



Butte Environmental Council

Educating and advocating for the land, air and water

Butte Environmental Council e-News

Your Environmental Sentinel

August 2013

In This Issue

[Annie B's Back!](#)

[Cleanup Help Wanted](#)

[Article Headline](#)

[Article Headline](#)

[Article Headline](#)

[Article Headline](#)

[Free At Last!](#)

[La, La, La, La, Gala](#)

[Save the Dates](#)

Quick Links

[BEC Website](#)

[BEC Event Calendar](#)

[Renew BEC Membership](#)

Dear Robyn,

Membership support is the heartwood of the BEC tree, our vital living core.

That's why we share opportunities for you to participate through our website, calendar, and our newsletters. Show your support today with easy and secure [online membership renewal](#).

The Triumphant Return of Annie B's

It's that time of year again -- kids large and small are returning to school, we all start yearning for rain, and the annual Annie B's Community Drive is back.

Annie B's runs from August 1- September 30 and is designed to encourage giving to local nonprofits, including BEC. We receive 100% of these dedicated contributions, plus a percentage of extra funds divided between the qualifying organizations.

You can **renew your BEC membership** by donating to Annie B's. We receive a list of BEC donors from Annie B's and if you are due to renew, we will count the donation as your renewal. This is your chance to help BEC and stretch your donation a little farther.

To contribute online, go to the home page of the North Valley Community Foundation, www.nvcf.org and check the box next to "Butte Environmental Council." Enter donation amount in the window that appears and scroll down to the bottom of the page to finish the donation.

Or you can make your check out to **Annie B's/Butte Environmental Council** and mail to:
NVCF, 3120 Cohasset Road, Suite 8, Chico, CA 95973



Thank you North Valley Community Foundation, for taking charitable giving to new heights; and thank you, North Valley Community, for Being the Change!

BUTTE ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mark Stemen, *Chair*
Michael McGinnis, *Treasurer*
Amanda Freeman
Tom Haithcock
Steve Handy

Bidwell Park & Chico Creeks Clean-up: Scouts and Cooks Needed!

The Clean-Up is **Saturday, September 21** -- mere moments away (in Event Time, which passes four times as quickly as normal time) and we have some favors to ask of you, gentle reader...

We are looking for **a few good volunteers to survey creek conditions** (i.e., how much trash and debris is out there?) and report back. These "scouting expeditions" will allow us to assign our volunteers on the day of the cleanup according to need and are therefore hugely

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important -- City staff is no longer available to help with this reconnaissance, so your help is critical. Bring a buddy or we'll pair you up with another volunteer.

Call Maggi at the BEC office, 891-6424, and sign up for a location. You can request a location if there's a particular area you're devoted to. Scouts will be going out in the first two weeks of September; again, this reconnaissance is crucial to the success of the Clean-Up.

Also mission-critical: We're sending out an **urgent call for five GAS GRILLS for cooking burgers at our Volunteer Barbecue. We also need about 5 volunteer cooks.** The time commitment for cooks would be 11am -1:30 pm on Saturday, September 21, and that's not bad for the amount of love you'll get when you feed people.

Special Thanks to our Community Clean-Up Sponsors:



Butte County Fish & Game Commission
City of Chico Parks Division

Sustainability Task Force: *Will We Sustain It?*

At **6:30 PM on Tuesday, August 20**, the **Chico City Council** will convene for its regular meeting. Our interest in that particular meeting agenda is the discussion on the **future of the City's Sustainability Task Force** -- a citizen body that will move the City's Climate Action Plan off the shelf and into the implementation phase. BEC Board Chairman Mark Stemen wrote about the importance of keeping--and prioritizing -- the climate action by the City of Chico:

*It is imperative that community members concerned about climate change let their Council representatives know: **now is the time to move forward, not backward, on climate change.** The right size of our effort should be more, not less.*

*Consider that this month's edition of Science Magazine reports that the current rate of climate change is 10 times faster than any previous known change. 2012 was the warmest year ever. The Earth has now experienced 338 consecutive months of about average global temperatures. **That means that if you are under 27 years old, you have never lived during a time when the monthly temperature was below average. Never.***



This also means **you need to be at the Council Chambers on Tuesday, August 20 at 6:30** to let your representatives know that you want accelerated action on climate change. **The discussion is item 4.3 on the agenda.**

I think the important point is that the Council promised to address climate change in **2006**. It is now **2013**, their plan is only **partially complete**, and the **majority of the measures concern future emissions**. The real heavy lifting, **reducing current emissions**, has yet to be identified; and, more importantly, discussed with the wide community. **The Sustainability Task Force** is an existing and viable City administrative body that can identify greenhouse gas reductions and vet them with the larger community so that we can reach consensus on **how to meet the State-mandated 25% reduction of greenhouse gas production over 2005 levels by 2020**.

The City Council agreed in **2008** to a **25% reduction by 2020**; they adopted a plan in **2012** that identified measures that would lead to a **10% reduction**. Earlier this year the Council focused the role of the Task Force to completing the Climate Action Plan and called for recruitment of Task Force members. I, and thirteen others, applied. The next Council meeting was to be appointments. Instead, it seems there is a need to clarify the importance of the issue.

I am asking you to let your City Council members know that **you want to see the STF continue until the City of Chico has a complete plan to deal with climate change**. There really is nothing more important. Seriously, what good is having a "right sized city" that is a safe place to raise a family, an ideal location for business, and a premier place to live, if **you do not have a habitable planet to put it on?**

Email your City Council members by clicking here. Let them know that concerned citizens are counting on them to move forward.

(Sigh...) It is exhausting, and beggars comprehension, why we have to keep making this point. We do not live on an Economy, we live on a Planet. And unless we make that fact our priority, we jeopardize everything that exists here. No matter how exceptional we think we are, **that includes us.**

Public Briefing on Bay Delta Wednesday, August 21

Curious to learn the latest on the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and those giant twin tunnels that Governor Brown is hellbent on installing under the bay delta estuary?

A public briefing will take place at the **Chico Masonic Center** on **Wednesday, May 21** from **1-4pm**.



We appreciate that county staff are trying to help local citizens learn more about this enormous project that will affect all Californians. Governor Brown's proposed "Twin Tunnels" are not the only option and this public briefing will present several alternative plans that have been proposed, including Congressman Garamendi, and Jonas Minton of the Planning and Conservation League.

BEC is pushing for the [Responsible Exports Plan](#) proposed by the [California Environmental Water Caucus](#), of which BEC is an active member.

The Environmental Water Caucus' Responsible Export Plan will:

- **eliminate the need for two giant tunnels** under the Bay Delta by modernizing existing facilities with improved fish screens at the South Delta and reinforcing levees above the PL84-99 standard
- reduce the quantity of water exported from the Bay Delta Estuary to more accurately reflect natural limitations to our water supply
- reduce the demand for water and increase supplies for exporters south of the Delta in order to compensate for the reduced south-of-Delta exports
- provide increased self-reliance for south-of-Delta water users through inter-regional water transfers and south of Delta groundwater storage
- **cost billions of dollars less** other proposed plans while accomplishing the legislated goals of estuary restoration and water reliability

We encourage you to attend this public briefing on Aug 21 to learn more about this important issue. BEC will be there, handing out info about the EWC's Responsible Exports Plan.

You'll also get another chance on **September 19** to learn more about the Delta at BEC's own [Code Blue workshop](#). We'll lay out the myths and facts of the proposed project, how it will impact the north state, as well as provide a **Citizen Action Training** that will empower north state voices to speak out to protect northern California's water.



BEC Challenges Concow Reservoir Water Transfer Proposal

In a dry year like this one, north state water is often sold to the highest bidder down south. **BEC strives to serve as watchdog for the environment by keeping a careful eye on any proposed out-of-region transfers.**

But when Thermalito Water & Sewer District (TWSD) began talks to sell 2,500 acre feet of water from Concow Reservoir, they did so behind closed doors and without the public notification required by law. The District makes the case that there will be no negative impacts to the environment, fish and wildlife, or to the public. But when you consider the cumulative impacts of many other regional transfers in a dry year, we feel there is sufficient concern.



Unfortunately, it may not be possible to prove in a court of law that the environment will be harmed as a result of this one, relatively small water transfer. There is, however, a **clear violation of the Brown Act**. The District failed to properly notify the public of their intent to sell the water. Thankfully our legal system recognizes how important it is for the public to have an opportunity to participate in the decisions that affect our communities and our natural resources.

Whether the public got shut out of this process intentionally or because someone didn't understand their legal obligations to notify, it sets a terrible precedent that these quasi-governmental entities could sell away our common assets behind closed doors. On this point, BEC has filed a **Letter of Demand**, opening the door for further legal action if necessary.

Thermalito Water and Sewer District and other water districts in the region need to remember that **BEC, AquAlliance, Citizens Water Watch, and the public are paying attention** and demand that our voice for the environment is not shut out of the process.

Visit our website to learn more about the many water transfers taking place in 2013 and to view BEC's Public Comment letter on the Concow Rervoir, submitted on July 15.

Ready? We're RARE-ing to Go!

by Tanya Parish, RARE Program Coordinator

The Recycling and Rubbish Education Program (RARE) is gearing up for the start of the school year!



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Beautiful *Endangered Species Faire* images courtesy of Alan Sheckter. Thank you Alan-- your eye is top-notch!

For more great pics from this event, [visit BEC's Facebook page](#).

I am Tanya Parish, and I'm so excited to be the RARE Program coordinator. I have been busy getting ready to re-launch this award-winning program that has taught thousands of kids and adults the importance of recycling and reducing waste. The RARE program is located in the BEC office in downtown Chico and can now be reached at rare@becnet.org or by phone (530)891-6426. We also have a Facebook page; please Like us [HERE](#).



We anticipate being ready for in-class recycling education workshops by October so if you are a teacher, or you know of a teacher that would be interested in a workshop, please contact us. The in-class workshops will include a hands-on lesson about recycling and the importance of reducing, reusing, and rotting (composting), tailored to each grade level.

We will also be scheduling group field trips to the Neal Road Landfill so contact us today for

this free educational opportunity. For more about the RARE program, visit us online at www.becnet.org/RARE.

Free At Last!--Car-Free, That Is

Butte Environmental Council is inviting the Chico Community to participate in **Chico Car Free Day** on **Sunday, October 6, 2013**, from **12pm-5pm**, in **downtown Chico**.



What would Chico be like with fewer cars on the street?

During Car Free Day multiple streets in the downtown area will be closed to automobile traffic to open up space for educational and fun-filled activities.

The idea behind Car Free Day is to reconsider urban transport with the prospect of sharing streets more efficiently. The event center is on Flume Street between 4th Street and 7th Street. 4th Street will remain open to traffic, as will 7th Street, and

barricades will be placed across Flume on the south side of 4th and the north side of 7th to designate the closure. Three cross streets will also be closed. 5th street will be closed from Main Street to Orient Street. 6th Street will be closed from Wall Street to Orient Street.

We are also looking for people to help us plan **Chico Car Free Day** and help with public outreach, food, musical entertainment, the children's area, contacting participants, venue set up/take down, and recruiting day of event volunteers. Planning meetings take place Mondays 3pm at BEC.

If you are interested in participating in Car Free Day, or have any questions or concerns, contact [Mark Stemen by email](#).

BEC's Anniversary Gala: Oct 19



Mark your calendars for **BEC's Anniversary Gala** on **Saturday, October 19th**. This will mark BEC's 38th birthday and will be a night full of elegance, charm, style, and fun. Kaelen Davis of Santino's will treat us to a delicious meal of California cuisine, and guests will enjoy live music, wine, beer, and the exclusive and unique items in our silent auction. **Tickets are \$40**, and all you need to do is pick up the phone and call the BEC office at **(530) 891-6424** to pay by credit card and purchase your ticket.

Save the Date(s) and click on the links for more info:

Wild & Scenic Film Festival 9/14

Code Blue Workshop on the Delta 9/19

Bidwell Park & Chico Creeks Clean-Up 9/21

BEC Land, Air, Water Concert 9/27

Oroville Salmon Festival 9/28

BEC Car-Free Day 10/6

BEC Anniversary Gala 10/19

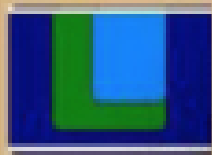
BEC Land, Air, Water Concert 10/24

Thank you again for your continued support of BEC's efforts. Your input or participation is always welcome. Simply reply to this email to tell me what's on your mind.

Hope to see you at our upcoming events. Together we can accomplish what is impossible alone.

Robyn DiFalco

Executive Director
Butte Environmental Council



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