

BIG CHICO CREEK ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

Where Education Meets the Land

The Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve (BCCER) is located on the ancestral land of the Mechoopda Indian Tribe. Under the direction of Chico State Enterprises, its 7,835 acres make BCCER the largest reserve in the California State University system. BCCER's mission is to preserve and steward critical habitat and to provide a natural area for environmental research and education.

Fire prevention, fuels management, and fire education are signature components of its operations. The reserve is home to 15 different vegetation communities, ranging from oak woodlands and mixed conifer forests to grasslands and chaparral, making it a prime spot for prescribed fire and wildfire mitigation training on in diverse ecosystems and site conditions.



BCCER BY THE NUMBERS*

1,049

Acres Underburned

66

Employees Hired

50

Students Hired

60

Wildland Firefighter
Type 2 Certifications—
Including 35 Current staff

105

Fire Practitioners
Engaged in Ecotherapy

27

Students in Wildland
Management Program—
17 More Pending

1,509

Acres of crew fuel
reduction and vegetation
management projects

11,343

Acres surveyed for fire
mitigation projects, per CEQA

265

Prescribed fire
training participants

*Since 2018

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

Hosting Cal-Trex to bring together federal, state, tribal, local nonprofits and private landowner partners to learn prescribed fire best practices and restore the ecological and community protection benefits of “good fire.”

Prescribed fire workforce development for participants ranging from college students earning basic firefighter qualifications to seasoned fire professionals receiving experiences to qualify as burn bosses and other specialized incident command positions. (Supported through a CAL FIRE’s Wood Products and Bioenergy Workforce Development Grant)

Manual thinning and prescribed burns for fuel mitigation, agency training, and public education. (Supported through CAL FIRE CCI grants and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy)

Prescribed fire and wildfire research as part of Chico State curriculum, wildland management master’s program, and external research support. (Supported through the CAL FIRE Fire and Resource Assessment Program)

Ecotherapy program for firefighters and the public, to use the calming effect of nature to support mental resiliency and heal from trauma and PTSD.



PARTNERS

CAL FIRE, USDA—Forest Service, US Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Economic Development Administration, Mechoopda Indian Tribe, Maidu Summit Consortium, Firestorm, Butte County Firesafe Council, Plumas County RCD, Plumas County Fire Safe Council, Butte County RCD, Terra Fuego, The Watershed Research and Training Center, Feather River College, Capra Environmental Services, Higgins LLC., City of Chico.

AS SEEN IN THE

The New York Times The Washington Post
San Francisco Chronicle THE SACRAMENTO BEE



“The Ecological Reserve staff are advancing cooperative prescribed fire across Northern California and have been critical partners in planning and implementing large-scale, community-based Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TRES) events. They are technical and operational leaders and students of fire, who continue to move good fire forward by sharing their skills, knowledge, and professionalism with others.”

Erin Banwell and Miller Bailey,
co-directors of fire management, The Watershed Research & Training Center