

For Immediate Release:
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Butte Environmental Council

ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION TO HOST COMMUNITY GATHERING

A coalition group of local environmental organizations will host a Community Gathering on Friday, March 8 at the CARD Center. The event takes place from 5:30 to 8 p.m., following the annual "This Way to Sustainability" Conference at Chico State.

The Environmental Coalition was formed as an effort to unite the various local environmental groups around the biggest environmental issues taking place in Chico and Butte County, including the implementation of the General Plans (City and County), the Butte Regional Conservation Plan, the Agricultural Mitigation Ordinance, regional water issues and climate change issues.

Woody Elliott, conservation chair of the Mount Lassen Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, voiced enthusiasm for the formation of the Coalition. "The Environmental Coalition offers an opportunity for local conservation organizations to share perspectives and priorities on environmental issues," he said. "This combined activism will foster meaningful oversight of urban development in our vulnerable rural area and improve our fragile but resilient earth."

The Gathering event offers members of the environmental community an evening to come together in a celebration of recent achievements and bolster the sense of connection between the numerous groups, said BEC Executive Director Robyn DiFalco.

Jeremy Miller, director of Kids & Creeks, agreed.

"The ability for the groups and individuals that make up our region's environmental community to come together, collaborate and speak as a single voice on key issues cannot be overstated," he said.

Featuring appetizers provided by each group and adult beverages for sale, the reception will be a point around which the organizations of the Chico Environmental Coalition rally to reaffirm the importance of working together. It will kick off with an hour of mingling, followed by an hour in which each organization will briefly present its goals and achievements.

Meeting monthly since November, the Coalition brings together approximately 20 nonprofit groups as well as representation from both Butte College and Chico State. Participating organizations include:

- Altacal Audubon Society
- AquAlliance
- Butte Bicycle Coalition
- Butte College, Sustainability Resource Center
- Butte Environmental Council
- California Native Plant Society, Mt Lassen Chapter
- California Urban Streams Alliance - The Stream Team
- Center for Water & the Environment, Chico State
- Citizen's Water Watch
- Chico Creek Nature Center
- Chico VELO Cycling
- Cultivating Community North Valley
- Friends of Bidwell Park
- GRID Alternatives
- GRUB Cooperative
- Institute for Sustainable Development, Chico State
- Kids & Creeks
- River Partners
- Sacramento River Preservation Trust
- Sierra Club Yahi Chapter
- The Chico Grange

These groups are coming together to combine their skills and expertise, working collaboratively and strategically on solutions to the challenges facing Northern California, according to DiFalco and other members of the Coalition.

"Special places take special care in order to stay that way," John Merz, chair of Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance, said. "For me, that's what the Environmental Coalition is all about."

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