



NEWS RELEASE
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Ticks in Bidwell Park

Chico, CA, April 26, 2011 - With spring here and summer around the corner, the City of Chico Park Division would like to remind park users of the presence of ticks in Bidwell Park. Ticks are small insect-like creatures most often found in woody and grassy areas. Ticks feed by attaching to animals and humans by biting the skin and sucking blood for up to several days. Ticks carry bacteria or viruses that can be transmitted to a person or pet while the tick is feeding.

The western black-legged tick or deer tick is the main Lyme disease vector in the western US and has been found in Bidwell Park. People are most commonly exposed to the Lyme disease agent by the immature nymphal black-legged tick which is active in the spring and early summer. According to the California Department of Public Health, an average of 5 to 15% of black legged ticks in California are infected with the Lyme bacteria. While Lyme disease is rare, the most common initial sign is a red, expanding bulls-eye rash that appears 3 to 30 days after the bite of an infected tick.

Prevention of Lyme and other tick borne diseases can be achieved by avoiding areas where ticks occur. Additionally, Park users can reduce their risk of exposure by staying on established trails and roads. If potential exposure is unavoidable, use both protective clothing and a tick repellent. Remember to check yourself as well as your pet daily for up to three days after being in a suspected tick area. If you find a tick, promptly remove it by using pointed tweezers. Grasp the head or mouthparts and pull firmly and directly outward without twisting. Place the tick in a vial or jar of alcohol to kill it and clean the bite wound site with disinfectant.

The Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District is available to assist in the identification of ticks, while the County Health Department can test for the presence of infection in the tick for a nominal fee. It is important to remember that nearly all of early diagnosed Lyme disease cases are easily treated and cured.

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact the Park Rangers at (530) 896-7800.

The Parks, Open Spaces, Greenways, and Preserves Division is within the General Services Department, and is responsible for maintaining and operating City parks, open space, and recreation areas including Bidwell Park, Children's Playground, Depot Park, City Plaza, Lindo Channel, Little Chico Creek Greenway, Teichert Ponds, and other preserves. Park Division programs include: Maintenance, Ranger, Lifeguard, and Volunteer Programs.