



DATE: 01/16/13  
TO: Bidwell Park and Playground Commission members  
FROM: Dan Efseaff, Park and Natural Resource Manager  
SUBJECT: 2012 Annual Park Division Report

## 2012 ANNUAL PARK DIVISION REPORT

### 1. 2012 Overview

*"National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst."* Wallace Stegner, 1983.

In 1905, Annie Bidwell, on behalf of herself and her late husband, John Bidwell, gifted 1,903 acres to the City of Chico, "as a token of their love and affection and that the grand work of God may be preserved to his glory and the happiness and pleasure of the people of said City for all time (from the deed)."

Unlike State and National Parks, this was a gift from private individuals to their community. Unlike other developed city parks from that era, the deed required the "preservation and protection of the waters of Chico Creek" and to "sacredly guard" the trees, shrubs, and vines of the Park. These conservation concepts are certainly fitting of a couple that was close friends with John Muir, and a unique, extraordinarily generous gift for the early 1900's. Although a city park, Bidwell Park certainly fits in the "best idea" tradition, and continues to have a profound influence on the City and region.

Park visitors have long felt that Bidwell Park is their personal treasure. On February 22, 2013, the California Parks and Recreation Society (CPRS), District 2 will recognize Bidwell Park as a Regional Treasure. District 2 covers 19 California counties.

Bidwell Park seems well matched with the criteria for the award; Regional Treasures have great historical significance and tremendous multi-generational impact on the quality of life in the region. They contribute to the economic vitality of the region. On all counts, Bidwell Park is worthy of recognition. Another aspect of the award is to recognize significant organizations, partnerships, and individuals that support Park programs or facilities. We are lucky to have a community that feels passionate about the Park and contributes to a variety of recreational opportunities and volunteers time for its care.

The affinity that the community holds for Bidwell Park runs extremely deep and resides in our community's DNA. The City logo shows a depiction of the Hooker Oak-- one of the famous historical landmarks in the Park. Generations of people (and their kids) from the Northern Sacramento Valley have swam in the Park's cool waters, biked beneath majestic valley oaks, watched the antics of acorn woodpeckers, and frolicked at Caper Acres. And long before that, this landscape sustained the native Mechoopda people, as evidenced by tools, shelter caves, and acorn grinding holes found in the park.

The Park inspires artists and everyone else. Many people choose to live in the area because of the Park. It is safe to say that as long as there is a Chico, there will be a Bidwell Park.

Yet amidst this celebration of the Park and vision of the Bidwells, we also need to acknowledge the needs of the Park and to "sacredly guard" it. We call upon those that have helped the Park in the past, and we must also call upon everyone that steps into the Park to be good stewards: to pick up waste, to stay on trails, to tread lightly when it is wet, to leave the flowers for the bees, to keep the dog on a leash, to be courteous to others, to volunteer, to donate, to educate others, to build a culture that the Park is a delicate treasure. Ironically, few people realize that to "keep the Park the same" in the face of rising numbers of visitors, requires a lot of active management (for trails, vegetation, and infrastructure). We need to confront the fact that the attention given to the Park and other properties is inadequate and we need to either creatively increase the care needed, or face the real possibility of a Park in diminished health and closed or decommissioned facilities.

In the past year, we've continued the upkeep of the Park and have started a number of initiatives that lays the foundation to tackle problems in a comprehensive way. For example, we have been developing some basic information regarding infrastructure, trails, vegetation, and visitorship that will help us develop priorities.

We anticipate that many of these efforts (such as the Trails and Natural Resource Management Plan) will come to fruition in the next year or two. In 2013-2014, Parks staff intends to:

1. Complete draft Trails and Natural Resource Management Plans.
2. Accept reservations and permits on-line.
3. Initiate an ADA trail at Horseshoe Lake (and complete the first phase of the Middle Trail Grant).
4. Present a needs-assessment for Caper Acres and seek funding for urgent repairs.
5. Complete a draft inventory of infrastructure (and ADA needs) that will put into focus our aging infrastructure, engineered for a different time.
6. Bring attention to other City-owned properties (Bidwell Ranch, Lindo Channel, and Comanche Creek) with management needs.
7. Support progress on the work plan for the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission (BPPC).

As these plans and priorities come into focus, we call for help. We have all been given so much from our beautiful open spaces, we ask you to give something back. Celebration and stewardship need to go hand in hand. Enjoy the park, yes, but also give something back through your volunteerism, donation, or educating other visitors.

The Parks Division is pleased to share this annual report to the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission and the public. In the following pages, we will highlight our accomplishments, but also trace out a framework from which we need to address fundamental issues in the park. Expect us to continue to "sacredly guard" the Park, but also expect us to ask for help and donations to take care of it. We will continue to build partnerships every day. We look forward to working with the community toward solutions in 2013!

## **2. Division Description**

The City of Chico's Parks, Open Spaces, Greenways, and Preserves Division (Park Division) is under the General Services Department. The Division's major responsibilities include maintaining and operating City Parks, open space, and recreational areas, including Bidwell Park (one of the largest municipally owned parks in the United States), Children's Playground, City Plaza, Lindo Channel, Little Chico Creek greenway, 1<sup>st</sup> and Verbena, Bidwell Ranch, Teichert Ponds, and other preserves. The City Street Trees Program, also under the Park Division, (Denice Britton supplied an annual report on that program), cares for and manages approximately 37,000 trees (urban forest) and many of the maintenance districts and public landscape areas within Chico. The City's Park Rangers, Park Maintenance Crew, and Park Services Coordinator all work within the Park Division.

We often hear that it is the quality of life that draws visitors and residents to Chico. This Division is proud to maintain assets that are integral to the livability of Chico. In addition, the Division is not immune to the impacts of a growing community that expects and deserves high quality service in a fair and economical fashion. The Division has grown over the years, both in size and complexity. Recently, the diminished budget has put a strain on our ability to keep up with these demands.

The Parks Division is organized into the following programs:

- Administrative and Visitor Services
- Maintenance and Infrastructure
- Natural Resource Management (planning, monitoring, trails, and vegetation management).
- Outreach and Education
- Ranger and Lifeguard
- Volunteer and Donations

The categories above represent both organizational structure (where employees work, the first four items) and also functional priorities (the last two, outreach and natural resource duties) that are shared duties of all employees. Readers will note that employees in the maintenance, ranger, and volunteer programs work in a more integrative fashion, completing tasks that meet a larger goal. For example, to meet vegetation management goals on a particular project we may utilize volunteers to help remove plants and provide visitor information during a prescribed burn, maintenance crew to oversee fuels thinning and complete a planting, and Rangers to coordinate a prescribed burn.

**Table 1. Comparative Statistics for the City of Chico and State and National Numbers Regarding Parks.**

Factor	Amount	Source
Chico Area	33.2 square miles 21,248 Acres	Chico GIS Department
Chico Population		US Census 2010; California Department of Finance 2011 Data
– City	86,187	
– Urban Area	107,000	
Ranking – City Size California	84 <sup>th</sup> largest 14 <sup>th</sup> Largest Metropolitan Area	California Department of Finance, Table of January 2012 City Population Ranked by Size, Numeric and Percent Change; 2010 US Census.
Bidwell Park		
– Area	3,670 acres,	City of Chico; The Trust for Public Land, 2012 City Park Facts
– Ranking Municipal Parks	3rd in California and 14th in the US.	
Park, Recreation, and Open Space Area managed by Park Division	5,053 acres	City of Chico GIS Department Inventory, 2012
Percentage of Parkland of Total City Area		The Trust for Public Land, 2012 City Park Facts; City of Chico.
– Median US Cities <sup>a</sup>	7.9 %	
–Chico <sup>b</sup>	>24 %	
Area of Parkland per 1,000 Residents		The Trust for Public Land, 2012 City Park Facts; City of Chico.
–Median US Cities <sup>a</sup>	13.1 Acres	
–Chico <sup>b</sup>	59 Acres	

<sup>a</sup> Estimate includes city, county, metro, state, and federal acres within the city limits.

<sup>b</sup> Estimates include City of Chico Park Division managed property only.

### 3. Resources

Most of the Operating Budget (Table 2) for the Park Division is derived from the General Fund (\$42,853,372 for FY 2011-2012), with key supplemental funding from grants and donations. The Parks/Open Spaces (682) budget supports staff time, contracts, maintenance and repair not only for Bidwell Park, but for greenways (Lindo Channel, Little Chico Creek, and Comanche Creek), Depot Park, City Plaza, Children’s Playground, Teichert Ponds, and Preserves.

**Table 2. Staff and Budget Summary**

Park Division	FY 1988-1989	FY 2007-2008	FY 2010-2011	FY 2011-2012	FY 2012-2013
Operating Budget	\$594,148	\$1,799,037	\$1,927,755	\$1,876,903	\$1,799,000
Staff <sup>a</sup>					
Park Division	14	13.5+	13	12	12
Street Trees	2	11	9	8	6
Area Managed (Acres)	< 2,500	5,053	5,053	5,053	5,053

<sup>a</sup> The Street Tree program was considered part of the Park Division in 1988. The lifeguard program is not part of this estimate but in 2010-11 and 2011-12 amounted to 3.75 FTE. Adjusted for inflation, the budget for FY 1988-1989 is \$1,153,109.

Interestingly, the 1989 Bidwell Park Master Management Plan projected that 31 employees would be needed by 1992-2000 based on estimated population growth. Our population growth has exceeded expectations at nearly 40%, and the acreage managed by the Park Division has doubled. The Park Division has fewer employees than in 1988.

Park funds are complemented by donations and volunteer support. Lessees also take care of certain park facilities. Donations provide critical support for interns, habitat restoration work and materials, invasive plant removal, and benches. In calendar year 2012, citizens provided over \$8,695 in park donations, including \$1,400 devoted to Caper Acres and in-kind donations valued at \$42,000. Monetary and In-kind donations are invaluable to helping take care of Bidwell Park and the City of Chico’s parks, open spaces and greenways (see Table 13 in Volunteer and Donations Section below).

#### 4. Bidwell Park and Playground Commission 2012 – 2013 Work Plan

Staff provided a detailed work plan update at the December 2012 BPPC meeting. Currently, many items on the work plan are in progress. An update on this progress will be reported before the end of the next fiscal year.

**Table 3. Current Status of 2012-2013 Work Plan**

Goal/Subgoal	Status	Comments
1. Develop and implement a priority list of projects and programs based on the Bidwell Park Master Management Plan (BPMMP) that will include adaptive management strategies. Specific projects include:	In-Progress	
a) Develop a Trail Plan for the Park	In-Progress	The initial stages of developing the Park's trail plan are underway with input from the Natural Resources Committee meetings on 01/12/12; 03/08/12; and 09/13/12.
b) Update the Trails Manual	In-Progress	The Trail Manual has not been started and is contingent on finalizing the Trail Plan.
c) Update of the Natural Resources Management Plan (includes vegetation management plan, management units, and an adaptive management framework)	In-Progress	The initial stages of developing the Park's Resource Management Plan are underway with input from the Natural Resources Committee meetings on 01/12/12; 03/08/12; and 09/13/12.
2. Finalize the Wet Weather Plan	In-Progress	Staff will provide an analysis and update of the Wet Weather Plan in December 2012.
3. Continue development of the Park Division's Volunteer Program	In-Progress	
a) More fully integrate into other Park programs.	In-Progress	Park staff meet regularly and volunteers are assigned tasks that help support Park vegetation, trail and infrastructure needs.
b) Develop a team leadership program to train volunteer session leaders.	Completed and on-going	Park staff conducted the 1 <sup>st</sup> training (2 sessions each during Spring 2012) for Bidwell Park Crew Leaders. These volunteers have led volunteer sessions and helped with annual work days.
c) Develop a Trail Volunteer Program (including training component)	Completed and on-going	Park staff conducted the 1 <sup>st</sup> training (2 sessions each during Spring 2012) for Bidwell Park Crew Leaders.
4. Begin development of an Urban Forest Management Plan	In-Progress	
a) Establish goals that will be the foundation for an urban forest management plan that is consistent with both the new General Plan and the BPMMP.	In-Progress	Draft completed.
b) Review landscaping policies with the goal of enhancing the appearance of the City's public properties and parks while alleviating the overall cost of maintenance.	Completed with the UFMP	
c) Provide for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the urban forest, including both street trees and Bidwell park trees.	On-going	
5. Assess needs and prioritize renovation projects for Caper Acres (developing funds and renovation plans for improved infrastructure and new play equipment).	In-Progress	Park staff has met with a consultant to review ideas and needs for renovating Caper Acres. Staff will also meet with potential stakeholders and will layout the components of a Capital Campaign for fundraising in the Spring of 2012.
6. Continue trail work priorities (Middle Trail work, Monkey Face, and Peregrine Point Trail connections).	In-Progress	The rehabilitation of the Middle Trail (Phase I, funded by the Recreational Trail grant) will be finished in 12/2012. Monkey Face Trail restoration has been vetted through Natural Resource Committee meetings and work has begun. The Peregrine Point Trail connections has not been started yet.
a. 7. Develop management plan concepts for		
a) Greenways (including Lindo Channel)	Not Started	
b) Lost Park	In-Progress	Work continues on the ground to address vegetation and

Goal/Subgoal	Status	Comments
		homeless issues.
c) Bidwell Ranch	In-Progress	Staff anticipates bringing information to Council in 2013 on the disposition of the property as a mitigation bank.
d) Comanche Creek.	In-Progress	The BPPC accepted (1/30/12) the Comanche Creek Greenway Management Plan, Comanche Creek Greenway Improvement Project, and Mitigated Negative Declaration.

## 5. Administrative and Visitor Services

### a. Program Description

Administrative functions of the Parks Division include reservations, permits, support and analysis for Bidwell Park and Playground Commission meetings, development and management of budgets, vendor payments and contracts, and customer and visitor services. All Park Division staff (especially the Park and Natural Resource Manager and the Park Services Coordinator) carry out some duties in this area, and shared administrative staff from the General Service Department (GSD) and other parts of the City support this function as well. Our efforts in customer and visitor services are an important part of providing citizens with a good experience in the park and community.

### b. 2012 Highlights

i. Customer service remains a priority. Citizens are often surprised to find that when they phone GSD, their calls are often answered right away by a staff member. Our front desk staff is courteous and often has answers to a wide variety of questions that span all of GSD.

ii. Service Requests - Park Staff received approximately 86 service requests in 2012. The majority of requests were related to fallen trees, graffiti and general vandalism to park signs and infrastructure.

iii. BPPC Support - Staff continued efforts to provide BPPC agendas and information packets in a timely fashion with the entire packet going out 5-6 days before the meeting (the legal requirement is that the agenda must be posted 72 hours before the meeting).

- Staff continued the efforts to streamline reports and make BPPC practices more consistent with the City Council procedures.
- Emails and letters directed to the BPPC are forwarded within 24-48 hours of receipt to commissioners, rather than waiting for the agenda packets. Communication from citizens on particular agenda items received prior to noon on the Friday before a meeting, are provided as part of supplemental packets.

iv. Economic Contribution - The Park Division processed \$524,146 in payments to over 118 vendors that provided professional services, materials, and supplies for the management of the Park. Approximately, 60% of the vendors are local suppliers. However, the economic benefit is small relative to the contribution to quality of life and local economic well being that Parks provide in enhanced real estate values, sporting equipment sales, event sales, health benefits, and venues for supporting non-profits.

v. Research Tracking – Staff continues to implement a more formal system for handling research or data collection requests in the Park. When fully implemented, we request copies of any data collected or publications, issue identification badges, and track the nature of research and number of projects.

vi. Park Leases – Attached are annual reports from park lessees.

vii. New contracts – A contract has been signed with Active Network, an online reservation system provider, and will be utilized for both public and private park use permits. This system will help customers to identify the location, content, availability and cost of reservations and to make a reservation from any computer at any time using the Internet. Staff is in the process of updating the fee schedule and anticipates going live with the system in the spring of 2013.

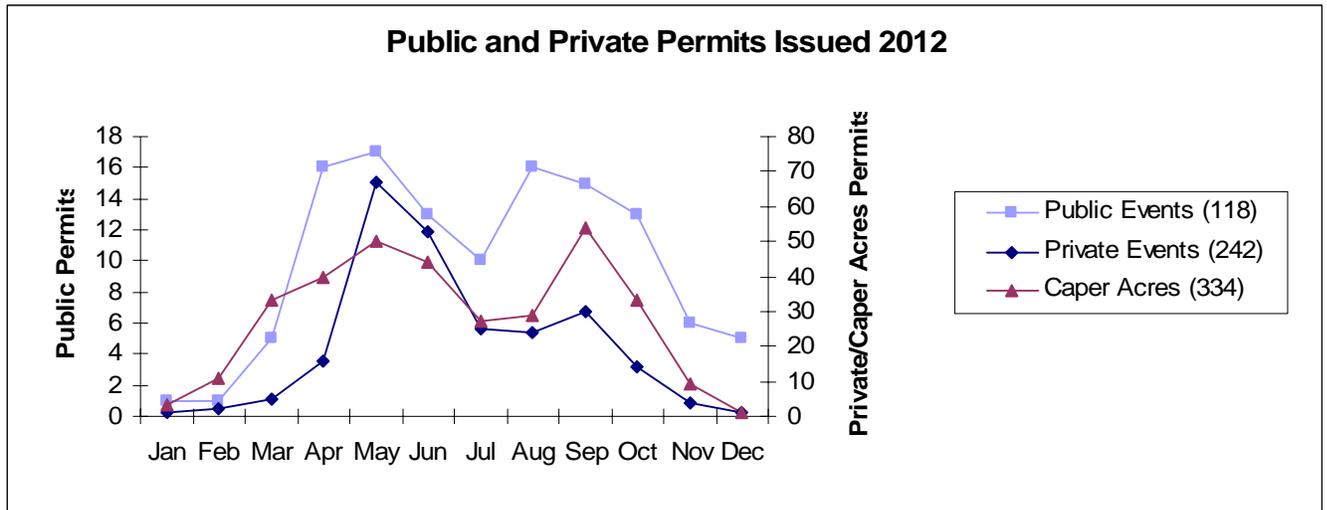
viii. Park Permits - City of Chico parks provide many ideal venues for family picnics and community events, offering a safe, picturesque environment for thousands of people annually. Some salient features include:

1. Staff tracked the number of permits and participants for both public and private events, including Caper Acres (Figures 1 and 2). Staff issued a total of 360 permits (118 public and 242 private events) and made 334

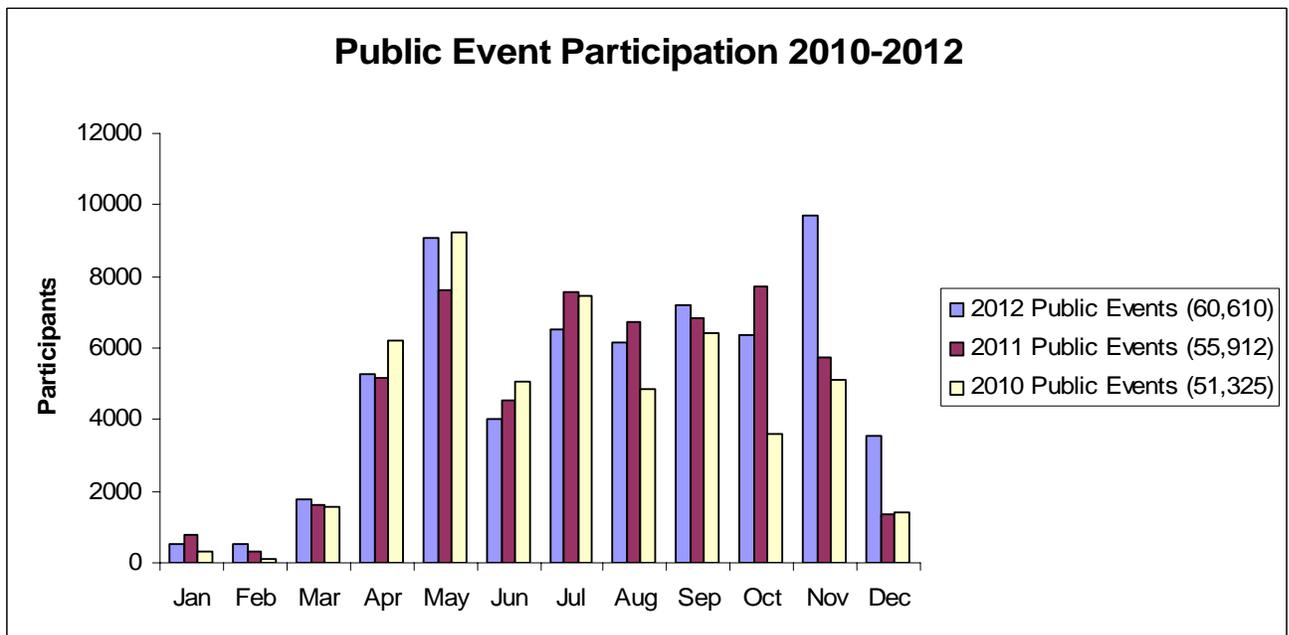
reservations at Caper Acres. Although private permits issued were down in 2012 (242 vs. 351), public event participation rose steadily over the past 3 years (Figure 2). Staff attributes the rise in public event participation to increased participation in existing events and the addition of new ones (including the Gnarly Neon 5k, Hmong Cultural Event, and the Great Debate).

2. Total revenue for private permits was down in comparison to 2011 (\$47,606). The transfer of one of the most popular reservation areas (Wildwood Park) to CARD in July 2011 may have had the most significant impact.
3. The total number of participants at public events (81,472) is based on estimates submitted by applicants. Due to the open nature of our parks and the fact that many of these events do not require admission, participant estimates for 2012 is a very conservative number that probably underestimates actual participation. The estimates do not include spectators, which could increase the numbers significantly.
4. Rangers provide coordination during these events including pre-event conversations, on-site assistance and monitoring. They also complete a post-event evaluation of public events, which helps in the planning of future events of similar character. In the past, a Park Attendant would complete many of these tasks. Funding for that position has been cut.

**Figure 1. Monthly Total of Park Permits Issued (2012)**



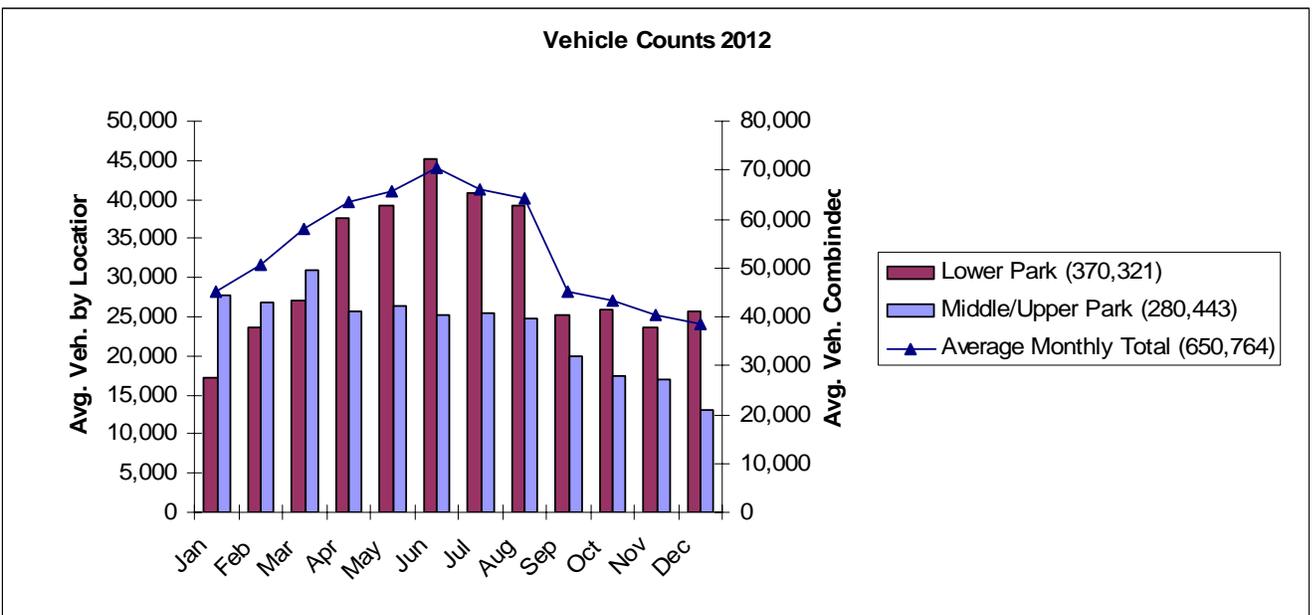
**Figure 2. Monthly Total of Public Event Participation (2010-2012)**



ix. Bidwell Park Traffic Counts – During the 2012 calendar year, staff installed portable traffic counters at locations in both Lower and Middle Park: N One Mile parking lot; (2) S One Mile; Cedar Grove; and Wildwood Way near the double gate entrance. The counters were installed for 1 week each month and tracked vehicles accessing the park as well as speed statistics. The estimates should be viewed as minimum estimates, because on several occasions, the traffic counters were tampered with, or failed to collect data. Still, the information provides some useful insights.

1. Lower Park vehicle counts tend to be higher than Middle/Upper Park year round.
2. Increased traffic on Wildwood Way in January-March in 2012 in comparison to 2011 may be attributed to warmer than average weather conditions.
3. To estimate a monthly average, we averaged the daily counts and multiplied by the number of days for each month (Figure 3). Summing up the monthly totals produces a vehicle traffic count exceeding 650,000 vehicles annually.
4. The average vehicle speed on South Park Drive at One Mile was 18 mph (speed limit: 20 mph); compared to an average vehicle speed of 32 mph on Upper Park Road near the double gate entrance (speed limit: 25 mph).

**Figure 3. Monthly Estimated Vehicle Counts (2012).**



x. Visitation – The traffic counts and event estimates above provide ones means of quantifying visitors. Accurate visitation data allows us to create adequate staffing plans for peak times, budget allocation, emergency planning, and provides a clearer picture to granting agencies. Use estimates are reported in “visits.” One person entering the park represents one visit.

Although the Bidwell Park Master Management Plan (EDAW 2008) included visitor surveys, routine estimates of Bidwell Park usage did not occur until last year, in which staff estimated visits at just over 1.1 million using extremely conservative estimates. We anticipate that over the next few years, we will continue to develop methods to improve the certainty of visitation estimates and hope to derive a formula for using traffic counts to arrive at a surrogate for the number of visitors to the park that arrive via other means.

This past year, staff expanded use of the portable traffic counters to Lower Park, conducted a person-per-vehicle tally, collected information on park event participation and tracked pool usage during the swim season. We will collect vehicle counts at additional locations this next year, including south Five Mile and install permanent counters. Additionally, we intend to refine the person-per-vehicle estimates, as well develop methods to determine use not already tracked by other means.

We used conservative estimates. Although, we have good quality data on vehicle counts, converting vehicles to visitors introduces uncertainty. Based on observations (an intern conducting person counts per vehicle), we

estimated a person-per-vehicle average (PPV) of 1.5 persons-per-vehicle for Bidwell Park, excluding the Peregrine Point Trailhead (PPV 2.3). Using this formula we arrive at:

$$\text{Annual vehicle count} \times \text{person-per-vehicle average (PPV)} = \text{Estimated annual visits (auto)}$$

$$650,764 \text{ vehicles} \times 1.5 \text{ PPV} = 976,146 \text{ visits}$$

The measurements did not include users who accessed the Park as a pedestrian, via bike or through an area not tracked by the portable vehicle counters. In contrast, Lassen National Volcanic Park uses a multiplier of 3 PPV and estimated 351,269 (2011) visitors.

Even in the absence of good data, a crude estimate at least provides a starting point that we can continue to refine over time (we are even looking at other measures-the potential of toilet paper use (over 15,000 rolls) as a potential metric for park use). We caution that these estimates should be considered very preliminary and "best guess estimates" or "order of magnitude" estimates until more definitive numbers can be developed.

Last year's estimate was at least 1.1 million visits to Bidwell Park. With these caveats in mind, we estimate the number of visits to Bidwell Park annually to exceed 1.9 million visits (Table 5).

**Table 4. Bidwell Park Visitation Estimates (Note order of magnitude estimates for some values).**

Location / Point of Entry (Transportation)		Estimated Daily Visits April-Sept.	Estimated Daily Visits Oct.-March	Estimated Annual Visits by Location	Quality of Data
<b>Lower Park</b>					
One Mile (auto)	a	1432	896	425,128	Good
One Mile (non-auto)	b	1,450	900	429,150	Very Poor
One Mile (event participation average)	c	51	72	22,437	Good
Lower Park Other (auto)	a	433	285	131,109	Good
Lower Park Other (non-auto)	d	900	600	273,900	Very Poor
Estimated Subtotal		4,266	2,753	1,281,724	
<b>Middle/Upper Park</b>					
Upper Park Road (Auto)	a	1209	1096	420,719	Good
Hooker Oak and S Five Mile (all)	g	300	150	82,200	Very Poor
Middle/Upper Park (non-Auto)	f	350	300	118,650	Very Poor
Highway 32/Peregrine Point (Auto)	e	250	150	73,050	Poor
Estimated Subtotal		2,109	1,696	694,619	
<b>Estimated Total Daily Visits</b>		<b>6,375</b>	<b>4,449</b>		
<b>Estimated Total Annual Visits</b>	h	<b>1,166,625</b>	<b>809,718</b>	<b>1,976,343</b>	

**Notes:**

- a) Based on average daily vehicle count (measured one week each month) and multiplied by an estimated 1.5 visitors/vehicle (observation average).
- b) View estimates with caution. Based on a "best guess" approach assuming that the ratio between visitors that arrive by car and by other means is 1:1 (rounded to the nearest 50). We believe that actual surveys will reveal that the number of people accessing this area by foot or bike to be much greater.
- c) Based on applicant reported numbers for events at One Mile (does not count means of accessing the Park) and calculated as a daily average.
- d) View estimates with caution. Based on a "best guess" approach assuming that the ratio between visitors that arrive by car and by other means is 1:2 (rounded to the nearest 50). We believe that actual surveys will reveal that the number of people accessing this area by foot or bike to be greater as most people even with cars will park outside the park and access the area via numerous pedestrian access points.
- e) Assume 7.2 cars/hour (average from Peregrine Point ranger log) multiplied by 2.3 visitors/vehicle (observation average) and 12 hours/day (Apr-Sept) and 8 hours (Oct - Mar); plus 50 visitors/day (peak) and 5 (non-peak) accessing the Park from other Hwy 32 access locations. Rounded up to the nearest 50.
- f) Estimate an attempt to capture visitors that access the park not by car ( and not accessing from other areas of the park). This may include bikers, hikers, and equestrians. Assumes a Upper Park Road car to pedestrian ratio of 1:1/4 year round. Rounded up to the nearest 50.
- g) Not measured. Estimate.

h) Estimated annual visits is based on 365 days; April-Sept =183 days and Oct-March=182 days.

## 6. Planning and Monitoring

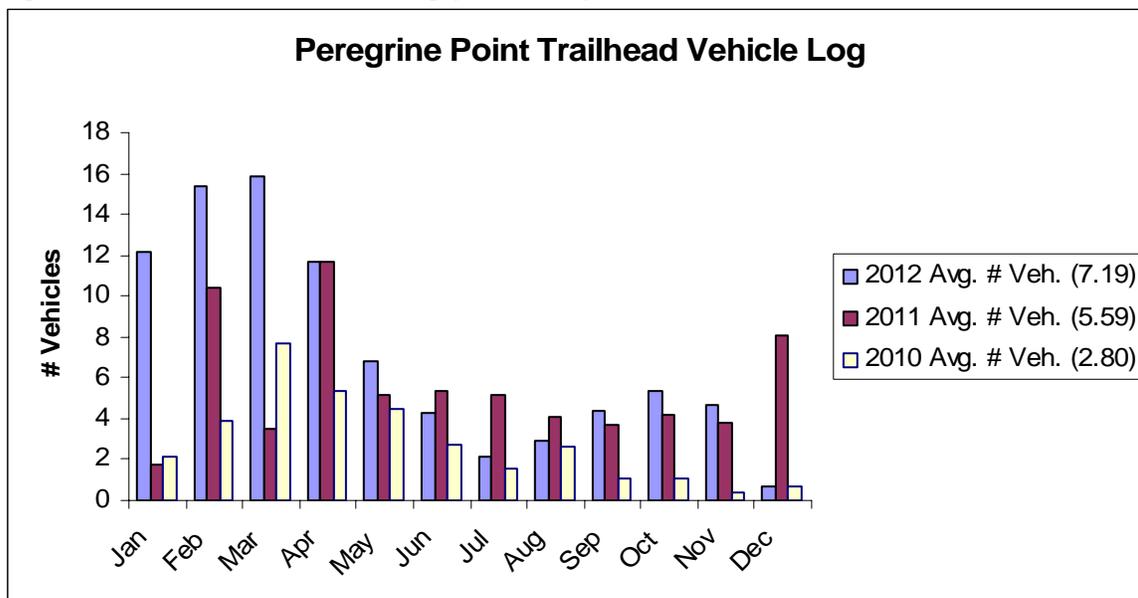
### a. Program Description

Many of the tasks associated with Planning and Monitoring are conducted by the Park and Natural Resource Manager with support from all other programs and even other departments and outside entities.

### b. 2012 Highlights

- i. Peregrine Point Monitoring Report – Staff issued the first annual monitoring report for the disc golf course in July 2012. The report provides documentation of first year data and makes recommendations as part of an adaptive management framework. Rangers have been monitoring visitation at the Peregrine Point Disc Golf Course since 2009. During patrol of the area, rangers document number of vehicles, course condition, weather conditions and misc. observations. The average number of vehicles per observation has steadily increased over the past 3 years (Figure 9). Average vehicle counts during closed days decreased from 2.73 to 1.03 from 2011 to 2012, suggesting better compliance with the closure policy.

Figure 9. Peregrine Point Trailhead Vehicle Log (2010-2012).



- ii. Trails Plan – Working with the Natural Resource Committee and the public, staff produced an initial inventory map of trails and estimate of trail totals (Table 6). In 2013-2014, we will identify priorities and develop a draft of the Trails Plan.

Table 5. Summary of Bidwell Park Trail Estimates based on Trails Inventory.

Area	Paved Roads (mi)	Unpaved Roads (mi)	Bike Paths (mi)	Designated Trails (mi)	Undesignated Trails (mi)	Total (mi)
Upper	1.6	5.92	-	34.74	10.55	52.8
Middle	2.6	0.54	1.84	10.35	12.2	27.5
Lower	5.67	0.15	3.43	6.45	7.39	23.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.89</b>	<b>6.61</b>	<b>5.27</b>	<b>51.54</b>	<b>30.14</b>	<b>103.4</b>

Notes: Based on 2009 Aerial Photography and with 2011 and 2012 Field Reconnaissance. Data are preliminary and will be refined with further analysis and verification (especially with undesignated trails in Upper Park).

- iii. Natural Resources Plan – This plan is also part of the Natural Resource Committee process. The most significant milestone on this task has been the development of Management Units in the Park. Breaking down the Park into Management Units will help communicate goals and track progress for the various areas of Bidwell Park. The units will aid with the description of threats, issues, and remedies, and also provide a more effective description of areas to park crew, volunteers and emergency responders. With a plant

inventory completed, we anticipate that the draft Natural Resource Management Plan will also be completed in 2013-2014.

- iv. Caper Acres – Staff is working on developing an estimate for the cost to develop an overall master plan for this beloved facility. The process will encourage public input. When complete, the plan will layout options and costs for improvements, which will allow for fundraising and capital campaigns.

## **7. Maintenance and Infrastructure**

### **a. Program Description**

Park maintenance staff is responsible for the care and maintenance of Bidwell Park and other assigned parks, viewsheds and green ways. The balance of city owned parks and greenways are contracted out to landscape contractors, examples would be City Plaza, Children's Playground or Humboldt Park.

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

To provide a sense of the scope, the Parks staff duties in Bidwell Park alone include:

- 6 reservation areas,
- 36 individual picnic sites,
- 7 park buildings that house 25 restrooms stalls
- 8 porta pottie locations,
- 3 shower facilities,
- Numerous lighting systems,
- 21.5 acres of irrigated lawn that is mowed and trimmed each week in the summer and leafed each week during the fall, and of course
- Over 10 miles of road ways and bike paths,
- Along with the seasonal cleaning and maintenance of Sycamore pool that runs on a weekly cleaning routine from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

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

In the past couple of years, wildland and land management tasks have been incorporated into daily and seasonal tasks. Park staff maintains the natural beauty from Lost Park to the end of Ten Mile House road. This work ranges from pruning trees, applying herbicide, mowing road and trail edges, developing and planting native rehabilitation sites, prescribed burns, invasive plant removal, trail maintenance, and wildland restoration.

### **b. 2012 Highlights**

2012 has been an interesting and exciting year with the positive push to tackle some of the major use and infrastructure ageing issues that face Bidwell Park. While resources are limited, Staff carefully planned projects to get the best results that could be had with the resources available. For example, staff realigned the Observatory parking lot to make more efficient use of space, to slow traffic, and to position vehicle lights to point away from the viewing platforms. The lot was resurfaced before the new fencing went up and native plants were started around the outdoor amphitheater and in an area to screen the building from visitors on the North Rim Trail. Staff completed other more subtle projects, such as the removal of invasive trees and shrubs to open up the site line for pedestrians and vehicles changes on entrances off of Vallombrosa. Other notable tasks for the year include:

- i. Middle Trail Grant – Staff working with the California Conservation Corps continued their progress east from parking lot F or sections 5/6 up through section 3 these sections contain armored creek crossings, rolling dips with nicks, along with trail tread hardening and water shedding work on connecting trails both above and below the Middle Trail.

- ii. Departmental Support – Staff continues with the responsibilities of opening gates, wet weather trail assessments, support of the volunteer program and partnering with other departments in GSD to complete projects in and out of the park, such as Alamo Street clean up and illegal camp clean up through out the city.
- iii. Wildland Restoration and Management - Staff continues to learn new skills and techniques which they apply daily to this newer piece of our park maintenance regimen of removing invasive plants, controlled burn piles, herbicide application from lot E to Bear Hole, along with replanting sites at lot C, One Mile and Five Mile, drilling native grass seed at Hooker Oak and at lot one in middle park, and repairing creek banks from beaver damage at Centennial and Manzanita bike path.
- iv. Volunteer Support - Park staff supported Make a Difference day at One Mile with site preparation and pile removal. Staff regularly supports volunteer efforts with removal of invasive materials in Bidwell Park, Verbena Fields and Hazel Street Park.
- v. Daily Maintenance - Staffs approach to daily maintenance is to revisit the basics regularly so that we may deliver the best service possible period. Staff plans and evaluates each project for the best methods and materials to use for a quality job, the end result whether it's cleaning a restroom or replacing a fixture is something we all can be proud of. A detailed listing of tasks is attached as an appendix titled Park Maintenance Hours 2012.
- vi. Homeless Impacts and Vandalism – Staff have observed an increase in homeless issues impacting the Park. For example, encampments have been observed in all areas of the Park. Some facilities require additional cleaning as use has increased. The cleanup of graffiti and vandalism also is a daily task.
- vii. Infrastructure Inventory – Late in 2012, Staff began an inventory of Park facilities. We are aware of no similar previous effort. The inventory will provide us a rationale basis on which to prioritize and estimate costs for future repairs and replacements. It will also provide us with an estimate of unfunded obligations and budget needs. There are many signs of the park of infrastructure's overdue maintenance (for example, the gravel portion of Upper Park Road, paved bike paths, and restrooms).
- viii. Night Inspection - Park staff participated in the first night time safety inspection which surprisingly generated fewer issues than expected. Staff focused on safety and security issues and ideas to improve them (adequate reflectors, lighting in areas, signs, observation of users and numbers, overgrown vegetation, etc.). Improvements to these areas will be made before the next peak season.

## 8. Natural Resource Management

### a. Program Description

Although we began listing this as a program area in 2012, natural resource tasks have long been an important part of Park Division work. Trails, invasive weed control, plantings, tree work, even managing behaviors in the park have an important effect on Park health, and all parts of the Park Division have responsibilities in this area. However, at this point its important to have this listed as a priority area because of its importance and the fact that we are better integrating the Division to work more complementary on efforts than previously. For example, the recent burns in the park represent efforts from administrative staff (planning and public notice), to rangers (safety and securing permits), to maintenance (site prep and oversight of crews), to volunteers (Park Watch provided information during the event), and even beyond to other City Divisions (Fire) and other entities (CDF). We include in this program area, Park Division efforts with project and park planning, projects, and monitoring.

### b. 2012 Highlights

- i. Wet weather – In December 2012, Staff presented an annual summary of data related to the wet weather policy and developed a Draft Adaptive Wet Weather Trail Management Plan. Revisions will be made to this document based on public, staff, and Policy Advisory Committee input and we anticipate that this document will return for BPPC consideration in 2013.
- ii. Prescribed Burn - The Park Division working closely with the Chico Fire Department, the California Conservation Corps, and CAL Fire conducted several operations to reduce fuels, and prep and conduct prescribed burns in Middle Park. Burns occurred on (6/7/12, 7/19/12, and the week of 11/5/12) in the following areas 1) north of Upper Park Road between Parking Areas B and C 2) a 3 acre area south of Upper Park Road between Parking Areas A and B, and 3) in a variety of areas south and west of Parking lot A. The burn objectives were to 1) control for medusahead (*Taeniatherum caput-medusae*) and yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), and to a lesser extent other annual grasses such as hare (or foxtail) barley (*Hordeum marinum*) and 2) favor native plants during the next growing season, and 3) reduce woody fuel loads.

- iii. Native Plantings: Staff and volunteers made good progress on removing invasive weeds, putting in native plants and updating and painting infrastructure of the park entrances and volunteer restoration areas.
- iv. CA Conservation Corps (CCC) Proposition 84 Grant – The Park Division received additional assistance from the CCC crew as the Chico satellite office received grant money to work on vegetation management and trail issues as part of a Proposition 84 grant. However, the state suspended the grant after the new fiscal year. The CCC's indicate that another funding source may be available for fuels reduction in 2013.

## 9. Outreach and Education

### a. Program Description

Community outreach and education is an important element of Park Division work to encourage appropriate use and appreciation of parks and resources. Although the Rangers typically take a key role in this function, the visible nature of our work means that all staff provides information to park users. With our focus on proactive enforcement of rules and protection of resources, it is important that our efforts in this area continue to improve:

### b. 2012 Highlights

The following is a summary of the notable activities:

1. The Bidwell Park Pulse continued quarterly publication, with positive feedback from citizens. The newsletter is predominately distributed electronically.
2. Staff continued quarterly *Park Talk* opportunities for the public.
3. The Parks Division initiated a Facebook page ([City of Chico—Parks Division](#)) and Twitter feed ([@ChicoParks](#)), as another way to connect with Park users. Trail closures, facility repairs, or park- related events will be updated.
4. Bidwell Park has been added to the California Watchable Wildlife project, which promotes wildlife viewing sites and educates the public about where and how to view native wildlife and habitats. Additional information can be found at [www.cawatchablewildlife.org](http://www.cawatchablewildlife.org).
5. Staff continued to develop a relationship with the Chico Creek Nature Center and plan to establish a satellite ranger office. Additionally, Park Watch volunteers continued to volunteer at the Nature Center acting as docents, giving visitors information and guidance about the park while staffing shifts at the Nature Center's Howard Tucker Hall.
6. Rangers, along with other City staff participated in the 911 Safety Pals show again this year. Seven performances, reaching 890 students occurred at various schools in the area. The show has been well received by the students, teachers, and parents.
7. This past year, the rangers were involved in numerous outreach efforts, including conducting a number of interpretive programs and staffing several information booths (e.g. Endangered Species Faire, Snow Goose Festival, Spring Safety Faire).
8. The Park Services Coordinator regularly conducts presentations about Bidwell Park and the Volunteer Program, some of those included: CA Native Plant Society, Mt. Lassen November Meeting; CSUC Parks and Recreation Community Involvement Class (2 classes); Butte College Connections Class; Butte College Habitat Restoration Class; and Sierra View and Parkview Elementary classes.
9. The Park Services Coordinator has provided on-going education and park information for school students through annual programs, such as Associated Students Community Action Volunteers in Education Adopt-A-Park Program (each semester); CSUC Upward Bound High School Summer Program (6 weeks); Chico High School Horticulture Class Native Plant Project (full school year) and the Adopt-A-Picnic Site program (through out the year).
10. The Parks Division hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual National Night Out event (08/07/12) at Sycamore Pool in the One Mile Recreation Area. The well-attended event drew over 200 people, plus members from support and sponsor groups like Target (with over a dozen employees), Park Watch, Kids and Creeks and the Blaze Radio station. Park staff, lifeguards and Park Watch volunteers provided information about park safety and organized fun activities for kids, including a dunk tank, watermelon eating contest and water balloon toss. Fire and ambulance personnel gave tours of emergency medical vehicles and helpful tips on emergency situations.
11. Rangers led a bike tour through Middle Park this past fall, focusing on history, natural resources and current management efforts. Additional themed tours will be coming up this year.
12. In 2012, rangers completed phase I of the "Park Minute", a radio campaign designed to educate the community about park issues, safety and natural and cultural resources in the park. The positive feedback from the public has generated a request (from the radio stations) for additional "minutes" which will record and air in 2013. Some of the new topics include vegetation management strategies, red flag closures, dark and

the park, park smart and young wildlife. Currently, there are 13 different "minutes" recorded and being aired in English with the possibility of adding recordings in Spanish in upcoming years.

13. Approximately 40 news releases were released in 2012, providing valuable information to the public on upcoming management efforts and volunteer opportunities as well as education on park resources.

## **10. Ranger and Lifeguard**

### **a. Program Description**

The mission of the Park Rangers is to protect, promote and enhance the natural and cultural resources of Bidwell Park, community and neighborhood parks, greenways and open space for present and future generations. We achieve this mission by providing education to the public, professional customer service, as well as consistent and fair enforcement of the law.

Park Rangers maintain and protect park resources and educate the community. Rangers patrol the City parks, playgrounds and greenways to enforce rules, laws and regulations; respond to emergencies; provide visitor assistance; report damage and safety concerns; assist with event coordination; address illegal encampment issues; develop outreach materials; conduct educational and interpretive programs; implement various monitoring programs; assist with the natural resource management program; as well as open/close park gates and facilities. The rangers maintain high visibility during their patrols to help deter crime and provide visitor assistance and work closely with Code Enforcement as well as the Police and Fire Departments. Two full-time and two permanent seasonal park rangers (0.75 FTE) were on staff this past year. The rangers have performed well, despite limited financial and staff resources, and pride themselves in responding professionally and promptly to their varied responsibilities.

The Park Ranger program also oversees the Park Watch volunteers, which began in 1995 and is similar to a neighborhood watch program. Park Watch members are ambassadors of the park; they provide visitors with information, foster a safe environment, and advise park staff about damage, hazards, vandalism, or other concerns. As avid park users, the volunteers incorporate patrol into their regular walking, biking, running, or horseback riding. In 2012, 15 new members were added to the program, bring the total membership to 126 who donated an estimated 8810 hours.

In addition, approximately 15 lifeguards (3.75 FTE) staff the Sycamore Pool from 11 am - 7 pm six days a week during the peak season. Lifeguards monitor pool and lawn activities, encourage safe behavior, perform rescues and provide first aid. The pool is much beloved and at any one time swimmers can exceed 100 with twice the number of lawn patrons. Rescues performed were about average this season, amounting to 7 total, less than the 12 performed last season. The lifeguards also apply first aid and provide treatment for bee stings, falls, abrasions and cuts. Due to the diligence of staff and good fortune there were no major injuries this year at the pool.

### **b. 2012 Highlights**

Community outreach and education played a larger role in Ranger duties than in the past. Intended to increase community interactions as well as foster stewardship and appreciation of the parks and recreational resources, the rangers hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual National Night Out event, fully implemented the "Park Minute," contributed to the quarterly newsletter, lead bike tours, staffed several information booths, and participated in a number of interpretive programs at local elementary schools, including the 911 Safety Pals which reached 890 students. These programs provided valuable information that enhanced park users' enjoyment and safety while also promoting the protection of our natural and cultural resources.

Rangers continued to play a major role in management and monitoring projects. This past year, rangers expanded visitation monitoring to Lower Park and an intern conducted a per-per-vehicle survey. Staff continued to work with interns on developing a comprehensive sign plan for Bidwell Park; a draft document will be complete soon. Furthermore, rangers were involved in several prescribed burns and vegetation management projects.

Additionally, they continued to streamline the park reservation system, including researching and choosing an online reservation system provider. Language and exhibit updates to Title 12 and 12R of the Chico Municipal Code were finalized and approved by the Commission and an update to the fee schedule was drafted. A comprehensive inventory and associated maps of all property managed by the Park Division was developed and rangers assisted with creating management unit maps. The combined enforcement and resource management efforts, coupled with a strong educational and outreach program have culminated in the rangers' ability to continue to effectively protect and promote the City of Chico's natural and cultural resources.

- i. City Accident/Damage/Theft Reports - are prepared for every instance of accident involving City property and/or damage/theft of City property (Table 7). Rangers are the first responders to many incidents in the park and in 2012 they assisted with several multi-agency medical responses and rescues. Notably, rangers were first on scene and initiated CPR on an unresponsive park user, provided scene security and logistical support on a fire incident involving two deceased people, responded to a dozen wildfires, and assisted with numerous rescue and missing persons operations. There was a marked increase in damage to City property this past year. Accidents, vandalism and major graffiti incidents all increased.

**Table 6. Accident, Damage, and Theft Reports (2010, 2011 and 2012).**

Report Type	2010 Reports	2011 Reports	2012 Reports
Injury Accident/EMS	19	19	18
City Property Damage	5	7	26
Fire	3	6	13
Wildlife	1	2	1
Other	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>59</b>

- ii. Citations and Warnings – We use a voluntary compliance and education enforcement strategy; therefore rangers issue a large number of warnings (Table 8). Citations from animal control, code enforcement, or police officers are not included.

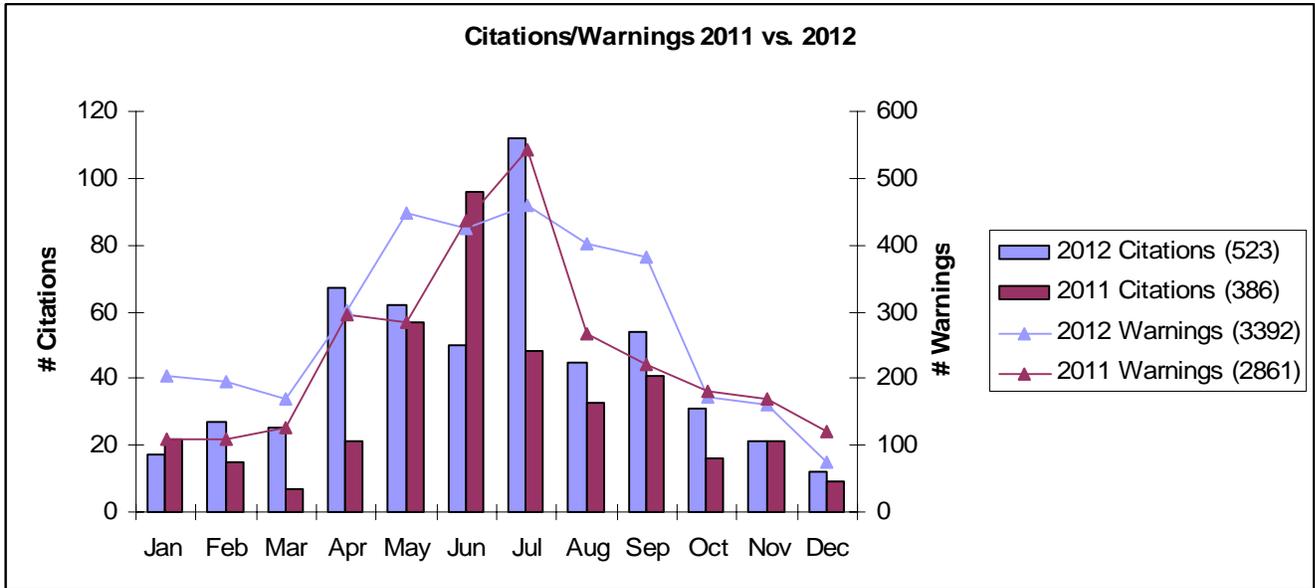
**Table 7. Summary Citations and Warnings by Violation 2012**

Violation	2012 Total Citations	%	Rank	2012 Total Warnings	%	Rank
Alcohol	129	25%	2	470	14%	3
Animal Control Violations	68	13%	3	846	25%	2
Bicycle Violation	2	0%	10	1091	32%	1
Glass	35	7%	4	153	5%	6
Illegal Camping	21	4%	7	147	4%	7
Injury/Destruction City Property	3	1%	8	7	0%	11
Littering	3	1%	8	18	1%	9
Other Violations	30	6%	5	259	8%	4
Parking Violations	210	40%	1	240	7%	5
Resist/Delay Park Ranger	0	0%	11	15	0%	10
Smoking	22	4%	6	146	4%	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>3392</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Table 8. Summary Citations and Warnings by Place 2012**

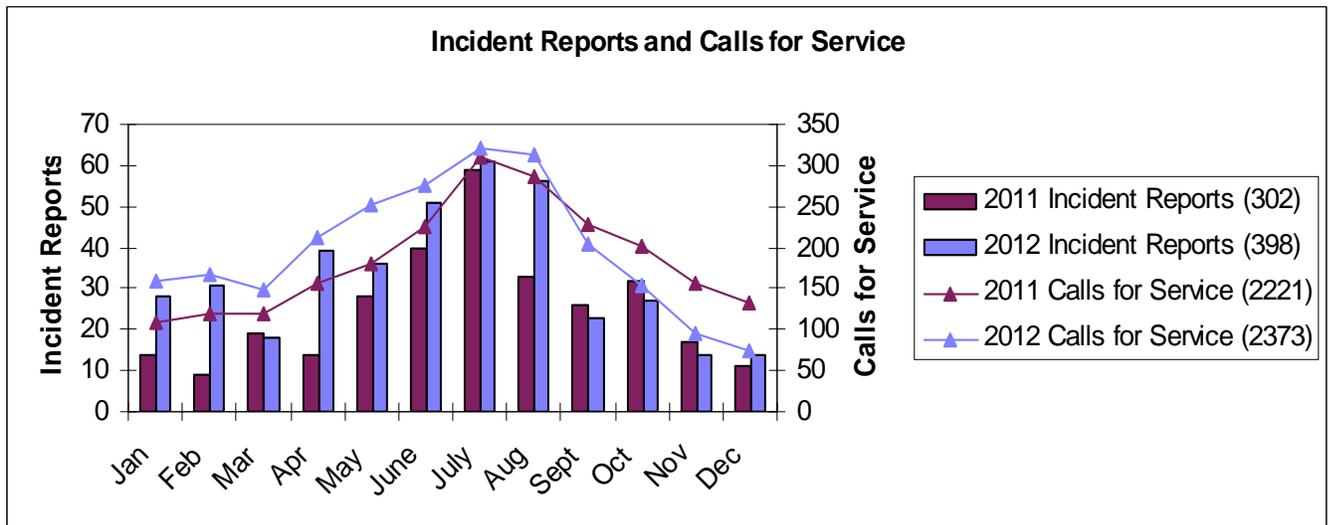
Location	Citations			Warnings		
	Total	%	Rank	Total	%	Rank
Lower Park	299	57%	1	2045	60.29%	1
Middle Park	58	11%	3	305	8.99%	3
Upper Park	128	24%	2	817	24.09%	2
Specialty Parks/Greenways	38	7%	4	225	6.63%	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>3392</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Figure 4. Monthly Citation/Warning Comparison (2011 and 2012).**



iii. Police Incident Reports and Calls for Service – The Police Department tracks incident reports and calls for service (Figure 5). The most frequent calls for service and incidents involved intoxicated subjects, outstanding warrants, thefts and illegal camping. This past year, police officers, fire personnel and rangers responded to 2373 calls (398 reports) in City parks, open spaces and greenways. Both calls for service and incident reports were up this year, with alcohol and drug related incidents, weapons violations and warrant arrests seeing the most increase. The “other” category is primarily comprised of found property, city property damage reports and death reports (6 death reports in 2012 vs. 1 in 2011). The deaths were associated with a construction accident-fall (Highway 99), suicide, 2 by fire (at a homeless encampment), and a heart attack. The fire required a biohazard clean-up.

**Figure 5. Summary Police Incident Reports and Calls for Service 2011 and 2012**



**Table 9. Type of Police Incident Report (2010-2012).**

Incident Report Type	2010 Reports	2011 Reports	2012 Reports
Arson	0	2	0
Assault	13	23	13

<b>Incident Report Type</b>	<b>2010 Reports</b>	<b>2011 Reports</b>	<b>2012 Reports</b>
Burglary	2	3	4
Drug Related	11	12	32
Drunk In Public	51	43	65
Larceny	31	47	44
Motor Vehicle Theft	1	2	1
Other	123	97	138
Parole/Prob. Violation	8	7	15
Rape	2	1	1
Resist/Obstruct/False Info	13	8	13
Robbery	3	7	5
Vandalism	3	3	2
Warrant	44	43	55
Weapons Violation	2	4	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>398</b>

iv. Homeless Encampments – Issues associated with homeless activities continued to increase, specifically impacting City Plaza, Lower Park and certain greenways. Several measures have been implemented to address homeless camp activity, including opening up densely vegetated areas and consistent, regular identification and clean-up of active camps. Rangers took a lead role in the program this past year, assisted by police officers and GSD crews.

## 11. Volunteer and Donations

### a. Program Description

When citizens take the opportunity to give time and energy to Bidwell Park, as Chicoans do, their investment in and respect for our unique resource grows deeper. *The Bidwell Park Volunteer Program's objective is to enlist the help of the local community in managing Park resources and expand volunteerism in as many aspects of enhancing Bidwell Park as possible (BP Volunteer Manual, April 2007).* Volunteers currently assist the Park Division in trail maintenance and repair, painting, litter removal, Park office tasks, control of invasive weeds, native plant seed propagation and planting in volunteer habitat restoration areas throughout Bidwell Park.

In 2012, volunteers contributed 19,801 hours of work to Bidwell Park and other Chico Greenways. In addition to these tasks, the Park Services Coordinator and Park Intern also include educational components focusing on Park history, and ecology; implement photo monitoring measures for restoration sites so that improvements can be seen over time and assist with the natural resource management program through the donation of thousands of hours of weeding invasive species and planting native plant species. The incorporation of vegetation management for years as the major portion of weekly and annual work sessions has helped supplement and offset the Park's maintenance crew time.

### b. 2012 Highlights

- i. Volunteer Hour overview - Overall volunteer hours were up 1% from 2011 (Table 10). Volunteers donated a 19,801 hours and more hours were devoted to work in City greenways and open spaces in addition to Bidwell Park. Large annual park work days remain popular events that school students, families, individuals, CSUC and Butte College students, community service groups and church groups participate (Table 11). While the number of new groups continue to increase, we have a remarkable retention of volunteer efforts – with many groups making an annual commitment to have a team participate in one of the Park's annually-held workdays (there is nothing like working in unison with a few hundred folks...! (Figure 6).

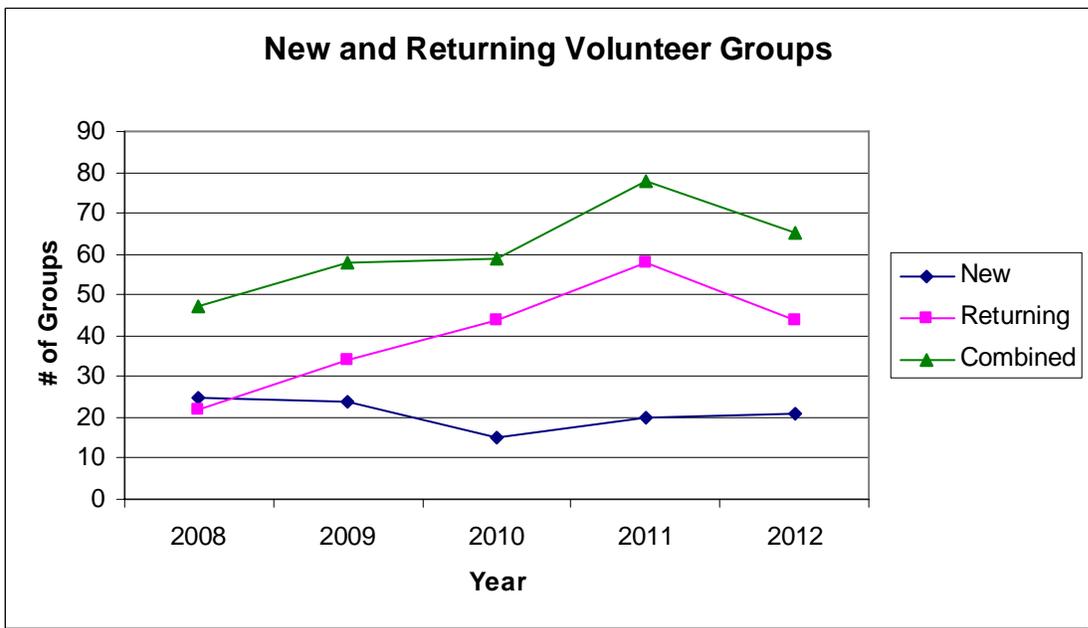
**Table 10. Summary of Volunteer Program Hours.**

Category	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Trend
Park Work	5,129	7,891	6,317	9,677	11,228	10,474	10,991	
Park Watch Patrol	11,913	10,866	10,455	10,061	8,788	6,901	8,810	
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>17,042</b>	<b>18,757</b>	<b>16,772</b>	<b>19,738</b>	<b>20,016</b>	<b>17,375</b>	<b>19,801</b>	

**Table 11. Summary of Volunteer Annual Event Hours.**

Event	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Trend
Earth Day	88	371	515	705	448	638	262	
Make a Difference	124	389	302	495	409	1,154	1,042	
Weekly Volunteer Days	222	603	493	985	1,451	1,430	1,169	
Upward Bound Work Day	473	536.5	0	370.5	347	503	446	
Trail Work Days	216	471	581	353	18	146	121	
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>1,123</b>	<b>2,371</b>	<b>1,891</b>	<b>2,909</b>	<b>2,673</b>	<b>5,447</b>	<b>3,040</b>	

**Figure 6. Summary of New and Returning Volunteer Groups**



ii. On-going Park Projects

1. The Park Division and **Chico High School Native Plant Project** (5th year) had 6 students who have cultivated/cared for over 10 native plant species since January 2012 through the end of the 2013 school year. Long time Park volunteer Michael Stauffer and CA Native Plant member Paula Shapiro (5<sup>th</sup> year!) are advisors and offer regular guidance on the project and work with students. Kyle Keanne (3<sup>rd</sup> year with the project) oversaw the care of the plants in the greenhouse during the summer. The class has two field days a year, in the fall to collect cuttings and in the winter to plant in the Park.

2. The Park Division and CSU, Chico's **Community Action Volunteers in Education (CAVE)** have partnered through the Adopt-A-Park Program for its seventh year. In Spring 2012, there were 20 CAVE students and in the Fall 17 CAVE students worked in Bidwell Park.

3. The Park Division and **CSU Chico's Upward Bound** (UB) high school program completed its 7<sup>th</sup> year with 10 high school students working in the Park 4 days a week for six weeks during the summer.
  4. The Park Division continues to provide weekly **Volunteer Workdays in the Park** throughout the year. This program provides important follow-up work and vegetation management in over 10 sites of the Park (Annie's Glen, Bear Hole, Caper Acres, Chico Creek Nature Center area, Cedar Grove, Five Mile Recreation, Lost Park, One Mile (north and south), Site 8, Site 24-25, and Sycamore Restoration Site. Funds raised through donations pay for an hourly Park Intern, who leads some of these sessions, which are in high demand as extra-curricular and mandated class community service components by Butte College and CSUC classes and organizations. Citizens unable to afford to pay their misdemeanor fines are able to work in the Park in place of paying.
- iii. Bidwell Park Volunteer Trainings - The Park Division launched its new Volunteer Training Program in the Spring of 2012. Over 50 people attended the combined Park training program orientation and then attended a 2<sup>nd</sup> specialized training for Crew Leaders, Park Watch and Trail Volunteers. The Crew Leader and Trail Volunteer trainings are brand new for the Park Division whereas Park Watch is the longest running volunteer program.
  - iv. Park Division's Volunteer Adopt-Park Site Program has been in existence formally since the Fall of 2008.
    1. Alpha Sigma Pi newly adopted Site 39 in the fall of 2012 and will start work this coming spring.
    2. Sigma Chi Fraternity marks its 3<sup>rd</sup> year of monthly work at site 40. The group planted native plants at their site (donation made possible through their applying for a CSUC sustainability grant) in the Spring of 2012 and watered the site throughout the summer.
    3. Sierra View Elementary School 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes (5<sup>th</sup> year) works twice a year at site 27 and have planted native plants there since 2010.
    4. McCabe Family (8<sup>th</sup> year) continues weeding at sites 11 and 12 and has helped water santa Barbara sedge.
    5. Rangel Family (3<sup>rd</sup> year) continue to remove vinca at site 32 and will plant native plants in 2013.
    6. Blue Oak Elementary 8<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> year) grade class adopted site 6 and planted native plants.
    7. Olson family continues work at adopted site #37
  - v. Intern Program - In 2012, the Park Division had 4 students complete paid and non-paid internships to help support projects and lead volunteers. **CSUC**: Rick Helgerson (8/2011 – 8/2012) – lead volunteer weekly sessions and Upward Bound sessions; researched and put together a privet removal/restoration plan for the Bidwell Golf Course (paid for by the Friends); and worked on restoration plans for N. One Mile, including mapping; Heidi Ortiz (8/2012 – present) GPS mapped the Park Sign Inventory; led volunteer weekly sessions; and provided general support for the Volunteer Program. Chris Fisher provided conducted a user survey in Upper Bidwell Park; and provided support for the Sign Inventory. **Butte College**: Rachel Libby (6/2012 – 8/2012) researched native and invasive weed plant profiles; and provided other project support.
    - Throughout 2012, **Friends of Bidwell Park** (FOBP) volunteer sessions were planned and led by long time Park and greenway volunteer, Susan Mason. Invasive weed removal projects (olive trees, privet, bladder senna, pokeweed, yellow starthistle, puncturevine and much more) were conducted in Bidwell Park; Memorial Way; Comanche Creek and Verbena Fields. Susan and volunteers devoted many hours to starthistle removal in all of Lower Park and many areas of Middle Park. FOBP have logged over 14,906 hours since 2003. FOBP has also donated to Park Projects providing four 40 yard vegetation dumpsters; \$600.00 toward a Privet Removal and Restoration Plan for the Bidwell Golf Course;
    - **CA Native Plant Society, Mt. Lassen Chapter** has several on-going projects in Bidwell Park and greenways. A group of CNPS members have continued to remove starthistle, prune back poison oak and brush the Yahi Trail for its 5<sup>th</sup> year of adoption. Their volunteer trail crew is led by Steve Overlock. Adrienne Edwards has helped research, correct and provide more information for redoing the signs along the Yahi Trail. Susan Mason has been leading volunteer sessions for CNPS in the City's greenways and open spaces, starting in the spring of 2012 with glossy privet removal along Little Chico Creek at Humboldt Avenue; and in the fall of 2012 started privet and other invasive woody weed removal at Teichert Ponds. Susan has accumulated thousands of volunteer hours by leading several weeding sessions with committed volunteers each week with Friends of Bidwell Park and CNPS.
    - **Comanche Creek neighbors**, community volunteers, and Park Crew leaders held approximately one work session a month at their site removing invasive weeds – privets, starthistle and blackberry to name a few.

Janet Ellner and Elizabeth Stewart have helped coordinate and lead these sessions as well as starthistle removal along Upper Park trails last spring.

- **Kids and Creeks** continues to bring elementary students to Bidwell Park's Sycamore Restoration Area, 9<sup>th</sup> and Hazel and Verbena Fields for restoration and weeding sessions.
- **Stream Team** Coordinator Timmarie Hamill conducts monthly water quality monitoring sessions at Five Mile and she continues to partner with the Park Services Coordinator to work with Sierra View Elementary School at site 27; Parkview Elementary School at site 8; and the Upward Bound High School Summer program.

vi. Donations

Through the years, the community has contributed funds to memorial benches, plaques, vista course stations, Caper Acres bricks and toward equipment and facilities. In the fall of 2011, Park staff and the BPPC undertook a revision of the Park Donation Policy to clarify how our community could give back to the Park and to raise needed funds as directed by the Master Management Plan. The new policy will be finalized in Spring 2013 and will also be updated in a timely manner to reflect inflation. The policy will also include annual fund information, as well as a new Memorial Tree Giving Program. In addition, City staff has developed a separate fund for Park and Greenway donations that can be carefully tracked.

In calendar year 2012, citizens provided over \$8,695 in park donations, including \$1,400 devoted to Caper Acres (see Table 13). Donations, both cash and in-kind, have helped save the Park Division needed financial resources. In-kind donations valued at \$42,388 from area businesses and local organizations as well as in-kind labor provided by the CA Conservation Corps and community volunteers provided hundreds of thousands of dollars (see Table 13) in support of Park projects.

**Table 12. Summary of Park Donations and In-Kind Service Donations (2012).**

<b>Donations</b>	<b>Project or Event</b>	<b>Value</b>
<b><u>Cash Donations</u></b>		
General Park	Includes plaque donations and misc.	\$1,920
Annie B's Fund Drive	Park intern, habitat restoration, trails and park upkeep	\$4,930
Bricks	Caper Acres	\$1,400
Church group	Council Ring	\$445
<b>Total Donations</b>		<b>\$8,695</b>
<b><u>In-Kind Donations</u></b>		
CA Conservation Corps	Volunteer hours (647 hours)	\$16,188
	Prop 84 funded CCC labor	\$20,000
Costco	Breakfast foods for Earth Day and Make a Difference Day	\$400
Friends of Bidwell Park	4 vegetation dumpsters; herbicide treatments; and Bidwell Golf Course Privet Removal Project Plan	\$1,950
Home Depot	Tools for Bidwell Park Earth Day	\$1,000
Lundberg Farms	Rice Chips for Earth Day	\$100
Starbucks	Coffee for Earth Day and Make a Difference Day	\$300
Recology	4 green waste dumpsters (volunteer project)	\$1,000
Rotary of Chico	Native Plants for Caper Acres	\$300
Soroptimist	Native Plants for the Bidwell Park entrance	\$150
CSUC Sigma Chi Fraternity	Native Plants for Site #40	\$200
Waste Management	2 green waste dumpsters (volunteer project)	\$800
<b>Total In-Kind Donations</b>		<b>\$42,388</b>

Both cash and in-kind donations have helped support numerous vegetation management projects as well as annual volunteer workdays. Friends of Bidwell Park's has provided support for greenwaste dumpsters so that weed tree removal projects can be finished more quickly while not impacting Park staff's limited time and resources. The group has also helped paid for needed herbicide treatments for specific woody weed species as well as a privet removal plan for the Golf Course produced by a Park Intern. Chico Rotary, Soroptimist International of Chico and CSUC Fraternity Sigma Chi have donated native plants based on planting plans provided by the Park Division. City-wide volunteer annual workdays, like Earth Day in Bidwell Park & Greenways and Make a Difference Day, are made possible through the support of long-time business donors Home Depot, Recology, Starbucks and Waste Management.

We have also received some help with studies and monitoring. For example, student interns from Chico State and Butte College provided support on some GPS mapping projects, and data collection; and Chico High School students propagated native plants for a fourth year for the Park's restoration sites.

The Chico community has been generous and as we move into the future, the care and well-being of Bidwell Park and other city properties will depend on this generosity. Park staff is looking into a special event for 2013 and further donation and grant-writing opportunities.

#### vii. Economic Value of the Volunteer Program

With limited financial and staff resources, Park and office volunteers remain an important asset to the health and well-being of Bidwell Park and the City's greenways. In 2012, the Volunteer Program has helped oversee efforts in the City of Chico's greenways as well as Bidwell Park. This facet has helped guide more community members and greenway neighbors who wish to contribute their part to the well being of the City's natural resources.

Traditionally, the financial worth of volunteer time has been estimated using a single dollar value for all types of volunteering. The Independent Sector updates annually the *Value of Volunteer Time* on its website <http://www.independentsector.org>. The current rate is \$24.18 per hour for the State of California (the volunteer rate is from 2010 and is the most up to date available). Using this rate, the Park's volunteer hours of 19,801 is equivalent to \$478,788. According to the IS website, "*The value of volunteer time presented here is the average wage of non-management, non-agricultural workers. This is only a tool and only one way to show the immense value volunteers provide to an organization.*" The Park Services Coordinator also solicits support of in-kind contributions from area businesses and organizations to help supplement the Volunteer Program and additional Park programs projects in the Park (see Table 3. Summary of Park Donations and In-Kind Service Donations (2012)).

## 12. Challenges Encountered

- a. Unless replaced, failing, aging infrastructure will continue to impact maintenance staff and costs. We are quickly approaching the point where costs, time invested, and potential liability may force facility closures. We have multiple recent examples, here are a couple:
  - i. At Caper Acres, vandals kicked out boards on part of the structure for Locksley Castle, the underlying structure was too rotted for a viable repair. The structure was removed and filled with fall material, allowing the structure to remain open, but diminishing play options. Staff spend up to 2 hours a day on safety checks and daily repairs (for example, screwing down boards) before Caper Acres opens. The condition of many Caper Acres features and the restroom make daily maintenance challenging.
  - ii. Bike paths and roads in Lower Park within the next few years may soon decay past the point where minor repairs can maintain a safe surface. A lack of modern road design and limited capacity culverts, contributed to the recent closure of the gravel portion of Upper Park Road. While we are looking at temporary repairs for Upper Park Road, the long term solution (a designed gravel road that better manages water and upgraded road base materials) will be cheaper to maintain, retain gravel, and better protect resources and visitor safety).
  - iii. Similar replacements, such as the recent closure of the Five Mile restrooms due to an old septic system will continue as facilities age and are used far beyond their original capacity (septic tank capacity: 1000 gallons vs. 3000 gallons).

- iv. We anticipate that within the next few years the Sycamore Pool and the surrounding deck area will need major repairs and a plan and design to anticipate this cost and provide a basis for seeking funds will be important.
- v. The Cedar Grove infrastructure is inadequate for current uses and requires a larger facility that would allow for current events, safety, and easier maintenance (better lighting, revised parking lot, irrigation for lawn area, etc).
- b. Increases in visitorship, places additional pressures on sensitive habitats and infrastructure in park and open spaces. Many resource issues in Upper (trail and road erosion, lack of trail design and signage, and potential damage to cultural and biological resources), Middle (invasive weeds and unauthorized trails), and Lower Park (invasive trees and infrastructure not up to modern standards)
- c. Balancing priorities, projects, and BPPC support with staffing and resource challenges. Staffing and work load continue to be of concern. In 2011 GSD lost two additional administrative staff members, which has translated to delays in processing reservations, permits, news releases, and service requests. The gap has been somewhat mitigated with the sharing of administrative staff, management staff filling in on the phones, and the use of interns, but comes with an opportunity cost. In response to the changes, we have moved up deadlines for BPPC meetings to allow for more time to put together packets and materials, the drawback is that last minute developments cannot always be carried forward to the meetings. We will use the volunteer program as an example of the opportunity costs. The volunteer program provides opportunities for working in Bidwell Park and greenways. The addition of more responsibilities and tasks for the Park Services Coordinator has meant a decrease in time devoted to the volunteer program. The Park Service Coordinator helps market the volunteer program, plan and coordinate work sessions, solicit donations, and cultivate and support new and on-going partnerships. This will affect the capacity of the Park Division to expand the Program. While we have created a new crew leader volunteer program to expand our capacity, the project needs adequate time to provide logistical support and planning.
- d. Over the past couple of years, Park Staff have devoted more time to wildland management. Essentially, there is a decades old backlog of natural resource needs in Bidwell Park and other City properties. For example, ill-concieved fire breaks made by dozers over 30 -40 years ago, continue to cause erosion and trail damage threatening Park resources. To maintain the long-term health of the Park, these need to be addressed. Parks staff will continue working on several fronts and responding to needs as they arise. We will also articulate needs and performing triage on priorities through the Natural Resource Management Plan and Trails Plan for the Park.
- e. Homeless encampment and other related issues, and vandalism and damage to park resources occupy a significant amount of staff time and must be addressed in a timely fashion, limiting our response to routine tasks. For example, 4 staff members were diverted from their regular duties for the better part of 2 days to address an explosion of vandalism and graffiti to make the Park presentable before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration.
- f. Scheduling time for coordination and collaboration among rangers and Park Division staff has proved challenging due to limited staffing and schedules that span 7 days a week for up to 18 hours per day. Maintaining a high level of visibility and customer service with limited staff resources. Rangers balance patrol responsibilities with outreach efforts, event coordination and monitoring responsibilities and administrative tasks. The recent cut of the Park Attendant means that Rangers support events, meaning less time to patrol the Park (and when an emergency arises, must leave the events unsupported).
- g. Safely and effectively address increased homeless encampments with limited police support. Decreased police support due to limited staffing and high priority call volumes. Many of the Police Department specialty units were disbanded, including TARGET, that provided essential support in proactively addressing illegal activity in specific areas. DTA parks and One Mile continued to face criminal activity including, animal control violations, illegal camping, assaults, disruptive behavior, drug and alcohol activity, vandalism, and other suspicious circumstances.
- h. Education and compliance is a key cornerstone to our enforcement approach and we will explore new options to get messages out to the public. The use of social media for example, will take some time to implement and integrate them into our program.

### 13. Upcoming Issues

One thing that is clear from compiling the information related to this annual report is the remarkable breadth of tasks and long list of accomplishments that the Division completed last year. We identified some tasks throughout the document, highlighted issues include:

- a. Revise and update the BPPC work plan for 2013-2014.
- b. Staff will be taking the leading role in the preparation of several key planning documents (Natural Resource Management Plan, Trails Plan, update of the Trails Manual, Management Plan Concepts for Greenways). In the past, much of the work associated with these types of projects would have been contracted with consultants. The effort will likely result in opportunity costs on other efforts, but will help guide future work in these areas.
- c. Revise and adopt the interim wet weather plan.
- d. Finalize and approve Title 12R CMC updates.
- e. Launch ActiveNet, an online reservation system to be utilized for both public and private park use permits. This system will help customers to identify the location, content, availability and cost of reservations and to make a reservation from any computer at any time using the Internet.
- f. Continue to develop the ranger program, including: review and update job description, policy manual and mission statement; and seek out and attend training. Maintain high visibility during patrols to provide visitor assistance and to help deter violations. Regularly utilize bicycle patrol. Continue to work closely with the Police and Fire Departments, exchanging pertinent information and addressing problem areas.
- g. Continued development of the training program for Park Watch, trail volunteers, and team leaders. A core group of team leaders will enable the program to continue to grow and increase opportunities for people to be involved in Bidwell Park.
- h. Refine the Park Watch program to reflect current roles.
- i. Develop a Master Plan and initiate a funding campaign for Caper Acres.
- j. Continue to build a relationship and collaborate with the Chico Creek Nature Center and other educational based organizations, including locating a ranger satellite office at the Center.
- k. Develop and record additional "Park Minutes."
- l. Develop additional campaigns that encourage sustainable habits (e.g. trail use during wet weather) and behavior at Monkey Face.
- m. Continue visitation monitoring, including the installation of permanent counters.
- n. Approve and deploy a sign plan, being developed by University of Cincinnati students, for Bidwell Park in order to enhance public safety and enjoyment of the Park by effectively communicating location and destinations as well as encouraging positive and safe behavior.
- o. Develop recommendations on improving the Bidwell Bowl Amphitheater.
- p. Develop recommendations for Bidwell Ranch.
- q. Training staff on restoration and new trail techniques.
- r. Address concerns associated with dogs and make recommendations on dog regulations.
- s. Address increased complaints of behavior at City Plaza and One Mile.
- t. Coordination of Maintenance, Ranger, and Volunteer programs on restoration and outreach efforts.

#### Attachments:

- 1) Detailed Maintenance Tasks 2012.
- 2) Photographs Attachment.
- 3) Annual reports from leasees.



DATE: 01/16/13  
TO: Bidwell Park and Playground Commission members  
FROM: Dan Efseaff, Park and Natural Resource Manager  
SUBJECT: 2012 Annual Park Division Report: Photos

## 2012 ANNUAL PARK DIVISION PHOTOS

### 1. Photos from the Field



*Rangers help local schools to learn about Park resources.*



*Rangers conduct wet weather trail assessments.*



*Lifeguards, staffed at Sycamore Pool during the summer months monitor pool and lawn activities, encourage safe behavior, perform rescues and provide first aid.*



*National Night Out provides a good outreach opportunity.*



*Park Watch volunteers support many park events and serve as ambassadors for the Park.*



*Ranger Barge and Linda Sheppard participate in the 911 Safety Pals again this year, reaching 890 students.*



*Many organizations supported the Park's National Night Out event in July.*



*Chico Soroptimists donated and planted native plants at the Fourth St. entrance for Make a Difference Day!*



*Associated Students' Community Volunteers in Education work each semester on habitat restoration*



*CSUC student volunteers paint over graffiti as part of our annual Make a Difference Day in Bidwell Park!*



*Chico High School Horticulture Students plant seeds and propagate native plants all year long for Park restoration sites. They have 2 field days a year!*



*Home Depot is an annual donor to Earth Day in Bidwell Park and their staff always has a fun team of volunteers.*



*Maintenance staff work with volunteers on a variety of Park projects.*



*Weeding is FUN with friends. Weekly volunteer sessions are offered year-round.*



*Park maintenance staff work hard to keep Bidwell Park and city greenways from of grafitti. Sycamore at One Mile was tagged – before and after cleaning photos.*