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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BEC RECOGNIZES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Chico, California – In celebrating its 41st anniversary, the Butte Environmental Council is looking to recognize **environmental heroes** in our community and also looking back over the decades to recognize those who've given years of service on behalf of the environment.

BEC is proud to honor the following individuals with this year's awards:

- Kelly Meagher– The Michael McGinnis Lifetime Achievement Award
- Paul Rea– The Colleen Jarvis Environmentalist of the Year Award 2016
- Claire Hutkins Seda & Jake Davis – The Barris Farms Service Award

This year BEC will recognize Chico resident **Kelly Meagher** with the **Michael McGinnis Lifetime Achievement Award**. The award, named after founding member Michael McGinnis, is intended to recognize an individual who has led lifelong efforts in environmental advocacy and education.

Kelly Meagher has had a long career as an activist, first as a volunteer for the United Farmers workers and later as a field organizer working under Cesar Chavez. After he moved to Chico, Meagher help defeat numerous poorly planned developments in Butte County, including Rancho Arroyo, later known as Bidwell Ranch. In the 80's Meagher helped run BEC's recycling center on Cherry Street, and became a general manager. Kelly Meagher is the original BEC Angel. An active voice in local politics, for over 30 years, Kelly has been a HUGE supporter of BEC through direct and indirect contributions. He has organized and funded numerous campaigns, in the name of environmental protection. More than anyone, he's used his own money to support BEC and environmental justice in our community. Recently, Meagher helped organize and fund the local No on Prop. 23 campaign in opposition to Assemblyman Dan Logue's effort to cancel AB 32, the state's greenhouse-gas-reduction law. Meagher is being recognized for his lifelong advocacy for protecting the environment.

A founder of Citizens against Hazardous Oil Trains, **Paul Rea** has been selected as **Environmentalist of the Year for 2016** for his efforts to raise local awareness about the hazards of transporting oil by rail. In March of this year, the film "On the Wrong Track" debuted at Chico State's This Way to Sustainability XI. The film is a documentary on oil trains coming down the Feather River Canyon. Oil trains are a growing regional concern, and Rea's documentary explains the significant, preventable risks to the water in the Feather River, Lake Oroville, and the Thermalito Afterbay that thousands of Butte County residents and farmers rely on. His

work has been monumental in the fight to protect the public from explosions and irreversible damage that could result from an oil train accident.

The **2016 Barris Farms BEC Service Award** recipient is jointly awarded to both **Claire Hutkins Seda and Jake Davis**. They are being awarded for their service to the local community in raising awareness and empowering individuals to take action toward reducing the effects of climate change. In 2015, Hutkins Seda and Davis helped create the Chico 350 group, our local chapter of the international organization known as 350.org. They organized a Climate rally last fall and a climate march this spring. These two local Chicoans are being recognized for their important work in our region.

Recipients were carefully chosen by the Butte Environmental Council board last month. **The awards will be presented at BEC's 41st Anniversary Gala fundraiser on Saturday, October 22nd at the Arc Pavilion. Tickets are \$50. The event will feature a Mediterranean-themed meal prepared by Obi Gagne of Chicobi's Catering, a Silent Auction, and live music.**

Present and past award recipients have helped BEC become the successful environmental protection organization that it is. Many past award winners have contributed significantly to the Chico Bidwell Parks & Chico Creeks Clean Up, the Endangered Species Faire, the Chico Bicycle Music Festival, the Code Blue series of citizen workshops on regional water issues, and the Dioxin awareness campaign in Oroville.

The Butte Environmental Council is a non-profit environmental organization based in Chico, California. BEC's mission is to protect and defend the land, air, and water of Butte County and the surrounding region through action, advocacy, and education. Since 1975, BEC has played a significant part in shaping the environment and policies of Butte County and surrounding areas.

For more information about the Gala event visit becnet.org/events/41st-anniversary-gala

For additional information of contact info for the award recipients, contact:

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530-891-6424, BEC Office

On the day of the event, press inquiries may call cell phone 530-720-2319.

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