



# 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

## Butte Environmental Council Newsletter

March 2015

### In This Issue

**Upcoming BEC Events**

**Block Parties with a Purpose**

**BEC's Advocacy Efforts**

**Citizen Science Outing**

**Go Solar & Support BEC**

**Enviro Community Gathering**

**Rain Barrels in Schools**

**New Recycling Zones**

**What's a Negawatt?**

**Enter to Win!**

**Community Events**

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

[Forward to a Friend](#)

[Like us on Facebook](#)

### Quick Links

[BEC Website](#)

[BEC Event Calendar](#)

[Renew BEC Membership](#)

[Last Month's E-Sentinel](#)

Dear Robyn,

As a BEC member you can help magnify our efforts by **sharing this newsletter with a friend** and telling them why you choose to support our organization. As always, we couldn't do it without you, and we are so grateful for your continued support!

Sincerely,

*Robyn DiFalco, Executive Director*

### Upcoming BEC Events

**Friday, March 27** 5:30 - 8 p.m.  
[Environmental Community Gathering](#) at C.A.R.D.

**Sunday, April 12** 10am - 1pm  
[Citizen Science: Hike to the Mouth of Big Chico Creek](#)

**Sunday, April 12** 4 - 8 p.m.  
[Garden Party Fundraiser](#) at Arc Pavilion

**Tuesday, April 14** 5-7:30 p.m.  
[Solar Info Workshop](#) at Dulce Home, downtown Chico

**Wednesday, April 22** 6-9 p.m.  
[Earth Day Film at Sierra Nevada Big Room](#)

**Saturday, May 2** 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
[Endangered Species Faire](#) at One Mile, Bidwell Park

(See articles below for all event details or visit our complete online calendar at [www.becnet.org/events](http://www.becnet.org/events))

## Block Parties With a Purpose

Neighbors and volunteers turned out in full force (nearly 60 strong) last Saturday, February 28 to rid Little Chico Creek of **garbage and an invasive weed called arundo**. This was a neighbor-driven effort to tackle some of the ubiquitous problems that plague Chico's urban streams.



The Mount Lassen Chapter of the California **Native Plant Society (CNPS)** and **Butte Environmental Council (BEC)** recognized that **frustrations were growing among the creek-side residents**, many of whom were ready to take action but did not have an avenue or the authority to do so. For example, it is illegal to remove weeds from the creek bank without permission and there are laws and safety issues when cleaning up homeless encampments. And so, **"Block Parties with a Purpose"** was born. When neighbors gather they are supported by BEC, CNPS and the City of Chico Parks Department with safety assurances, tools, dumpsters, matching volunteers and lunch (yum!)

We are all working towards the goal that urban waterways can once again be the **beautiful little neighborhood creeks** and healthy wildlife habitat corridors that they once were.

*\*Thank you Waste Management and Woodstocks Pizza for supporting this event!*

## BEC's Latest Advocacy Efforts

### PG&E Tree Removals

Have you heard about the hundreds of trees removed at the Oroville Cemetery recently? We have been working hard to learn details about **PG&E's plans to remove hundreds of trees throughout Butte County** that supposedly threaten or compromise underground gas lines. BEC has been meeting with PG&E and with County and City of Chico officials to learn more about the proposed project. **We are strategizing ways to reduce the scale of the project (number of trees removed) and how to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures (tree replacements) are planned and completed.** Stay tuned for future public meetings about this issue.



### Fracking

Thanks to all who showed up for the Feb 10th Butte County Board of Sups hearing which took all day and had a packed audience. The ban wasn't adopted; instead supervisors directed staff to proceed with an ordinance to ban disposal of waste in injection wells and present a Conditional Use Permit requirement for fracking. The effort continues with the development of new strategies and of course the citizen initiative will be on the June 2016 election.

## Groundwater Legislation

We're actively "watchdogging" the implementation process for this new legislation and weighing in on how groundwater basin lines are drawn, who has authority over each basin, and how rules for "water budgets" will be determined.

## Arundo Removal in Little Chico Creek

We're still waiting to hear whether funding has been awarded for a \$1 million dollar grant with the City of Chico to remove the invasive weed Arundo Donax. Meanwhile, we're moving forward with partners at the City and the Native Plant Society to continue chipping away at the problem. (See block parties article above.)



## Ag Buffers & Setbacks in the Butte County General Plan

The County is working on revisions to the setback requirements for residential development in rural areas, anticipated for spring/summer 2015. Depending on how the rules are written, it could lead to a significant increase in development (or not). We're waiting for the final documents and the full Environmental Impact Report later this year. While out of date, [this link provides some background info about what is being considered](#).

## Citizen Science Outings: A scientific exploration of the Big Chico Creek Watershed

Join in for an upstream migration along Big Chico Creek, from the confluence with the Sacramento River to the forested spring headwaters. We'll be joined by salmon scientists, hydrologists, meteorologists, and forest experts to help us understand the scientific mysteries of the creek we love. These field trips are for everyone awed by the wonders of nature and who have a spirit for learning.

### Mouth of Big Chico Creek

Sunday April 12th 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

### The Meandering Middle

Sunday May 24th 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

### Pilgrimage to the Headwaters

Sunday June 7th 8 a.m.-5 p.m.



[All the juicy details and RSVP information here.](#)



## Save Money and Support BEC with Solar on your Rooftop!

BEC has partnered up with full-service solar provider, [SolarCity](#), to help bring the benefits of solar energy to the North State area. **If you've been thinking about going solar, or want to learn more about your options, now is the perfect time to go green and support BEC in one step.** For every household that installs solar through SolarCity and references BEC, **BEC will receive \$250.** At this rate, it will only take 100 referrals for BEC to reach its goal of earning \$20,000!

SolarCity makes clean energy available to homeowners, businesses, schools, non-profits and government organizations at a lower cost than they pay for energy generated by burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas. There are **no upfront fees or installation costs**, just pay a guaranteed lower monthly bill to SolarCity.

**For more information, join us at our [Solar Information Workshop](#) on Tuesday, April 14 from 6-7:30 pm** at Dulce Home in downtown Chico (127 Main St). You'll get all the details plus appetizers and beverages! Or visit [www.becnet.org/solar](http://www.becnet.org/solar) or contact Craig Almaguer at **228-1895** or [calmaguer@solarcity.com](mailto:calmaguer@solarcity.com) to schedule a free consultation.

***And don't forget to mention you heard about this opportunity through BEC!***

### JOIN THE SOLAR REVOLUTION TODAY!

**Go Green and Support BEC in One Step!**  
Send funds back to BEC by going solar with SolarCity, America's #1 full-service solar provider.



**Protect Your Environment!**  
By going solar, you can reduce your carbon emissions by the equivalent of taking one car off the road for 20 years!

**Save More Than Energy!**

- No upfront fees
- No installation costs
- Just pay a monthly bill that's guaranteed lower than what you pay now for dirty energy

For more information, visit [www.becnet.org/solar](http://www.becnet.org/solar)



## Third Annual Environmental Community Gathering

A coalition group of local environmental organizations will host the [Environmental Community Gathering](#) on Friday, March 27 at the CARD Community Center following the last keynote presentation of the [This Way to Sustainability Conference](#) at Chico State.

The reception will provide an opportunity for the organizations of the **Environmental Coalition of Butte County** to reaffirm the importance of working together. This event will take place just following the final keynote speaker of the Chico State's [This Way To Sustainability Conference](#).

Attendees will gain a fulsome picture of our progress and challenges in environmental work through visiting the tables, participating in a scavenger hunt, and connecting with one another.



**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, climate change issues and water issues.

**Anyone from the public is welcome to attend and we'll even have activities for the kids.** Participating organizations will provide free appetizers and beverages (including beer and wine) will be available for purchase at the event.

## Rain barrels at Local Schools

We installed our third rainwater catchment system, most recently at Wildflower Open Classroom last week with junior high students (who were awarded with an extra math lesson calculating water conservation efforts) and first and second grade students who joined in to help paint!

Now, we do a rain dance!



## More Mandates, More Recycling

One of the most common things we hear from County residents is, **"Why don't I have recycling services at my house if I live in the county and not the city?"**

Well, good news! As of March 1st, you may be able to receive recycling services where you could not before.

**Recycling and green waste collection will now be part of basic collection services in six new recycling zones within the County.** These areas include: Durham, Magalia, South Oroville, Thermalito, Kelly Ridge, and the outskirts of the Chico "sphere of influence".



California has a statewide mandate for local cities and counties to divert 75% of their waste from landfills. This means adding more options for residents to recycle. Butte County is doing their part to make this process efficient and sustainable for all residents. According to county recycling coordinator Steve Rodowick, "We will organize the unincorporated parts of the County into specific service areas for the collection of waste and recyclables. This allows the waste haulers, as well as the County, to operate more efficiently and therefore add more services to meet the new State mandates. With a more efficient system there will be **fewer trash/recycling trucks on the road, less wear and tear on those roads, fewer greenhouse gas emissions** and will provide a stable funding source for the Neal Road Recycling and Waste Facility and the Butte Regional Household Hazardous Waste Facility and will allow Butte County to develop additional renewable energy projects."

For more information on how these changes may affect your address, check out the county website at [www.buttecounty.net/RecycleButte/home.aspx](http://www.buttecounty.net/RecycleButte/home.aspx)

Butte County waste haulers web sites are listed here:

[www.recologybuttecolusa.com](http://www.recologybuttecolusa.com)

[www.wm.com/location/california/north-valley/chico/index.jsp](http://www.wm.com/location/california/north-valley/chico/index.jsp)

[www.paradiserecycles.com](http://www.paradiserecycles.com)

## From the Energy Ambassador: What is a Negawatt?

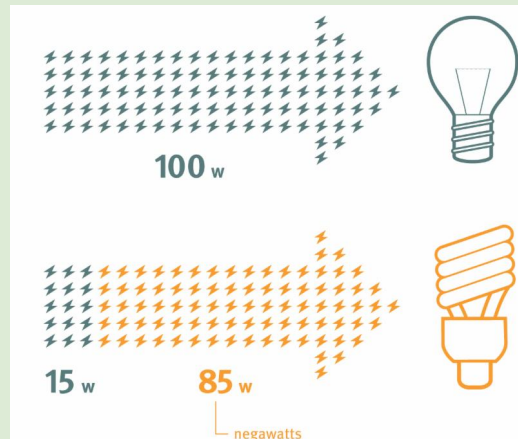
It's the **CLEANEST** form of energy. **It is the watt of energy that is saved, or conserved, and therefore not produced!**

Avoiding the use of energy in the first place is the cleanest and least expensive answer.

**"One watt never used is one that doesn't pollute."**

Here's one way to get negawatts in your home: Seal up the largest air leaks in your house-the ones that whistle on windy days, or feel drafty. The worst culprits are usually not windows and doors, but utility cut-throughs for pipes ("plumbing penetrations"), gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings, and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.

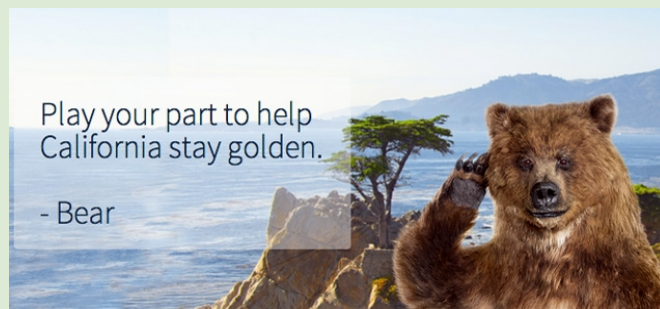
Find out more at [www.energyupgradeca.org](http://www.energyupgradeca.org)



## Make an action plan and enter for a chance to win!

**Would you like the chance to win a new Energy Star refrigerator, dryer, or Eco-star pool pump?**

Now until **March 31st, 2015**, register on [Energy Upgrade California](http://www.energyupgradeca.org) and make an action plan for savings around your house and be entered in the "play your part" sweepstakes!



Ask Becky if you have questions at [beckyh@becnet.org](mailto:beckyh@becnet.org)

## Environmental Events in the Community

For more information about upcoming local events please visit BEC's Environmental Events Calendar at: [www.becnet.org/events](http://www.becnet.org/events)

**Wed evenings through April 15**

[Respectful Revolution 8-week Film Series: Putting Ideals Into Action](#)

Wednesdays 7-9 p.m. at CSUC, Siskyou Hall, Room 120

Mar. 11th "Sustainable Living"  
 Mar. 18th -No Forum - Spring Break  
 Mar. 25th "Serving Society Through Ethical Business"  
 April 1st "Stories Of Restorative Justice"  
 April 8th "Personal Growth For The Common Good"  
 April 15th "Chico Night!" (features videos on local folks)



### **March / April OLLI Course: "Bidwell Park: What's There and Its Care"**

A weekly lecture series on Tuesday afternoons in March and April available to retirees who are members of OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute).

Register at: <http://rce.csuchico.edu/osher/register>

**Sun, March 8** [Maidu Plants Walk in Upper Bidwell Park - Chico](#). Meet at the Horseshoe Lake parking lot "E" in Upper Bidwell Park. Leader: Wes Dempsey, phone: 530-342-2293

**Wed, Mar 11** [Environmental Coalition of Butte County meeting](#)  
 9-10:30 a.m. at Chico Peace & Justice Center, 526 Broadway St.

**Thurs, Mar 12** [2015 Sustainable Business Series](#), pre-registration required  
 Energy Efficiency - March 12th  
 Alternative Transportation - May 14th  
 Water Conservation - August 6th  
 Recycling & Composting - November 19th

### **Fri & Sat, March 13-14**

[Abrupt Climate Change - Dr. Guy McPherson and Nature Bats Last Staff](#)  
 Chico Peace and Justice Center, 526 Broadway St.

**Mar 16-20** Camp Chico WIILD: [Spring Break Camp at the Nature Center](#)

**March 20** Deadline to [register for This Way to Sustainability conference](#) at CSUC

**Tues, Mar 24** [Fracking Presentation](#) by Dr Todd Greene, 5 p.m. at CSUC, Physical Sciences Building (PHSC), Room 202

**Thurs-Fri, Mar 26-27** [This Way to Sustainability Conference at CSU, Chico](#)

**Fri, Mar 27** [Environmental Community Gathering](#)  
 C.A.R.D. Center, 545 Vallombrosa Ave., Chico

**Fri, April 10** [Banff Mountain Film Festival](#), Laxson Auditorium, CSUC

**Sat, April 11** [7th Annual Walk4Water](#) with Bridging the Gap Foundation  
 8:30 a.m. at Bidwell Park

**Sun, April 12** [Citizen Science Outing: Hike to the Mouth of Big Chico Creek](#) with BEC's Watershed Program, 10am - 1pm, must pre-register





**Sun, April 12** [BEC's Garden Party Fundraiser](#), Arc Pavilion, 4-8pm

**Sun, April 12** [Wildflower Show and Native Plant Sale](#)  
Noon-4 p.m. at CARD Center, 545 Vallombrosa Ave., Chico

**Sat, April 18** [Earth Day Volunteer Day in Bidwell Park & Greenways](#)

**Sat, April 18** [Celebrate the Jewel, Chico Creek Nature Center](#), 11am - 4pm  
a day of sharing the educational and recreational activities; a Bidwell Park  
Showcase and family fun day.

**April 22 is EARTH DAY!**

**Wed, April 22** [Butte College Earth Day Festival](#)  
9 a.m.- 4 p.m. at Main Campus Fountain Lawn  
Contact: sustainability@butte.edu or 879-6143

**Sun., April 26** [Chico Wildflower Century Ride](#), Chico VELO

[Forward this email](#)



This email was sent to robynd@becnet.org by [robynd@becnet.org](mailto:robynd@becnet.org) |  
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).



Try it FREE today.

Butte Environmental Council | 116 W 2nd Street, Suite 3 | Chico | CA | 95928