



Environmental Sentinel

Your source for Butte County's environmental news and events

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Protecting Butte County's land, air, and water since 1975

Speaking up for the Trees

November 2014

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Dear Robyn,

Community support for BEC's work feels stronger than ever these days -- and we're so grateful to everyone who showed their support at the City Council meeting last night, where we sought to defend the trees. Thank you to those who carpoled to Oroville in support of banning fracking, who came to our recent Gala, who helped clean up trash in the creeks, and who donated recently through Annie B's.

None of this is possible without your membership donations and we are proud to have you all standing with us on these important issues.

Sincerely,

Robyn DiFalco

Upcoming BEC Events

Saturday, November 8

- * Tree Plantings on Humboldt Rd
 - * Block Party with a Purpose on Lindo Channel
 - * Garden Work Days
- ... See details below for all the exciting things BEC is doing this weekend!

Saturday, November 15 9am - noon

Oak Planting in Upper Bidwell Park

Meet at the North Rim Trail, Parking lot B.

Thursday, November 20 6:00 - 7:30pm

Water in Paradise (and California's vision for water budgeting and the Water Action Plan)
The Paradise Library, 5922 Clark Rd., Paradise

Thursday, December 4th 6:00-7:30pm

California's New Groundwater Laws (and how these bills can lead to sustainable water use)
The Chico Grange, 2775 Nord Ave., Chico

Friday, December 12th 5:30 - 7:30pm

BEC Holiday Party at 379 E 10th Ave, Chico

Oak Tree Plantings in Upper Bidwell Park

On Saturday November 15th, the community is invited to join BEC in planting Blue Oak Acorns in Upper Bidwell Park. Join us and give back to the park by helping to restore the oak woodlands we love.



Date: Saturday, November 15th 9:00am to Noon

Meet at the North Rim Trail, Parking lot B.

During the morning we'll be digging, caging, and watering. Wear closed-toe shoes, long pants, and layers, and bring a reusable water bottle.

This is a four year project funded by the California Wildlife Foundation and the goal is to engage the community in the planting and maintenance of these trees. On November 12, 13, and 14, BEC is hosting Oak-focused field trips for local schools with Kids & Creeks and the Altacal Audubon Society. November 19th we'll be planting oaks with youth from juvenile hall.

[Sign-up here to be get involved or receive email updates about all oak tree planting project dates.](#)

Anniversary Success

BEC's 39th Anniversary Gala was a HUGE success! We had some incredible silent auction items, including 2 roundtrip tickets on Southwest Airlines, a year supply of Organic Valley Products, and a weekend cabin rental. **Thank you** to all who attended and supported BEC through the Gala. A special thanks to all the great volunteers and of course to our chef, Kaelen Davis!

In case you missed it last month, the 2014 award winners are:



John Merz - The Michael McGinnis Lifetime Achievement Award

Andy Keller - The Colleen Jarvis Environmentalist of the Year Award 2014

Joni Clark Stellar - The Barris Farms Service Award

Thanks also to our wonderful sponsors that attended the Gala this year: Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, Kelly Meagher, and AG Mart.

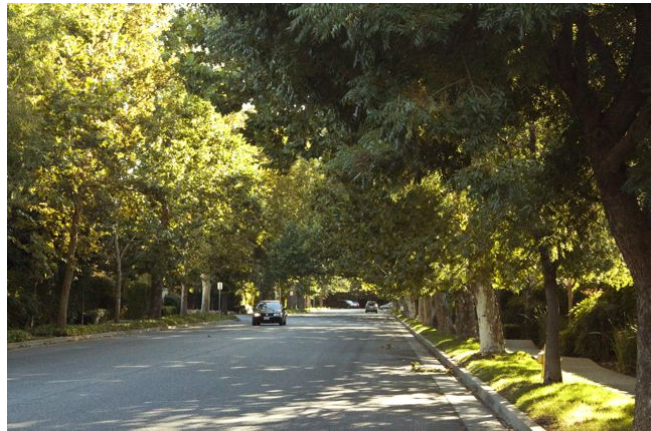
To see the photo gallery from the Gala, [click here!](#)

City of Stumps?

You may have caught recent media coverage of BEC's appeal to the Chico City Council to reconsider a **tree removal permit for 25 Sycamore trees** on Mission Ranch

Blvd. Here's the [CN&R article](#) and the [Chico ER article](#) on this story, and you might have seen last night's news coverage on Action News Now.

BEC is speaking out, not just for these 25 trees, but also to urge City Council to consider the bigger picture of Chico's urban forest and the disturbing trend we're experiencing, where tree removals have outpaced tree plantings for the past six years.



Since this issue has received a fair bit of publicity in recent weeks, a lot of concerned citizens have contacted BEC to say thank you for speaking up for the trees and that they share our concern about how many trees are being removed. A good number of them came to the **City Council meeting on Nov 4** to show their support for better protection of Chico's urban forest.

BEC filed the appeal to ask Council to reconsider this particular tree removal permit and to explore alternatives to cutting down these 25 trees or to consider conditions or amendments, such as replanting more trees than are being removed, in an effort to mitigate for the loss of the mature trees and the value they provide.



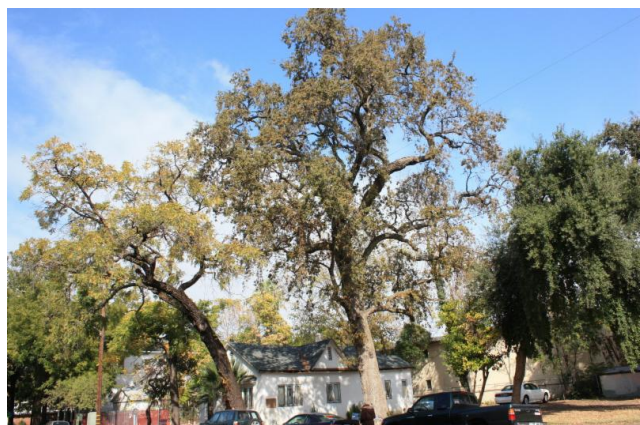
Chico hasn't had an urban forester on staff since Denise Britton left in August 2013. The city council approved funding in this year's budget for selection of a part-time contract urban forester, but the position still hasn't even been posted. Meanwhile, the final draft of the Urban Forest Management Plan, presented in November 2012, has been sitting on a shelf for two years.

Until it's adopted and implemented, **Chico's municipal code lacks any protections for the approximately 35,000 street trees** in the public right-of-way. There are an estimated 4,400 vacant spaces where street trees could/should be planted.

After an hour and half of worthwhile discussion and public testimony at last night's City Council meeting (Nov 4), Council approved the tree removal permit (5-2). The decision was disappointing, but our efforts for broad protection of Chico urban tree canopy will continue.

Blitz Tree Planting on Nov 8

A year ago BEC appealed the removal of a pair of oak trees on the corner of 8th and Salem. We eventually withdrew the appeal in part because the Salvation Army graciously agreed to plant more trees, but we also called for the draft Urban Forest Management Plan to be adopted. At the City Council's last goals setting session, they set the goal of adopting



the Urban Forest Management Plan within a year, and charged the Park Commission with finalizing the draft. Meanwhile the City has cancelled nine of the last twelve tree committee meetings and no progress has been made on the forest plan.

This weekend, CSUC students from Construction Management and the department of Geography are **planting 18 trees** around the Butte County Housing authority project on Humboldt, and we are using the draft forest plan to guide us. Eighteen trees added to the urban forest sounds wonderful, until you hear that 25 more are coming down (see previous article about Sycamores on Mission Ranch Blvd). By the City's own reports, in each of the last five years, the city has cut down more street trees than it has planted (see graph in previous article).

Blitz Tree Planting with CSUC

When: Saturday, November 8th from 8:30-noon

Where: along Humboldt Road and at the Torres Shelter off Silver Dollar Way

This is the first of several tree plantings this fall and spring with future dates TBA.

Chico Tree Advocates Thanks You for Your Support!

With the help of over 30 generous local donors, Chico Tree Advocates and Charles Withuhn raised \$2,530 for tree planting by the September 30 deadline for the City of Chico's mini-grant program. These funds were matched 92% by the City with an additional \$2,326, **for a total of \$4,856 raised to plant street trees in Chico!**

Tree planting dates will be scheduled for winter and spring.

To get involved, please [contact Charles by email](#) or call 343-3152.



CTA meets at 4pm on the second Tuesday of each month at the Chico Peace and Justice Center, 526 Broadway in Chico. All are welcome to attend.

Chico Tree Advocates also now has a [website](#). Give it a look!

Local Fracking Bans Meet with Some Success

On October 23, a couple dozen of us spoke at the Butte County Planning Commission meeting to make the case for banning fracking.

We were so grateful to see how many citizens showed up that day, including a good showing from farmers who spoke out about the risk of contaminating our water resources. The pro-fracking voices were also there, some of whom appeared to be well-paid lobbyists for the oil and gas industry, but we certainly outnumbered them.

The outcome of the meeting was that the Commissioners are still considering revisions to the draft ordinance. **The next public hearing will be held on Thursday, December 11th in Oroville.**

We've been working so hard for so long that it's disappointing that this keeps getting dragged out for more months. But this time-frame is pretty typical and we'll just keep working on it.



Meanwhile, several other counties had success banning fracking at the November ballot: **San Benito County passed a ban with 57% of the vote**, and **Mendocino County voters banned fracking with 67% support**. However, in Santa Barbara County, a fracking ban lost after oil industry groups spent more than \$7.6 million to beat the measure placed on the ballot by local grassroots groups. This is what we're up against!

Come Celebrate The Season With Us!

Join us **Friday, December 12th**, to celebrate the achievements of the past year, catch up with old friends, and make new ones!



BEC's Holiday party will take place at the home of BEC members Nani Teves and Jonas Herzog **379 E 10th Ave in Chico** from **5:30 - 7:30pm**.

Bring a dish or drinks to share, or just show up for the fun! As we've done the past few years, there will be various handmade gifts for sale as part of your holiday shopping, and the artists will be donating a portion of the proceeds to BEC. Artists interested in participating should call 891-6424.

For more details, visit <http://www.becnet.org/events/bec-holiday-party>

Upcoming Environmental Events in the Community

For more information about upcoming local events please visit BEC's Environmental Events Calendar at: <http://www.becnet.org/events>

Wed & Thurs, November 5th and 6th
Butte College Campus Sustainability Day

Main Campus, Sustainability Resource Center (SSG-101), 10am to 2pm
Theme is "Waste". Booths, films, upcycled art contest, paperless technology resources and much more! Contact: sustainability@butte.edu or 879-6143



Sat, Nov 8 OMG GMO Film Series event at the Pageant Theatre
<https://www.facebook.com/events/859482624070647>

Sat, Nov 8, (9 am to noon)

Block Party with a Purpose: Neighborhood Cleanup and Invasive Plant Removal, Lindo Channel at Esplanade

(BEC, California Native Plant Society, Chico Park Division)

<http://www.becnet.org/watershed-program>

Sat, Nov 8 Native Plant Sale, 10 am-2 pm, Bidwell Mansion State Park, Chico
CNPS will be part of the festivities at the Farm City Celebration Harvest Festival. Some of the available plants for sale include California skullcap, goldenrod, wild strawberry, milkweed, chaparral clematis, white sage, blue-eyed grass and rabbitbrush..

Sat, Nov 8 Humboldt Community Garden Workday 8am - noon

Sun, Nov 9 Oak Way Community Garden Workday 8am - noon

Sun, Nov 9 Tiny House Village Expert Andrew Heben

All are invited to come and hear Andy Heben, founder of the tiny house village in Eugene, Oregon on Nov 9 at 3 pm at Bidwell Presbyterian Church, 208 W. First Street in Chico. Andy's recent book Tent City Urbanism is the definitive text on using small structures as alternative to living outside.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1509827705942808/>

Tues, Nov 11 Sierra Club Yahi Program Meeting 6:30pm

Nancy Hawley will tell us how she became a park ranger and about her experiences at Cape Hatteras National Seashore and Denali National Park. Social hour with refreshments will start at 6:30pm with the program following at 7pm. at the Chico Branch Library at 1108 Sherman Ave. on the corner of East First Ave. and Sherman in Chico. The talk is free and open to the public. Non Sierra Club members are welcome. For more information call Suzette Welch 342-9214.

Thurs, November 13

Sacramento River Preservation Trust's 30th Annual Members Dinner

The celebration begins at 5:30 pm at the Sierra Nevada Brewery's Big Room, with music provided by John Seid & Larry Peterson. There will be a no host bar and a silent auction running from 5:30-7:15pm, followed by dinner and a short program. This year's guest speaker and recipient of the Sacramento River Preservation Trust's Founders' Award will be Rita Schmidt Sudman, retired executive director for the Water Education Foundation and state water system professional. For reservations and payment questions please call the Sac River Trust office at (530) 345-1865 or email lucas@sacrivertrust.org.



<https://www.facebook.com/events/1483987205212514/>

Tues Nov 18 Seminar: Frank Corsetti, Geobiology, Department of Earth Sciences, USC

4:00-5:00 PM at CSU Chico, Physical Sciences Room 213

Earth- Life Transitions Associated with the Triassic-Jurassic Mass Extinction

<http://www.csuchico.edu/geos/events-and-seminars/2014-Seminar-Schedule%20.shtml>

Wed, Nov 19 Outdoor Education for All! (OEFA) Strategic Plan Meeting:

defining 5-yr goals that will lead to an organizational Action Plan for Butte County and beyond. Bidwell Mansion Visitor Center 4-7pm, Free Parking
Community invited - your input is highly valued! By working together, expand outdoor education opportunities for all!

Wed, Nov. 19 Guest Speaker: Guy McPherson

Butte College Chico Center (Forest Ave), rm. 146, 6:30 to 8:30pm

Guy McPherson, Award Winning Conservation Biologist, Author and Professor Emeritus at the University of Arizona. McPherson's topics range from education and evolution to the twin sides of the fossil-fuel coin.

Contact: sustainability@butte.edu or 879-6143

Thurs, Nov 20 BEC Water Forum: Water in Paradise (and the governors new plan for regional water budgets)

6-7:30, Location: The Paradise Library <http://www.becnet.org/water>

Tues Dec 2 CSUC Seminar: California Geoscapes, by John Karachewski, Dept of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC), Sacramento

4:00-5:00 PM at CSU Chico, Physical Sciences Room 213

<http://www.csuchico.edu/geos/events-and-seminars/2014-Seminar-Schedule%20.shtml>

Thurs, Dec 4 BEC Water Forum: California's New Groundwater Laws (and how these bills can lead to sustainable water use) at the Chico Grange 6-7:30

<http://www.becnet.org/water>

Wed, Dec 10 Chico Velo Holiday Party & Annual Meeting 5:00pm

Thurs, Dec 11 Public Hearing on Ordinance to Ban Fracking in Butte County

at the Butte County Planning Commission in Oroville

9:00 am, at 25 County Center Drive, Oroville

<http://www.buttecounty.net/dds/Planning/NotableProjects/Fracking.aspx>

Fri, Dec 12

BEC Holiday Party, 5-7pm

379 E 10th Ave, Chico (see details above)

<http://www.becnet.org/events/bec-holiday-party>

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