Field Trip Descriptions - Friday
62nd Conference of the California Geographical Society
California State University, Chico

Friday, May 2, 2008*

9:00am - 4:00pm — Sacramento River Float

Chuck Nelson, Geographical Information Center Director, will lead a 10 mile float through a section of the 77-mile long Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge includes 27 properties with over 10,000 acres of riparian habitat. The SRNWR is critical to fish, migratory birds and plants and provides shelter for songbirds and various water animals, including otters, turtles, beaver, American pelicans, ospreys, and bank swallows. We will be joined by Nature Conservancy (TNC) personnel to tour sites and discuss TNC’s restoration program on the river. The route includes stops at remnant and restored riparian sites, leaving time for wildlife watchers to wander and photograph. Walks are easy and the float requires no expertise in rafting. Meet at the east entrance to Holt Hall at Arcadian Street. Bring sunglasses, water, hat, water shoes, camera, binoculars and snacks. $50. Box lunch provided. Maximum: 18 people.

9:00am - 3:00pm — Butte Creek and Big Chico Creek Restoration Projects

Join Scott Gregory, biologist and Geography and Planning graduate student, on this trip through two local Sierra Nevada foothill canyons and streams just east of Chico. Butte Creek and Big Chico Creek are adjacent watersheds and are equally stunning in beauty, but because of differences in mineral wealth, the two canyons have experienced very different degrees of human impact over the past century and a half. Butte Creek Canyon experienced a gold rush in the 1850’s, and once had numerous mining communities with a rugged and somewhat lawless human population. Today, Butte Creek supports the largest self-sustaining populations of Chinook salmon among the northern tributaries to the Sacramento River. To the north, Big Chico Creek lacks gold completely. This feature has contributed to its relatively sparse human population and has subsequently provided opportunities to research different methods of restoration, including restoration of the natural fire regime. The trip will begin with a visit to Butte Creek Ecological Preserve, a 93-acre parcel in lower Butte Creek Canyon owned and managed by California State University, Chico. This is the site of a vegetation restoration project where commercial gold dredging and gravel mining operations once occurred. We will then visit the university’s 3,950-acre Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve, which supports a diversity of native wildlife and heterogeneous vegetation communities. Removal of highly invasive plant species has been the focus of restoration efforts in this rather remote and expansive parcel of property. Meet at the east entrance to Holt Hall at Arcadian Street. Moderate hiking, 3 miles round trip; wear hiking boots, long pants, apply insect repellent and bring extra water. $35. Box lunch provided. Maximum: 28 people.

12:00 - 5:00pm — Vineyards of Butte County

Geography professor Scot Hoiland (Butte College) will lead this tour of the wine landscapes of Butte County. Heading eastward on Highway 32, the group will follow the route of the historic Humboldt Pass Road. We will pass through the village of Forest Ranch, once an important center of logging and lumber milling where the historic lumber flume transporting timber down into Chico originated. From Forest Ranch we will drop down into the canyon of Little Chico Creek and climb up onto Doe Mill Ridge where LaRocca Winery is located. We will tour the winery, view the sustainably farmed vineyard, and taste Phil LaRocca’s wine. We’ll retrace our steps to Highway 99, where we will travel northward through orchards, field crops, and grazing land until we reached the village of Vina. This is the site of Leland Stanford’s famous (or infamous) winery built before the turn of the 20th century, at the time considered the largest winery in the world. The original buildings still stand intact as part of the Abbey at New Clairvaux, an active Trappist monastery. We will tour the historic winery, taste wine, and then tour the Chapter House under construction, using stones from a 14th century Trappist monastery in Spain that were transported to California by William Randolph Hearst. Meet at the Butte College Chico Center on Forest Avenue. (Take 20th Street east from Highway 99, and turn right on Forest Avenue; please contact local organizing committee if you need further directions.) The tour will include short, easy walks to and from stops; wear comfortable walking shoes and bring extra drinking water. $35. Box lunch provided. Maximum: 25 people.

9:00 am - 4:00pm — Where City and Country Collide: Planning for Fire in the Butte County Foothills

Join local geographer and city planner Mark Trembley for a tour of fire-prone residential development in the foothills east of Chico. The disastrous fires in San Diego this past October taught us an expensive lesson on how not to plan and construct residential subdivisions on grassland-oak woodland ecosystems in the urban-rural fringe areas of California. Out of this experience evolved a design approach known as “Shelter-in Place” where new techniques of grading, structure orientation, street configuration, landscaping and construction of individual structures can significantly reduce the risk of fire damage. Have developers and local planning agencies in Chico and Butte County learned these lessons? Our field trip will explore typical developments that remain high-risk as compared to more recent development that incorporate
9:00 am - 12:00 pm — Innovations in Urban Planning and Design: Chico

Local land use planning consultant and Geography instructor, Pam Figge will lead a tour of Chico’s commercial and residential areas, contrasting the urban planning model of post-World War II with the innovative design of “New Urbanism.” Within the contextual and spatial setting of historic Chico with its classic city design (grid street pattern, pedestrian friendly infrastructure), this tour explores the changing design and mixed land uses that have been the cornerstone of Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND). The tour includes a short PowerPoint presentation on design concepts, components and infrastructure before venturing into the field. The regional shopping area, surrounding residential areas and innovative new neighborhoods will be explored. The tour will include easy walking in a neighborhood adjacent to the campus and the nearby downtown core with transportation provided to outlying areas. Meet at Butte 503. $25. No lunch provided. Maximum: 28 people.

10:30 am - 12:00 pm and 2:30 - 4:00 pm — Tour of Sierra Nevada Brewery’s Sustainable Production

Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.’s primary mission is to produce the finest quality beers and ales without compromising its role as a good environmental steward and corporate citizen. Join Cheri Chastain, Chico State Geography and Planning graduate, for a tour of the Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. This tour will focus on sustainable projects of the brewery, including hydrogen fuel cells, solar panels, CO2 recovery system, recycling & waste diversion, transportation improvements, water treatment, and the on-site hop field. Free sample tastings are available in the restaurant afterward; food is also available for purchase. Meet at the front of the Chico State Police Station on Normal and First Streets. The group will take the public bus to the brewery. Bus will stop within one block of the facility. Close-toed shoes are required for the tour. $20. Maximum: 15 people for each tour.

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm — Historic Chico Walking Tour

Chico possesses an impressive inventory of historic architecture, some of it dating back to the mid-19th century. Since 1981, volunteers from the Chico Heritage Association have worked to preserve this architecture while educating the public about the importance of doing so. Local Chico State graduate and President of the Chico Heritage Association, John Gallardo, will lead a tour of the town’s most notable historic sites and buildings. Starting at the university’s Special Collections at Meriam Library, where historic maps of Chico and the region will be on display, the group will go south to the neighborhood that encompasses the South of Campus Historic District, home to many examples of stunning post-Victorian architecture. The group will then move through downtown Chico, where it will stop to look at the El Rey and Senator Theaters, the Chico Museum, St. John’s Episcopal Church, the Stansbury House, Madison Bear Garden, and the public buildings and spaces surrounding the recently renovated City Plaza in the heart of Chico. Throughout the tour, John will tell the story of local people’s efforts to protect some of the most beautiful examples of 19th and early 20th century architecture. The tour will end at the historic core of the Chico State campus. Meet at Special Collections on the third floor of the Meriam Library. This is a relatively easy walk with no hills. Wear comfortable shoes, and bring water, snacks and sunscreen. $20. No lunch provided. Maximum: 20 people.

*All field trips will go rain or shine (please dress appropriately for the weather). Check www.calgeog.org for any possible changes (to times, itineraries, etc) approximately one week prior to the conference. Field trips are for registered conference participants only.

Sunday, May 4, 2008*

8:00 - 3:00pm — Agricultural Landscapes of Butte County

Scott Brady and Mark Stemen of Chico State will lead this tour of Butte County’s diverse agricultural landscapes. The tour includes a visit to almond, pistachio and walnut orchards; the Smuckers processing plant in south Chico; the historic Patrick Ranch House; the state agricultural colony of Durham; olive processing facilities of Lodestar Olives; and the Lundberg Family Farm. The tour will stop at the rice fields of Rancho Esquon so participants can learn about the rice industry’s role in waterfowl conservation. Meet at the east entrance to Holt Hall at Arcadian Street. Easy to moderate walking. Wear walking shoes and bring snacks and extra water. $35. Box lunch provided. Maximum 28 people.

8:00 am - 12:00 pm — Rancho Llano Seco and the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge

Joseph Silviera (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Don Hankins (CSU Chico) will lead this tour of the historic Rancho Llano Seco and the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge to observe habitat conservation and restoration activities. Unique habitats including vernal pools, oxbow lakes, and valley oak woodlands will be observed and discussed. Many of the areas visited are managed for rare and/or endangered species. The emphasis of this tour will be biogeographic and conservation oriented, but will also highlight some features of cultural interest within the landscape. Meet at the east entrance to Holt Hall at Arcadian Street. Easy to moderate walking. Wear walking shoes. Bring hat, binoculars, sunscreen, snacks and water. $25. No lunch provided. Maximum 28 people.
9:00am - 1:00pm — Geography of Bidwell Park

Chico State geographer Guy King will lead this tour of one of the largest municipal parks in California. Established in 1905, this unique 3,618 acre park along Big Chico Creek extends from downtown Chico well into the foothills of the Cascade Mountains. The spectacular scenery of Bidwell Park is split between the Lower Park’s riparian woodlands developed on Big Chico Creek’s alluvial fan, and the Upper Park’s deep canyon cut through the variegated volcanic rocks of the Cascades. Bidwell Park is considered to be the “Jewel of Chico” because of its many different physical environments and multiple recreation opportunities. This field trip explores Upper and Lower Park prehistory, history, geology, landforms, soils, plants and animals, natural hazards, and conservation issues. Stops include One-Mile and Five-Mile Recreation Areas, Horseshoe Lake, the Bidwell Golf Course area, and the Bidwell Mansion Museum. Also part of this field trip is a moderate one-mile hike up the Yahi Trail.  

Meet at the east entrance to Holt Hall at Arcadian Street. Easy to moderate walking. Wear walking shoes for rocky trails and bring snacks and water. $25. No lunch provided. Maximum 28 people.

9:00 am - 12:00 pm — Public Art Walk of Chico

Chico is listed as the number 10 art city of its size in John Villani’s book, The 100 Best Art Towns in America. We are blessed with many artists, actors, dancers, poets and musicians. The art scene is greatly enhanced by the presence of CSU Chico and the affordability of living in a smaller urban area. In 1993, a fine arts master plan was put into place by our city council. An arts commission was created along with the position of an arts coordinator. Since then over 40 public art pieces have been placed throughout the city. Your tour will include many of the downtown acquisitions and will be led by local artist and former arts commissioner Paula Busch. The tour in the core of downtown will include Elm Court, Dancing Trout fountain, the Hands sculpture, Diamond Alley, the COBA project, the luminary art benches, as well as a plethora of murals. Downtown is also home to 13 galleries and many cafes that exhibit local art (a list will be provided). There will be a brief explanation of how the funding sources are obtained for these projects. The Arts Commission’s new brochure listing all the pieces and a map of their locations will be available to you for further explorations. Meet under the stage canopy in the City Plaza. Easy walking with no hills. $20. No lunch provided, but restaurant options for lunch will be suggested. Maximum 20 people.

9:00 am - 12:00 pm — Eco-Chico Bike Tour

Enjoy a pleasant six to eight mile bicycle ride on the Eco-Chico Bike Tour that showcases examples of best practices in sustainability in the Chico area. The tour was designed by LaDonna Knigge and students from her Fall 2007 Planning for Sustainable Communities class. The sites for the bicycle tour are selected to highlight achievements in the “Three E’s of Sustainable Development:” environment, economy and equity. These represent sustainable practices that range from commercial ventures, to construction projects, to simple, everyday examples of ecological living. The tour will showcase the Chico State compost display area, solar array and 3-in-1 Collaborative (AS Recycling, Sustainability, and Environmental Action Resource Center), sustainable businesses, Chico Housing Improvement Program self-help and affordable housing developments, GRUB community gardens and The Cause -- a student conceived residential, educational resource that practices simple solutions to consumerism. The tour will end at Gorilla Bites restaurant for an optional lunch. Meet at the south end of City Plaza near Fifth Street and Broadway. This route includes no hills, and speeds should average around 9 mph. Bikes and helmets not included. Please contact Cathie Benjamin (cbenjamin@csuchico.edu) if you need to rent a bike. $20 (does not include bike rental). No lunch provided. Maximum 20 people.

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