

Where Education Meets the Land

2021–2022 Annual Report

**BCCER and BCEP
CSU, Chico Ecological Reserves
Chico State Enterprises**





"BCCER is a great place to feed your curiosity. There's just so much to explore and learn about up there, from the bugs to the animals to forestry to the plants. It's amazing."

— Sophia Munoz-Oliverez

Volunteer Coordinator, Paradise Recreation and Park District (Reserves Alumna)
Paradise, CA

Where Education Meets the Land

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Reflection & Opportunity

Dear Friends of the Reserves,



Reflection and hindsight do not come naturally to me. I am constantly looking forward, eager for the next opportunity or challenge. While this attribute has served our organization's growth and impact in recent years, I often forget to pause, celebrate success, and say thank you.

THANK YOU.

Thank you to our ever-growing staff (doubled again this past year) for working hard through heat, rain, smoke, and bureaucracy to better our wildlands and serve our community.

Thank you to our partners whose faith in us has resulted in a record number of projects and amazing hands-on experiences for our students across the North State.

A special thank you to the Mechoopda Indian Tribe, whose ancestral lands we collaborate to steward and for the willingness to partner on important projects throughout our community.

Thank you to my wife and daughter for their support and patience. I give my full self to this program partly because I don't have a choice.

If we want our kids or grandkids to be able to go camping in the summer, swim in clean rivers, or experience the plants and animals we grew up with, we need to invest in these programs and in the people who give us a fighting chance for this future.

Thank you to our visionary and committed community supporters whose generosity and investment have allowed us to be innovative and nimble while providing unmatched opportunities to our program participants.

This last year was amazing. Take time to read through this report and know that you helped make this all possible.

Okay, enough looking back. . . . Keep your ears perked and eyes peeled. We are on the precipice of accomplishing things next year that will knock your socks off.

With gratitude and respect,

Eli Goodsell
Director
CSU, Chico Ecological Reserves

Reserves at a Glance 2021-2022

3

WMP Students
Graduated



1,827
Ecotherapy
Participants

181

Acres
Underburned



\$179,509
Community Support
Received

3

Fisher
(*Pekania pennanti*)
Sightings



25

New Hires to
the Reserves



Wildland Management Program Produces Three Graduates

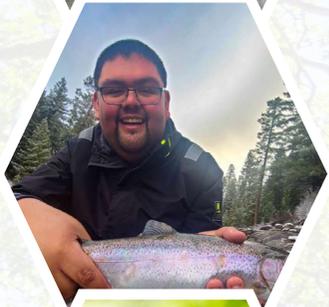
Two years after the inaugural cohort began school, we had our first batch of graduates this past spring. It has been a tremendous honor to watch these students grow academically, network professionally, and set themselves up for future success.



Karina Haddad

Thesis Project: Ecology of Mammalian Predators in the BCCER

Haddad's thesis focused on identifying acres to suggest for the Ecological Reserves' Adopt an Acre Campaign and to influence the land management practices in response to drought by identifying the water and food sources that should be conserved.



Cole Morales

Thesis Project: Applying and integrating GIS for tribal use: A project that incorporated GIS in cultural resource management for Northern California tribes

Morales' work incorporated the use of Geographic Information Systems in cultural resource management for Northern California tribes.



He-Lo Ramirez

Thesis Project: Improving Northwestern Maidu education in Northern California: A need for & creation of place-based culturally relevant curricula
Ramirez's work focused on place-based, culturally relevant outdoor education for Native youth and developed a multi-subject curriculum to restructure education that accurately teaches Native youth about their own history and culture.

The Wildland Management Master's Program was designed to provide students with the unique opportunity to create their own MS degree by drawing from multiple disciplines to accommodate their academic, professional, and personal goals. With the exponentially growing need for forest and land management, students can taper their degree to fit their career pursuits in this field. Students are also afforded the opportunity to gain hands-on experience to better serve them academically and professionally.

The program is purposely interdisciplinary, as the opportunities and challenges stemming from the world of wildland management are multifaceted. These students come from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds, all with certain driving factors that propel them through the Wildland Management Program. The various projects these students produced are evidence of their passions, and the variety of projects showcases their individual identities and intersections with the natural world.

Tribal Members Excel



“This program allowed me to grow academically, professionally, and personally through all the great courses offered that built my program and through the support I received from faculty and staff that took the time guiding me through this program.”

Cole Morales

Raised in Westwood, just northeast of Chico, as an enrolled tribal member of the Susanville Indian Rancheria, Morales' heritage has played a large part in his educational goals. He earned a BS in Recreation, Hospitality, and Parks Management with an emphasis in natural resources management. This degree, coupled with a Certificate in Geospatial Technology, guided him toward the recently created MS Interdisciplinary Studies: Wildland Management Program in the fall of 2020.

Fast forward two years later, and Morales has now successfully defended his thesis - Applying and integrating GIS for tribal use: A project that incorporated GIS into cultural resource management for Northern California tribes. This step-by-step manual was designed for tribes to integrate Geographic In-

formation Systems in their cultural and natural resources management planning. The guide shows how to create a GIS database based on cultural and natural resources found in the field by Tribal Monitors using ArcGIS Pro.

Morales has capitalized on opportunities to gain experience by working in the Office of Tribal Relations on the Chico State campus; collaborating with the local Mechoopda Tribe; and serving as an active member of the Susanville Indian Rancheria. Morales recently parlayed his knowledge, education, and experience into a position at the Ecological Reserves, where he is the first manager of the newly developed Cultural Stewardship Program.

Through Reserves' Programs

“Through this program, I was able to manage wildlands utilizing a holistic approach to benefit the whole community at large, but more specifically, my own community who are the traditional land stewards and land managers of the Big Chico Creek & Butte Creek watersheds.”



He-Lo Ramirez

A member of the local Mechoopda Indian Tribe, Ramirez has been actively involved in tribal culture. Growing up to appreciate the natural world the way his ancestors have, Ramirez used that knowledge as the foundation for his academic career. After successfully completing a BS in Biological Sciences and earning a teaching credential, his focus turned toward blending his rich personal knowledge and education with his passion for conservation by being part of the first cohort of the MS Interdisciplinary Studies: Wildland Management Program.

Ramirez showcased his determination in completing his goal by being the first of his cohort to defend their project: *Northwestern Maidu education in Northern California: A need for and creation of place-based culturally rele-*

vant curricula. His project helped the Ecological Reserves obtain a grant to develop the Cultural Stewardship Program, set to take place fall 2022.

Ramirez's extensive cultural knowledge and natural sciences education has played a pivotal role in attaining significant positions within his field. He was the Ecological Reserves' first Cultural Steward during his time as a graduate student and he now serves as the director of the Mechoopda Indian Tribe's Office of Environmental Planning & Protection.

CCC Forestry Corps & Workforce Development



With the help of Assembly Bill 2126 (2018), the California Conservation Corps created a Forestry Corps with the goal to develop and implement forest health projects in state responsibility areas or high hazard fire zones. There are currently six Forestry Corps in the state of California. In recognition of the Ecological Reserves' long history of land stewardship, the Ecological Reserves was designated a host site for one of these crews.



The crew that reports to the Ecological Reserves assists with all projects relating to fuels reduction, ecological restoration, and maintenance. In addition to working shoulder-to-shoulder with college-educated Ecological Reserves staff similar in age, the crew often works with longtime volunteer Professor Paul Maslin, receiving a masterclass in ecological restoration and maintenance from a professor who has been actively working the land since its inception in 1999. The crew is also exposed to various techniques used in restoration work, given moments to learn more about the local natural ecosystem, and provided opportunities to meet the organizational partners of the Ecological Reserves.

Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (Cal-TREX)

The Ecological Reserves led the Butte Cal-TREX training event from October 2021 through March 2022. This California Prescribed Burn Training Exchange brought together over 100 federal, state, tribal, local nonprofits, and private landowner partners to learn best practices in prescribed fire while achieving ecological and community protection goals. Participants came from Butte, Lassen, and Plumas Counties, as well as Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and Canada for this important training.

By using an “All Hands, All Lands” approach, the training focused on building a local prescribed fire crew through hands-on field scenarios, fireline leadership skills, local fire ecology, cultural burning, and fire management. Participants are now part of an “on-call” list to conduct safe and effective prescribed burn events throughout our region.

In spring, resources were pivoted toward Plumas County and the surrounding area to participate in the Plumas Cal-TREX event to learn and burn. The Plumas Cal-TREX training event provided the Reserves team additional opportunities for learning, burning, and connecting with partners and community members.



Partners came together to plan, prep, and implement over 1,600 acres of prescribed fire projects through these events. The Ecological Reserves crew participated in burns on both private and public lands, including the City of Chico, Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve, and Feather River College (this was the first time fire was reintroduced to that campus in over 40 years).





Outdoor Classroom

99
Field Trips
& Classroom
Visits

73
Different
Classes
Participated

1,647
Elementary
Students
Served

21
Bus
Scholarships
Awarded

735
Hours of
Student
-Teaching
Experience

After three semesters of no in-person field trips due to COVID-19 measures, the Outdoor Classroom experienced a big boom in participation during the 2021-2022 school year. The start of the school year was anything but reassuring, as the Chico Unified School District canceled all field trips slated for the fall 2021 semester. This left our Education Coordinator scrambling to reorganize and schedule field trips from other school districts. The decision to cancel was later reversed.

An uncertain start to the year led to a year for the record books. 2021-22 turned out to be the busiest year the Outdoor Classroom has experienced, serving more students than ever before. This was due, in part, to an award from the CA Coastal Commission's Whale Tail grant, which funded wages, bus scholarships, and the acquisition of equipment like binoculars and water testing kits.



“Best field trip ever! Thanks so much for all you do!”
- Karen Johnson
4th Grade Teacher
Neal Dow Elementary

“This is one of my favorite field trips to take my 4th graders on. The organization and information is so valuable and hands on. Thank you for providing such a great environment for my students to learn from.”
- Cassie Halley
4th Grade Teacher
Durham Elementary



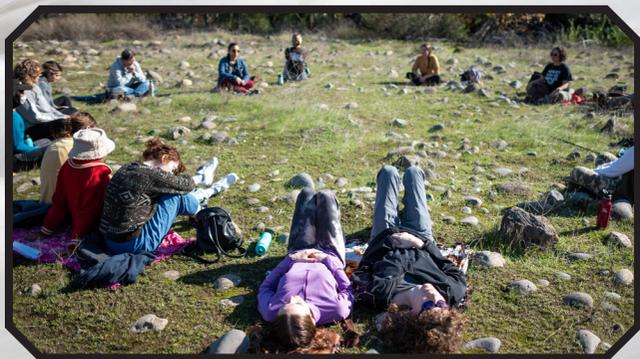
Ecotherapy Program

Following the Camp Fire, the CSU, Chico Ecological Reserves received funding from the North Valley Community Foundation's Butte Strong Fund to form the innovative Ecotherapy Program, which focuses on providing desperately needed mental health services to our community.

The Ecotherapy Program expanded significantly at the beginning of the school year with the hiring of Blake Ellis as our full-time Ecotherapy Program manager. Ellis was charged with leading the program in its partnership with the WellCat Counseling Center to provide rapid services to students struggling with unprecedented mental health challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

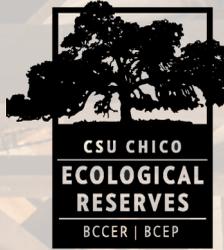
Managing the partnership and staff, connecting with community supporters, developing a presence on campus, and further growing the program provided Ellis with non-stop, rewarding work. The spring 2022 semester culminated in collaborative efforts with Chico State's Division of Student Affairs and Basic Needs Project, as well as continued growth of the program's partnership with the WellCat Counseling Center. The Ecotherapy Program now regularly offers place-based, holistic healing practices to Chico State students, staff, and faculty. "Forest Therapy Tuesdays" are a weekly occurrence on the Chico State campus for all Wildcats to join.

We ended our busy year celebrating the award of additional funding from the North Valley Community Foundation's Butte Strong Fund. This funding expands our Ecotherapy Program to increase foresty therapy services to community members impacted by wildfire in Butte County.



"These walks offer a rare and sacred opportunity to 'drop into' oneself in nature. They are a rich chance to step back from our many distractions and to simply BE for a couple of hours."





Where Education Meets the Land

Financials

Income	Amount
Program Income (Fee for Service)	\$ 94,697
Donations	\$ 179,509
State	\$ 230,550
Other Non-Operating Income	\$ 816,846
Total Income	\$ 1,321,602

Expenses	Amount
Operating Expenses	\$ 181,247
Equipment	\$ 21,875
Travel	\$ 1,903
Contractors	\$ 69,059
Personnel (Salaries and Benefits)	\$ 769,050
Facilities and Administrative Costs	\$ 106,715
Total Expenses	\$ 1,149,849

Totals	
2021-22 Year Net Assests	\$ 171,753
Prior Year Net Assets	-\$ 36,772
Total Net Assets	\$ 134,981

Collaborators & Sponsors



Community Support

Legacy Level

Elizabeth Collieran & Hollis Elliott
Anita Chang
Wes Dempsey
Dempsey Family Endowment
Bruce Galloway
Paul Lake
Paul Maslin
Colin Stokes

Mountain Lion

\$5,000+
Patricia Egan
Foor Foundation
Bruce & Penny Galloway
Bob Henning & JenniferToth-Henning
Maggie Hill
North Valley Community Foundation
Elizabeth Quail

Black Bear

\$1,000-\$4,000
Linda Allen & Gayle Hutchinson
Carol Burr & Roger Lederer
Trisha Edelmann
Doug & Kelly Guerrero
David & Hilary Hassenzahl
Darrell & Susan Johnson
Sandra Kriezel
Debra Larson
Ailsie McEngteggart
Judy Robison
Ann Sherman

Bobcat

\$700-\$999
Tag Engstrom & Kristine Mazzei
John Henning
Joyce Hill

Gray Fox

\$300-\$699
Greg & Marion Armstrong
Ellie Bradbury & Lionel Valley
Jim & Mary Johnson
Marti Leicester
Bonnie & Marv Megibow
Al Pritchard

Saw-whet Owl

\$299 and under
Jack & Abe Baily
Kristen Borges
Shaun-Adrian Chofla
Fernando & Stacie Corona
Jim Crane
Kate Disney
Robin & Ian Donatello
David Donnell
Michelle & Glen Eaton
Karen Edwards
Richard Elsom
Brandon Ertis
Anne Goodsell
Jim & Michelle Graydon
Jessica Harrington-Patten & Ryan Patten

Adele Harth
Colleen Hatfield & Shahroukh Mistry
Skip & Nancy Hubbard
Thomas & Carol Huston
Madelyn Ibarra
Iola Ireland & Henry Crowhurst
Suzanne Janicki
Thomas & Margaret Lee
James Martin
Margaret Martin
Tom & Marsha Martin
Jennifer Mays
Tom Mello
Donald Miller
David Neuschatz
Kate Post
Patricia Puterbaugh & Germain Boivin
Tom & Patricia Reilly
Peggy & Steve Schaefer
Nitsa & Irvin Schiffman
Margaret & Dennis Schmidt
Dulcy Schroeder
Dave & Debra Scotto
Karen Smith
Anne & Paul Stephens
Tom & Mary Anne Thomson
Vivian Toy
Deborah Voekel & David Philhour
Julie Wakalee
Joan Walters
Frank Willis

Collaborators & Sponsors





BIG CHICO CREEK
ECOLOGICAL RESERVE



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