



DATE: 01/16/15
TO: Bidwell Park and Playground Commission members
FROM: Dan Efseaff, Park and Natural Resource Manager
SUBJECT: 2014 Annual Park Division Report

2014 ANNUAL PARK AND STREET TREES DIVISION REPORT

1. 2014 Overview

The year 2014 marked another year of significant challenges to the Parks, Open Spaces, Greenways, and Preserves Division (Park Division) and the Street Trees and Public Plantings Division (Street Trees). The Divisions reside in the Public Works Department. Staffing and resource cuts initiated in 2013 and the impact to services, remained the leading challenge. The combined staffing levels for both divisions is just over half of what was available in 2009. In addition, the Council and Administrative Services Department held open two key positions for over a year (Park Services Coordinator (PSC) and Urban Forest Manager (UFM)).

With these challenges, the Divisions focused on providing basic and emergency services. While we have made progress in many areas, progress was delayed as we developed new creative solutions to handle workload and redefined staff responsibilities. Staff continued a number of efforts to transform the organization. Some examples include:

- Completion of the Caper Acres renovation plan that will use a community fund raising model. Renovations will reduce operations and maintenances cost of the facility.
- Despite the PSC position not being filled, volunteer hours were over 28,500 hours, representing approximately \$750,000 in value to City parks and greenways. Donations held relatively steady; however the value of in-kind services ballooned to \$284,790.
- Development of a more streamlined tree report system to minimize staff costs and utilize already existing information from the City's tree database.
- Continued use of Butte County Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (SWAP) and Alternative Custody Supervision (ACS) to aid with Park and greenways work.

As resources and capacity are added, we believe that 2015 will allow us to more fully move forward. To kick off this year, we reflect on accomplishments in 2014 and initiatives that are coming up in 2015. The Parks Division and Street Trees Division are pleased to share this annual report to the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission and the public. In the following pages, we will highlight our accomplishments, and lay out new approaches to accomplish new efforts. 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 2015!

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 Parks Division is organized into the following programs:

- Administrative and Visitor Services
- Maintenance and Infrastructure
- Natural Resource Management (planning, monitoring, trails, and vegetation management).
- Outreach and Education
- Ranger and Lifeguard
- Volunteer and Donations

We should note that employees work in an integrative fashion and may complete tasks in multiple programs. For example, to meet vegetation management goals on a particular project we may utilize volunteers to help remove plants and provide

visitor information during a prescribed burn, maintenance crew to oversee fuels thinning and complete a planting, and Rangers to coordinate a prescribed burn. The City's Park Rangers, Park Maintenance Crew, and Park Services Coordinator all work within the Park Division.

The City Street Trees Program, is integrated with the Parks Division (staff plans a more in-depth report on the status of Street Trees later this year). The program cares for and manages approximately 40,000 City street trees (trees planted in the City Right of Way and public planting areas) and 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. Comparative Statistics for the City of Chico and State and National Numbers Regarding Parks.

Factor	Amount	Source
Chico Area	33.2 square miles 21,248 Acres	Chico GIS Department
Chico Population		
– City	86,187	US Census 2010; California Department of Finance 2011 Data
– Urban Area	107,000	
Ranking – City Size California	84 th largest 14 th Largest Metropolitan Area	California Department of Finance, Table of January 2012 City Population Ranked by Size, Numeric and Percent Change; 2010 US Census.
Bidwell Park		
– Area	3,670 acres,	City of Chico; The Trust for Public Land, 2012 City Park Facts
– Ranking Municipal Parks	3rd in California and 14th in the US.	
Park, Recreation, and Open Space Area managed by Park Division	5,053 acres	City of Chico GIS Department Inventory, 2012
Percentage of Parkland of Total City Area		
– Median US Cities ^a	7.9 %	The Trust for Public Land, 2012 City Park Facts; City of Chico.
–Chico ^b	>24 %	
Area of Parkland per 1,000 Residents		
–Median US Cities ^a	13.1 Acres	The Trust for Public Land, 2012 City Park Facts; City of Chico.
–Chico ^b	59 Acres	
Spending per capita (City of Chico Parks)	\$18.37	Trust for Public Land 2014, (see text for comparisons).

^a Estimate includes city, county, metro, state, and federal acres within the city limits.

^b Estimates include City of Chico Park Division managed property only.

3. Resources

The Operating Budget (Table 2) 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. Donations provide critical support for interns, habitat restoration work and materials, invasive plant removal, and benches. 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.

More detailed reports on staffing impacts were presented to the BPPC last year with an annual comparison summarized in Figure 1. To provide some perspective on these numbers some ratios may help (for comparison to major cities, the reader may refer to the Trust for Public Land, City Park Facts (note that the numbers below do not include CARD):

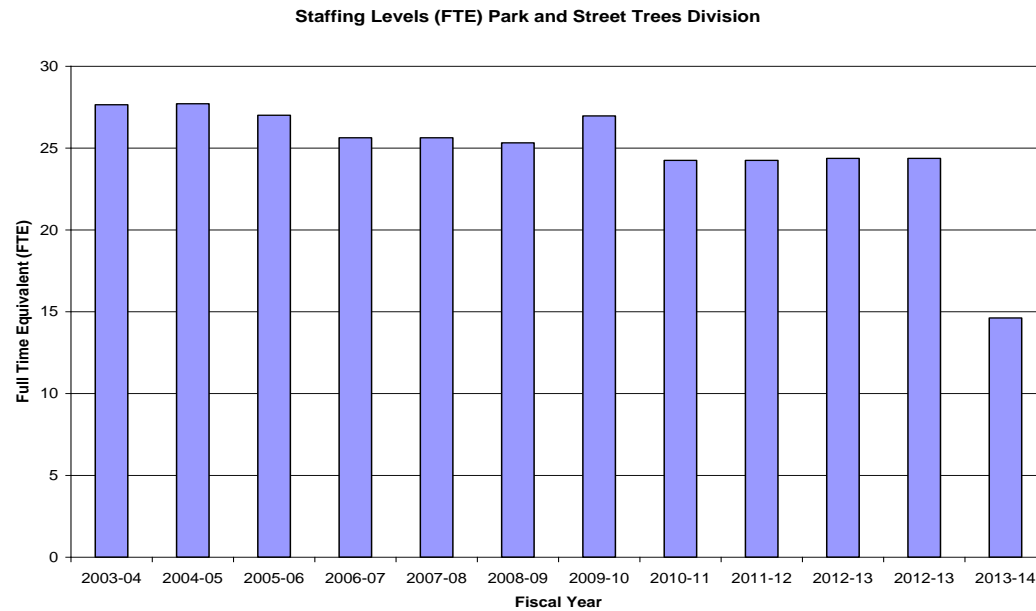
- Total Spending on operations per resident: City of Chico Parks and other properties: \$18.37 (was \$20.21 last FY year). Cities on the TPL ParkScore Index (includes large cities): Include San Francisco (\$215.99), Sacramento (\$165.74), Bakersfield (\$89.15), Fresno (\$50.57), Santa Ana (\$39.51), and Detroit (\$22). Chico was below all cities on the list including and even below low ranking cities.
- Employees per 10,000 residents (2013 data): City of Chico: 1.0. Cities on the TPL list: high of 16.5 in Seattle; to a low of 0.8 in Tulsa.

Table 2. Annual Staff Budget Comparison.

Category	FY 1988-1989	FY 2007-2008	FY 2010-2011	FY 2011-2012	FY 2012-2013	FY 2013-2014	FY 2014-2015 (adopted)	Trend (2007 to present)
Operating Budget								
Park Division	\$594,148	\$1,799,037	\$1,848,137	\$1,817,833	\$1,805,759	\$1,742,016	\$1,593,492	
Street Trees Division		\$1,131,143	\$971,276	\$1,019,987	\$1,073,079	\$839,941	\$914,754	
General Fund Budget		\$49,310,955	\$41,282,457	\$42,995,996	\$43,724,540	\$44,449,213	\$45,955,168	
Staffing ^a								
Park Division	14	13.5	13	12	12	8.75		
Street Trees	2	11	9	8	6	3		

Notes: The Street Tree program was considered part of the Park Division in 1988. The lifeguard program is not part of this estimate but in 2010-11 and 2011-12 amounted to 3.75 FTE. Adjusted for inflation, the budget for FY 1988-1989 in 2014 dollars is \$1,188,979. Formatting depicts the numbers relative value to other years.

Figure 1. Comparison of Staffing Levels.



4. Bidwell Park and Playground Commission 2013 – 2014 Work Plan

Staff will provide a detailed work plan update at the January BPPC meeting. The BPPC will consider a new biennial work plan for 2015-2016.

Table 3. Current Status of 2013-2014 Work Plan

Goal/Subgoal	Status	Comments
<p>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. Specific projects include:</p>		<p>The loss of key staff members in 2013 delayed progress (key staff members including ones that were working on the GIS for the Trails and Natural Resources Management Plans, and the lead on the infrastructure inventory). In early 2014, Staff indicated to the BPPC the hope to restart efforts and bring information to the Natural Resource Committee (NRC) by Summer 2014 (Lower Park trails objectives reviewed at the July meeting).</p>
<p>a. Develop a Trail Plan for the Park and provide public opportunities for progress updates and input as projects move forward.</p>	In-Progress	<p>1a. Parks staff have developed several methods for collecting public input (surveys, field presentations, and meetings). The Middle Trail project and Monkey Face trail work have proceeded following considerable public outreach. The Natural Resource Committee (NRC) has reviewed an inventory of Park trails and initial objectives. Staff anticipates completion of a draft documents in 2015.</p>
<p>b. Update the Trails Manual.</p>	In-Progress	<p>1b. The Information and concepts developed with the Trails Plan will influence the revision of the Trails Manual (a revision approved in 2006). Some initial steps have been taken to start the revision (including work on a supporting document, the Sign Manual). Unlike the previous version, City staff will complete the revision in-house. Work on the Trails Plan will commence after the completion of the Trails Manual.</p>
<p>c. Update of the Natural Resources Management Plan (including vegetation management plan, management units, and an Adaptive Management framework).</p>	In-Progress	<p>1c. The NRC has reviewed Management Units, invasive plant database, recommendations for Lower Park, etc. Staff anticipates that the NRC will need to complete additional review before a draft is ready late in 2015 (or early 2016).</p>
<p>d. Complete an inventory of Park Infrastructure.</p>	In-Progress	<p>1d. Draft inventory completed in 2013, Staff will need to complete review and research and add estimated lifespan and costs.</p>
<p>2. Finalize the Wet Weather Plan.</p>	Completed	<p>The BPPC adopted the plan at the October 28, 2013 meeting. Under the plan, staff have completed two monitoring reports. As part of the adaptive management approach to the plan, staff will bring revisions to the BPPC when needed. The plan is available on the City's webpage and may be cited as:</p> <p>City of Chico. 2013. Adaptive Wet Weather Trail Management Plan (Revised 2013). Bidwell Park, Chico, California. October 15, 2013. Public Works Department, Parks Division. Chico, California</p>
<p>3. Complete review of the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP), including Environmental Review.</p> <p>a. Review the Short Term Objectives described in the UFMP and prioritize those that can be done within current budgetary constraints.</p>	In progress.	<p>After a rejuvenation of the effort in the first 6 months of 2014, the plan was placed on hold due to delays in staffing. The Public Works Director indicated to Council that a contract will be in place for some of the functions of the Urban Forest Manager and that revisions to the plan will be completed in 2015.</p>
<p>4. Assess needs and prioritize renovation projects for Caper Acres (developing funds and renovation plans for improved infrastructure and new play equipment).</p>	Completed.	<p>The City Council adopted the Caper Acres Renovation Plan at the December 2, 2014 meeting. The BPPC reviewed and accepted the Master Renovation Plan including a refined design, list of priorities and costs, and public input process. Staff will embark on implementation and fund-raising for the multi-year project.</p>
<p>5. Explore funding opportunities to better support Park Division projects and programs. Priority items would help:</p>		<p>The Division made significant progress on 5a and 5c.</p>
<p>a. Establish a park event(s) to celebrate the park, raise community awareness of issues and needs, and develop funds.</p>	Completed	<p>5a – The Park Division hosted it's second Bidwell Park Birthday Bash in fall 2014 to celebrate the 108th and 109th birthday of the park. The Division plans a series of events for the 110th celebration, cumulating in the fall.</p>

Goal/Subgoal	Status	Comments
b. Explore the feasibility of a community funded, interpretive, interactive memorial to the significance and scale of the Hooker Oak.	Not Completed.	5b – Minimal progress: collected documentation, conducted preliminary conversations with CSUC professors, and moved the remaining wood in storage. Staff also developed some initial concepts, such as a museum display, or on-site physical representation of the trunk and dripline and interpretive panels and photographs (including the idea that either an onsite viewer or phone app could show the size of the tree). To date, the City has been unable to secure solid interest from partners.
c. Explore adequate funding sources for infrastructure and operations to implement the Comanche Creek management plan and improvements (including grants, donations, creation of a maintenance district, etc.).	Completed.	5c – BPPC supported Council adoption of a Housing Related Parks grant at the 12/16/13 meeting. Council later adopted the resolution. Citizens have worked on the proposal and also developing operational funding for the opening of the area. The City worked with interested neighbors to develop a successful state grant application (\$1,000,000). As of this report, the City is awaiting an agreement that would allow the initiation of work. The improvements include basic site amenities and a pedestrian/bike bridge. The neighbors are close to securing pledges of \$17,000 annually for the first three years to support ranger patrol and maintenance on the site.
6. Provide increased management focus on other City properties, including:		
a. Develop management plan concepts for all City Greenways.	Not started.	6a – Work delayed, due to the precedence of other priorities (see 6b below).
b. Seek funding to develop a Master Management Plan for Lindo Channel.	Not Completed.	6b – Limited progress, Staffing challenges hindered progress, as staff from other Departments (working on funding) were cut. In 2014, Staff explored the use of existing funds for Verbena Fields for work on a long-term management plan for Verbena and Lindo Channel (which can be expanded to objective 6a) and determined that initial funds could start the plan. The BPPC will provide a forum for public input on the plan and review of the draft document.
c. Receive information on ongoing mitigation bank efforts on the Bidwell Ranch property.	In progress.	6c – Staff presented an initial status update on the project to the NRC (January meeting), and anticipates detailed information to be presented to the NRC and Citizen Work Group. Staff will present a report with options and estimated costs to Council in 2015.
d. Report on progress and explore development options for Lost Park.	In progress.	6d – While early in the process, Staff is exploring options on revised parking options and sidewalk. Staff and volunteers have completed considerable work on the site in the last two years, reducing the number of incidents and complaints in the area. Staff has developed some information on managing natural resources on the site, which needs to be refined into a single report, and is looking into options to replace the parking meters there. We are not aware of any comprehensive efforts to look at long-term land-use planning for the area.

5. Administrative and Visitor Services

a. Program Description

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. All Park Division staff (especially the Park and Natural Resource Manager and the Park Services Coordinator) carry out some duties in this area, and shared administrative staff from the General Service Department (GSD) and other parts of the City support this function as well. Our efforts in customer and visitor services are an important part of providing citizens with a good experience in the park and community.

b. 2014 Highlights

- i. **Service Requests** – Public uses a service request system. The majority of requests (Table 4) were related to street trees fallen trees, graffiti and general vandalism to park signs and infrastructure (Park Rangers are included, but we more commonly directly dispatch them to issues in the park).

Table 4. 2014 Service Requests Started by Administrative Staff.

Division	Status		Total	Ratio
	Open	Closed		
Illegal Encampment	9	166	175	
Park Rangers	4	9	13	
Parks	43	187	230	
Trees/Public Landscapes	393	513	906	
Total	449	875	1324	

- ii. BPPC Support – Staff supported 10 BPPC meetings, 2 Natural Resource meetings (1 canceled because of a lack of a quorum and held in January), and 4 Tree Committee meetings.
- iii. Economic Contribution – As of the report time, we were unable to include the payments to vendors that provided professional services, materials, and supplies for the management of the Park and greenways. This information will be included in future reports.
- iv. Research Tracking – Individuals from various agencies, including CSU, Chico students requested permission to conduct research projects in Bidwell Park. Some of the studies and requests include: educational field trips, vascular plant, bryophyte, and fern collections. Staff will be developing a system to better track requests in the coming year.
- v. Park Leases – Staff sent out requests for annual reports in December. Attached are annual reports from park lessees – Bidwell Park Municipal Golf Course, Chico Creek Nature Center, Chico Equestrian Association, Chico Rod and Gun Club, the One Mile Concession Stand (Dog House), Silver Dollar BMX, Chico Community Observatory. As of the time of this report, we have not received reports from –Chico Outsiders (ORAI) and CARD.
- vi. New contracts – Selected contracts include a contractor for Sycamore Pool repairs, aphid control, Caper Acres Renovation Plan, and others.
- vii. Lifeguards– After a substantial delay with a dearth of candidates, Parks was able to provide lifeguards at the Sycamore Pool. We were able to get a number of good candidates after reports in the media sparked interested applicants. The California Conservation Corps will supply 3-4 lifeguards and Keith Welch (CCC) also provided certification training for a number of good candidates that did not have all required certifications.
- viii. Park Permits - City of Chico parks provide many ideal venues for family picnics and community events, offering a safe, picturesque environment for thousands of people annually. Some salient features include:
 - 1) Staff tracked the number of permits and participants for both public and private events, including Caper Acres (Figures 2 and 3). Staff issued a total of 582 permits, down from 644, this includes 84 public events (103 in 2013), 212 private events (238 in 2013), and 206 reservations at Caper Acres (303 in 2013).
 - 2) After a steady 3 year rise from 2010-2012 (up to 60,610), total public event participation declined sharply in 2013 (49,551), but rebounded in 2014 (58,500) (Figure 3). The largest decrease appears right after the start of the Fiscal Year (July and August and seems to rebound after that). The reduced levels may be associated with public perception on reduced hours and staffing levels. The estimates do not include spectators, which could increase the numbers significantly.

Figure 2. Monthly Total of Park Permits Issued (2014)

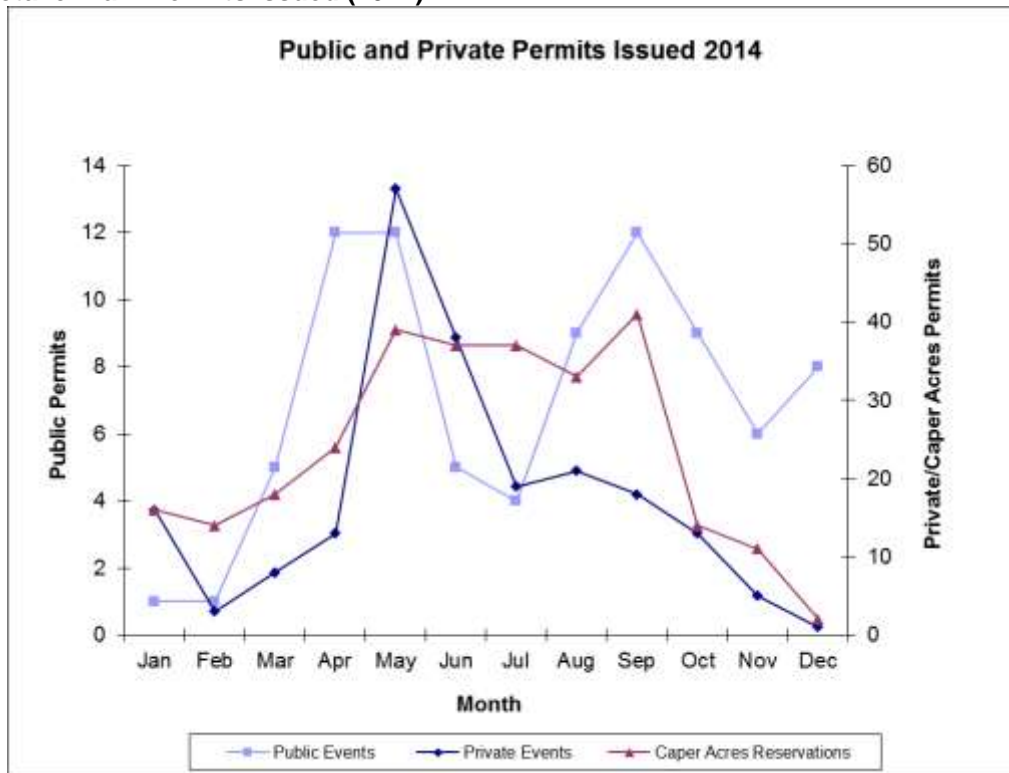
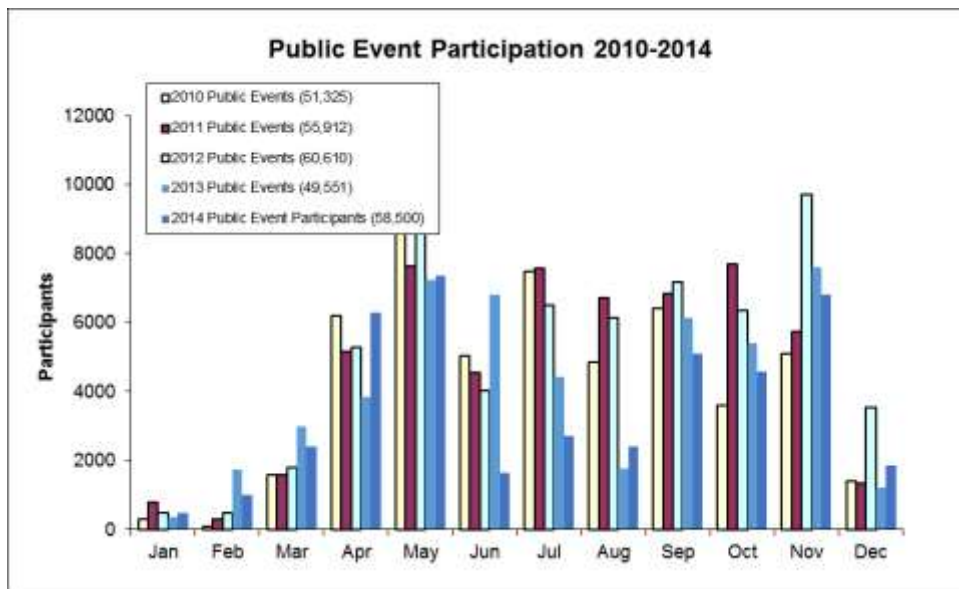


Figure 3. Monthly Total of Public Event Participation (2010-2014)



- ix. Bidwell Park Traffic Counts – Staff will resume the monitoring of vehicles with the installation of permanent traffic counters in 2015 (traffic counts ceased with staffing reductions).
- x. Visitation Estimates – Likewise staff hopes to resume visitation estimates and recruit students and other volunteers to conduct calibration studies to develop ratios between traffic counts and visitors that arrive at Bidwell Park by other means. In 2012, staff estimated over 1.9 million visits to Bidwell Park annually based on traffic count collection. Visitation data provides a means of prioritizing projects and aide in seeking funding.

6. Planning and Monitoring

a. Program Description

Many of the tasks associated with Planning and Monitoring are conducted by the Park and Natural Resource Manager with support from all other departments and outside entities such as non-profits or consultants.

b. 2014 Highlights

- i. Peregrine Point Monitoring Report – Staff issued the third annual monitoring report for the disc golf course. The most notable recommendation is the movement of some targets to protect trees and other resources, this will allow for seasonal or short-term changes in configuration.
- ii. Trails and Natural Resources Plan – Last year Staff reported progress in working with the Natural Resource Committee and the public on initial inventory maps, estimate of trail totals, and the development of Management Units; and noted anticipated drafts completed in 2013-2014. Staffing issues have prevented the restart of those efforts, but we now anticipate that these efforts will be restarted before the end of the 2013-2014 Fiscal Year and draft plans completed by Fall 2014.
- iii. Caper Acres – Significant efforts began work on developing a master plan for this beloved facility. The process will encourage public input. When complete, the plan will layout options and costs for improvements, which will allow for fundraising and capital campaigns. Staff anticipates a plan will be completed for BPPC review by Fall 2014

7. Maintenance and Infrastructure

a. Program Description

Park maintenance staff is responsible for the care and maintenance of Bidwell Park and other assigned parks, view sheds and green ways. The balance of city owned parks and greenways are contracted out to landscape contractors, examples would be City Plaza, Children's Playground or Humboldt Park.

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 day a week (365 days a year) and is comprised of three maintenance workers, one senior maintenance workers, and a field supervisor. Park staff duties include cleaning, safety inspection, graffiti removal, and maintenance of park grounds, facilities, and play areas.

To provide a sense of the scope, the Parks staff duties in Bidwell Park alone include:

- 6 reservation areas,
- 36 individual picnic sites,
- 7 park buildings that house 25 restrooms stalls,
- 8 permanent porta pottie locations,
- 2 temporary porta pottie locations,
- 3 shower facilities,
- Numerous lighting systems,
- 21.5 acres of irrigated lawn that is mowed and trimmed each week in the summer and leafed each week during the fall, and of course
- Over 10 miles of road ways and bike paths,
- Along with the seasonal cleaning and maintenance of Sycamore pool that runs on a weekly cleaning routine from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

In addition to these daily tasks, Staff is engaged throughout the year on the repair of the various parts of the park infrastructure from painting, plumbing and electrical to adding, replacing or fabricating equipment or fixtures such as signs, waste receptacles, benches, picnic tables and exercise equipment. In addition, staff prepares and posts reservation areas for over 500 private and public events each year. While Bidwell Park is the main focus of Staff, they also have duties on other City properties.

Over time, wild land and land management tasks have been incorporated into daily and seasonal tasks that staff perform. Park staff maintains the natural beauty from Lost Park to the end of Ten Mile House road. This work ranges from pruning trees, applying herbicide, mowing road and trail edges, developing and planting native rehabilitation sites, prescribed burns, invasive plant removal, trail maintenance, and wild land restoration through the planting of native plants and grasses.

a. 2014 Highlights

Because of the staffing reductions, 2014 overall represents a year of responding to issues rather than proactive work programs. Although staff attempted to plan for several projects, we simply could not follow given the workload and morphed into a reactive mode trying to keep some semblance of order for Bidwell Park and all other areas of responsibility. This has taken its toll on park staff, and staff is at times disillusioned and dispirited about the future of the park and the services we once were able to provide. In 2009, Park staff devoted over 17,000 hours to the upkeep of parks and greenways, in 2014 the number dropped to 5,655 hours. Despite that constraint, staff continued to make positive changes in the park. For example, Public Works staff changed all of the lighting at One Mile to LED both in the buildings and on the paths. And Staff closed out 183 of the 404 service requests for the year. Sharing some of the limitations may help the public understand the reasons basic maintenance and opening of areas has been challenging. This upcoming year provides an opportunity to reassess what may be realistic for the park division to deliver and develop new approaches to projects.

- i. Trail Program - The trail program has seen minimal action due to staff reductions and injuries. The goal for the spring program is to complete the Middle trail grant, clean up the Monkey face trail reroute and complete some minor erosion work on the south rim trails.
- ii. Removal of Potential Hazardous Materials - Toxic telephone pole barriers removal project advanced by 620 feet of removal and 195feet of new split rail fence for 2014.
- iii. Native Plantings - Native Planting sites completed or reworked in 2014 include the Five-Mile levee, two sites south of the one mile bridge and one on the north side of bridge.
- iv. Infrastructure replaced, retrofitted or removed - With help from Sign and Signal, staff switched all lights at One Mile to LED units at a cost of 5,943.44. With the change, energy usage in September dropped from \$620.09 last year to \$295 this year. Staff selected September, as that month should serve as an average month for light use. Staff also believes that we can change this rate schedule to LS-3, customer owned and metered lighting which would be another \$130 of savings for September and more during the long winter months. If that rate change is successful, annual savings could exceed \$6,000 yearly!
- v. Sycamore Pool repair - is on hold do to the late start and water flows greater than what can be diverted through the tunnel once the flows recede and we get a resalable amount of clear weather staff will reset head dam and make ready the pool floor for the contractor to proceed.

8. Natural Resource Management

a. Program Description

Although we began listing this as a program area in 2012, 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, and all parts of the Park Division have responsibilities in this area. However, at this point its important to have this listed as a priority area because of its importance and the fact that we are better integrating the Division to work more complementary on efforts than previously. For example, the recent burns in the park represent efforts from administrative staff (planning and public notice), to rangers (safety and securing permits), to maintenance (site prep and oversight of crews), to volunteers (Park Watch provided information during the event), and even beyond to other City Divisions (Fire) and other entities (CDF). We include in this program area, Park Division efforts with project and park planning, projects, and monitoring.

1. 2014 Highlights

- i. Wet weather – Staff prepared an annual review based on 2013-2014 data and the “Adaptive Wet Weather Trail Management Plan”.
2. Prescribed Burns – Fuel reduction and prescribed burns - Preparation of piles for burning was completed in the Wildwood Area; however, all burns were postponed due to poor burn conditions. Several areas have fuels reduction piles that were burned in early 2015, when favorable fire conditions returned.
3. Monkey Face Reroute- staff completed the first phase of work on the path to Monkey Face. Additional work will continue the planned looped trail.

4. Native Plantings: Staff and volunteers continued progress on removing invasive weeds, putting in native plants and updating and painting infrastructure of the park entrances and volunteer restoration areas.
5. Housing-Related Parks Program Comanche Creek Grant – The State announced that the City of Chico has been awarded a \$1,032,000 grant under the Housing-Related Parks Program. The grant funds will be used for the implementation of the Comanche Creek Management Plan, which includes developing trails, a bike/pedestrian bridge over the creek, and other amenities.
6. Park Talk: Horseshoe Lake Trail Opening on June 6th – The Park Division hosted a ribbon cutting and opening for a segment of renovated trail that connects parking lots to the Horseshoe Lake fishing pier. The trail connects ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) parking spots with the pier.
7. Little Chico Creek- Starting in early summer/last spring we began planning for invasive plant herbicide applications on Little Chico Creek and Lindo Channel (volunteer and other City work in those areas proceeded me, but we wanted to approach it in a more systematic way). Herbicide applications began in the fall. Targeted plants include arundo, ailanthus (tree of heaven), pistache, black locust, and other woody plants that pose a potential habitat and fire hazard. We worked only on City Property. Targeted areas on Lindo Channel concentrated near the bridges to reduce blocking the floodway, increase visibility for police and minimizing encampments, and ease of implementation (access to equipment, and from road--most bang for the buck). We took a different approach on Little Chico Creek working the area from Bruce Road down to the foot bridge past Forest. After review of the initial work, staff was quite pleased with the care of the application (minimize drift to other species), already seeing some results (usually would expect evidence next spring), and the speed of the work met our expectations. Additional work began on Little Chico Creek above Highway 99 to Humboldt Park and also across from 9th and Hazel Ave, and along the bike path at Teichert Ponds, which will ease annual maintenance costs in that area.
8. Parks staff installed the a series of recycle containers made available with as part of a national recycling bin grant program made possible by Keep America Beautiful (KAB) and The Coca-Cola Foundation. The Park received 20 containers under the grant. The custom stand designed by Parks Staff, is vandal resistant, secures the can, and allows for efficient emptying of the cans during pick up. The Work Training Center will pick up the recyclables on a regular basis, and will process them at their facility on Fair Street.
9. Catalpa Treatment Study - Meghan Oats, Jim Dempsey, and Susan Mason completed a poster for the CAL-IPC Symposia on: "Catalpa speciosa control using herbicide application methods". Some of the fall 2013 treatment trials were done in Bidwell Park. A copy of the work may be viewed here: http://www.cal-ipc.org/symposia/archive/pdf/2014/Poster2014_Oats.pdf .

9. Outreach and Education

a. Program Description

Community outreach and education is an important element of Park Division work to encourage appropriate use and appreciation of parks and resources. Although the Rangers typically take a key role in this function, the visible nature of our work means that all staff provides information to park users. With our focus on proactive enforcement of rules and protection of resources, it is important that our efforts in this area continue to improve:

1. 2014 Highlights

The following is a summary of the notable activities:

- i. The Bidwell Park Pulse continued quarterly publication (the Fall edition will be available soon).
- ii. The Parks Division continued uploading content on the Facebook page ([City of Chico—Parks Division](#)) and Twitter feed ([@ChicoParks](#)), as another way to connect with Park users.
- iii. Rangers, along with other City staff participated in an abbreviated version of the 911 Safety Pals show again this year. The show has been well received by the students, teachers, and parents.
- iv. This past year, the rangers were involved in numerous outreach efforts, including conducting a number of interpretive programs and staffing several information booths (e.g. Endangered Species Faire, Snow Goose Festival, Wildcat Welcome and the Bidwell Bark).

- v. The Park Services Coordinator Intern provided on-going education and park information for school students through annual programs, such as Associated Students Community Action Volunteers in Education Adopt-A-Park Program (each semester); CSUC Upward Bound High School Summer Program (6 weeks); Chico High School Horticulture Class Native Plant Project (full school year) and the Adopt-A-Picnic Site program (through out the year).
- vi. Bidwell Park Birthday Bash (9/13/14) – The City of Chico celebrated Bidwell Park’s 109th anniversary and hosted its second annual Bidwell Park Birthday Bash! The event celebrated the revitalization of Caper Acres while providing a sense of community as well as raise needed funds for the Park. The Birthday Bash centered around the One Mile Recreation Area with Dunk Tanks, a watermelon eating contest, and other kid friendly games. The day finished up with Band Swap at City Plaza.
- vii. Approximately 13 news releases were released in 2014, providing valuable information to the public on upcoming management efforts and volunteer opportunities as well as education on park resources.

10. Ranger and Lifeguard

a. Program Description

The mission of the Park Rangers is to protect, promote and enhance the natural and cultural resources of Bidwell Park, community and neighborhood parks, greenways and open space for present and future generations. We achieve this mission by providing education to the public, professional customer service, as well as consistent and fair enforcement of the law.

The park ranger’s primary duty is the protection of the city’s parks and other City-owned properties and the preservation of the peace therein by enforcing the park rules and regulations. Rangers patrol the City parks, playgrounds and greenways to respond to emergencies; provide visitor assistance; report damage and safety concerns; assist with event coordination; address illegal encampment issues; develop outreach materials; conduct educational and interpretive programs; implement various monitoring programs; assist with the natural resource management program; as well as open/close park gates and facilities. The rangers maintain high visibility during their patrols to help deter crime and provide visitor assistance and work closely with Police, Fire, Code Enforcement and other State and Federal public safety and natural resource based agencies. Two full-time and one permanent seasonal park ranger (0.75 FTE) were on staff this past year. The rangers have performed well, despite limited financial and staff resources, and pride themselves in responding professionally and promptly to their varied responsibilities.

a. 2014 Highlights

The Park Rangers also coordinate the Park Watch volunteers. Park Watch is the City’s longest running volunteer program. 2014 marked the 20th anniversary of service to the community. Park Watch members are ambassadors of the park; they provide visitors with information, foster a safe environment, and advise park staff about damage, hazards, vandalism, or other concerns. As avid park users, Park Watchers incorporate their volunteer duties into their regular walking, biking, running, or horseback riding. In 2014, 22 new members were added to the program, bringing the total membership to 128 who donated an estimated 14,400 hours for the year.

Additionally, rangers administer and provide oversight of the lifeguards. 2014 was a challenging year for the lifeguard program. There were no returning lifeguard staff and a shortage of qualified candidates. The result was a late start for lifeguard presence at Sycamore pool. Typically guards are in place by Memorial Day weekend. This year did not see a full lifeguard staff until just before the 4th of July. The number of guards was also reduced in 2014. Usually there is a staff of 15 guards, this year there were only 10. The reduction in staff forced the reduction of hours guards were at the pool. Guards were on shift from 1 PM until 7PM unlike the 11 AM to 7 PM shift the previous year. Lifeguards monitor pool and lawn activities, encourage safe behavior, perform rescues and provide first aid. The pool is much beloved and on peak days swimmers can exceed 450 with twice the number of lawn patrons. During the 2014 season it was estimated that a total of 14323 park visitors utilized the pool and surrounding area between the 4th of July and Labor Day weekend. The lifeguards provided treatment to 14 visitors for bee stings, falls, abrasions and cuts. There was 1 rescue for a near drowning. Due to the diligence of staff and good fortune there were no major injuries this year at the pool. The Lifeguard staff is essential to encourage safe behavior in the water during busy summer months. Lifeguards also provide important information to rangers and police. That information has resulted in the arrest of several potentially dangerous people.

- i. Community outreach and education plays an important part in Ranger duties. Outreach by rangers is intended to increase community interactions as well as foster stewardship and appreciation of the parks and recreational resources. Rangers contributed to the quarterly newsletter, staffed several information booths, and participated in 911 Safety Pals. These programs provided valuable information that enhanced park users' enjoyment and safety while also promoting the protection of our natural and cultural resources.
- ii. The balance of outreach and enforcement continued to tilt in 2014. Staffing reductions at the Chico Police Department had a direct impact on the Rangers. Rangers contacted more felons and parolees in the field than what has ever been previously reported. Park Rangers also experienced more "mob type" mentality during busy holidays and weekends. Often times rangers were outnumbered at least five to one on alcohol contacts. Rangers were creative in reaching out to other agencies for assistance. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife provided wardens for Upper Park patrol as they were available. Rangers continued to work with the Butte County Sheriff's Office Alternative Custody Supervision (ACS) and Sheriff's Work Alternative Programs (SWAP). The Sheriff's work programs have been a tremendous help in the clean-up of illegal encampments.
- iii. Homeless Encampments – Issues associated with homeless activities continued to increase, specifically impacting City Plaza, Lower Park and all greenways. Several measures have been implemented to address homeless camp activity, including opening up densely vegetated areas and consistent, regular identification and clean-up of active camps. Rangers have taken a lead role in the program over the past two years, assisted by Public Works crews, ACS and SWAP crews, and Chico P.D. Rangers were able to address and close 171 service request. The result was the removal of more than 470 cubic yards or 188 tons of material from Chico's parks and greenways. That does not include the 20 tons that were removed during the Chico Creek s Clean-Up day facilitated by the Butte Environmental Counsel and co-sponsored by the City of Chico. Three Rangers issued 159 warnings and 81 citations for illegal camps in 2014. Chico PD also issued 142 warnings and issued 161 citations. Rangers spent more than 50% of their time on homeless encampment abatement. The time spent on camps was necessary in order to maintain some degree of public safety especially in the greenway areas. As a result there has been a significant decrease in the amount of time rangers spend in Bidwell Park.
- iv. Issues that involved animals increased in 2014. Specifically there has been a steady rise of complaints about dogs and irresponsible actions by dog owners. At least 2 deer in Middle Park appeared to fall victim to dogs. Additionally there were 4 confirmed incidents of dogs that drowned in Upper Park.
- v. The combined enforcement and resource management efforts, coupled with a strong educational and outreach program have culminated in the rangers' ability to continue to effectively protect and promote the City of Chico's natural and cultural resources.
- vi. City Accident/Damage/Theft Reports - are prepared for every instance of accident involving City property and/or damage/theft of City property (Table 5). Rangers are the first responders to many incidents in the park. In 2014 they assisted with several multi-agency medical responses and rescues. There was decrease in damage to City property this past year. Also vandalism and major graffiti incidents decreased.

Table 5. Accident, Damage, and Theft Reports (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.)

Report Type	2010 Reports	2011 Reports	2012 Reports	2013 Reports	2014 Reports
Injury Accident/EMS	19	19	18	14	16
City Property Damage	5	7	26	9	6
Fire	3	6	13	3	0
Animals	1	2	1	0	5
Other	1	1	1	1	1
Total	29	35	59	27	28

- xi. Citations and Warnings – We use a voluntary compliance and education enforcement strategy; therefore rangers issue a large number of warnings (Table 6). Citations from animal control, code enforcement, or police officers are not included.

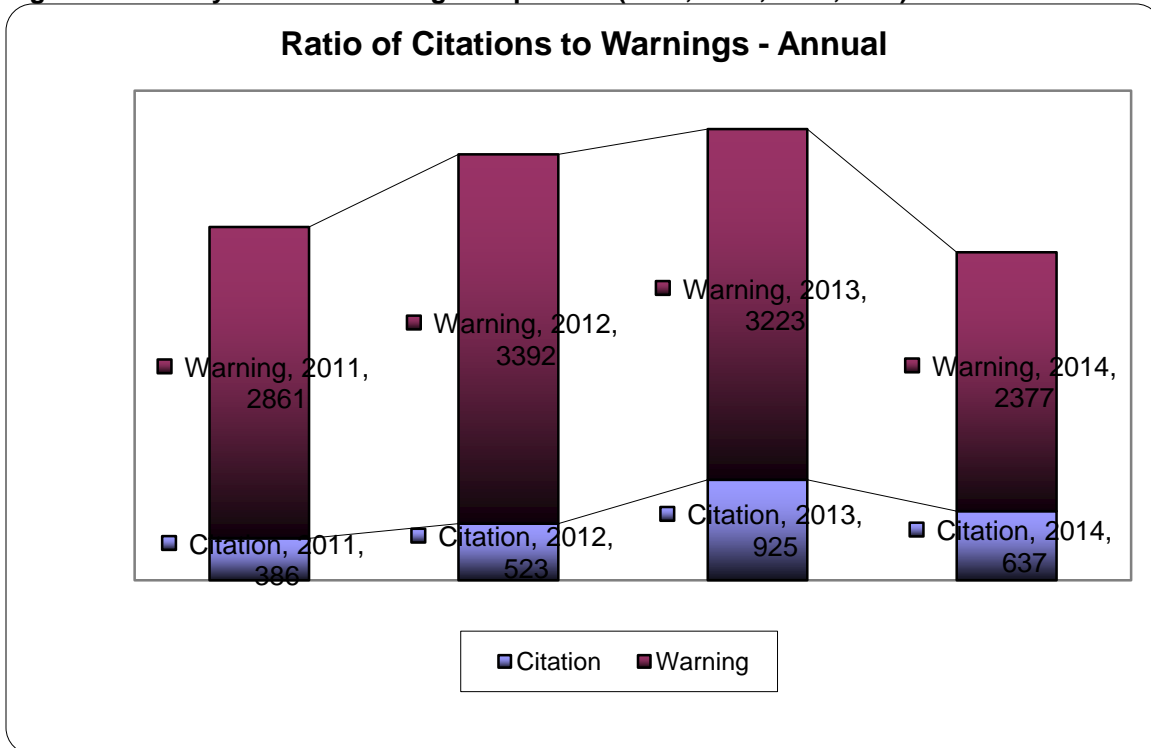
Table 6. Summary Citations and Warnings by Violation 2014

Violation	2014 Total Citations	%	Rank	2014 Total Warnings	%	Rank
Alcohol	99	16%	2	309	13%	4
Animal Control Violations	84	13%	4	438	18%	3
Bicycle Violation	3	0%	11	485	20%	1
Glass	32	5%	6	159	7%	6
Illegal Camping	85	13%	3	241	10%	5
Injury/Destruction City Property	8	1%	8	4	0%	11
Littering	5	1%	9	48	2%	9
Other Violations	23	4%	7	104	4%	7
Parking Violations	245	38%	1	98	4%	8
Resist/Delay Park Ranger	4	1%	10	9	0%	10
Smoking	49	8%	5	482	20%	2
Total	637	100.0%		2377	100.0%	

Table 7. Summary Citations and Warnings by Place 2014

Location	2014 Citations			2014 Warnings		
	Total	%	Rank	Total	%	Rank
Lower Park	235	36.9%	1	1285	54.1%	1
Middle Park	44	6.9%	4	199	8.4%	4
Upper Park	182	28.6%	2	294	12.4%	3
Specialty Parks/Greenways	176	27.6%	3	599	25.2%	2
Totals	637	100.0%		2377	100.0%	

Figure 4. Monthly Citation/Warning Comparison (2011, 2012, 2013,2014).



Type	2011	2012	2013	2014
Citation	386	523	925	637
Warning	2861	3392	3223	2377

- xii. Police Incident Reports and Calls for Service – The Police Department tracks incident reports and calls for service. We were unable to obtain the calls for service and incident reports for 2014.

11. Street Trees

a. Program Description

The Street Trees and Public Plantings program cares for public landscaping and the over 36,000 trees planted in the Public Right of Way and other city-owned areas (excluding natural areas such as Bidwell Park and Greenways). Since 2013, the Parks Division absorbed the functions of the Street Trees and Public Plantings (landscapes) Division.

b. 2014 Highlights and General Summary

- i. Chico named Tree City USA for 30th year – The Arbor Day Foundation recertified Chico as a 2013 Tree City USA recipient. This is Chico's 30 year with the program. The Tree City USA program is a national program that provides the framework for community forestry management for cities and towns across America. Communities achieve Tree City USA status by meeting four core standards of sound urban forestry management: maintaining a tree board or department, having a community tree ordinance, spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry and celebrating Arbor Day.
- ii. Tree Crew Efforts – The tree crew was an important part of taking care of the City trees. However the crew was cut in FY 2013-2014.

Through a bid process we managed to hire a local tree service, Petersen Tree Care to handle our emergency work. Petersen Tree Care was utilized 307.5 hours totaling \$69,187.50 for emergency services.

In July 2014 a full time Senior Tree Maintenance Worker was rehired to full time duty. This allowed us to complete most of the highest priority requests such as traffic safety pruning and broken or hanging limbs that cause a public hazard. The daily assignments consist of a variety tree maintenance work including clearing stop signs, elevating low limbs for site clearance in school zones, formative pruning young trees for proper structure, removing smaller dead/dying/invasive trees for public safety, and more. See the attached spread sheet below for more details.

With the current staff and budget that the Street Tree Division is operating with it is not able to provide the same level of service that it did in previous years. Since the reductions, the 1 full time STMW has been limited to pruning only what he can reach from the ground level. This is due to OSHA requiring that whenever operating a tree boom truck or climbing, a second employee shall be present to render immediate assistance. However, by using pole saws with extensions he is able to reach and prune approximately 15-20 feet high maximum. Also, with the use of a throw line he is able to remove hanging limbs up to 80 feet.

The following information on pruning was targeted toward the lower canopy of the trees for public safety. The pruning did not include a full trim of the entire canopy. In years past when the department was fully staffed they would safety prune the entire tree while they were there in an effort to save time from coming back.

Highlighted Tree Maintenance totals for 2014

- Traffic Safety Pruning- 882 trees pruned.
- School Zone Pruning- 220 trees pruned.
- Smaller dead/dying/invasive removals- 209 trees removed.
- Formative Pruning (structure pruning of younger trees) -178 trees pruned.
- DCBA Pruning- 360 trees pruned.
- Bidwell Park pruning- 22 trees pruned.
- Storm Damage and Down Limb Calls- Responded to 642 locations.
- Call Outs- Responded to 68 emergency calls that primarily came from CPD Dispatch.

i. Projects Completed

- 560 Service Requests- a detailed list is available.
- Brush Chipping and Clean Up- 37 hours.
- Unauthorized Camp Clean Up- 37 hours.

- Christmas Tree and Menorah set up/take down- 0 hours.
- Down Limbs and Hangers- 569 hours (585 locations).
- Downtown Plaza- 10 hours (minimal elevating on 49 trees).
- Routine Elevating- 0 hours.
- Equipment Maintenance- 162 hours.
- Grates and Cages- 42 hours.
- Irrigation- 965 hours.
- Planting- 29 hours (assisted volunteer groups to plant 14 trees).
- Prep Time and DOT Inspections- 403 hours.
- Formative Pruning- 60 hours (178 trees).
- Bidwell Park Pruning- 12 hours (22 trees pruned, 2 trees removed).
- Traffic Safety Pruning- 425 hours (882 trees pruned).
- Priority Removals- 134 hours (209 dead/dying/invasive trees removed).
- Safety Meetings- 20 hours.
- School Zone Pruning- 110 hours (220 trees pruned).
- Storm Damage Clean Up- 73 hours.
- Training- 11 hours.
- Assist DPW- 2 hours.
- Assist Police and Fire- 4 hours.
- DCBA Pruning- 156 hours (360 trees pruned).
- GIS Inventory- 462 hours.
- Call Outs- 68 (all call outs required follow up assessment, pruning or removal).
- Permits- Removal- 25-approved, 3-Denied.
 - Planting- 17-approved
 - Pruning- 21-approved
- Emergency Tree Work- 307.5 hours (\$69,187.50).
- Removal Contract Work- 139 trees (\$69,500.00). 25 trees removed from CMD 78 (no cost to general fund).

Trees

- Completed its 30th year as a Tree City USA.
- Continued updating of the City's Street Tree Inventory.
- The 1-full time Senior Tree Maintenance Worker concentrated on safety pruning around school zones, elevating tree limbs over streets for traffic safety, clearing for signs and signals, formative pruning young trees for proper structure, removing smaller dead/ dying/invasive trees for public safety, cleanup of from storm damage, and responding to broken and hanging limbs.
- The 1-full time maintenance worker focused on irrigation of newer trees, GIS inventory, clearing down limbs and assisting with storm damage cleanup.

12. City Landscapes

a. Program Description

The landscapes range from very large and spread out to small in size. Each year due to the possible acceptance new subdivisions, sites may be added to the city's responsibilities and placed under contract. The City contracts maintenance services to Carson Landscape Industries and their local subcontractor, Sierra Landscape Maintenance Inc. This is the city's largest annual service contract and amounts to \$644,952 for services being paid out over 119 different fund accounts. The city's Landscape Inspector communicates daily with the landscape contractor, promoting contract compliance and efficient quality services. There are four general categories of public landscapes in Chico (please see photographs):

- **City Specialty and Neighborhood Parks** include City Plaza, Children's' Playground, Ringel Park, Depot Park, Verbena Fields, Humboldt Park, Emerson, Husa/Nob Hill and various greenways.
- **Municipal** buildings or facilities include City Hall, Municipal Services Center, Fire Stations, Police Department, Waste Water Treatment Plant.
- **Parking/Transportation** facilities include the Parking Lots, Bus Transportation Center, Amtrak Depot and the Airport Terminal and its facilities.

- **Public Plantings** include Chico Maintenance Districts (CMD) and Right of Ways (ROW) park-strips, back-ups and medians throughout town

The seasons strongly influence tasks. The following is a general overview:

1. Winter - Each December the controllers are turned off through the winter to help insure water conservation and equipment protection. In January, the maintenance focus turns to pruning shrubs to reduce size, if necessary and thin to maintain natural shape and relevance within each individual landscape. Once the annual pruning is done, the shrubs are attended to monthly for general maintenance. Late winter is also when irrigation systems are given a full check so they are ready to be used in the spring season, when occasional irrigation may be necessary. The landscapes have irrigation controllers with multiple programs being monitored and adjusted through out the year to conserve water and still provide for the health of the plants.
2. Winter/Spring - Fertilizers are applied and follow-up to pre-emergent applications from previous Summer/Fall. Weed control is ongoing, month to month. Records are kept regarding chemicals applied. Some sites have annual plant "color" beds that are changed out quarterly and reinforced through out the year.
3. Spring/Summer - Mulch is reestablished and chip mulch generated from tree work is utilized to save money. Mulching helps to control weeds, reduce water evaporation and moderate soil temperatures. There is a consistent focus on water conservation with weekly irrigation checks and repairs performed during all months when systems are operating. As a part of the attention to conservation, water quality is also important. Protecting the water supply from contamination is assured by testing every Backflow Prevention Device associated with a City of Chico property. Weather is predictable during this growing season. Many tasks are routine such as mowing, trimming, weed control and litter removal.
4. Fall – Fall's cooler nights, reduces evapotranspiration, so the irrigation programming is reduced. Some systems are on remote central control. This conserves water resource, water costs and provides for better plant health with lower maintenance costs. Fall fertilization of turf and other plants occurs. Wood chips continue to be placed in planters to cover bare soil. With the season leaf drop, hauling is a daily routine in Fall/Winter.
5. Other impacts - There is an impact to some sites due to vandalism vagrancy and/or illegal encampment. Throughout the year, repairs and maintenance to related facilities are accomplished. Some examples are repairs to picnic tables and benches, lamp light and electrical, irrigation, sound walls and restrooms. In high impact public use places, there is daily patrolling for trash and litter pick up, graffiti removal and need for surface cleaning. Landscape maintenance is an integrated service and each year cycles through tasks that orient to each season and the varied levels of public activity within the different landscaped sites. The public generated 292 service requests during 2014, relating to landscape conditions, irrigation repairs, debris, locating underground utilities and facility repairs. There were 265 additional requests generated (during the first five months alone) through communication with the Landscape contractor, city personnel and other agencies for necessary repairs and services.
6. Design Plans and Field Inspection – Design plan reviews and field inspections of landscapes are required prior to accepting new developments to insure proper installation and success of the landscape's growth and maturity. Five new sites and two service upgrades were added to the contract during 2014: Medians and back-ups on the new extension of Eaton Road between Ceanothus Avenue and Floral Avenue; the re-vegetation mitigation at Lindo Channel for the Manzanita Corridor project and the also the bike path bridge at Little Chico Creek; park strips near Children's Playground for the downtown Couplet project; Pet Station bag dispenser service for Hillview Terrace subdivision and back-up landscaping within a small neighborhood common area called Orchard in the northwest part of Chico.
7. Interaction with other divisions and agencies – Throughout the year the Landscape Inspector cooperates on projects or tasks with other city divisions like Engineering, Waste Water Treatment Plant and Operations and Maintenance. There is cooperation with the Community Development, Fire and Police Departments. Landscape utility location services are provided to construction contractors. There is on-going interaction and cooperation with California Department of Transportation, California Water Service Co. and with companies or associations that monitor and report to state and federal agencies on sites established for re-vegetation mitigation required through a permitting process.

8. Evaluation of plantings - On a routine basis, Staff works on evaluating the need for replanting and water conservation measures.

b. Highlights

1. Water Conservation practices emphasized:

- Irrigation is turned off during the months of December through February. Any necessary irrigation during this time is performed via a temporary manual program. The system is to be checked prior to irrigation. Sites that have “annual color” plantings, have only that station irrigate.
- An annual “start-up” irrigation system check is performed and repairs made for every site. It’s usually done between January 15th and March 15th. The public may see active irrigation during the day when system checks are performed. However, irrigation is programmed to water at night when evaporation conditions are low.
- Weekly irrigation checks are performed during the irrigation season for every site.
- Small repairs are made within 24 hours of detection or notification.
- Large repairs that require proposed work are mitigated by turning broken systems or components off until full repair can be made.
- Turf is irrigated at 90% of evapotranspiration (ET).
- Shrubs and ground covers are irrigated at 70% of ET.
- Proper head alignment, arc and nozzle adjustments, pressure adjustments and proper “soak-time” programming is required to minimize or eliminate run-off and over-spray.
- Wood chip/shred is placed to cover bare soil to reduce evaporation and moderate soil temperatures.
- Water meters are checked once a month to see if they are spinning while no irrigation is running.
- At locations where plant material has not been replaced, heads or nozzles are capped.

Additionally:

- January 31st, 2014, the landscape contractor was instructed to reduce irrigation by 20%, effective immediately.
- There is daily/weekly communication with our landscape contractor, promoting quality and efficient performance. Field inspections occur for monitoring and verification.
- Product and design changes are considered in locations where the original design is old, deteriorated and no longer aligns with industry consciousness. Funding is a challenge.
- We continue to evaluate landscape sites that may be used to replant with drought tolerant/low-water-use plants, when funding is available.

1. Design Standard Review - A review of our current standards for landscape design occurred during 2014. It is projected that draft changes will be available to management in late winter or early spring. Conserving water and plant health is supported by appropriate design features and proper installation. Landscape designs submitted by community developers for required permits, are reviewed and accepted before construction begins. In 2014, the review process itself was looked at. A standard landscape design review checklist and a project installation-inspection checklist are being developed.

2. Dancing Trout Fountain Renovation

Deteriorating piping and valves were replaced. Flow management was improved.
Broken tiles were replaced. All tile surfaces were cleaned re-grouted and sealed.
Granite slab basin and pedestal was cleaned, resealed and re-leveled.
Concrete surfaces were cleaned, repainted and sealed.
Cost = \$3,420.

We are ever mindful of the need and emphasize the importance to actively conserve water. We strive to improve where we discover a breakdown in these practices and are open to new, helpful information and ideas. In addition to conserving our water resource, cost savings ranging from .11% to 15.69% per month have been identified during 2014. Financial data for January through September show savings of \$15,986.92 due to reduced consumption. Different seasons have different demands for landscape irrigation, thus, the variance in saving percentages each month. As more data is collected and reviewed, both consumption and cost savings can be reported.

9. Volunteer and Donations

Program Description

When citizens take the opportunity to give time and energy to volunteer in Bidwell Park and our City greenways, their investment in and respect for Chico's unique resources grow deeper. *The Bidwell Park Volunteer Program's objective is to enlist the help of the local community in managing Park resources and expand volunteerism in as many aspects of enhancing Bidwell Park as possible (BP Volunteer Manual, April 2007).* Volunteers currently assist the Park Division by participating in the Park Watch program and in a variety of other efforts. Park Watch volunteers work for the benefit of Bidwell Park, the visitors, wildlife, and trails. Park Watchers act as ambassadors of the park by providing visitors with information and advising park staff about damage, hazards, vandalism, and any concerns they encounter while in the park. Other volunteer activities include; illegal encampment clean ups, painting, litter removal, water quality monitoring, weed mapping and monitoring, providing environmental education, creek-bank restoration, trail maintenance and repair, event planning and implementation, fundraising, outreach, Park office tasks, control of invasive weeds, native plant seed propagation and planting native plants. In 2014, volunteers contributed 22,896 hours of work in Bidwell Park and City of Chico Greenways.

c. 2014 Highlights

- i. Despite the absence of a Park Services Coordinator, the Park Intern, Heidi Ortiz has continued to coordinate and support volunteers in doing restoration projects.
- ii. For years, the high priority placed on vegetation management during weekly and annual volunteer work sessions has helped supplement and offset the Park Division maintenance crew staff time. Also with the reduction of staff, volunteer dedication to cleaning encampments and trash has been vital for cleaning our watershed.
- iii. Large annual park work days remain popular events that school students, families, individuals, CSUC and Butte College students, community service groups and church groups participate in (see Tables 8 and 9).
- iv. CSUChico's CAVE Adopt a Park and Upward Bound programs continue to provide reliable volunteers for the Park, greenways and open spaces.

Table 8. Summary of Volunteer Program Hours.

Category	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Trend
Park/Greenway Work	5,129	7,891	6,317	9,677	11,228	10,474	10,991	8035	14163	
Park Watch Patrol	11,913	10,866	10,455	10,061	8,788	6,901	8,810	10844	14400	
Total Hours	17,042	18,757	16,772	19,738	20,016	17,375	19,801	18,879	28,563	

Table 9. Summary of Volunteer Annual Event Hours.

Event	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Trend
Earth Day	88	371	515	705	448	638	262	906	780	
Make a Difference Day	124	389	302	495	409	1,154	1,042	1120	425	
Upward Bound Work Day	473	536.5	0	370.5	347	503	446	730	545	
Trail Work Days	216	471	581	353	18	146	121	137	0	
Total Hours	901	1,768	901	1,924	1,222	2,441	1,871	2,893	1,750	

10. The Park Division and **Chico High School Native Plant Project** completed its 6th year with 4 students during the spring semester of the 2013-14 school year. Students cultivated and cared for over 15 native plant species, experimented with different growing techniques and seed preparation. Park volunteer Michael Stauffer advised on the project and worked with students. The class had one field day during the spring to plant their propagated plants at Sycamore Restoration Area. Volunteer hours totaled 400 hours in 2014.

11. The Park Division and CSU, Chico's **Community Action Volunteers in Education (CAVE)** have partnered through the Adopt-A-Park Program for its ninth year. During the spring 2014 semester, 27 CAVE students signed up to work in Bidwell Park and our City greenways. During the fall we had a record 36 CAVE students who signed up. Their volunteer hours contributed to the park is around 1,700.
12. The Park Division and **CSU Chico's Upward Bound (UB)** high school program completed its 8th year with 10 high school students working in Bidwell Park four days a week for six weeks during the summer under the guidance of Park Intern, Heidi Ortiz. Upward Bound students also participate in an annual City of Chico/ Upward Bound workday. Volunteer hours during the students six week involvement totals 720 plus an additional 545 for the event equals 1,265 hours.
13. Volunteer **Adopt-A-Park Site Program** has been in existence since the fall of 2008.
 - Sigma Chi Fraternity (5th year) weeded and watered their site, site 40. The group volunteered a total of 40 hours.
 - Blue Oak Charter School (Ms. Ginney's class) worked 36 hours at their adopted (site #6) in April to pulling vinca major, plant natives and water.
 - McCabe Family (10th year) continued weeding in different areas of the Park and at their adopted sites, 11 and 12.
 - Rangel Family (5th year) removed vinca at site 32.
 - Friends of Comanche Creek have offered monthly work sessions at Comanche Creek greenway.
 - Susan Toaspern- Holm and Don Holmtar volunteered 30 hours removing starthistle in the Bryant Avenue meadow and along Vallombrosa Avenue from Bryant Avenue to Highway 99. They also spent time with Susan Mason removing star thistle from the north end of the orchard along Vallombrosa and from the meadow east of Peterson Memorial Drive. This year marks their 7th year volunteering for the Park Division.
 - Elaine Ellsmore hosted volunteer work sessions at her adopted sites, 5 Mile Recreation Area, Verbena Fields and Hooker Oak Park. 80 hours in total were spent removing trash and weeds including mullin, poke weed, grapevine and yellow star thistle.
 - Site 29 was adopted by Ryan McDougale and stepson Jaydence Marsh. They have volunteer 33 hours removing vinca, collecting seeds, planting willow and removing grape from the site. They also contributed another 21.5 hours during other work sessions during the fall and winter.
 - Site 2 was adopted by Adelei Carman and the Inspire High School California Scholarship Federation. They have been removing grape, vinca and blackberry from the site. Their hours total 36.
 - Thad Walker volunteered 15 hours doing trail work.
 - DCBA/Jesus Center adopted Lost Park, picking up trash weekly.
14. **Weekly Volunteer Workdays in the Park & Greenways** -- This program provides restoration, weed control and trash removal and trail work opportunities in various Park sites such as Annie's Glen, Cedar Grove, Five Mile Recreation, Lost Park, One Mile (north and south), Site 8, Site 24-25, Sycamore Restoration Site, and in the City's greenways, including 9th & Hazel Park, Children's Playground, Comanche Creek, Humboldt Park, Little Chico Creek, Lindo Channel, Memorial Way and Teichert Ponds. Funds raised through donations pay for an hourly Park Intern, who leads some of these sessions. Crew Leaders led the majority of the sessions, which are in high demand as CSUChico and Butte Collage extra-curricular classes and mandated community service. Citizens unable to afford to pay their misdemeanor fines are able to work in the Park and greenways in place of paying fines.
15. The Park Division's **Crew Leader Program** and volunteer leaders of independent groups have increased the number of weekly sessions to provide pro-active care for sustaining and restoring a variety of locations in the City's greenways, open spaces and Bidwell Park. Crew Leaders are individuals who have received training in order to take on leadership roles in Bidwell Park and City greenways. Crew Leaders lead volunteer sessions, document worksite progress and report volunteer hours. With the absence of a Park Services Coordinator, Crew Leaders (and Park Watch members) have also assisted the Park Intern with fundraising, event planning and event implantation. The Park Division has several active Crew Leaders who schedule regular sessions with support from the Park Division. Worksites and Crew Leaders include; Little Chico Creek (Susan Mason), Comanche Creek (Janet Ellner, Elizabeth Stewart and Susan Mason), Teichert Ponds (Susan Mason), Verbena Fields (Susan Mason, Elaine Ellsmore), Humboldt Neighborhood Park (Susan Mason) and 9th and Hazel Neighborhood Park (Susan Mason). Within Bidwell Park some Crew Leaders have taken on the responsibility

of overseeing volunteer activity at a location of their choice. Steve Overlock led a session along Yahi Trail for the 7th year (for CNPS). Elaine Ellsmore leads volunteer sessions at 5 Mile Recreation Area, Verbena Fields and Hooker Oak Park (CARD leased property). Michael Bruhn and Susan Mason lead sessions at Lost Park, Susan Mason leads sessions at Bidwell Bowl, Annie's Glen and Camellia Way. Other Crew Leaders that have taken on specialized roles. Michael Stauffer helps operate the Chico High Native Plant Project. Timmarie Hamill (from CA Urban Stream Alliance/Stream Team) does water quality monitoring with the public along Big Chico Creek.

16. **Independent Groups** have been a driving force for the Park Division's Volunteer Program .Their efforts generate 1,000s of hours of labor while their leaders provide monetary support and logistic solutions to our Park and greenway's issues.

Friends of Comanche Creek Greenway contributed 1,400 volunteer hours working on the north and south greenways along Comanche Creek. They worked to remove invasive plant species (primarily Himalayan Blackberry, milk thistle, ailanthus, Johnson Grass, puncture vine, yellow star thistle and privet), as well as to clean up abandoned homeless encampments and pick up trash. They received \$1532 in the form of donated green waste bins and trash removal from Recology, along with a Clean-up grant from Butte County. Scott Wineland's in-kind contribution of \$1,950 was greatly appreciated. FCCG paid \$400 to Dempsey Vegetation Management, and raised \$7,297 (through the North Valley Community Foundation) towards the implementation of a Housing-Related Parks Grant. They sponsored twice monthly volunteer workdays at Comanche Creek Greenway, and participated in other community creeks events.

Friends of Bidwell Park contributed 1,004 volunteer hours, working mainly at Lost Park, Bidwell Bowl, and the area west of CARD. They paid \$1,750 for herbicide treatments primarily at Lost Park and west of the Nature Center. FOBP hired a part-time AmeriCorps Conservation Associate to help plan and implement invasive plant removal projects in Bidwell Park. Last fall, they contracted with DCBA/Jesus Center to pick up trash weekly in Lost Park. With a matching city grant, they've been able expand the now semi-weekly cleanup to include the area from Children's Playground to One Mile on both sides of creek.

The Mount Lassen Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) contributed 1,370 volunteer hours working primarily along Little Chico Creek removing privets, olives, pokeweed, & arundo, doing weed surveys, picking up trash and cleaning up illegal encampments. Thanks to a \$4,000 grant from Waste Management covering vegetation and trash disposal costs, CNPS has been able to undertake some major invasives removal projects. They also held monthly work sessions along the city-controlled CSU Chico riparian area and CNPS and BEC sponsored 2 neighborhood cleanup events, with more to follow in 2015. CNPS member Wes Dempsey removed Spanish broom in Lindo Channel from Manzanita Ave to Madrone Avenue. Also, member Steve Overlock held a session along Yahi Trail in Upper Park.

CA Urban Stream Alliance "The Stream Team", facilitates opportunities for citizen volunteers to conduct water quality and habitat monitoring within the Big Chico Creek watershed. Dedicated Stream Team volunteers tracked water quality during monthly monitoring sessions held at Brown's Hole, Bear Hole, Five Mile, One Mile, and Annie's Glen, contributing 720 hours of service. The Stream Team also conducted stormwater and environmental education where students assisted in restoration, water quality monitoring, and trash surveys at Lost Park, Children's Park, Five Mile and One Mile, contributing 6000 hours of service. The Stream Team volunteers also performed quarterly photo monitoring at Lost Park and Verbena Fields, contributing 36 hours of service. In addition, The Stream Team hosted 3 community outreach events (9 hours) and 4 trash surveys at Lost Park and One Mile (160 hours). Lastly, they spent over 300 hours writing grants for the City of Chico including a recently awarded Prop. 84 stormwater grant. Their total volunteer hours for the Park Division in 2014 is 7,255.

Kids and Creeks logged 117 adult hours and 306 elementary school student volunteer hours of restoration at Verbena Fields during Kids and Creeks field trips. Kids and Creeks reported 22.5 volunteer hours in Upper Park planting oaks with Butte Environmental Council. At their adopted site (9th & Hazel) they spent 36.5 hours weeding and cleaning up litter. Kids and Creeks total volunteer hours for 2014 were 482.

Butte Environmental Council has hosted the Bidwell Park and Chico Creeks Cleanup every September since the mid 80's. This year, 450 volunteers participated in the event. In addition to the yearly clean up, BEC hosted an oak tree planting in Upper Park for 90 children and a "Block Party with a Purpose" which attracted 55 community members. Altogether, Butte Environmental Council contributed 1,352.5 hours to restoring the Park and greenways.

17. Donations

In calendar year 2014, citizens provided \$11,050.81 in park cash donations, including \$6,600 devoted to Caper Acres (Table 10). Donations, both cash and in-kind, have helped save the Park Division financial resources. In-kind donations valued at \$284,790 from area businesses and local organizations as well as in-kind labor. (Table 11)

Table 10. Summary of Park Donations and In-Kind Service Donations (2014).

Donations	2014 Value	2013 Value
<u>Cash Donations</u>		
Outreach, Education and Special Events	\$0	\$3,284
Caper Acres/ Nico Project	\$6,600	\$1,594
General Improvements	\$940	\$6,253
Infrastructure	\$500	\$120
Park Intern	\$1,750	\$1,000
Trails	\$500.81	\$1,640
Vegetation Management	\$500	\$97
Jake Early T Shirts	\$260	
Total Cash Donations	\$11,050.81	\$13,988.00
Annie B's Fund Drive *Funds are accounted for in the Park accounts listed above.	\$8,241	\$ 6,779

Table 11. 2014 Summary of In-Kind Donations.

Organization	Description	Amount
Butte County Public Works Cleanup fund	4 vegetation roller bins at Comanche Creek	\$680.00
Butte County Sheriff (SWAP and ACS programs)	Camp clean-ups, Caper Acres, vegetation work. Average crew size of six members with at least 1 deputy supervisor. ACS and SWAP crews contributed approximately 20 hours per week to the parks and greenways. 20 hours Xs 7 members is 140 hours per week @ 52 weeks per year is 7,280 Xs 24.75 per hour.	\$180,180.00
Butte Environmental Council	Acorn planting project	\$10,000
	Bidwell Park & Creeks of Chico cleanup	\$3,200
	Block Party with a Purpose supplies	\$4,500
California Conservation Corps	Volunteer hours (1014 hours @ CCC labor fair market value \$18.77)	\$66,011
Chico Tree Advocates	To buy tree samplings for urban forest	\$2,530.00
Costco	Breakfast foods for Earth Day and cakes for Bidwell Birthday Bash	\$300.00
Friends of Bidwell Park	Herbicide treatments in Bidwell Park	\$1,750.00
	AmeriCorps Conservation Associate	\$3,880.00
	DCBA for Jesus Center trash pickup	\$1,296.00

Organization	Description	Amount
	Planting stakes, rice straw	\$74.00
	Vegetation and trash disposal costs	\$125.00
	4 Vegetation and trash roller bins	\$667.00
	2 vegetation loads from Lost Park	\$10.00
Friends of Comanche Creek Greenway	Herbicide treatment of ailanthus	\$400.00
	Supplies (gloves, bags, tools)	\$70.00
Home Depot	Buckets, tools, gloves	\$350
Mount Lassen Chapter-CNPS	Vegetation and trash disposal costs	\$159.00
	4 vegetation and trash roller bins	\$1,206.00
Orchard Supply	Buckets	\$189.50
Recology	84 trash bins	\$2,016.00
	67 recycle bins	\$201.00
	2 3 yard bins	\$211.66
	1 6 yard bin	\$173.79
	1 15 yard bin	\$200.00
	4 20 yard bins	\$1,040.00
	1 30 yard bin	\$320.00
	1 40 yard bin	\$380.00
	1 40 yard vegetation bin	\$120.00
Sacramento Tree Foundation	600 used tree tubes	\$600.00
Wineland Walnut Inc	Ailanthus tree removals at Comanche Creek	\$1,950.00
Total In Kind Donations		\$284,789.95

18. Economic Value of the Volunteer Program

The economic value of the volunteer program is only one measure of its worth. The Bidwell Park and the City's greenways Volunteer Program promotes safety, environmental health and beauty, sense of place and connects community members with our unique public lands. With limited financial and staff resources, Park Division volunteers remain an important asset which does have a monetary value. Traditionally, the financial worth of volunteer time has been estimated using a single dollar value for all types of volunteering. The Independent Sector updates annually the *Value of Volunteer Time* on its website <http://www.independentsector.org>. The current rate is \$26.34 per hour for the State of California (the volunteer rate is from 2013 and is the most up to date available). **Using this rate, the Park's volunteer hours of 28,562.5 is equivalent to \$752,336.25!!** According to the IS website, "*The value of volunteer time presented here is the average wage of non-management, non-agricultural workers. This is only a tool and only one way to show the immense value volunteers provide to an organization.*" The Park Intern also solicits support of in-kind contributions from area businesses and organizations to help supplement the Volunteer Program and additional Park programs projects in the Park summary of Park Donations and In-Kind Service Donations (see Table 9.1).

19. Challenges Encountered

Staffing challenges – the largest challenge is posed by the diminished resources available to the Divisions. The absence of a Park Services Coordinator put a strain on the department.

Infrastructure – The diminished resources come at a time when Park infrastructure continues to decline.

Homeless Encampments – Encampments clean-ups and related enforcement issues were a significant part of all duties of the park division.

20. Upcoming Issues

One thing that is clear from compiling the information related to this annual report is the remarkable breadth of tasks and long list of accomplishments that the Division completed last year despite the immense challenges. Upcoming issues staff hopes to address include:

- i. Complete draft Trails and Natural Resource Management Plans.
- ii. Continued reexamination of Division functions to better match current resource and staff capacity. May result in changes to service.
- iii. Accept reservations and permits on-line.
- iv. Install trail kiosks at Horseshoe Lake. Complete the initial trail and erosion work at Monkey Face.
- v. Complete the Caper Acres Master Plan and begin to seek funding for urgent repairs.
- vi. Support progress on the work plan for the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission (BPPC).
- vii. In response to the cuts in staff, Park Hours were reduced to match current resources. Staff prioritized services on peak days (Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays) with no changes in park hours on those days. However, some park gates (to vehicles) and restrooms remain closed. Staff will recommend the restoration of ranger and maintenance staff so that the park may return to normal hours.
- viii. In addition, to the Urban Forest Plan, the Division will prepare a Street Trees Work Plan, which will provide the public a guide for upcoming priorities. The plan will provide the BPPC with a means to measure progress and layout reasonable expectations based on current resource levels. Future progress on these efforts will be shared in the annual report.
- ix. Staff will submit capital project requests for projects. While current budget realities may not allow for funding, staff notes that it is important to acknowledge these items as separate from the operations budget improve tracking and develop a long-term replacement approach. These items include:
 - 1) Upper Park Road: The project will lead to a more sustainable, safe, cost-effective road that meets modern forest road standards. Phase I will conduct topography, botanical, wetland, and archeological surveys of the road; initiate permitting and compliance; develop sustainable designs that reduce maintenance costs; meet environmental and water quality goals; and estimate costs and timelines.
 - 2) Middle Trail Grant Phase II - Project continues Phase II of Middle Trail Project: 1) Design, Construction and Rehabilitation.
 - 3) Park Facility Improvements - Project will provide funds for the rehabilitation, repair, and installation of new facilities in City Parks, Greenways, and other City properties (new features such as benches, picnic tables, building improvements and repairs, minor bridge and paved path repairs; bringing electrical up to code; irrigation repairs; gate and fence replacement and installation; Par Course features; ADA repairs; and others).
 - 4) Bidwell Bowl - Project will restore Bidwell Bowl as a viable venue while working within the historical significance of the facility. Phase I - provide for an architectural and historical evaluation to determine reasonable renovation actions; initiate environmental compliance; solicit public input; develop renovation designs that meet the Secretary of Interior Standards for renovation of historical facilities; estimate costs and a timeline for completion.

- 5) Parks Tree Maintenance - Partially restore funding for annual maintenance of high risk trees in target areas (playgrounds, trails, picnic sites, roads, bike paths, & other developed areas in City Parks and Greenways)/
- 6) Corridor Tree Improvements - Provides funding for high priority corridors for planting, proactive structural and formative pruning, tree protection, and irrigation. .

x. Staff made the following staffing recommendations to restore services for the Divisions:

- 1) Rangers: Add 1.25 FTE (add a permanent ranger position, and make the seasonal position full time) to restore the 0.75 FTE lost in FY 2013 and allow for improved overlap, staff safety, and better temporal and geographic coverage during the week.
- 2) Park Attendant (to assist with events and logistics): This could be partially funded through event fees that will be re-examined during 2015-16. 0.5 FTE
- 3) 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.
- 4) 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. Allows for better response to emergencies.

Attachments:

- 1) Detailed Maintenance Tasks 2014.
- 2) Tree daily reports
- 3) Annual reports from lessees (Bidwell Park Municipal Golf Course, Chico Creek Nature Center, Chico Equestrian Association, Chico Rod and Gun Club, the One Mile Concession Stand (Dog House), Silver Dollar BMX, Chico Community Observatory.
- 4) Photographs