



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



July 2015

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Dear Robyn,

Summer may be a slow-down time for you but at BEC, we're keeping busy as usual on some important advocacy work; namely the threat of excessive groundwater pumping, rural rezoning that would reduce the buffer between ag and residential homes -- resulting in increased pesticide exposure, and yes, we're still working on saving some oak trees from PG&E's planned removals! (More details below.)

Meanwhile, **we moved our office next door and we still need help** getting our new space set up and furnished! See below for opportunities to help BEC in the office and to raise your voice with BEC on the important issues.

None of this is possible without member support like yours. Since it's member renewal time for some of you, we're enjoying all the renewal envelopes coming in, some of them with delightful "keep up the good work" notes. Thank you so much for making it all possible!

Sincerely,

BEC Website

BEC Event Calendar

Renew BEC Membership

Last Month's E-Sentinel

Robyn DiFalco, Executive Director

Upcoming BEC Events

July 13-17:

BEC New Office Open House.

**Come visit us at our new digs -
downtown Chico above Naked Lounge coffee
shop:**

116 W. 2nd St., Suite 3

Same building, different suite. Come by for refreshments and to say hello!

Saturday, July 18:

5K Climate Challenge Community Run

Join GRID Alternatives and BEC and Reduce Our Carbon Footprint.

Saturday, Sept. 19:

Bidwell Park & Chico Creeks Cleanup

Join us for this annual event as part of the Great Sierra River Cleanup and Coastal Cleanup Day!

5K Chico Climate Challenge - This Saturday!

July 18: 5K - 7 AM. Come out and enjoy the morning. Start with a 5K fun run, followed by a breakfast and a community gathering to discuss climate action in Chico. Some proceeds benefit BEC! BEC members receive a discount at [sign-up](#). Use code BEC5K at checkout.



BIDWELL PARK • JULY 18TH, 2015 • 7:00AM
ADULTS \$35, YOUTH \$10, CHILDREN FREE!

REGISTER AT www.gridalternatives.org/chicoclimatechallenge
A BENEFIT FOR GRID ALTERNATIVES & BUTTE ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

New Office Open House This Week!

BEC is hosting an Open House Week at our new office this week - July 13-17. Please stop by; we will have snacks and refreshments all week for our supporters! Come downtown, check out the new space, touch base with our new staff, and get involved! We have information on upcoming events, our programs, and ways you can help as a BEC member.



We'll have a wishlist in our new office of both supplies and furniture we could greatly use as well as services we need, such as electrical work, painting etc. Come in, have some snacks, meet the staff, and see the new office. We can't wait to see you!

Also, **a huge thank you to Mark Stemen, Evan Oetinger, Dave & Celeste Garcia, Ken Fleming and Kevin Killion** who have gone above and beyond recently in helping us with everything from moving furniture to getting our internet reconnected. You all make this organization the wonderful community resource that

it is!

PG&E to Cut More Trees: Please Help Speak Out August 31

We need your help speaking out for Chico's trees!

BEC has been actively advocating to save trees that are proposed to be removed as part of PG&E's plan to clear its underground gas transmission lines. A few months ago we reported that **PG&E proposes to remove as many as 85 mature trees in the Comanche Creek greenway area within the Chico City limits**, and dozens more throughout Butte County unincorporated areas.



The latest development is that there will be a public hearing in late August at the City of Chico Bidwell Park and Playground Commission meeting, scheduled for **Monday, August 31**. This will be a very important opportunity for the community to raise our collective voices and let the City know how important these trees are. **We're calling for the largest trees to be saved and for PG&E to mitigate for the removal of any trees with a robust replanting plan.** PG&E's utility easement may give them the "right" to do whatever they want in this case. But with public outcry on this issue, we believe the City and the citizens can reduce the scope of this tree removal project and hold PG&E accountable for mitigating their impact.

Please **mark your calendar and plan to join BEC at the City Council Chambers on Monday, August 31 at 6 pm.** If you don't feel comfortable speaking at the podium, please come to the meeting anyway to show your support and concern. You can submit written comments in advance to the Clerk of the Commission at parkinfo@ChicoCA.gov.

The agenda and full staff report for this meeting will be posted 72 hours in advance at [this website](#).

Help us be a voice for these trees! Let's save some mature oaks!

Stop Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District From Draining Our Aquifer!

In Butte County, water resources are constantly under threat. Considering the ever present threats to water in our valley, water warriors of the North State are forced to choose their battles wisely; **the following is a battle we cannot afford to lose.**

On June 16, Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District (GCID) **released a Notice of Exemption for their 5 deep-water wells, each with capacity to produce an estimated 4,000 gallons per minute.** That means, combined, their wells have the capacity to produce 88 acre-feet per day, enough to supply 88 families with drinking water for an entire year. And now, **GCID wants to add five**



additional deep-water wells.

The draft Environmental Impact Report for this proposed well project has been released and the district will be accepting comments until July 30, 2015. Butte Environmental Council is working diligently with Citizens Water Watch and citizens on strategies to protect our groundwater resources and stop these wells from draining our shared aquifer. We are also working with citizens from Glenn and Colusa counties who are rekindling the group Save Our Water Resources, which successfully stopped Crystal Geyser from further privatizing groundwater back in 2010.

Turns out, this is an old threat raising its ugly head again. GCID originally installed these wells for "research purposes" and [BEC sued to prevent them from being used for production](#) (groundwater extraction) and the judge ruled the wells could only be used for research. And yet, on June 16, GCID turned on the wells and started pumping, claiming they are exempt from environmental review.

If you are a concerned citizen, **let your voice be heard next week at GCID's July 22 public hearing at [Ord Bend Community Hall](#)**. The deadline for submitting written comments is July 30. For more information about this threat and what you can do to speak out, [visit BEC's website](#).

Reducing the Ag Buffer = increased development and increased pesticide exposure

How are pesticides and increased rural development interconnected in Butte County?

The County's [proposed revisions to the General Plan Zoning Ordinance](#) would reduce the 300 ft buffer between Ag land and residential homes.

The reason? The current rules limit the "development potential" on rural residential zoned property. **In other words, developers can't put enough houses on rural lands adjacent to agriculture.** The County is now proposing to reduce the 300 ft buffer to as little as 25 ft in some cases! This 300 ft buffer is set based on the pesticide overspray drift and is in place to reduce exposure to pesticides.



The County's "Right-to-Farm" ordinance has merits but its adoption as currently written will result in increased pesticide exposure for neighboring homes and increased development in rural areas.

This is not good land use planning and will result in more conflicts between residential and ag, while taking away rural citizens' right to not have pesticides drift onto their homes, yard, pets and children.

BEC will give public comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report at the [Butte County Planning Commission](#) on **Thursday, July 30 at 9am in Oroville at the County Chambers**. Please join us and speak out. Call 588-3605 to carpool from Chico to Oroville.

2015 Bidwell Park & Chico Creeks Cleanup - Sept. 19

On Saturday, September 19th, BEC and the City of Chico will host this annual community event as part of the broader Great Sierra River Cleanup events. Each year this event brings hundreds of individual participants from within many areas of our community: schools, churches, youth groups, university organizations and families.



We have already received participation from several local businesses, including the **TriCounties Bank, Klean Kanteen, Orchard Supply Hardware, Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, Madison Bear Gardens, Lundberg Family Farms and more.** What a great opportunity to do some community service with your colleagues and show your businesses' support for Chico's parks and creeks! If you are interested in sponsoring this event, contact us by September 1st to be featured on all promotional material.

Groups are encouraged to wear their company or organization logo on the day of the event. **We'll have a photo contest on social media and you'll be encouraged to get shots of your group in action, helping to clean our beloved park.** As a business partner to this event, your company will be recognized for your generous efforts and your willingness to set an example of excellent community service. This can also be a great team-building opportunity.

This year we've made it easy to [pre-register your team](#), whether you're a business, a social club, a school group, family or an individual. So mark your calendar for September 19! The need is as great as ever.

Thank You 2015 Bidwell Park & Chico Creeks Clean Up Sponsors!

Platinum:



BUTTE COUNTY
FISH & GAME
COMMISSION



Gold:



Green:



A Solar Story - You May be Next!

BEC is excited to share the "solar story" of **Bill and Lori Bowler**, who are the first people to take advantage of **Solar City's** promotional installation of a solar system and contribution to BEC through the [Energy Upgrade California Energy Ambassador Program!](#)

The couple had been thinking of going solar for years and it wasn't until the presentation at a recent BEC wine tasting fundraiser, and after talking with a Solar City representative, that they took the plunge.

"One incentive is a really generous tax credit this year," adds Bill. "Honestly, our main motivation is environmental," he adds. **"There's the realistic scare of the drought, and sunnier days and less rain mean capturing more solar."**

The 5.6-kilowatt system will be fully operational and hooked up within the next month, and is anticipated to provide nearly all (more than 97%) of the Bowler's energy needs.

Two more families have signed up for a solar system with Solar City through the BEC program: **Forough and Sean Molina**, and **Aaron and Heather Lyon**. BEC would like to thank them and Solar City for its generous contribution!

If you are interested in taking advantage of the current tax credits, obtain a system (payment plans are available that can enable you to have solar installed with little or no upfront costs), please **contact Craig Almaguer, Field Energy Consultant, Solar City at 530.228.1895** or calmaguer@solarcity.com. Please remember to mention BEC!



Saving Water and Proud of it

Are you proudly letting your lawn go brown? Are your neighbors giving you a hard time? We heard from people whose efforts to conserve water were misunderstood or criticized by neighbors. Now you can let them all know you're proudly doing your part for the California drought! **It's time for all Californians to transition to minimal water use.** With this sign you can help make this a growing movement. [Get your sign from BEC today.](#) Signs are FREE to anyone who wants one; suggested donation of \$2 to help us cover costs.



Oak Watering - Calling All Volunteers

The [Oaks Project](#) is underway and going strong. Last fall, a great turn-out of wonderful volunteers including helpers from **Kids & Creeks** and **Juvenile Hall** helped us collect and plant acorns in 100 sites. This summer we are going to need **help from the community keeping those seedlings alive.**

Spread the word to anyone you know who would enjoy going to Upper Park on **Sunday mornings.** A BEC staff person will be there **every Sunday at 8:15 AM**

from now through end of August with water and supplies. Wear sturdy shoes and help us carry water to the little oaks. The seedlings are all within a very short walk of the parking lots. **Meet at North Rim Trail Parking Lot B at 8:15AM.** Then move to second watering spot near Chico Rod & Gun Club parking lot. Hope to see you there!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED For Oak Watering This Summer

Start at the
North Rim Trail
Parking Lot
8:15 a.m.



A project of the Butte
Environmental Council
Funded by the
California Wildlife
Foundation

EVERY SUNDAY



In partnership with the City of Chico Parks Division
and the Bidwell Park Golf Course

Special thanks to everyone involved with the acorn collecting
and planting, including Kids & Creeks, Butte County Juvenile
Hall, and the Bidwell Park & Playground Commission.

Time to Save Water and Energy (and how to talk to your neighbors about saving water)

Energy Saving Tips:

Investing a few dollars into a tube of caulk (under \$4/tube) or a package of weather-stripping (\$4/10ft) could save you at least \$20 a month on your heating and cooling bill. Bonus, sealing up drafts makes your home more comfortable.

Use these links to see how to seal your house:

www.energy.gov/public-services/homes/home-weatherization/sealing-your-home
www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home_sealing.hm_improvement_sealing

3 Easy Ways to Save Water and Energy for Under \$4!



Weather stripping \$3.98



Sink aerator \$3



Caulk/sealant \$3.98

Get in the habit of using the cold water tap when washing your hands. Turning on the hot tap uses energy even if you don't have the tap on long enough for the water to get hot.

Water Saving Tips:

- Install low-flow aerators (\$3/each) on all your taps in the house. Each time

you turn on the faucet, you'll be saving water. Already have them? Check to see what the GPM (gallons per minute) rating is. Older aerators are over 2.5gpm. Newer ones are rated from 0.5 - 2.2 gpm!

- Take 5 minute showers instead of 10 minute showers. Need a timer? BEC has 5 minute shower timers available for you!

More information on the [Energy Upgrade CA Website](#).

New Recycling Legislation in CA

Mandatory recycling of organic waste is the next step toward achieving California's aggressive recycling and greenhouse gas (GHG) emission goals. **California disposes approximately 30 million tons of waste in landfills each year, of which more than 30% could be used for compost or mulch.**



Organic waste such as green materials and food materials are recyclable through composting and mulching, and through anaerobic digestion, which can produce renewable energy and fuel. **Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions resulting from the decomposition of organic wastes in landfills have been identified as a significant source of emissions contributing to global climate change.**

Last October, Governor Brown signed AB 1826, requiring businesses that generate 8 cubic yards of organic waste or more to arrange for the recycling of their organic waste by April 1, 2016. Businesses that generate 4 cubic yards or more must comply by January 1, 2017. Stay tuned for info on how local haulers will roll out new services as this new law gets implemented.

Thank You BEC Board Members

We'd like to recognize and thank a couple of BEC board members who have completed their terms and recently stepped down from the BEC Board. **Skye Li, Grace Marvin, and Steve Handy** have all been significant contributors to BEC's success over the past few years. We are so grateful for their service and will miss them now that they're moving on to other endeavors.



We'd also like to welcome our newest board member, **Sarah McConnell**. Sarah has been involved with the GMO labeling campaign and comes to us with enthusiasm for doing some advocacy work.

We also have a couple vacancies on the BEC Board that we're looking for some dedicated activists to serve BEC. The board will fill vacancies by appointment. Any current BEC members interested in serving BEC are encouraged to apply. For more info about board expectations, and to download the application

form, visit www.becnet.org/board-directors . Call Robyn at 891-6424 for any questions about serving on the board.

Community Environmental Events

Chico Cloth harvesting Flax Workshop Sunday, July 19 from 8 am to 12pm

Chico Cloth will be taking this year's flax harvest through a Rippler which we made to extract the seed pods from the plant. We will also be winnowing the seeds from the pods. During the next few months we will be having hands on demos of the various processes at the Humboldt Community Garden which you are invited to attend. In August and September we will demonstrate the other steps for making fiber know as Braking, Scutching and Hackling. Contact Sandy Fisher at sandyfisher@chico.com



This Sunday, July 19, 6-9 pm - Frack Free Butte County Musical Chairs Fundraiser.

Enjoy an acoustic evening with Stevie Cook, small plates, beer and wine inclusive, and a raffle of artistically inspired chairs.

Limited seating. \$50 donation.

Contact Cathy Mueller at 530.680.83.52 or Dave Garcia at 530.533.2357.

Oroville Summer Speaker Series

Lake Oroville Visitor Center, 917 Kelly Ridge Road Oroville, FREE for the Public
Wednesday evenings at 7:00 P.M.; 530-538-2219

July 22: California's Water - It Belongs to All of Us! Jana Frazier

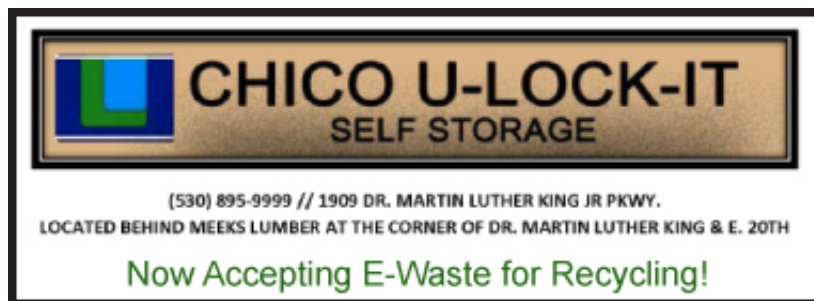
July 29: Wonders of Water Rex Burress

Aug 5: Culture and history under our levies Greg White

Aug 12: Fracking: Oil and Water Don't Mix! Dave Garcia

Aug 19: McLaughlin's Wall - the whole story Michael Ochoa

Aug 26: Drought tolerant Gardening Susie Cunningham



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