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For Immediate Release

GRAND OPENING OF THE OAK WAY COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Butte Environmental Council (BEC) is hosting a Grand Opening for the new Oak Way Community Garden at the corner of 8th Ave and Highway 32 (Nord), adjacent to the Oak Way Community Park. The event is taking place at the garden itself, with use of the picnic area in the park.

The event takes place from 5 -7 pm on Tuesday, July 29 and the general public is invited to attend and check out the new garden. Since it opened in April, all plots have been leased to community members and the garden is thriving with the bounty of the summer growing season.

There will be a potluck and gardeners will bring dishes made from food grown at the garden. There will also be a "gardeners' swap" where surplus produce will be traded or given away.

The idea of having a community garden takes BEC back to its roots and its founding in 1975, when five groups, (including Chico Community Gardens) came together to form the Butte Environmental Council. Thirty-nine years later, in collaboration with the City of Chico, and CARD BEC has developed two community gardens, first Humboldt Community Garden and most recently Oak Way Community Garden.

The goal of the community gardens is to not only provide community residents with a place to grow food, but to grow as a community as well. The Oak Way Garden has created an alliance with Independent Living Services of Northern California to provide universal access to all the gardeners in our community. Oak Way is also in the process of constructing an area with elevated and vertical garden beds specifically for gardeners who have their mobility limited by age or disability. The idea of this is so everyone in our community can have access to gardening.

BEC broke ground on the Oak Way Community Garden Spring of 2014, the garden is now up and running at full capacity with a growing waitlist. The garden, located next to Emma Wilson Elementary School, offers 28 plots for community members. BEC volunteer Taylor Tansom has been working with CSU professor Mark Stemen at the garden and is coordinating the grand opening. "I've only started working with BEC and the garden for a month now and I love watching the garden as well as the community grow". Tansom says the garden's presence alone has started to bring the nearby community together.

The Garden is the brainchild of Chico State professor Mark Stemen and his students in Geography and Planning. Mark has been a significant part of the Chico State Campus' as well as the City of Chico's sustainability movements for many years. The creation of this garden is just one of many accomplishments he had overseen, but "this one has a special place in my heart," Stemen says. "I have always loved growing things, but growing a community is really wonderful."

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

For further information, visit www.becnet.org/community-gardens or contact Executive Director Robyn DiFalco at [\(530\) 891-6424](tel:5308916424) or robynd@becnet.org.

On the evening of the event, press inquiries may call cell phone 530-588-3605.