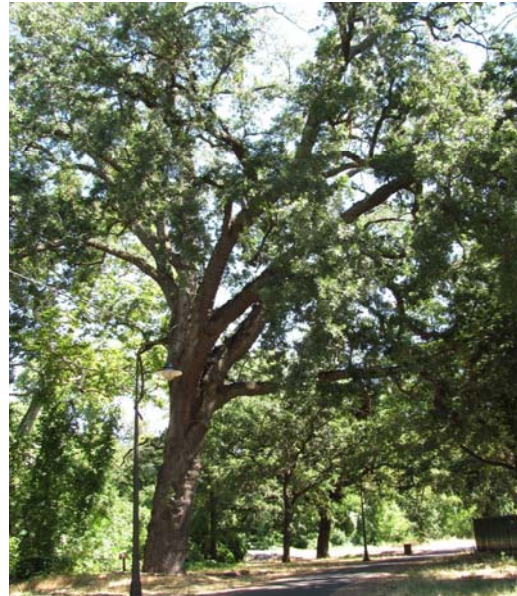


CHICO'S HERITAGE TREE PROGRAM

In March of 2010, after two years of sub-committee meetings and review, the Chico City Council approved several revisions in the Municipal Code relating to trees. This revision included setting up a Voluntary Heritage Tree Program (CMC Section 16.68.010) to recognize significant trees growing in Chico. On November 2, the City Council approved the first 6 Heritage trees. Three of those trees are located in Chico's Parks and Open Space. Another is a City street tree, and the final one was a private tree in a new development across from the Nature Center. Subsequently, 2 trees were nominated by CARD and approved for Heritage Tree Status on 12/21/10. These trees are described below. The City's program is active and seeking new Heritage Tree Applications.

A 67" valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) tree in Annie's Glen was nominated because of its prominent location next to the bike path near the entrance from Orient and E 2nd Street.

The tree has a history of old flood damage at its base, where an old injury can be seen. Floods deposit soil over the original grade of the root collar, and sometimes, this soil can create a crown rot injury. The tree's root collar has been exposed, however, and the tree pruned to improve its safety and longevity.



This **53" diameter Blue Oak (*Quercus douglasii*)** is clearly seen by looking east from Baroni Neighborhood Park, and is located in the open space preserve in the Hillview Terrace Subdivision.. Blue oaks are found in the more upland areas of Chico, where the water table drops below 30' in depth. They therefore rely on an extensive root system to gather water for the long summer months, rather than the deep sinker roots of the valley oak. This makes them slower growing and more sensitive to construction that encroaches upon their canopy and root zone.

A mid-west species that was likely planted by the Bidwell's in Children's Playground, this **52" Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)** is one of the largest in California – rivaling one in Sacramento that is considered the largest at 54". Our tree is an excellent specimen, with little to no limb breakage and is found at the north end of the Park. It is usually in full fall color for most of November and December.





The city's largest Heritage Tree is a 78" Valley oak located near the corner of Eaton and Cohasset and a 66" oak on Heritage Oak Drive. This tree grows on the bank of Sycamore Creek. At some point in time in the distant past, the soil was raised over the root collar of the tree, probably in the building of the levy and Eaton Road, to the south of the tree. Volunteers have cared for the tree over the years by installing large logs around the outside of the drip line to keep vehicles out from under the canopy, pruning and cabling the tree, and removing the excess soil over the root collar. Called the Eaton Oak, it is an incredible specimen that is a joy to stand under. One limb has grown to the ground and is helping to support the massive structure.

A tree that the City can be proud of preserving is found on Heritage Oak Drive. This 67" valley oak was recognized by the developer and care was taken to keep house foundations at the outer edge of the canopy. The street was carefully constructed around the tree as well. Not long after the tree was preserved, it broke a large limb growing to the north, so now the tree's canopy is pruned on a regular basis to reduce the weight on the long horizontal limbs so they don't break. An area at the base of the tree is mulched on a regular basis, and was made part of the street's right of way for the tree.



A 70" Bastogne or Paradox walnut (*Juglans hindsii x regia*) located at the new Park Forest Subdivision is a seedling hybrid between the English and the native black walnut. Fairly common in the Chico area, this tree was planted in 1900 as a pollinator for a small family owned walnut orchard. Property developers of Park Forest LLC set aside the area around the tree to protect it and feature the tree as a center piece of their Park Forest project on East 8th Street across from the Nature Center. They built a large ring around the dripline to protect it during construction. To date no significant damage has occurred from construction.

Two additional trees – located in the CARD Community Park off 20th Street were nominated for the program. On the south side of the park, at the end of Cleveland Street, a lovely 62" valley oak provides shade and beauty for a small picnic area. The tree existed long before the park was built, and has been pruned and cabled over the years.



A California black walnut (*Juglans hindsii*), of the type that John Bidwell planted around Chico, covers another picnic area north of the oak. It sits near the children's playground in the 20th Street Community Park. These trees are known for their exceedingly beautiful wood that is also quite valuable. The nuts are excellent eating, although cracking the nut is so difficult that they are no longer produced in California. They remain an agricultural necessity, though, and are used for root stock on most walnuts because they are resistant to the oak root fungus disease common to California soils.

HELP US FIND MORE HERITAGE TREES!

Citizens owning significant trees who are interested in having them considered for Heritage Tree Status are encouraged to contact Denice Britton, the Urban Forest Manager at 896-7802, or email dbritton@ci.chico.ca.us

City of Chico Heritage Trees

Eaton Rd.
78" Valley Oak



0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet

Upper Bidwell Park

Park Forest
69" Bastonge Walnut

Heritage Oak Dr.
66" Valley Oak

Children's Playground
52" Sweetgum
(Liquidambar)

Lower Bidwell Park

Hillview Terrace
53" Blue Oak

Annie's Glen
67" Valley Oak

Card Community Park
74" Black Walnut

Card Community Park
62" Valley Oak

Chapter 16.68**VOLUNTARY HERITAGE TREE PROGRAM****Section:****16.68.010 Voluntary Heritage Tree Program.****16.68.010 Voluntary Heritage Tree Program.**

- A. The purpose and intent of the Voluntary Heritage Tree Program is to identify, promote public awareness of, maintain, and protect designated trees within the City of Chico. This program acknowledges that Heritage Trees, whether located on public or private property, are distinct and unique living resources of the City of Chico.
- B. Any person may submit an application on a form supplied by the director and accompanied by the required fee, to designate a tree as a Heritage Tree. If an application is filed by a person other than the owner of the property on which the tree is located, then the application shall include the written and signed consent of the property owner and the property owner shall have the opportunity to be fully involved in the designation process. Applications shall be evaluated by the urban forest manager and forwarded to the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission for review and recommendation to the City Council. The City Council may designate a tree as a Heritage Tree if it meets any of the following criteria:
1. Any native Oak (*Quercus*) species or Sycamore (*Platanus*) species, having a diameter at breast height of thirty-six (36) inches or greater when a single trunk, or a cumulative diameter of thirty-six (36) inches or greater when a multi-trunk, and with good health and structure; or
 2. The tree is an outstanding specimen of a desirable species of good health and quality structure; or
 3. The tree is of historical interest; or
 4. The tree is an unusual species, is of distinctive form, is a part of a significant grove or is otherwise unique.
- C. Once a tree is designated as a Heritage Tree, a Notice of Heritage Tree Designation shall be recorded against the property on which the tree is located. Heritage Trees located on public property are exempt from the recording requirement.
- D. Heritage trees may only be removed pursuant to Chapter 16.66 of this code.
(Ord. 2402)