

BUTTE COUNTY



COUNTY INFORMATION

Size: 4,344 sq. km (1,677 sq. mi)

Population: 215,881 (2006 U.S. Census)

Sub-Region: Northern Sierra Nevada

Official Website: www.buttecounty.net

CONSERVATION STORY

Volunteers with Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance Defend Against Invasive Weeds

In November of 2006, the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance discovered that their watershed was being taken over by a merciless and restless invader – the Spanish Broom weed.

Spanish Broom is what is called an “invasive species.” These species overrun the natural ecosystems of other species and take over, potentially strangling native plants or animals.

Removing these “invasive species” is often necessary when restoring an ecosystem to its natural state.

Disruptions in an ecosystem can directly affect the community they surround. The Spanish Broom, for example, dries quickly. Because of its flammable nature, areas densely populated by Spanish Broom are at great risk of fire.

That particularly worried Butte County resident Dulcy Schroeder. “I used to drive 20 miles to see Spanish Broom. It’s a beautiful plant, but then I realized what it was doing to my neighborhood,” says Schroeder.

She also noticed that nothing was being done about it by state agencies or elected officials. In retaliation, Schroeder and two others decided to join together to protect their homes and the natural environment. To do this they sought the help of a community-based conservation group, the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance (BCCWA).

The BCCWA is a volunteer non-profit organization. They organize and sponsor wetlands restoration project, river monitoring programs, efforts to restore salmonidae populations on Big Chico Creek, and monitor groundwater sustainability in Butte County.

The BCCWA “gave us everything we needed,” said Schroeder. “They told us the information we need to know about the species, what we can do, and how to get money for it.”

Through the BCCWA, Schroeder organized the Broom Education and Eradication Program, also known as BEEP. Like many community efforts, BEEP originally had no source of funding, so the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance provided the umbrella of a non-profit, tax-exempt, 501(c) (3) status.



By March 2007, BEEP had a public outreach effort underway. Schroeder and what had now become a core of eight people had arranged for articles to be published in the local newspapers, were giving talks at local schools, and were holding public meetings with dozens of people about the threat Spanish Broom posed to their community.

As the effort progressed, other people pitched in, donating weed pulling equipment, gloves, and even free food and drinks during events.

By August of 2007, the Broom Education and Eradication Program had pulled over 50,000 Broom plants from Forest Ranch and the surrounding area. By late summer of 2007, the weather had become too hot for the group to continue. However, they rested in the knowledge that they had made their community safer from fire and removed an invasive species.



The next community effort, Schroeder said, is going to be replanting of native species.

The BEEP encourages more families to volunteer with community groups such as the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance. “I don’t know why it is that us old people are the ones that want to do this,” Shroeder pondered aloud. “Teaching kids about the environment is critical. They’re so sharp they get it. They take it home and teach it to their parents.”

Residents interested in the work of the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance or any future Broom Education and Eradication Program activities, please contact them via their group information listed in this directory or visit their website at <http://www.bigchicocreek.org/>.

ORGANIZATIONS

Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance

Contact Name: Susan Mason - Watershed Coordinator

Address: P.O. Box 461, Chico, CA 95927

Phone: (530) 894-1308

Email: coordinator@bigchicocreek.org

Website URL: www.bigchicocreek.org

County of Activity: Butte

Issue Focus: botanical, water supply, watershed quality, wildlife and habitat

Public Events: bi-monthly public meeting presentations, storm drain stenciling, and restoration site tours

Volunteer Opportunities: stream monitoring, watershed restoration projects, invasive plant removal

Accepts Donations: yes

Description: The mission of the Big Chico Creek Watershed alliance is to protect and enhance the ecological integrity and economic vitality of the Big Chico Creek watershed through cooperative efforts. In partnership with landowners, interested citizens, government agencies and private enterprise, we work to foster education, understanding sustainable land management, and ecosystem and water quality restoration and conservation.

Current activities include sponsoring a citizen water quality monitoring program, a wetlands restoration project, a creek bank stabilization project, preparation of grant

applications for funding to restore a fish ladder for Big Chico Creek's salmonidae populations, participation in the county's groundwater programs, cooperative efforts for removal of invasive plants in the watershed, and joint projects with the Butte County Resource Conservation District.

Butte Environmental Council

Contact Name: Barbara Vlamis

Address: 116 W. Second Street, Suite 3, Chico, CA 95928

Phone: 530.891.6424

Email: barbarav@becnet.org

Website URL: www.becnet.org

Counties of Activity: Butte, Glenn, Tehama

Issue Focus: air quality, botanical, global warming, land use, water supply, watershed quality, wildlife and habitat

Group Type: advocacy, litigation, restoration, coalition, outreach

Public Events: Annual Endangered Species Faire (www.endangeredspeciesfaire.org); Annual Bidwell Park and Creeks of Chico Clean Up

Volunteer Opportunities: Events coordination and participation, advocacy (letter writing, monitoring local issues and agencies, public hearings participation), photography, newsletter (article writing, proof-reading, advertising sales, mailing assistance), fundraising (including events), in-office assistance.

Accepts Donations: yes

Description: For 31 years the Butte Environmental Council has been a leading voice for protecting the environment, public health, and health of all species in the northern Sacramento valley and foothills. BEC's mission is to protect the Sacramento Valley Foothills Ecoregion and our quality of life. We do this through the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the land, air, and water.

BEC assists an average of 500 area resident each month with calls involving land use regulations and law, toxic threats, habitat destruction, and solid waste referrals. A small, dedicated staff and large cadre of volunteers implement our programs.

Some major current efforts include stopping the export of the northern Sacramento Valley's and foothill's ground water; protecting vanishing vernal pool habitat throughout California; and educating the community about toxics in our air, water, and soil through our Chico Urban Streams Alliance program and our toxics outreach and education program.

California Native Plant Society – Mount Lassen Chapter

Contact Name: Woody Elliot
Address: P. O. BOX 3212, Chico, CA 95927
Phone: (530) 342-6053
Email: cnps@cnps.org
Website URL: www.cnps.org

County/Counties: Butte, Plumas
Issue Focus: botanical, land use, water supply, watershed quality, wildlife and habitat
Group Type: monitoring, restoration, education
Composition: coalition, volunteer

Public Events: Gardening activities, book and poster sales, nature walks, hikes field trips, as well as various publications are all provided to the public

Volunteer Opportunities: Assist at local garden shows, plant tours, hikes, volunteer at local parks with weeding, planting, designing educational material, working on policy issues by volunteering in the Sacramento office

Accepts Donations: yes

Description: The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to conserve them and their natural habitats through education, science, advocacy, horticulture and land stewardship.

Originally formed in 1965 in the east bay region, the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The Society, working through its local chapters and statewide programs, seeks to increase understanding of California's native flora and to preserve this rich resource for future generations. Membership is open to everyone. Our members have diverse interests including natural history, botany, ecology, conservation, photography, drawing, hiking, plant uses, land use, horticulture and gardening, and a love of California's natural setting.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND AGENCIES

COUNTY SUPERVISORS

Butte County Board of Supervisors:

Board of Supervisors
25 County Center Drive
Oroville, CA 95965
Website: http://www.buttecounty.net/cob/district_info.htm

Senate Representative – 4th District:

Counties Represented: Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Nevada, Placer, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity and Yuba counties

Website: <http://republican.sen.ca.gov/web/4/>

Assembly Representative – 3rd District

Counties Represented: Lassen, Plumas, Butte, Sierra Yuba, Nevada, Placer

Website: <http://republican.assembly.ca.gov/members/a3/index.aspx>