



Environmental Sentinel

Your source for Butte County's environmental news and events

Brought to you by the **Butte Environmental Council**
Protecting Butte County's land, air, and water since 1975

April 2014

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Dear Robyn,

Happy spring! This time of year is packed full of great events, and we are happy to share some exciting updates from our ongoing programs and work in the community that your contributions make possible. As always, we are grateful for your continued support!

Upcoming BEC Events:

Humboldt Community Garden Work Day
Saturday, April 12 10am - 2pm

Earth Day Film: Plastic Paradise at The Big Room
Tuesday, April 22, doors open at 6pm, film begins at 7am. [Join the Facebook Page and invite a friend!](#)

35th Annual Endangered Species Faire
Saturday, May 3, 11am - 5pm

BEC Wine Tasting Fundraiser at the Crystal Room
Thursday, May 29, 5:30pm - 7:30pm

Water Conservation Workshop: Lawns to Native Landscapes
Sunday, June 1, 9:00am - 2:00pm

The Chico Bicycle Music Festival
Saturday, June 7 10am - 10pm

Water Conservation Workshop: Greywater for Laundry
Saturday, June 14 10am - 3pm

Environmental Events Calendar

Join BEC Today!

**Renew Your BEC
Membership**

Is Butte County poised to be the first in CA to ban fracking?

Who would have believed that Butte County could be the first in California to adopt a ban on fracking?!

A few days ago, we were elated to watch as our elected leaders vocalized their support for a ban on fracking in Butte County and then voted 4-1 to proceed with drafting the language for a ban. (Thank you to Lambert, Kirk, Teeter and Connelly for supporting this.) Not a moratorium, not a soft regulation of fracking through a conditional use permit (which was presented on the agenda), but an actual BAN.

No other county in CA has yet banned fracking, so we stand ready to become the first!



BEC joined dozens of citizen activists at a public hearing on fracking at the Butte County Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, April 8th. The hearing was held on the question of whether to limit or regulate the practice of hydraulic fracturing for natural gas in Butte County through a change to the Zoning Code, which would have required a conditional use permit and environmental review. The outcome of the discussion was that the Supervisors voiced support for a ban on fracking. That was a better outcome than any of us could have predicted. You can imagine the cheers and excitement from the crowd during the discussion and the final vote! It felt like a huge victory for all who have worked to push this issue over the past year and a half!

But wait: we haven't banned fracking yet! The next step is to present the language for a ban at an upcoming Supervisors meeting, which will likely take place in May or June. BEC will be involved in facilitating final adoption of the ordinance, and we'll keep you posted as things develop.

Meanwhile, grassroots petition-gathering efforts continue for a fracking ban. These signatures are needed to show public support for this ban, since now the opposition will most certainly come out of the woodwork. **Volunteers are needed now** throughout Butte County to help gather at least 7,500 signatures or as many as 15,000. [A volunteer training will take place this Saturday](#), April 12 at 1pm at the Chico Peace & Justice Center.

To get involved in the Frack-Free Butte County campaign, visit www.facebook.com/frackfreebuttecounty

For a more lengthy articles and photos by Karen Laslo please go to ChicoSol.com

Earth Day Film: Plastic Paradise: *The Great Pacific Garbage Patch*

Celebrate Earth Day with us! Join BEC at the Sierra Nevada Big Room

on **Tuesday, April 22** for a screening of the new award-winning film "*Plastic Paradise: The Great Pacific Garbage Patch*."

Chico Bag and Klean Kanteen are hosting this Earth Day film screening event and fundraiser to benefit three local nonprofits: [The Sacramento River Preservation Trust](#), [Kids & Creeks](#), and [BEC's Recycling and Rubbish Education Program \(RARE\)](#).

Doors open at 6 p.m., film start at 7pm, and any donation amount gets you in the door. Special gifts from ChicoBag and Klean Kanteen will be given to those who donate \$15 or more.

We hope to see you there! [Join the facebook event](#) and invite your friends. [More details are available on the BEC website.](#)



Special Thank You to our Event Sponsors



The Endangered Species Faire: The Webs of Life

Just a few things to get you excited about this year's [Endangered Species Faire](#).

- Feeling a sense of pride that you are a part of a community so actively involved in environmental causes.
- Listening to live music under the shade of giant valley oak trees.
- Looking in microscopes, competing in the nature bowl, and making instruments with garbage.



- Drinking strawberry lemonade while dipping your feet in the cool waters of Big Chico Creek.
- Cheering on local school children as they parade and display their hand-made endangered species puppets.
- Yummy Food including: A new food truck in town called the Grub Station, Maria's Tamales, Blush Catering, and Chico Natural Foods Organic Popcorn Bar.
- Amazing local bands including: The Upstairs Neighbours, Electric Canyon

Our new location is at One Mile in Lower Bidwell Park, which was actually the original Endangered Species Faire site many decades ago. We return to this original venue for better access, better swimming, more shade, and more electricity.

We'll see you on **Saturday, May 3rd from 11am-5pm**, at One-Mile in Bidwell Park.

Help us Reach our Goal

This is BEC's year of Membership. We proudly represent the collective voice of more than 700 community members, and this year, it is our goal to add 100 new individuals to stand with us on behalf of the environment. Since announcing the membership drive, we have 15 new BEC members!

Are you already a member? Thank you!

Please tell your family and friends about the work BEC does on behalf of the local community and environment. **Pass along this newsletter** and share the impact that your contributions make possible.

Not yet a member? You should be! We have donation options for all income levels, and every dollar truly helps. You are reading our newsletter, which shows you all the ways BEC is responding to environmental issues in our community. You care, we care, [join us](#)!

Did your membership lapse? Conveniently [renew online today!](#) We are grateful for your continued support!

For more information about the benefits of Membership, please call 891-6424, stop by our office in downtown Chico, or [email Justina](#).



Water Wisdom

Even though it has been raining, we continue to hear the reservoirs are well below average and the snow pack is thin. Being in a water shortage heightens our awareness to the importance of water in our lives,

and we take action to be a part of the solution. We teach our kids to turn the faucet off while brushing their teeth, we stop watering our lawns, and we talk to our friends about what drought means for local farmers. If we continue to learn about ways to use water wisely and accomplish this alongside our fellow community members, we will find that in the long term, drought cycles will no longer be considered emergencies.



BEC is hosting [two upcoming water workshops](#) that will help you conserve even more!

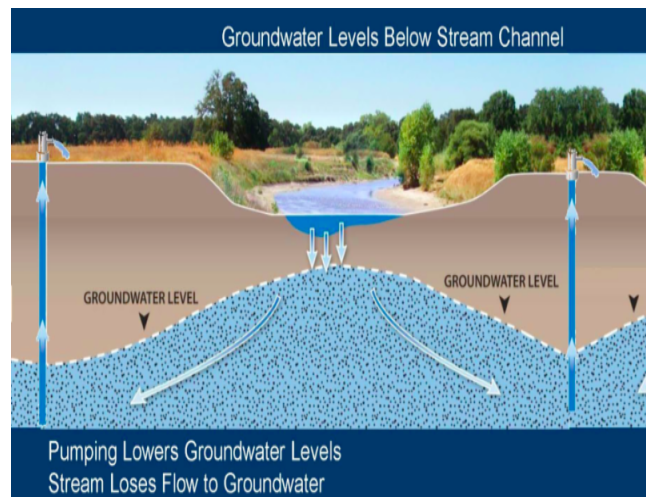
by Bubba Suess

Find out how water wise you are by taking this quiz:
(answers at bottom of newsletter)

1. Where does your water come from?
2. Why is there water in the creek in the summer even though it hasn't rained in months?
3. How much water on average does a Chico citizen use each day?
4. Where do the creeks of Chico originate from and flow to?
5. What are three ways your family does or could conserve water?

Groundwater Watch

If there is a silver lining to the 2014 drought, it might be that **we're finally seeing some new rules proposed for regulating groundwater**. CA's oversight of groundwater has been limited: left to local jurisdictions where boundaries do not coincide with those of the hidden, often exploited resource below. Because the groundwater for which our lives depend, the Tuscan Aquifer system, flows widely beneath political boundaries, our local regulations are only as good as our neighbor's regulations.



BEC's water policy analyst, Carol Perkins attended a recent public hearing in Sacramento on March 24. Voices for the environment and the North State were underrepresented, as usual. BEC's comments focused on the need to regulate at the local level but also to ensure that the "local voice" is not granted solely to irrigation districts, which were established for an entirely different purpose and that do not represent the majority of water users.

While California's readiness to address groundwater management issues is a promising sign, we also have concerns. Reform and solutions should be regionally centric, with a strong basis in the local hydrology and geology. Would the state's

regulations supersede Butte County's existing protections for groundwater? The focus on groundwater banking as a method of water storage raises questions of state control over private use rights of groundwater. Rest assured, **BEC will continue to watchdog this important issue at the state level and strive to ensure that the environment and the North State is represented as groundwater policy is developed.**

For more on this topic, read the [Chico ER's recent editorial](#), and an [article from the SF Gate](#).

May is Bike Month

What a beautiful time of year to **get back in the habit of riding your bike** more often for work or play. And our friends at **Butte Bicycle Coalition** and **ChicoVelo** are organizing so many events in the month of May to help you exercise your legs and lungs, enjoy the spring scenery, and reduce your carbon footprint!



Highlights for 2014 include:

- [Bike to Work or School Challenge](#)
- Childflower Ride & Bike Skills Rodeo April 27; group ride leaves at 9 am
- Chico Natural Food Coop Member Appreciation Day May 2
- Seersucker Ride May 4
- Garden Bike Tour May 17 (includes a stop at [BEC's newly opened Oak Way Garden!](#))
- 5th Annual Children's Bike Swap May 18 11-3 pm, Boys & Girls Club
- Walk and Roll Wednesdays May 7, 14, 21, 28
- Bike Movie Night Out May 23; 7 pm, Senator Theater
- Oldspokes Bike Swap May 31
- Chico Historical Tour & Bike Show/Party June 1
- Chico Bicycle Music Festival June 7

For a full calendar and more details about this year's events, see www.bikechico.org For additional information call 530-345-7347.

Spruce Up Your Bikes: 6th Annual Chico Bicycle Music Festival

Taking place on **Saturday, June 7th** from 12pm till dark, the Chico Bicycle Music Festival is the perfect finale to BIKE month, a national campaign promoting bicycling to work, school and play. The Chico Bicycle Music Festival (CBMF) is a non-profit event promoting human-scale transportation and talented local musicians through innovation, bicycles and community.

This festival is for all ages and free to the public. The audience runs the amplified sound, by bicycling to generate power. This gets people moving to the music and participating in a new way of thinking of energy. Bicycling to two different venues also gives the community a feel for moving themselves on a bicycle and realizing how fun and easy it is. We have volunteers helping to make the festival run smoothly and efficiently. BEC is proud to be the fiscal sponsor for the Chico Bicycle Music Festival.

The Festival starts at Camellia Way Park on Vallombrosa with Music By:
12pm: Kyle Williams, The Railflowers and Bunnymilk.

Live-On-Bicycle ride with Lisa Valentine

Silver Dollar Fair Grounds, Commercial Building. Fair Street.

5pm: Chikoko, Evin Wolverton, Diamond Down String Band, Mark Growden, Wolf Thump and DJ Hocus Pocus.

Participating vendors include BLUSH Catering, Chico Chai, Chico Natural Foods Co-Op, New Belgium Brewing Company, Chikoko and other artisans.

Become a Fan on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ChicoBicycleMusicFestival>

Website: www.chicobicyclemusicfestival.com

Sign up to volunteer at: www.SignUpGenius.com/go/8050E4FADA722A31-cbmf

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Sign up to volunteer at the festival!

Become a Fan on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/ChicoBicycleMusicFestival>

Festival Website: www.chicobicyclemusicfestival.com

BEC Values Volunteers

Thank you so very much to the volunteers who helped make our Breaking Bread, Breaking Ground fundraiser a success. We rely on the generous support of our community, and while there are those with the resources to give financially, many of our supporters give with their time. And we are grateful!

We welcome you to [become a BEC volunteer](#) and join the fun at one of our [upcoming events](#):

- April 12: Humboldt Community Garden Work Day
- April 18: Endangered Species Faire Poster Making Happy Hour at the [BEC office](#) 3-6pm
- April 19: Earth Day in Bidwell Park (BEC will lead the Verbena Fields work session)
- May 3: Endangered Species Faire

We Need You at the Endangered Species Faire:

This is a large event that welcomes thousands of people each year. It runs smoothly, with many extra's such as being zero-waste and offering a bike valet service, only because many people pitch in to help. And the reason people pitch in is because this is an important event that inspires kids and adults to learn about and participate in environmental issues. (Plus it's fun and we feed you). [Become a volunteer here.](#)

Endangered Species Faire Poster making happy hour

On Friday April 18th from 3-6pm at the BEC office we will get crafty and enjoy happy hour food and drink while making signs for the Endangered Species Faire. If you feel like rounding out your work week amongst friends -- and transitioning from typing on keyboards to painting on cardboard -- we heartily invite you to stop by.

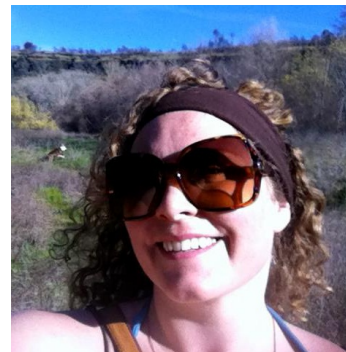
Go RARE Team!

It is with great excitement that we announce not one, but **two**, wonderful, fantastic and dedicated **RARE program assistants. Bret Jensen and Becky Holden** have been involved with RARE as interns and have shown a passion for recycling and waste management, as well as a commitment to the RARE program.

Bret and Becky will be assisting with all aspects of the RARE program, therefore making it possible to reach more classrooms and children. Each of these individuals bring super-star skills to the program, and with their help RARE will continue to thrive and share the message of the four R's! Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot!!!

BEC Board Elections this June

First and foremost, we want to **recognize and thank Amanda Freeman for her years of service on the BEC Board of Directors** -- and to congratulate her on her great new job, which has unfortunately taken her away from us. Amanda was a tremendous asset to BEC, not only for her professional background in law and natural resources management, but also because she was our Secretary, a member of the Executive Committee, and an all-around great person, dedicated to BEC and our efforts. Thank you, Amanda! We miss you!



Amanda's departure means we now have one vacancy on the BEC Board -- just in time for our June Election. **Have you considered getting more involved with BEC?** All BEC members are eligible to serve on the BEC Board of Directors. Our board is pretty diverse, with 13 individuals, about halfmen/women, and a wide range of ages from retirees to college students. Everyone brings something different to the organization, and all we ask is that you

are committed to BEC's mission and willing to put in about 5 hours per month.

There will be four seats open in the election. In addition to the one vacancy, two current board members will stand for re-election: **John Scott** and **Michael McGinnis**, while newly appointed board member **Sharon Wallace** will stand for election for her first term.

The deadline to submit an application and biography is Friday, May 23. [Applications are available on the BEC website](#), or by calling the BEC office.

Voting will take place over two weeks between June 2 - 14, and the new board term begins July 1st.

Become a Friend of the Faire



Holding an event as wonderful as the Endangered Species Faire for 35 years is quite a feat, and one that Butte Environmental Council is proud to have done! This is an event for all ages, with environmental education being offered alongside music, eco-entertainment, and a live animal show!

With science education receiving less funding, **it is now more important than ever to provide the hands-on learning experience that the Endangered Species Faire offers.**

Help BEC educate and inspire today's youth. Thank you for your generous support as a **Friend of the Faire!**

With Thanks and Gratitude

- **Chico Peace & Justice Center & the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship** for partnering on the film showing of Bidder 70. There was a great turnout and it was a truly powerful film.
- **Vallerie at Smuckers** for donating used barrels for our rainwater catchment workshop, and Bidwell Presbyterian for offering their beautiful brick patio for the event.



- **Donna Garrison** for all her hard work preparing and cooking an amazing meal for the Community Garden Fundraiser.
- **all our sponsors for the Endangered Species Faire**
- Super star **volunteers like Bree anya**, who has donated her time and excellent skills in support of BEC's administrative operations
- **Susan & Stephen Tchudi** who are working with 500 kids in Chico to create endangered specie puppets for the Endangered Species Faire Procession of Species Parade.
- **Mitch & Matt Bancroft** and all their friends who helped pull off a successful concert fundraiser for BEC's new Oak Way Garden.

Water Wisdom: Quiz Answers

Answer 1: Our water supply is groundwater. For

bonus points: The Tuscan Aquifer

Answer 2: Snowmelt recharges the groundwater, which flows to the creeks throughout the summer by gravity.

Answer 3: Approximately 230 gallons (according to California Water Service)

Answer 4: From Sierra Nevada Mountains to the Sacramento River to the ocean.

Answer 5: Endless possibilities



Environmental Events in the Community

Frack-Free Butte County petition gathering training,

Saturday, April 12 1:00pm

Chico Peace and Justice Center, 526 Broadway St, Chico. Call Chris Nelson for more info and to RSVP at 520-5973

Fracking Film Screening of Gasland 2 with Q & A after the film

1950 Wild Oak Ln, Valley Oak Village Community Center

\$5-10 donation to the Frack Free Butte County Campaign. For more information visit the [Facebook Event Page](#).



Chico City Council considers GMO Labeling Resolution

Tuesday, April 15 at 7:00pm - 10:00pm

Chico City Council members will consider hearing a resolution on calling upon the State and Feds to label GMOs. Concerned citizens are encouraged to show up and show support. For more information visit the [Facebook Event Page](#).

How to Create a Food Forest

Thursday, April 17 at 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Butte College-Chico Center

Create a food forest wetland in your backyard integrating canopy trees, fruit and nut trees, herbaceous, shrubs, vegetables, flowers, bulbs, vines and cover crops together. Maximize production, space, water consumption, diversity and your soil biology. FREE for Butte College students and employees! \$5-\$10 sliding scale

donation for community. Proceeds to benefit Perma-fun-k. Located at the Chico Center Student Lounge Room 146, 2320 Forest Ave., Chico, CA. For more information visit the [Facebook Event Page](#).

Butte College Earth Day

Tuesday April 22nd and Wednesday April 23rd 10am - 2pm

Earth Days will be a 2 day long celebration at the Butte College Main Campus on the Fountain Lawn next to the Arts Building. Activities, live music, and healthy food will be available. BEC and RARE will be attending this event so stop on by and say hello! For more information visit the [Facebook Event Page](#).

Indigenous Earth Relations Alliance Conference at Chico State

Friday April 25, 9am - 5pm

The Indigenous ERA conference will be an exploratory conference that will present information and expertise vital to regional sustainability and resiliency. For more information visit the [Facebook Event Page](#).

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