/	cost
tree tubes 5', bird net, zip ties	50	4	\$200
orchard stakes 8'x2"round	50	5	\$250
hardware cloth 3/8", roll 25' x 24"	1	45	\$45
Valley oak acorns/existing pots	20*	on hand	\$-
shrubs coffeeberry, elderberry, ...	30*	10	\$300
herbs milkweed, goldenrod, ...	49*	3	\$147
x200 plugs of grass, sedge	2*	155 + 190	\$345
			\$1,287

Labor:
Using skilled labor (not volunteers) estimated at 45 hours (not volunteers).
Weed control, using existing City contract, estimated at \$1,400 through fall 2022.
*Red numbers to be determined

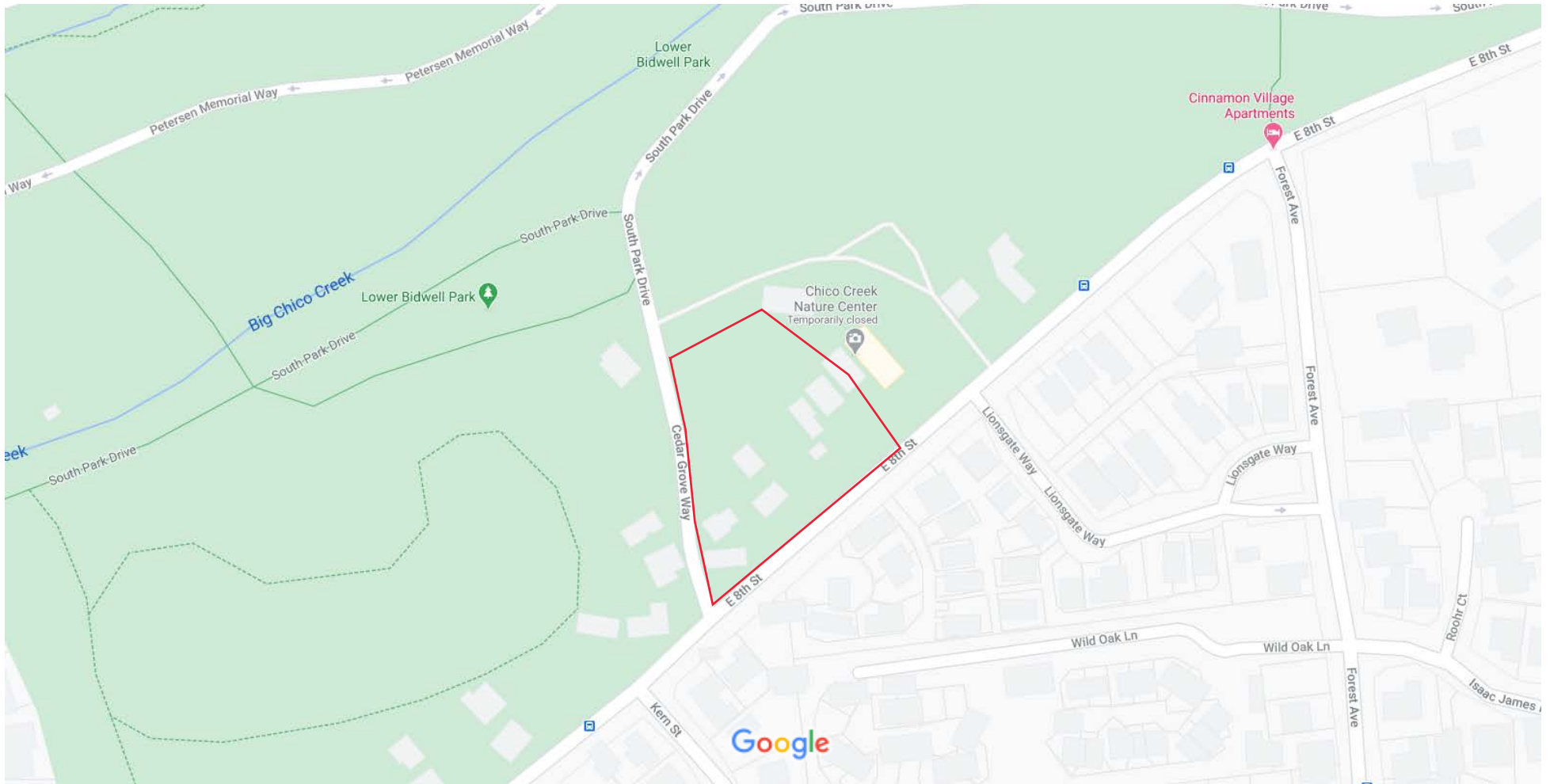
RESTORATION TASK CALENDAR – Attached as Exhibit B

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¹ Shaded wildfire fuel break standard for this purpose: individual tree canopies separated by >=15' of open sky after 10-15 years growth= canopy ~20' diameter for Valley oaks; shrubs separated by open space that is 2x their mature height from adjacent shrubs or tree trunks or herbaceous patches; herbaceous vegetation planted in patches of 100-400 sq. ft. by species.

EXHIBIT B - RESTORATION PLAN SCHEDULE

Task Calendar - Restoration Plan for Nature Center clearing area.	
FINAL 10/16/2020 Jdempsey	
Timing depends on weather	Task (Expected 'weeds' are annotated in the attached 6/19/19 site survey report.)
2020 = year 0	
November	Last fall weed control followup.. Remove coast(?)live oak seedlings along Cedar Grove Way. Determine # of what native plants desired, purchase plants and planting materials (materials/cost estimate attached)
early December	Planting installed with protection and mulched.
2021 = year 1 of planting establishment	
late January	Monitor winter annual weeds, start Vinca control (spray new growth through April).
March	Monitor to treat winter-early spring weeds.
April	Monitor to treat cut stump resprouts through June. ?supplemental watering until 85-90degF.
late May	Monitor to treat spring weeds. Maintain planting protection.
June	?supplemental watering monthly until fall/winter rain.
October	Monitor to treat weeds. Maintain planting protection.
December	Evaluate planting mortality and replant.
2022:yr 2	
lateJan	Monitor winter annual weeds, start Vinca control (spray new growth through April).
March	Monitor to treat winter-early spring weeds.
April	Monitor to treat cut stump resprouts through June. ?supplemental watering until 85-90degF.
late May	Monitor to treat spring weeds. Maintain planting protection.
June	?supplemental watering monthly until fall/winter rain.
October	Monitor to treat weeds. Maintain planting protection.
December	Evaluate planting mortality and replant.
2023:yr 3	
lateJan	Monitor winter annual weeds, start Vinca control (spray new growth through April).
March	Monitor to treat winter-early spring weeds.
April	Monitor to treat cut stump resprouts through June. ?supplemental watering until 85-90degF.
late May	Monitor to treat spring weeds. Maintain planting protection.
June	?supplemental watering monthly until fall/winter rain.
October	Monitor to treat weeds, to remove planting protection as ready. If approved by City, start phasing out exotic mature trees by priority: hackberry, pistache, Catalpa, walnut, incense cedar.
2024	March Monitor to treat weeds, to maintain planting protection.
	October Monitor to treat weeds, to remove planting protection as ready. phase out exotic trees.
2025	March Monitor to treat weeds, to maintain planting protection.
	October Monitor to treat weeds, to remove planting protection as ready. phase out exotic trees.
2026	March Monitor to treat weeds, to maintain planting protection.
	October Monitor to treat weeds, remove planting protection. phase out exotic trees.





DATE: 12/9/20
TO: Bidwell Park and Playground Commission (BPPC)
FROM: Linda Herman, Park and Natural Resources Manager
SUBJECT: Parks Division Report

NARRATIVE

1. Updates

- a. Upper Park Parking Fees – As directed by the City Council a plan to implement the proposed parking fees for Upper Bidwell Park has been completed by the City's Consultant Dixon Resources. The City Council's consideration whether to approve the proposed implementation plan and parking fees is tentatively scheduled for the January 5, 2021 Council meeting.
- b. Lindo Channel Defensible Space Grant – Staff was notified that the City's application for a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant to provide defensible space on Lindo Channel from Manzanita Ave. to Hwy 99 has been forwarded to FEMA for consideration for funding. A preliminary project scoping meeting with FEMA was held, which moved the application further along in the selection process. If approved, the City will be awarded \$188,000 in grant funds, with the City providing \$63,000 in in-kind matching funds for a total project cost of \$251,000.
- c. South Park/Petersen Drive Safety Maintenance – Park and Street Tree Staff is developing a Work and Traffic Control Plan for the local CCCs to help elevate and cut-back vegetation that has encroached upon both South Park and Petersen Drives in Lower Bidwell Park. This road maintenance work is needed to provide a safe path of travel for bicycles and pedestrians, and to improve sight lines for vehicles. The CCC crews are tentatively scheduled for the week of January 18, 2021. A press release will be sent notifying the public prior to the start of work.
- d. Chico Rod & Gun Club Lease – Staff conducted a five-year review for the final five-year extension provision in the current lease with the Chico Rod and Gun Club. Over of the past five years, the Club has installed a new roof and siding on the front of the facility at a cost of approximately \$50,000. They hope to install more siding during this next term. The Club is also in compliance with the open to the public requirements, providing 20-25 hours of free public use per month (the lease only requires 2 hours/mo.). The Club also provides support for the Hooked On Fishing Event and holds several youth and veteran classes. The lease expires in 2025 at such time the BPPC and the Club will consider whether to enter into a new lease.
- e. Caper Acres – The Governor's original COVID stay-at-home order included the closure of outdoor playgrounds. However, Butte County Public Health confirmed that the final guidelines allow outdoor playgrounds to remain open with implemented COVID protection measures. These measures have already been implemented in Caper Acres so the playground will remain open unless restrictions change.

2. Maintenance Program

General - Staff provides on a need and time basis the cleaning and safety inspections of all recreation areas including grounds, playgrounds, picnic sites, roads and paths, coupled with the weekend cleaning and re-supplying of all open park restrooms. Maintenance and repair of park fixtures, daily opening of gates, posting reservations, unauthorized camp clean up and the constant removal of graffiti from all park infrastructure.

- a. Lower Park: Staff has teamed up with sign and signal to repair all the vandalized pole lights in the Anne's Glen and One Mile area. Most of the lights have had the service doors broken off and the wires striped back so that electricity can be stolen. This is a dangerous and costly activity as often the wires make contact with each other causing a short and blowing the fuses and shorting the life of the light itself.

- b. Middle Park: Routine maintenance, (i.e. lawns, irrigation, building maintenance, etc.). Staff repaired a main line water break at Five Mile. This system is fragile and in the need of being replaced.
- c. Upper Park: Routine Maintenance
- d. Greenway Parks: Routine maintenance. As time and staff permit. Staff helped out Engineering by bringing in several tons of boulders to block off potential vehicle entrances at Comanche Creek.
- e. Upcoming projects: Side trim and elevate vegetation on the Lower Park drives. Grade parking lots Fall turf program. Repainting of the vandalized Easter Cross in Upper Park that was painted with rainbow colors.

3. Volunteer and Donor Program

- a. Bidwell Park Donation – The Parks Division received a very generous donation of \$15,400.00 from the Peggy McGettrick - Kirkland Memorial through the North Valley Community Foundation. The funds have been deposited into the park's general improvement donation fund.
- b. Sycamore Field Bench Donation – The Chico Area Recreation District (CARD) installed a memorial bench on the east side of the first base line of Sycamore Field. CARD's lease allows them to make alterations and improvements under City Park Director approval. The bench was donated by the Chico Senior Softball Association.
- c. Community Action Volunteers in Education (CAVE) – CAVE students concluded their fall semester of service during the first week of December. Even with the challenges of COVID restrictions, the CAVE volunteers were able to accomplish meaningful vegetation management tasks in Lower Bidwell Park and Verbena Fields. CAVE plans to return to service for the Spring 2021 semester.
- d. Friends of Comanche Creek Greenway (FOCCG) – FOCCG, partners with the PALS volunteer program, have been very busy removing old cement chunks from the meadow area along the bike path on the south side of the Comanche Creek Greenway. The removal of the cement chunks will be helpful for future maintenance of the area.
- e. Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities
 - Volunteer Calendar – To find out about upcoming volunteer events please [CLICK HERE](#) or visit <https://www.chico.ca.us/post/volunteer-calendar>

MONTHLY SUMMARY TABLES

Table 1. Monthly Volunteer Hours

Parks and Greenway -PALS- (Partners, Ambassadors, Leaders & Stewards) Volunteer Activities, Oct & Nov. 2020							
Date	Location	Partner/Agency	# of Volunteers	Hrs. Worked	# of Vols Xs Hrs. = Total Hrs.	Task	Leader
Various	Bidwell Park and Greenways	PALS	140	various	914	Various/ Ambassadors	Shane Romain
10/3/2020	Lower Park	CAVE	6	3	18	Gen. Cleanup	Shane Romain
10/3/2020	Peregrine Point	ORAI	2	2	4	Mulch	Phil Brock
10/4/2020	Peregrine Point	ORAI	2	2	4	Mulch/Baskets/Gen. Cleanup	Phil Brock
10/4/2020	Middle Park	BEC	4	3	12	Veg. Mgmt.	Daniel Baxter
10/9/2020	Verbena Fields	CAVE	6	3	18	Veg. Mgmt.	Alli Meders-Knight
10/10/2020	Peregrine Point	ORAI	2	5	10	Mulch	Phil Brock
10/10/2020	Lower Park	CAVE	6	3	18	Veg. Mgmt.	Shane Romain
10/11/2020	Peregrine Point	ORAI	2	1	2	Mulch	Phil Brock
10/12/2020	Middle Park	BEC	5	3	15	Veg. Mgmt.	Daniel Baxter
10/16/2020	Verbena Fields	CAVE	6	3	18	Veg. Mgmt.	Alli Meders-Knight
10/16/2020	Lower Park	PALS	7	3	18	Veg. Mgmt.	Kevin Seeger
10/17/2020	Lower Park	CAVE	6	3	18	Veg. Mgmt.	Shane Romain
10/17/2020	Peregrine Point	ORAI	1	2	2	Mulch	Phil Brock
10/24/2020	Peregrine Point	ORAI	1	2	2	Mulch	Phil Brock
10/24/2020	Comanche Creek	FOCCG	4	3	12	Gen. Cleanup	Liz Stewart
10/24/2020	Lower Park	PALS	32	3	96	Veg. Mgmt.	Shane Romain
10/25/2020	Peregrine Point	ORAI	1	3	3	Mulch/Gen. Cleanup	Phil Brock
10/30/2020	Verbena Fields	CAVE	6	3	18	Veg. Mgmt.	Alli Meders-Knight
10/30/2020	Comanche Creek	FOCCG	29	3	87	Gen. Cleanup	Liz Stewart
10/31/2020	Lower Park	CAVE	6	3	18	Veg. Mgmt.	Shane Romain
Various	Bidwell Park and Greenways	PALS	140	various	914	Various/ Ambassadors	Shane Romain
11/1/2020	Comanche Creek	FOCCG	1	2	2	Gen. Cleanup	Liz Stewart
11/2/2020	Comanche Creek	FOCCG	1	2	2	Gen. Cleanup	Liz Stewart
11/6/2020	Verbena Fields	CAVE	6	3	18	Veg. Mgmt.	Cathryn Carkhuff
11/7/2020	Lower Park	CAVE	6	3	18	Gen. Cleanup	Shane Romain
11/7/2020	Lindo Channel	PALS	3	4	12	Gen. Cleanup	Scott Huber
11/13/2020	Verbena Fields	CAVE	6	3	18	Veg. Mgmt.	Cathryn Carkhuff
11/13/2020	Comanche Creek	FOCCG	3	3	9	Gen. Cleanup	Liz Stewart
11/20/2020	Comanche Creek	FOCCG	10	3	30	Gen. Cleanup	Liz Stewart
11/20/2020	Lower Park	PALS	20	3	60	Veg. Mgmt.	Kevin Seeger
11/20/2020	Verbena Fields	CAVE	6	3	18	Veg. Mgmt.	Cathryn Carkhuff
11/21/2020	Lower Park	CAVE	6	3	18	Gen. Cleanup	Shane Romain
11/27/2020	Comanche Creek	FOCCG	4	4	16	Gen. Cleanup	Liz Stewart
				TOTAL HRS.	2442		

Table 2. Monthly Ranger and Other Incidents

Significant Incidents, November 2020

Date	Location	Incident details
11/20/2020	North 5 Mile	Robbery
11/21/2020	Comanche Creek	Tent fire from overturned candle
11/30/2020	4th and Woodland	Illegal burn large transient camp

PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1: CAVE installing native plants North 1 Mile



Figure 2: Comanche Creek cement removal



Figure 3: PALS removing invasive ivy



Figure 4: Bench at Sycamore Field

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DATE: 12/14/20
TO: Bidwell Park and Playground Commission (BPPC)
FROM: Richie Bamlet, Urban Forest Manager
SUBJECT: Street Trees Division Report

NARRATIVE

1. Updates

- a. Tree pruning of the DCBA is making good progress
- b. Community outreach continues to promote neighborhood tree planting

2. Planning/Monitoring

- a. Damage Reports – There were five damage reports in November. Claims related to branch drop onto property.

3. Planning and Building Development

- a. UFM reviewed many plan reviews in the Trakit permitting system. Comments included Tree Protection Zone enforcement, submission of adequate tree protection plans, inadequate mitigation plans, species choices.
- b. Public Works Operations and Maintenance is assisting with a joint initiative with Public Works Engineering and Cal-trans for construction of the SR99/Eaton road roundabout. Road geometry and Caltrans clear recovery zones dictate which trees can remain and which require removal. Forty-two trees of various species including Coast redwoods, Deodars, Valley oaks, pines, ash and walnuts are scheduled for removal in January. See Exhibit 1

4. Miscellaneous

- a. Ongoing discussions continue to formulate a partnership with Butte County Local Food Network (BCLFN) for fruit harvesting and distribution from city-owned trees. This project will be presented at a future BPPC meeting.
- b. Davey Resource Group tree inventory is nearing completion. Middle park in Bidwell is scheduled for inventory and final Quality assurances checks are being made.
- c. A 3-year Emergency Response Contract was awarded to M&S Wesley.

5. Maintenance

- a. City tree crews continued tree maintenance operations in the Downtown Core Business Area (DCBA). Trees are being trimmed to improve sidewalk, road and building clearance as well as to correct structural defects.
- b. City contractor West Coast Arborists (WCA) continued work on removal of dead and dying trees in

various parts of the City. Locations that will make suitable replant locations and that will be irrigated are being stump ground in preparation of replanting in spring 2021.

c. The remaining Catalpa trees surrounding the open area at the Chico Nature Center were removed. Trees were hauled off site or broadcast utilizing the new Vermeer chipper/winch.

d. The access route behind Picholine way was cleared of dead trees and underbrush.

5. Outreach, Training and Education

a. UFM was re-certified as a Tree Risk Assessor (TRAQ). Landscape Supervisor and UFM attended Model Water Efficient Landscape ordinance (MWELo) training. UFM attended the national virtual Partners in Community Forestry conference

b. Senior Maintenance Worker passed the written portion of the ISA Tree Worker credential. The candidate will attend a field exam when one is next scheduled.

c. Tree Division hosted an ISA aerial lift workshop. Staff from various divisions in Public Works were in attendance.

d. Butte Environmental Council continued media outreach to promote the upcoming fall neighborhood community canopy campaign. Over thirty volunteers were enlisted for a neighborhood tree planting initiative. UFM provided tree planting training 12/5. Thirty new street trees were planted adjacent to resident homes 12/12

e. Tree Division continued its collaboration with Chico Tree Advocates and local Realtors in November. New trees were planted to celebrate purchase of homes. .

6. Street Tree Supervisor Report

The Street Tree Supervisors monthly summary data tables for November is included below:

MONTHLY SUMMARY TABLES

Table 1






Category	Staff Hours	% of Total	% Change from Last Month	Trend
Tree Crew Hours				
1. Safety	103	13.9%	119.8%	
2. Tree Work	277	37.3%	46.2%	
3. Special Projects	336	45.3%	208.7%	
4. Admin Time/Other	26	3.5%	32.5%	
Monthly Totals	742	100.0%	80.0%	

Table 2

Item	Values	% Change from Last Month	Trend
5. Productivity			
Calls			
Call Outs	48	76.2%	.....
Service Requests: Submitted	0	-	.....
Service Requests: Completed	61	70.1%	.....
Sub Total	0	-	-----
Trees			
Planted: Trees	0	-	.....
Pruned	194	218.0%	.....
Removed: Trees (smaller)	0	-	.....
Removed: Stumps	0	-	.....
Removed: Trees	6	150.0%	.....
Sub Total	200	215.1%	-----
Tree Permits (#)			
Submitted	8	-	.. ..
Approved	7	-	.. ..
Denied	0	-	.. ..
Total	15	-	-----
6. Contracts			
Expenditures (\$)	\$ 10,300	-	.. ..
Trees (#)			
Planted	0	-	.....
Pruned	0	-	.....
Removed: Trees (smaller)	0	-	.....
Removed: Stumps	13	-	.....
Removed: Trees	0	-	.....
Routine Maintenance	0	-	.....
Total	13	-	-----

7. Upcoming Issues/Miscellaneous:

- a. CSU intern Urban Forest Coordinators will continue to promote tree planting campaigns and associated community outreach for urban forest community planting events to be scheduled spring 2021.
- b. A 3-year back-up to the main tree maintenance contract continues to be finalized.
- c. RFP for Urban Forest Master Plan and Community Canopy analysis is being developed for deployment in early 2021.

PHOTOGRAPHS

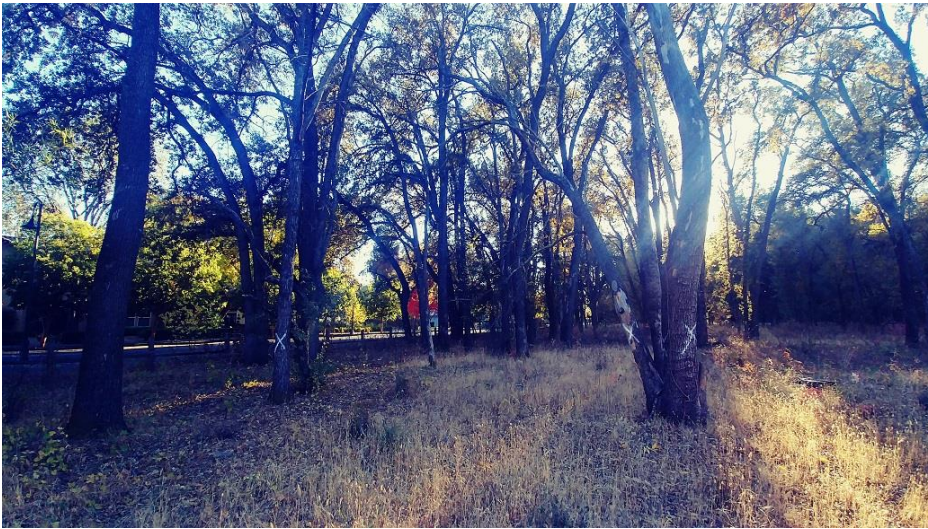


Figure 1. Catalpa trees marked for removal. Chico Nature Center.



Figure 2. Tree Division Crew broadcasting chip over the site at Chico Nature Center 12/8/20



Figure 3. Tree work on access route behind Picholine



Figure 4 Chico Tree Advocates and new homeowner with newly planted Citrus tree
Figure 5. Community tree planting training day. 12/5/20