



DATE: 1/10/17
 TO: Bidwell Park and Playground Commission (BPPC)
 FROM: Dan Efseaff, Park and Natural Resource Manager
 SUBJECT: 2016 Annual Report

2016 ANNUAL PARK AND STREET TREES DIVISION REPORT

1. Overview

The Parks Division and Street Trees Division are pleased to share this annual report to the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission and the public. The objective of this document is to provide transparency to the public and report on performance of the Divisions. It also allows us to reflect on last year’s accomplishments and lay out new approaches to tackle upcoming issues. As there is a lot of information to digest, we split up the report into 3 parts: 1) the narrative (this section), 2) supporting tables and figures (Attachment A), and 3) photographs (Attachment B). We have minimized the tables and figures in the first part and the reader should consult the supplemental section for details.

In 2016, the organization focus continues toward providing basic and emergency services. Although staffing cuts initiated in 2013 (the staffing levels for both divisions is half of 2009 levels) continue to limit services, we developed new solutions to handle tasks, such as using resources such as volunteers and new capital projects to complete the backlog of work. The pages below highlight some of the work completed in this last year and is a testament to the people that are trying to make Chico a better place.

As citizens, commissioners, and staff we have much work to do and we will continue to build better partnerships and ways to do things every day. We look forward to working with the community toward solutions in 2017!

2. Division Description

The City of Chico’s Parks, Open Spaces, Greenways, and Preserves Division (Park Division) is under the Public Works Department. The Division’s major responsibilities include maintaining and operating City Parks, open space, and recreational areas, including Bidwell Park (one of the largest municipally owned parks in the United States), Children’s Playground, City Plaza, Lindo Channel, Little Chico Creek greenway, 1st and Verbena, Bidwell Ranch, Teichert Ponds, and other preserves. The City’s Park Rangers, Park Maintenance Crew, and Park Services Coordinator all work within the Park Division. Employees also support tasks to support other Public Works Divisions. The Division is divided into the several programs (Table 1).

The City Street Trees Program, is integrated with the Parks Division. The program cares for and manages approximately 40,000 City street trees and includes areas within the City Right of Way and also in public planting areas, such as many of the maintenance districts and public landscape areas within Chico. The program consists of field staff (arborist, tree workers, landscape inspector, etc.) and contractors (landscape, tree work, stump grinding, etc) to carry out the work of the division.

Table 1. Description of Division Programs.

Program Name	Description
Parks Division	
Administrative and Visitor Services	Administrative functions of the Parks Division include reservations, permits, support and analysis for Bidwell Park and Playground Commission meetings, development and management of budgets, vendor payments and contracts, and customer and visitor services. Our efforts in customer service are an important part of providing citizens with a good experience in the park and community.
Maintenance and Infrastructure	Park maintenance staff cares and maintains Bidwell Park and other assigned parks, preserves, and greenways. Many citizens are surprised at the scope required to maintain city-owned areas for safety and the satisfaction of park visitors. Our staff works seven days a week (365 days a year) and is comprised of three maintenance workers, one senior

	maintenance worker, and a field supervisor. Parks also uses contractors for certain tasks and areas. Park staff duties include cleaning, safety inspection, graffiti removal, and maintenance of park grounds, facilities, and play areas.
Planning and Monitoring	The Park and Natural Resource Manager with support from other departments and outside entities such as non-profits or consultants primarily conducts tasks associated with this program. Tasks include planning for trails, and vegetation management, and monitoring.
Natural Resource Management	Natural resource tasks have long been an important part of Park Division work. Trails, invasive weed control, plantings, tree work, even managing behaviors in the park have an important effect on Park health.
Outreach and Education	Community outreach and education is an important element to encourage appropriate use and appreciation of parks and resources. The Rangers take a key role in this function, with a focus on proactive enforcement of rules and protection of resources. However, all staff provide information to park users because of the visible nature of our work.
Ranger and Lifeguard	Park Rangers protect park resources and educate the community; patrol the City parks and greenways; enforce rules and laws; emergency response; visitor assistance; report and address damage and safety concerns; event coordination; conduct educational and interpretive programs; monitor; assist with natural resource management tasks; open/close park gates and facilities; assist prescribed burns and vegetation management projects. Since 2015, the Chico Area Recreation District (CARD) provides lifeguards to the City.
Volunteer and Donations	The Volunteer Program enlists the help of the community to manage and enhance Parks and Greenways. Volunteers serve as park ambassadors through Park Watch and work on a variety of projects to help with habitat improvements, infrastructure improvements, monitoring, and trails. The Donation Program provides critical support for interns, habitat restoration work and materials, invasive plant removal, and benches.

Street Trees and Public Plantings Division

Public Plantings and Landscapes	The program oversees landscape maintenance and installations in and around City Specialty and Neighborhood Parks, Municipal buildings, Parking/Transportation facilities, and Public Plantings. This is the city's largest annual service contract and directs services over 117 different fund accounts and over 250 service location points within the city's landscape areas. The City communicates daily with the landscape contractor, promoting contract compliance and efficient quality services. Landscaped areas in this program are categorized as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Specialty and Neighborhood Parks including City Plaza, Children's' Playground, Ringel Park, Depot Park, Verbena Fields, Humboldt Park, Emerson, Husa/Nob Hill and various greenways and vegetation mitigation sites. • Municipal buildings or facilities including City Hall, Municipal Services Center, Fire Stations, Police Department, and Waste Water Treatment Plant. • Parking/Transportation facilities including the Parking Lots, Bus Transportation Center, Amtrak Depot and the Airport Terminal and its facilities. • Public Plantings including Chico Maintenance Districts (CMD), Right of Ways (ROW) park-strips, back-ups and street medians throughout town.
Street Trees	The Street Trees program cares for approximately 40,000 trees planted in the Public Right of Way and other city-owned areas (excluding natural areas such as Bidwell Park and Greenways).

3. Resources

The Operating Budget (Table 1) for both Divisions comes from General Fund sources. Park funds are complemented by donations and volunteer support. Lessees also take care of certain park facilities. The Parks/Open Spaces (682) budget supports staff time, contracts, maintenance and repair not only for Bidwell Park, but for greenways (Lindo Channel, Little Chico Creek, and Comanche Creek), Depot Park, City Plaza, Children's Playground, Teichert Ponds, and Preserves.

In FY 2016-2017 staff will look to fortify staffing. For example, we will request a seasonal ranger, Park Attendant or administrative help (to assist with events and logistics), Maintenance Worker (1 FTE) and Maintenance Aide (1 FTE) (Partial restoration of cuts to allow for the return of regular facility hours, to perform minimal maintenance and safety, and support basic park projects and volunteer efforts), and Tree maintenance Worker (Partial restoration of cuts (2 FTE). This

allows for a viable crew number that could use the boom truck and safely work off of the ground, and provide for more comprehensive actions in response to emergencies.

4. Bidwell Park and Playground Commission 2015 – 2016 Work Plan

At the September 28, 2015 meeting, the BPPC adopted a Biennial Work Plan. The BPPC supported an alternative approach to reflect the current realities of limited resources by adopting a Primary and Secondary Priority List. The secondary list would be pursued as resources allow and opportunities arose. The priorities aid staff and the BPPC to track progress.

Table 2. Current Status of 2016-2017 Work Plan

Goal/Subgoal	Status	Comments
1. Develop and implement a priority list of projects and programs based on the Bidwell Park Master Management Plan (BPMMP) that will include adaptive management strategies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Complete Trails Plan (BPMMP, O.T-1 and Appendix E). b. Update Natural Resources Management Plan (BPMMP, 3.5.3.2 and Appendix C). 	In progress	The Natural Resource Committee continued work on the trails plan with a focus on Upper Park Road policy, working on collecting public input. Staff made some incremental progress on collecting information related to objectives for both plans. Staff anticipates substantial progress as capacity increases with the hiring of an Urban Forest Manager.
2. Support Street Tree Programs on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review and update approved Street Trees list and plan. 	Limited progress	Note that this is a more focused document than the Urban Forest Plan. As noted in the last annual report, progress on this priority hinges on the hiring of an Urban Forest Manager, which did not occur in 2016.
3. Review and update Park policies, rules, and fees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review current rules, fee structure, and practices for reservations, events, and special use (weddings, research, field trips, events, etc.) permit process for City properties to streamline and modernize process. The review will also evaluate commercial use of the Park and consider standards for event signs. b. Review and revise Rules and Regulations related to dogs and pets in Bidwell Park and other City-owned properties. 	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The City should unveil an on-line reservation system late in 2017. The modernization of the Park fee schedule will take a considerable effort and will begin after other priorities are completed and will likely carry over into the next workplan. b. Staff and Commissioners began background research to aide with the review of dog and pet issues, which included information from park users and a sampling of rules from comparable agencies. This item will come before the Policy Advisory Committee for evaluation, public input, and to develop a recommendation to the full BPPC.
4. Explore funding opportunities to better support Park Division projects and programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop funding for the implementation of renovation projects for Caper Acres 	In progress	Since 2015, Caper Acres fundraising efforts have raised over \$25,000. Repairs and renovations have begun on a small scale, but will greatly be accelerated in 2017 with the completion of a Phase I Plan. The plan will identify priorities and specifications which will aid with communication to donors and service groups and provide a blueprint to complete work. Catastrophic storm damage to the Crooked House, accelerated the replacement of this Phase III item.

Secondary Priorities

- A. Develop and implement a priority list of projects and programs based on the Bidwell Park Master Management Plan (BPMMP) that will include adaptive management strategies. Complete three of the following specific projects:
 - a. Update Trails Manual (BPMMP, I.T-1 and Appendix E).
 - b. Complete Park Infrastructure inventory (BPMMP, supports O.MS-2).
 - c. Adopt a sign manual for Bidwell Park (BPMMP, I.I/E-3 and O.DS-1).
 - d. Complete a feasibility/policy analysis for Upper Park Road (BPMMP I.Upper-15).
- B. Support Street Tree Programs on the following:

- a. Finalize the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP), including Environmental Review and prioritize short-term objectives that are possible within current budgetary constraints.
- b. Review and support a Street Trees Encroachment Planting Permit Program (developed as a City Administrative Policy and Procedure (AP&P).
- C. Review and update Park policies, rules, and fees. Complete two of the following:
 - a. Explore the need for and potentially designate new racecourse routes in Bidwell Park.
 - b. Review Bidwell Bowl sound restrictions.
 - c. Develop a naming policy for facilities and park areas.
- D. Explore funding opportunities to better support Park Division projects and programs. Priority items that help support this goal are to:
 - a. Continue support of park event(s) to celebrate the park, raise community awareness of issues and needs, and develop funds. Commissioners will establish obligations to help raise donations, recruit volunteers, or volunteer for Park fundraising efforts.
 - b. Seek funding for an architectural/historical review of Bidwell Bowl to determine reasonable actions for its renovation.
- E. Provide increased management focus on other City properties, including:
 - a. Develop a Lindo Channel Master Management Plan.
 - b. Receive information on ongoing mitigation bank efforts on Bidwell Ranch.
 - c. Develop management plan concepts for City Greenways (based on Lindo Channel Master Management Plan).
 - d. Review list of City properties and the current status of management plans.

5. Park Division Highlights

a. Administrative and Visitor Services

- 1) Service Requests – Staff closed over 1000 service requests in 2016. Street Trees staff closed over 739 requests of the 1103 that entered into the system. While there is still 964 Street Tree requests open, this breaks the steady increase in Service Requests from less than 150 in 2013 to over 1200 in mid-2016.
- 2) Park Hours - The increase of 0.25 FTE in ranger time allowed most park gates to return to pre-2013 hours for vehicle access. Restrooms returned to the pre-staffing cut levels with a new arrangement with the Sheriff's Department allowing Bidwell Park restrooms to be opened and serviced.
- 3) BPPC Support – Staff supported 10 BPPC meetings, and 2 Natural Resource Committee meetings, which equaled the numbers in 2015.
- 4) Park Leases – City Staff developed new leases using the City's new agreement template for the One Mile Concession Stand with the Dog House, and the Chico Equestrian Arena with the Chico Equestrian Association. Copies of submitted Annual Reports are attached (Attachment C). Any not submitted in time will be attached to future Division Reports.
- 5) Park Permits – Staff issued a total of 542 permits with Total event participation at 50,909. The estimates do not include spectators, which could increase the numbers significantly. This continues the decline from 2012 (694 permits and 81,472 participants).
- 6) Public Works Operations Consolidation – Parks staff again returned to 965 Fir Street this fall to provide additional coverage for administrative staff and increased coordination with other divisions. The move should allow for more administrative support during peak times.

b. Planning and Monitoring

- 1) Peregrine Point Monitoring Report – At the 8/29/16 BPPC meeting, staff presented a 5 year review of the monitoring program and data and provided recommendations for the course and monitoring approach. Staff will incorporate recommendations from the report into a revised 5 year Monitoring Plan that the BPPC will consider for adoption at a future meeting. The BPPC reviewed and accepted the 2015 Monitoring Report. ORAI has continued maintenance on the course, however, the extremely small window over the past 2 years have contributed to delays on key improvements recommended in the plan.

Both the addition of wood chips and installing alternative basket locations require the use of machinery that can be brought on site when the soil is dry and the fire danger is low.

- 2) Trails and Natural Resources Plan – Parks made minimal progress on these tasks such as updating GIS coverage and plant lists. The most significant progress concerned questions on Upper Park Road.
 - a) Upper Park Road – Staff developed a scope of work on the review of Upper Park Road with a consultant (as of 1/19/17, the contracting is nearly complete). Staff worked with the Natural Resource Committee at 2 very well attended meetings to obtain public input on policies related to this important park feature. A questionnaire will be developed for on-line and field surveys. The Natural Resources Committee (NRC) considered public input on the uses of the gravel portion of Upper Park Road; while staff worked on a companion to assess the condition of the road and provide remedies and costs. This item is part of the update for the Bidwell Park's Trail Plan. Staff will be finalizing a survey in 2017 to comprehensively collect information.
- 3) Horseshoe Lake Monitoring - Chico Environmental submitted the annual monitoring report associated with the lead clean-up (See March 28, 2016 Division Report submitted to the BPPC).
- 4) Bidwell Ranch – In late 2016, the City accepted bids for grazing at Bidwell Ranch and Foothill Preserve. The City awarded Bradley and Sons the winning bid based on the \$13,500 in annual revenue to the City. Cattle limit the growth of non-native grasses and enhance the flowering of vernal pool plants. The long-term disposition of Bidwell Ranch is connected to the Butte Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (BRHCP).

c. Maintenance and Infrastructure

- ii. Maintenance– Staff continues daily maintenance and unfortunately defers bigger items until we have resources to complete such work. In addition, special projects (such as opening new parks) and responsibilities (such as supporting volunteer efforts) have become the norm for park workers.
- iii. Improvements – Several improvements were made possible with a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budget approved by Council last year. Last year was the first year that the City had a CIP for general park facility improvements. Some of the benefits include:
 - 1) One Mile Recreation Area - new tables, improved lockable BBQs, and other improvements replaced features that had fallen into disrepair, such as the water supply (jug fillers) and the access to electricity. The One Mile restrooms received a new coat of paint to the interior and new hand dryers have replaced the battered and abused old ones.
 - a) Caper Acres Repairs and Improvements – new roof on the restrooms and new paint and flooring in the Crooked House before it was destroyed in this winter's storms. The damage from the storms necessitated the razing of the house. Staff is helping develop the priorities for the renovation plan.
 - b) Five Mile Building Revamp- Staff painted interior and exterior. However, the inspection of the more serious work needs to be undertaken as we have major rot issues due to maintenance deferral.
 - c) Upper and Lower Park Parking lots: Staff resurfaced Horse Arena and lots B, C and E with 94 tons of basalt road base this year and patched lower park lots as time and budget would allow, all lots are in dire need to be completely reworked with new material.
 - d) Cedar grove – received a partial make over with the replacement of all the picnic tables at the reservation site. Parks also purchased the remaining seven pieces of the Par Course equipment to complete the 2009 rebuilding of the existing course. Work will commence in the spring as time allows. –.

- e) Native Plantings –Staff completed the re-vegetation of the cliff site at Vallombrosa and Manzanita on Big Chico Creek. They planted a variety of herbaceous plants and grasses, installed new fencing and signage in hopes of saving the cliff from human caused erosion.
- f) Sycamore Pool repair – Parks crew completed additional repairs to the Sycamore Pool Deck and filling in of large cracks and holes in the pool floor and walls they also installed a new removable pole for the kiddie pool area.

iv. Comanche Creek Greenway–

- 1) One of the biggest accomplishments of the year was the opening of the Comanche Creek Greenway in July (7/22/16). Parks Staff worked closely Public Works Capitol Projects staff to develop the Greenway on time with a very short construction window (about 6 months). The newly opened facility provides access to a beautiful area of South Chico and provides parking, drinking fountain, picnic tables, benches, interpretive panels, a bike and pedestrian bridge and paved bike path and nearly a mile of new nature trail.
- 2) Upcoming projects may include: 1) Complete trail segments: a) Wrex to Valine, and b) West of bridge, including pedestrian and possibly vehicle access (Phase II funding); 2) Vegetation removal: especially a Yellow flag iris strategy and continue successful efforts on invasive woody plants; 3) Planting: Native grass delayed because of exceptionally early, wet weather. The City will be working with the Friends of Comanche Creek Greenway (FCCG) on a potential native plant hedgerow on the southern border; 4) FCCG continues very active volunteer efforts and the City will continue meeting with the group on a regular basis in 2017.

- v. Teichert Ponds – In fall 2016, Staff begun planning and construction on an improved trail to the "peninsula" area between Ponds 1 and 2. Early rains postponed completion of the project until spring 2017. When completed, the trail and access road will be raised allowing for better access during wet conditions and the trail will have two natural surface viewing "platforms".

- vi. Bridge Repairs - Parks has been concerned about the condition of the Ceres (Lindo Channel) and Marsh (Little Chico Creek) Bridges. As the costs of a comprehensive repair exceeded the Parks materials budget, we reached out to Public Works Engineering to look at better solutions than replacing the timbers (potentially replacing the decking with lightweight concrete, with the benefits of a smoother surface, less ongoing maintenance and has a longer life expectancy than the timber decking). The City will be looking at funding sources to make the repairs and we are hopeful that we will be able to initiate comprehensive repairs in 2017. In the meantime, Parks staff will continue to make repairs on the worst sections.

d. Natural Resource Management

- i. Wet Weather Policy – Staff continued enforcement and monitoring of the Wet Weather Policy. Unfortunately, CDEC relocated the weather station at the USFS tree farm to near Wicks' Corner (near Highways 70 and 149). A citizen notified us of the potential change. As of 1/19/17, it is still not noted in the location of the station information; however it was verified with DWR. Staff explored options for using a new weather station that has data readily available on-line. After some research, Staff will use a combination of sites the KCIC (Chico Airport) station:
 - 1) NOAA <http://w1.weather.gov/obhistory/KCIC.html> to provide good 1, 3, and 6 hour precipitation (the hourly data may be too much for our purposes for each day), and
 - 2) Weather Underground (<https://www.wunderground.com/history/airportfrompws/KCIC/1998/1/1/DailyHistory.html>) to provide daily data (but does not provide average daily temp and doesn't give the 24 hour ppt).
 - 3) This will be reevaluated with the wet weather report.
- ii. Sherwood Forest Restoration Area- Work to removal non-native, invasive species in the overgrown area just east of Caper Acres is underway! The area known as the "jungle" has been nearly taken over by Himalayan

Blackberry and English Ivy. Volunteers prepared the area and have planted 2 dozen Valley Oak trees. The Sherwood Forest Interpretive Trail behind Caper Acres is planned to be used as part of the Jr. Ranger program slated to debut in May of 2017.

iii. Little Chico Creek Corridor -

- 1) Arundo - Volunteer and City efforts continued to manage Arundo along Little Chico Creek. Except for a couple of locations treated in the fall, Arundo is eradicated upstream of Humboldt Neighborhood Park (wind chime). Considerable reduction has occurred on City properties down to 9th and Hazel, but it remains an issue on private property in that section. Treatment will continue as staff and budget allow.
- 2) Rehabilitation project – Rangers to the lead on an effort to clean up the Humboldt Avenue Corridor between Orient and Cypress. Parks worked closely with Chico PD, Butte County ACS, and engaged neighbors. Major limbing up of trees and sight line clearance along with removal of invasive trees and vegetation have removed the non-native improved habitat, and increased citizen enjoyment of the area.

iv. Butte Environmental Council (BEC) Tree Planting – BEC continued to plant and tend blue and valley oaks in Middle and Upper Bidwell Park (145 volunteers planted 117 acorn plots). They will continue maintenance and summer watering until oaks have grown out of their tubes, then replaced with a larger cage.

v. Trails Program –

- 1) Parks Division worked on additional improvements to the Monkey Face loop trail. The Santos Fire and early rains postponed the fall trail season tasks. Crews were able to install split rail, signs, and completed some trail work and volunteers installed jute and straw to close off trail cuts and split rail fencing sections along the beginning of Monkey Face trail to help guide trail users. Staff installed some signage with more to follow as time and budget allow. Next spring, , Parks plans a section of embedded rock, and some rock "steps" to connect the trail with the lower part of Monkey Face, and a new eastern connection from Monkey Face back to the Middle Trail. Rangers will also work on improved signage.
- 2) The new alignment from the Parking Lot to the Middle Trail has been very well received and handled winter extremely well. This section was subject to flooded conditions, loose surface, and erosion. Additional fencing has been added near the Horseshoe Lake parking lot and a new rogue trail was removed.

vi. Spanish Broom Treatment - Susan Mason from Friends of Bidwell Park and Dempsey Vegetation Management reported substantial progress on Spanish broom herbicide treatment in Upper Park with the treatment of well over 1000 shrubs. Wilting of these shrubs was apparent within a week following the treatment. However, numerous other seedlings and plants remain too young to produce seeds. Most of these could be hand-pulled if volunteer labor was available."

vii. Fires - August in the Park will be remembered as the month of fire with five fires breaking out between Bidwell Park and specialty parks. Three small fires in Teichert Ponds were reported during the month and found in close proximity to homeless camps. Upper Park had two fires on consecutive days.

1) Santos Fire -

- a) The Santos fire consumed 88 acres. Crews fought the fire from the ground and air and crews remained in the area for over a week. The fire and dozer cut fire lines caused significant damage to the park, namely, potential erosion issues, destruction of vegetation, and damage to trails.
- b) Staff completed a rehabilitation plan with CALFIRE and work started immediately after the fire. Parks Crew worked with CALFIRE (Ishi Creek Crew) to complete some work prior to the 9/13/16 forecast for heavy rain; and returned in early November to implement erosion control measures at the Fire Area (including Homestead meadow, Guardians Trail, and 10 Mile House Road).

- c) Closed areas included the Guardian Trail between Bloody Pin and 10 Mile House Road; the Pine Trail, and periodic closures of 10 Mile House Road. The Annie Bidwell Trail remained open. The closed area has been reduced to the Guardians and Pine Trails until dry conditions and work can be completed (likely this spring). This policy will be re-evaluated as conditions change. Signs have been posted at trailheads about closures and rangers patrol the area daily to encourage good stewardship. Rangers placed cameras on closed trails. While there is evidence of some mountain biking, rangers report that trail usage appears minimal.
- d) Forthcoming work includes improving trails, native grass planting, refining micro-topography to minimize drainage and erosion issues. Staff anticipates that once the trails appear stable and routes re-established that the Guardians trail will be opened.

- viii. Storm Damage – December storms brought flooding and fallen trees to the park. Several Valley Oaks succumbed to the saturated soils and flood waters exceeded the banks of Big Chico Creek flooding houses, eroding creek banks and leaving considerable debris to clean up. One of the most apparent incidents occurred when a valley oak uprooted in the saturated conditions and fell on the Crooked House. Staff will be inventorying the damage for potential release of emergencies funds.
- ix. Homestead Meadow Prescribed Burn: A 10 acre control burn between Guardian Trail and Annie Bidwell Trail near the Santos Fire area occurred on November 8th. The meadow was overrun with star thistle, a common invasive in the park originally brought in by cattle. Native grasses including blue wild rye, California brome, slender wheatgrass and purple needle grass are planned for this location. Connector trails to the ABT and 10 Mile House Road are planned to link this destination mountain meadow to the trail system in the future. Rainy weather precluded the planting of native grass in this area which will be postponed until fall 2017.

e. Outreach and Education

Community outreach and education is the hallmark and joy of the Parks Division, especially the ranger program from both a safety and educational viewpoint. Some highlights include:

- i. Coordination - With all the duties rangers are tasked with, coordination of presentations are challenging as other duties, priorities, and emergencies come into play. In 2017, an outreach to local schools is planned to encourage classes to schedule events with rangers and for individuals to participate in the Junior Ranger Program.
- ii. Ranger interpretation garners an increased “buy in” and stewardship for the park. Many talks, walks and bike rides are impromptu, but some are planned visitations with specific topical information. Rangers have met with school groups, clubs, volunteers and individual community members desiring to know more about the park. The perennial favorite outreach for the year was the Mountain Lion/Urban Interface PowerPoint. So far it has been shown to two groups with requests for future showings. Rangers have also had about a dozen participants in the last year take advantage of the Ranger Ride Along Program where individuals experience the day to day duties that rangers encounter.
- iii. Events - Park Rangers, staff and our volunteers participated in a number of events including the Snow Goose Festival, Endangered Species Fair, Elk’s Public Safety Day and the Walmart Allied Agency Day.
- iv. Fire Danger Sign - To increase park user's awareness of fire danger, the City of Chico Parks Division erected a "Fire Danger" sign at the entrance to Upper and Middle Park on Manzanita and Wildwood Avenue across from Fire Station 5 in August. The 4 x 3 foot sign reads "Fire Danger in Bidwell Park Today" and has an arrow designating the different levels of danger from low to extreme. Staff update the sign on a weekly basis unless conditions change dramatically. Citizens interested in the most current fire weather should consult the National Weather Service Fire Weather page (<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/firewx/?wfo=sto>)
- v. News Releases - Parks and Street Trees Divisions submitted 22 news releases in 2016. Releases shared information about safety, closures, new parks coming online and various event happenings in the park.

f. Ranger and Lifeguard

- i. Lifeguard Update - A lifeguard agreement for the 2017 summer season is set to roll over after a two year trial period. A favorable review of the 2016 season was shared by both parties. A reduction of lifeguard hours was introduced in 2016 after reviewing visitor counts. The current schedule calls for a 1.5 hour reduction of hours daily on non-peak days (M-W), and hour reduction on peak days (F-Sun). Additionally, only weekends will be staffed after the start of CUSD classes up to and including Labor Day. The current hours allow for CARD programming at Sycamore Pool.
- ii. Jr. Ranger Program- The debut of the program is set for spring to coincide with the Park Division's Fantasy Fun Run in May. The program's motto: EXPLORE, LEARN, PRESERVE is coupled with various ranger led activities twice a month intended to teach youth about Bidwell Park history, plants, animals, local native culture, and stewardship in a fun and interactive environment.
- iii. The Butte County Sherriff's Office Alternative Custody Supervision (ACS) and Sheriff's Work Alternative Programs (SWAP) have been integral to the Park Division's operation in 2016. The Sheriff's Department contracted with the City to provide restroom cleaning services for Bidwell Park Monday thru Thursday. In addition, ACS and SWAP have contributed staff for monthly homeless camp cleanups, trash removal, beautification projects and vegetation and tree removal on the Humboldt / Little Chico Creek Corridor.
- iv. Significant Incidents – In addition, to the Santos Fire and floods of mid-December (see above), here are other incidents that occurred in Parks and greenways (Table 6).
 - 1) Injuries – Accidents for injuries requiring EMS response and transport (13) were the lowest in five years of accident data (a 15.2 annual average). While outdoor activities carry inherent risk, prevention strategies can help reduce the number of incidents and the ranger program can help reduce risks. The following are important factors: 1) Trip Preparedness (having proper shoes for outings, carrying water, hats, sunscreen, knowing where one is going); 2) Awareness of limitations (Physical stamina/shape, medical conditions or injuries, physical aptitude in challenging environs); 3) Responsible safe behavior, and 4) Age related injuries and conditions. Three of the four mentioned are areas where a ranger interface, or additional kiosk information may help deter accidental injuries.
 - 2) City Accident/Damage/Theft Reports – The table lists only significant incidents requiring a damage report. On a daily basis, Staff often directly repairs damage in the park, which can occur any time of day. Therefore, routine damages are under-reported.
 - 3) Animal issues – In 2016 staff researched dog issues and what's being done in other municipalities in order to present the BPPC with strategies and potential options for dealing with leash issues, injuries caused by dogs, animal drownings in swimming holes, and conflict with user groups. An update to the current municipal code is planned after the BPPC indicates policy direction in early 2017.
 - 4) Hazardous Materials - Rangers have been first responders in a half dozen incidences within the last year involving an increasing amount of hazardous materials found in creeks and greenways. Rangers have been present at community cleanups and stressed not handling or transporting unidentified substances and mixtures or petroleum products often used in drug making. Haz Mat Response by CFD accompanies all reports of materials and a time consuming evaluation is conducted and materials are removed from site.
- v. Safety - From a crime perspective, ranger report three areas of significance: vehicle break-ins, bike theft and homeless encampment related activities are at the forefront of issues in the parks. Rangers encourage patrons to keep bikes close at all times, even when locking. Additionally, rangers have posted signs in parking lots and remind visitors often not to leave anything visible or valuable in vehicles. Rangers continue to work with police to deal with homeless issues. While the park remains a relatively safe place for citizens, we promote situational awareness and basic personal safety precautions.
- vi. Homeless Encampments – Illegal encampments remained a top issue in 2016. Routinely, areas are given 48 hour notice to vacate and remove personal property before rangers and ACS respond to dismantle camps

and clean up associated debris. Rangers and ACS typically address encampments by corridor once a month with weekly cleanups occurring as time and resources are available. In 2016, crews collected and disposed of 108 tons (400 yards) of debris from camps.

- vii. Protection of Resources- Resource protection is a challenging issue for the Park Division given the expanse of the park, greenways and open spaces(5000 + acres) given current staffing. Education goes a long way in mitigating concerns. The Park Watch Program has been a vital link to rangers in providing information about unwanted activities in the park and intercept of those activities.

g. Donations

i. Revenue -

- 1) Street Trees - Street Trees received \$48,680 in revenue with the PG&E donation (\$20K) making up the bulk of the funds. In-lieu fees associated with building permits make up much of the other revenue. These funds provide sources of funding for the restarted tree planting program.
- 2) Parks – Events, private donations, and merchandise sales make up the bulk of donated revenue. The Parks Division received \$19,230 in donations for 2016.

- ii. In-Kind Donations – The Parks Division received approximately \$158,300, in in-kind services in 2016. Highlights include:

- 1) The Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) provided an average team of 6 workers for 40 hours a week for an average of 10.50 an hour in 2016 to reduce fire fuels and work on vegetation management projects. The estimated value of the contribution from the (AFWD) program is \$194,350 in 2016.
- 2) The Sheriff's Alternative Custody Supervision (ACS) provided an average of 5 workers for 10 hours a week in 2016. They performed general park maintenance and illegal encampment removal duties. Using a formula of 50 hours per week xs 52 weeks = 2600 hours xs 24.75 hour (California economic rate for volunteer value). The estimated value of the ACS program in 2016 is \$64,350.00
- 3) Orchard Supply Hardware provided approximately \$1,000 worth of tools and equipment to the volunteer program.

iii. Fundraising Events:

- 1) Synergism, "Women Together for Beauty"- Synergism presented "Pure Imagination" a choral program in April of 2016. The group donated \$500 to the Caper Acres Renovation Project.
- 2) Capers Acres Fantasy Fun Run, 2016- Over 200 people participated in the first annual Caper Acres Fantasy Fun Run. There were great costumes and a lot of smiles! Over \$2,500.00 was raised to contribute to the Caper Acres renovation project.
- 3) Annie B's - The City of Chico Parks and Street Trees Division participated in the North Valley Community Foundation Community (NVCF) Fundraiser. 2016 marked the 10th and last year for Annie B's. There were an incredible amount of organization throughout Chico vying for donations. Parks received \$1,700. and Trees received \$450.
- 4) Merchandise – Limited edition Jake Early, Caper Acres Humpty Dumpty Kleen Kanteens are for sale in several stores and at the Park office. All proceeds from the sales go toward the Caper Acres renovation project. The Park Division also sells Park related T-shirts.

h. Volunteer

- i. Volunteer Hours – Citizens dedicated a remarkable 24,830.75 hours in 2016! The total includes volunteer efforts on City-Owned Park, Greenway and Open Space properties. While the immense value of volunteer time goes beyond simple numbers, an estimate of economic value provides a scale for comparison. Using the current rate for the State of California (\$24.75/hour), the Park's total volunteer hours equates to over \$614,561.06.

- ii. Caper Acres Volunteer Service and Donor Registry – Because of the interest in helping with Caper Acres (especially to help rebuild the crooked house), staff have developed a registry to compile interested service providers information (www.raceplanner.com). The registry helps the Parks Division match volunteers, donors, and materials to appropriate projects.
- iii. Park Watch - Members serve as ambassadors to the park, provide information and alert park staff to damage, hazards, vandalism or illicit behavior. Currently, 112 active Park Watch volunteers contribute an average total of 1,100 hours each month.
- iv. Spring Volunteer Orientation– Nearly 40 citizens attended the spring volunteer orientation. Several new Park Watch, Team Leader and general volunteers contributed to the park throughout the year.
- v. Park Partners – Independent groups and volunteer leaders provide a number of weekly volunteer sessions to proactively care for sustaining and restoring City-owned parks, greenways and open spaces. Partners lead volunteer sessions, document worksite progress and report volunteer hours. Several partners, with support from the Parks Division, schedule regular session. Partners include; Friends of Bidwell Park, Friends of Comanche Creek Greenway, Chico Velo-Trailworks, Stream Team, California Native Plant Society, Butte Environmental Council, CAVE and Youth for Change
- vi. Events –
 - 1) Volunteer Saturdays – The weekly events give people and groups that would like to volunteer on a “drop in” type basis the opportunity to do so.
 - 2) CATS in the Community (3/31/16) – 40 students from CSUC converged on Bidwell Park for a day of service. They contributed over 120 hours of work removing litter and performance of vegetation management projects.
 - 3) Earth Day (4/23/16) - Over 225 volunteers came out to the South 1 Mile Area of Bidwell Park to celebrate and help brushing trails, removing invasive plants and litter clean-up. Over 700 volunteer hours were contributed to the effort!
 - 4) National Trails Day (6/4/16) - Parks Staff worked with over 50 volunteers and staff from the Chico Velo-Trailworks, Friends of Bidwell Park, Native Plant Society, California Conservation Corps, and the Alliance for Workforce Development on Chico’s celebration of trails. Citizens contributed more than 200 hours to Park trails.
 - 5) Upward Bound Workday (6/17/16) – More than 250 students and volunteers contributed to the clean-up of the South One Mile Recreation Area. Participants delivered approximately 500 hours of labor, while learning about plant identification and vegetation management. The event significantly contribute to the maintenance of the park and promoted feelings of pride, goodwill and community. Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families or families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree, with the goal of increasing success of completing secondary and postsecondary education.

6. Street Tree and Landscapes Division

a. Street Trees Highlights

- i. Overview – Street Trees will continue to focus on operations to build staffing and contractual capacity to aid in taking care of the City’s trees, streamline permit process, and stabilize (and reduce) number of open service requests.
- ii. Tree Planting - Staff are planned for a significant planting last year. In addition to the 52 trees associated with the PG&E donation, an additional 150 trees will also be planted. This represents a substantial increase from past years. Priority areas will be downtown, areas that have existing irrigation (such as in medians and City-owned park strips). Staff will prioritize neighborhoods with low tree occupancy as that will allow for economies of scale in planting and follow-up care.

iii. Tree City USA –

1) Tree City USA –

- a) The Arbor Day Foundation honored the City of Chico as a 2016 Tree City USA recipient (Chico's 32nd year). The program provides a framework for community forestry management for cities and towns across America. The program requires a summary of certain budget expenses. Below are rough estimates (these will be more refined in the future), but provide some interesting
 - i) Tree Planting and Initial Care (Include cost of tree purchases, labor and equipment for planting, planting materials, stakes, wrapping, watering, mulching, competition control, etc.): \$45,000.
 - ii) Tree Maintenance (Include pruning, insect and disease management, fertilization, watering, etc): \$672,000.
 - iii) Tree Removals (Include cost of equipment, supplies, labor, etc): \$30,000.
 - iv) Management (Include public education, professional training, memberships, salaries, street and park tree inventory): \$75,000.

- 2) Arbor Day Celebration Plantings - Because of the wet weather and storm response, the City of Chico rescheduled two separate Arbor Day Plantings. The City worked with CSU Chico students from the Sustainability Program to plant 5 trees in parkway strips near campus (on Mansion Ave between Arcadian and Citrus Avenues) (4/29/16). In addition, CSU Chico student participating in the Community Action Volunteers in Education (CAVE) helped with the planting of valley oak acorns (over 25) at the One Mile Recreation Area of Lower Bidwell Park. The planting follows the Chico City Council adoption of a resolution on March 1, 2016 celebrating California's Arbor Day. The resolution encourages citizens to support our city's urban forestry program, helping to protect our, trees and woodlands for present and future generations.

- iv. Priority Tree Corridor Work - Trees crews will resume working on the priority corridor list and continue work on Vallombrosa Ave. Pine and Cypress Ave and other high priority trees.

- v. Staffing – Sufficient resources to complete tree work continues to be a significant problem for the City. The City will seek to balance the services provided by contractors with a viable tree crew and will make that request in the next Fiscal Year.

- 1) Urban Forest Manager – After the first round of interviews in late 2016, Staff narrowed the list to 3 candidates. The second round of interviews will be in January.
- 2) Hourly workers - The Street Tree Division utilized hourly workers to complete a number of high priority tasks. With the hourlies, we were able to have enough for a City tree crew and were able to keep pace with incoming service requests and certain key projects. For example, the crew prioritized pruning along school corridors to improve visibility and reduce hazards. The crew completed this work in the summer, to take advantage of relatively light traffic.
- 3) California Conservation Corps (CCC) - The CCC crew excelled in a 5 week grates/cages project in the downtown area and a spring tree planting. Two City employees overseeing and working side by side with the CCC crew and 2 hourly helpers, were able to plant 98 trees in 8 days (including site prep and stump grinding of 14 trees). The approach allowed the City to stretch contractual dollars, complete the work quickly, leveraged staff time, and provided good training for CCC members.

vi. Tree Contracts -

- 1) Emergency services – Petersen Tree Care was the low bidder again this year and will be our emergency contractor for the fiscal year. This contract is renewable annually for up to 3 years total.

2) Routine Pruning and Planting – M&S Wesley Tree Service has done some pruning in the residential and corridor areas, but have been limited due to lack of budget funds.

3) Removal Contract - Twin Cities Tree Service is completing the first list of 86 dead/dying trees that was assigned to them in November. Rainy and wet weather conditions have made it challenging for the workers to complete removals. The list should be completed by the end of January. Most sites will be replanted this spring, unless they were removed because they were not planted in a valid planting location. The previous contractor (Salinas) ceased operations prematurely associated with higher costs and the prevailing wage requirement. Tree removal costs rose from \$700/tree to an average of over \$1200/tree and about \$2,500 for the largest ones.

vii. Permits - Property owners have markedly increased the number permit requests on City Street Trees since staffing cuts in 2013. Over 154 permits were issued in 2016 (this number does not include permits approved through planning permits). The numbers of permits from recent years may be summarized as follows: 28 (2013), 66 (2014), and 122 (2015).

b. Public Planting and Landscapes -

i. Overview - The program oversees landscape maintenance and installations in and around City Specialty and Neighborhood Parks, Municipal buildings, Parking/Transportation facilities, and Public Plantings. This is the city's largest annual service contract and directs services over 118 different fund accounts. There is a combination of sites and sub-sites with over 250 service location points within the city's landscape areas. The city's Landscape Inspector communicates daily with the landscape contractor, promoting contract compliance and efficient quality services.

ii. Water Conservation – One focus area over the past couple of years has been the reduction of water use. The City continued strict water conservation practices in our landscapes during 2016.

1) The city currently has 223 water meters in use. Some of the metered water is for landscape and sanitation. Some is for potable water consumption in our parks and municipal buildings. Some is used during permitted community development projects.

2) Water consumption continued to decline from 2015 figures. At the time of this report, only data for January through June 2016 was available. There was a reduction of 14,510 CCF of water consumed during those first six months compared to January through June of 2015. One CCF is 100 cubic feet of water volume. One CCF equals 748 gallons of water.

3) The rain that fell during Fall/Winter of 2016 did not arrive until after the hot months of the year's continued drought conditions when landscape irrigation is typically applied for optimum health and aesthetics of plants. Much of Chico's landscaping is low water use plant material and can tolerate drought conditions, even if showing signs of stress. However, the need to continue strict reductions in 2016 during a time of year when the plant need is highest, produced stress and some plant mortality.

iii. 2015 Landscape parkway conversion guidelines and Urgency Ordinance - On July 7, 2015, Chico's City Council considered and approved the adoption of landscape parkway conversion guidelines and an Urgency Ordinance amending Chico Municipal Code (CMC), Chapters 14.08 and 19.68 regarding encroachment permits and landscape conversions.

a) The ordinance protects and provides for the health and vigor of city street trees, allows qualified removal of existing landscapes without a permit and reduces water use through the planting of low-water use plants and installing water efficient irrigation systems. Due to extended drought conditions in 2015, mandates from the State of California and California Water Service Company's "Turf removal" program, many citizens were contacting the City for information and permission to remove and replant landscaping within the City's ROW and parkway strips adjacent to their property. The ordinance helped reduce staff time related to permitting. It also provided standard guidelines for the community. The guidelines can be found on the city's website on

the “Street Tree Division” page. Use the drop-down menu for Departments and Divisions, located on the City’s “Home” page.

- b) One intention of the ordinance was to reduce the need to process permits. However, some landscapes in the ROW have been modified without notification to the City; and the City has not been able to track the number of modifications or measure their impact on the City since its adoption.
- iv. Landscape Design Standard Review - Due to work load and time constraints, a complete review and potential revision of our city landscape standards and the process for new landscape development was not achieved during 2016. The extensive task is being kept as a goal for 2017.
- v. Landscape Development - New housing development often is required to include improvements like public landscaping in the City Right of Ways. There were seven new locations completed this year. They are located on East 20th at Concord, E. Eaton Road between Ceanothus and Floral Avenue, West Eaton Road (west of Penzance) and Humboldt Road at Overseer Court.
- vi. Service requests -
 - 1) Approximately 260 service requests related specifically to city landscapes or the city’s landscape contract. Out of those, 160 were requests to identify and locate landscape utilities prior to development construction and utility work.
 - 2) Additionally, 858 requests related to landscape issues. Examples include: check and repair irrigation systems, observations of potential hazards, check and repair related landscape facilities such as fences, sound-walls, electrical lighting, plumbing, check landscape maintenance conditions and quality control, inspect tree conditions, review and inspect new landscape design installations, identify and locate landscape utilities and consult on landscape projects.
 - 3) Comanche Creek Greenway and Storm Water Grant Projects –
 - a) The Landscape Program assisted in the design and installation of the parking lot entrance off of Park Avenue into Comanche Creek Greenway. The project included landscaping along a pedestrian and bike path connecting Ivy Street and 22nd Street. This link improved the access from the neighborhoods surrounding the greenway and the new bridge across Comanche Creek.
 - b) The program also assisted with the completion of six Storm Water Grant projects. These projects provide landscape designs that capture, return and or allow rainwater to permeate into the surrounding soil without running off site. These projects raise public awareness of these design aspects. They are located at City Hall (5th Street side), The Airport Terminal parking lot, the Amtrak Train Depot, Municipal Parking Lot #5 next to Lost Park, Murphy Commons Apartment Complex on Notre Dame Boulevard and Habitat for Humanity at 16th and D Street. The projects will provide long-term benefits to groundwater recharge and water quality.

7. Upcoming Challenges

a. Parks Division

In addition to the wide swath of duties and tasks, staff completes, here are some focus areas that we would like share with the Public and BPPC.

- i. Administrative and Visitor Services – Improved permitted processes will be a focus for 2017. Staff will improve the reservation system for parks (potentially including public events), and making a push to make these available on-line. Staff will focus on improving the permitting and tree report process for trees, providing information for prospective applicants on the requirements for trees related to building permits. Our efforts in customer service are an important part of providing citizens with a good experience in the park and community.

- ii. Maintenance and Infrastructure – Because of limited resources, Parks has deferred a number of maintenance items. Restoration of staffing levels will greatly improve our capacity to complete projects and we will make requests to improve staff with hourly or full time employees. Staff will also return to completing the parks inventory started in 2013. This will provide compelling information on the state of park infrastructure and costs of returning it to safe, serviceable condition.
- iii. Planning and Monitoring – As staffing is improved, the Division will have the capacity to return to key projects (namely the Trails Plan and Natural Resources Management Plan), and improve timeliness on time sensitive reports (i.e. the Peregrine Point monitoring reports and data analysis). Another key focus will be the collection of public input on policy and the technical survey of Upper Park Road.
- iv. Natural Resource Management –
 - 1) Staff will continue the substantial progress made on woody vegetation in targeted areas. For example, concerted efforts with volunteers, staff, and the program partners (Sheriff and principally the Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) to remove non-native vegetation and improve sightlines at One Mile. Unfortunately the AFWD group will lose funding at the end of February, with this loss, we will be requesting a staff member for 2016-17 to focus on vegetation and other natural resource projects.
 - 2) Parks plans to complete important trail projects at Teichert Ponds, Comanche Creek, and Monkey Face in Bidwell Park. This will add over 2,000 feet of improve trail projects.
- v. Outreach and Education – Now more than ever, an educated and engaged public, will help the Division take care of Parks. Educated citizens that are knowledgeable about fragile park resources, recreational opportunities and the right way to enjoy them, will encourage stewardship and ensure generations of Chicanos the ability to enjoy the marvelous gifts bestowed upon us by the founders of our city.
- vi. Ranger and Lifeguard – Rangers have a critical and wide ranging responsibilities in the Parks. The description of the program notes: resource protection, education, interpretation, visitor assistance, event organization, public safety and patrol, and enforcement of municipal and penal codes. It is the day to day accomplishments that are telling on what our rangers really do. Some of these include servicing a restroom when we are short maintenance staff, helping a citizen who twisted their ankle or need directions, leading a group of kids to clean up trash, meeting with event coordinators to make sure that a non-profit's key fundraiser is safe and successful; counseling a young daredevil to enjoy the park in a safer manner. One of the continuing challenges have been homeless encampments and the impacts to the parks. As there are a number of efforts in the City regarding homeless issues, we eagerly watch the potential progress, so that Rangers can return to the basic duties that visitors to the park need. In 2017, Rangers will lead volunteers and supervise other partners, to improve sightlines and remove non-native vegetation. The Rangers will also kick off a Junior Ranger Program in 2017.
- vii. Volunteer and Donations – Staff will look to continue improvements on volunteer sign ups. Several fundraising events will be on the calendar for Parks. Fundraising for the Caper Acres renovation will be important for the success of the project. While we will look for opportunities to work with volunteers and in-kind donations, Maintenance staff will serve a key role to ensure that equipment is installed according to playground standards.
- b. Public Plantings and Landscapes – As the state hopefully recovers from drought a number of landscape and tree areas will need to be replanted within current budgets. Staff will look at a number of options including Municipal Districts to complete this need.
- c. Street Trees – Staff is hopeful that capacity will be improved to allow the resurrection of a crew. The hiring of an Urban Forest Manager will also help stabilize the program and move from a reactive to proactive approach. Key areas for improvement will be to stabilize and reduce the number of service requests and to reinvigorate routine pruning and formative pruning.

Attachments:

- A. Supplemental Tables and Figures (Detailed Maintenance Tasks, Tree daily reports, Citations, visitors, etc.)
- B. Photographs

C. Annual reports from lessees: 1) Bidwell Park Municipal Golf Course and 2) the One Mile Concession Stand (Dog House). Reports were not available from: the Chico Creek Nature Center, Chico Equestrian Association, Chico Rod and Gun Club, Silver Dollar BMX, Chico Community Observatory. These will be attached to future Division Reports.

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