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Blue Oak Group



Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

Round Trip EV Drive Across Country

By Bill Monroe



How does a cross country round trip via electric car sound?
Intimidating?
Range anxiety filled?
Dangerous to cross the deep South in a car that screams “I am a Liberal”, (especially with the Biden/Harris bumper sticker we sport)?
Here is how it went down.

We have a one-year-old Hyundai Ioniq 5 all electric car. This is not an “Electric Hybrid car” that the manufacturers are beginning to tout as an alternative to cars with only an internal combustion engine. No, this is a for real battery fueled car with an electric engine. It gets 303 miles per full charge allowing for a good 3 or 4 hours of driving between charging.

(continued on page 2)

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Round Trip EV Drive *(continued from p. 1)*

For the first two years after purchase, Ioniq 5 comes with two years of free charging from “Electrify America”. Thus, our motivation for a cross country trip while charging was still free. Other Electric Vehicles (EVs) such as the Volkswagen ID4, come with 3 years of free charging. This is quite a deal and related to the settlement VW made with the EPA, as a result of a scandal involving faked emissions data for their diesel models.



A selling point of the Ioniq 5 is that it charges very rapidly. They say it takes 18 minutes to charge from 20% to 80 %. Very fast indeed...if it were true. More on that later.

The network of charging stations across the country is extensive and growing. It seems most of the Electrify America locations are in Walmart parking lots, so we had a kind of tour of Walmart locations wherever we went. It was convenient as Walmarts have pretty clean restrooms, generally, and sell snacks and lunches to munch on while charging. That said, some sites are, (as they are in Chico CA), in Bank of America parking lots and other similar locations. These charging locations were easy to find using the GPS navigation software that comes with the car, as well as the Electrify America app...downloadable free to a cell phone near you. Another useful app is “Plugshare” which reveals all chargers on the map including Tesla, which as of this writing can only be used by Tesla vehicles except for their low charge rate “Destination” chargers.

Only twice on our trip did we have to “wait our turn” to charge.

We managed the whole trip using only Electrify America chargers, with two exceptions: once in Taos, NM, and another at a friend’s house in Missouri using the 120-volt charging cable that comes with the car. We were able to plan ahead using the apps to direct how to get to our District of Columbia ultimate destination and back. The route had to be adjusted with charging stations in mind. We had wanted to visit Laurel, Mississippi, site of one of our favorite HGTV remodeling shows, but were unable to, as central Mississippi is a charger desert. Otherwise, we found plenty of chargers where we needed them and never once ran out of, or even approached running out of electrons. The network of chargers by several companies has expanded greatly in the last few years and is growing.

Newsletter Information

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Blue Oak Group News reserves the right to edit all submissions for reasons of space, clarity and potential libel. The opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Sierra Club or the Blue Oak Group.

Complaints?

Squeegees and other services that gas stations provide like tire air are unavailable. We brought along camp chairs for us to sit outside the car while charging, just for a change of pace. The charging stations need a picnic table or two under a rainproof roof. They also need water and squeegees for cleaning the windshield. At this point none of the charging stations include these. Why?

So, what about the charging speed issue, mentioned above. While the Electrify America stations usually have “Hyper Charging”, supposedly capable of delivering a 350-kw charging speed... they never deliver at that rate. In fact, on occasion, they will charge as low as 37 Kw. When called, the tech support people do little to explain this, other than the temperature is perhaps low (it was 50 degrees) and that it says: “up to 350 kw”, not a guaranteed speed. In any temperature, we have never gotten above 227 kw. So, be prepared for a bit longer than 18 minutes charging from 20 to 80 Percent.

By the way, the tech support people are very calm and helpful. The chargers and/or the software are sensitive and sometimes just do not work. This is worrisome when attempting to charge in the middle of the desert with no place else to charge. Tech support can override the usual interface and/or restart the charger to get the charging started. Whew!
The number to tech support is on the charger.

So, we had a lovely trip beginning March 16, 2023, from Chico with a drive to Bakersfield, and returned on May 3rd. We ended our trip with a beautiful drive up Highway 395 on the eastern side of the Sierras. The roads were clear but sometimes had 6 feet of snow on either side. We visited Ridgecrest, Lone Pine, Bishop, and Bridgeport, with stops at Manzanar and Mono Lake. Intense, beautiful, and amazing.

As for issues of feeling safe, we were “Coal Rolled” twice in 5k miles but nothing else the least bit threatening. No keying of our car. Once, while charging, someone in a very large 4-wheel drive vehicle pulled up to us and rolled down his window. I was expecting to be yelled at about being communist or something. Instead, he leaned over and yelled “You drove that bad boy all the way from California? Right on!” So, folks are coming around, and you definitely cannot judge a driver by his vehicle.

I highly recommend EV transportation. Yes, there are environmental issues with EVs, but consider the alternative.

2023 Blue Oak Group Sierra Club		
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Chair: Suzette Welch	Rep. To Motherlode: Grace Marvin	Newsletter Advertising: Position Open
Interim Secretary: Betty Volker	Conservation Chair: Grace Marvin	Outings Chair: Alan Mendoza
Treasurer: John Hollister	Facebook Administrator: Suzette Welch	Outreach Chair: Wendy McCall
Board Member: Jane Coleman	Forest activist: Patricia Puterbaugh	Political Chair: Position Open
Board Member: Wendy McCall	Membership Chair: Position Open	Program Chair: Position Open
Board Member: Bridget Blair	Newsletter Editors: Suzette Welch, Louise Casey	Publicity : Position Open
Board Member: Marissa Maxey	Newsletter Distribution: Steve Miller, Dave Nopel, and Suzette Welch	Treasurer: John Hollister
		Website: Louise Casey
		Youth Activities: Wendy McCall

Blue Oak Fall 2023 Outings and Events

Coordinated by Alan Mendoza. For updated outings information and for general information about outings and meeting places, please see our web site at: www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/blue-oak

Saturday, October 14—Butt Mountain/Carter Meadow Hike (2,B)

A round-trip hike of 9-10 miles mostly on the PCT to reach the rocky 7900' summit of Butt Mountain. Along the way we'll have tremendous views to the west and south of Lake Almanor. At the top we'll get a 360 degree view, including Lassen Peak. Bring sunscreen, lunch, plenty of water and \$ for drivers. About a 90-100 mile round-trip drive including 6 miles on a dirt road. Rain/snow cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:30AM. Leader: Alan, 530-891-8789 or ajmendoza666@gmail.com

Saturday, November 11—North Rim/Yahi Trail (2,B)

Enjoy upper Bidwell Park on a 8-9 mile hike on the North Rim Trail. Along the way we will get great views of Chico and the surrounding area. We will then descend on a rough trail to pick up the Middle Trail and eventually drop down to the Yahi Trail. Rain cancels. Meet at Horseshoe Lake parking lot at 9AM. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza666@gmail.com

Tuesday, November 21—Help Prepare Blue Oak Newsletter for Mailing

Join the mail crew on Tuesday Nov. 21, 2023, at 2:00 pm to process the Blue Oak Group Newsletter for mailing. The meeting place is the Lodge at the Terraces in California Park located at 2750 Sierra Sunrise Terrace. The Lodge is the older independent living section of California Park.

Suzette Welch, booksontape@rocketmail.com
Coeditor Blue Oak Group Sierra Club Newsletter

Blue Oak Group Fall Picnic

by Betty Volker



Third Annual Blue Oak Group fall picnic will be held on Oct. 8, 2023, at 5 mile Recreation Area in the Group Picnic Table area at the extreme east end of 5 mile. Parking lot is off of Centennial Ave in Chico.

Arrive around 5pm to socialize, and food will be served around 5:30.

Welcome to all members and interested new people. It's a potluck, so bring your favorite potluck dish to share, your own tableware and a favorite beverage.

Hope to see you there. Any questions- email Bettyinchico@gmail.com

Conservation News



Focus on Outings

by Grace M. Marvin
Blue Oak Group Conservation Chair;
Blue Oak Group Representative to the Mother Lode Chapter's Conservation and Executive Committees

July 23, 2023, was the date of the quarterly meetings of the Mother Lode Chapter (MLC). Concerns of Chapter leaders are many, including:

1. The Chapter sorely needs a new Outings leader. That person is essential to better hiking programs in the Groups, e.g., our Blue Oak Group. Please see the MLC's Outings Vice Chair's comments below.
2. There is no date yet for the Awards Banquet.
3. Our national club is undergoing significant re-organization including staff and staffing issues.
4. The 30 by 30 project has not yet met its goals.
5. The Tobacco Project is seeking a new leader.
6. The MLC favors biomass pellets (under some circumstances), but National does not.
7. We MLC leaders would like assurance about finances from National, especially about covering costs of lawsuits. The Center for Biological Diversity and Aqualliance continue to support the Blue Oak Group's lawsuit - filed in early February 2023. As MLC lawyer, Jim Pachl, reported earlier: *the citizen referendum of the City Council's project approval qualified for the next primary election, March 5, 2024. The ligation is stayed until the status conference set for May 15, 2024, after the outcome of the referendum is known.*

Key points from Sierra Club Mother Lode Chapter Outings ReportSubmitted by Bruce Notareus, MLC Outings Vice-Chair, outingssierraclub@gmail.com or bnotareus@gmail.com

- *At present, we have 19 currently certified Outings Leaders in the Chapter....*
- *Training. We are in the process of scheduling an in-person Outdoor Leadership Training class that should occur before 9/30/2023. (This includes First Aid training, too.)*
- *The number of scheduled outings continues to grow slowly as we recover from the Covid shutdown....*
- *The Sacramento Group maintains a Meetup page of 14,000 subscribers/members. <https://www.meetup.com/sacramento-sierra-club> We have asked all MLC outings leaders to post their outings to Meetup....*
- *Maintaining the MLC's Outings Schedule is the responsibility of the MLC's Outings Chair.... While he remains the MLC Outings Chair, Tony is essentially "retired" and has been inactive for several months, necessitating the MLC to appoint me (Bruce) as the "Vice Chair.... Historically, all MLC outings, from all groups and sections, and many other MLC events have been posted to and appeared on the MLC's Outings Schedule. It would be a benefit to all if we could address this issue and reinstate the use of the MLC Outings Schedule on the MLC website. One suggestion is to have the Outings Schedule maintained by the same person that manages the MLC website.*

May we all continue to explore, enjoy, and protect our precious planet – despite ALL our many challenges!

Stop Valley's Edge — Vote NO

By Susan Tchudi, Smart Growth Advocates



Valley's Edge Oak Grove

We won! As the readers of this publication likely know, the Valley's Edge Specific Plan is going to a vote of the citizens of Chico on March 5, 2024. After a successful petition drive in which signatures easily exceeded what was required, the City Council opted for a special election (the most expensive option available and the one hardest for turning out the vote).

Smart Growth Advocates and Save Our Hometown want to thank all of you who signed the petition and who circulated petitions. In the words of Addison Winslow, the only City Council member who voted against Valley's Edge: "The volunteers behind the Valley's Edge referendum blew it out of the water. . . . We've never seen so many valid

signatures collected for a municipal measure in Chico's history. . . ." (Chico ER, 3/20/2023)

But our work is not over! We can't lose momentum. And we need all of you to become or stay involved!

Our new name is **Stop Valley's Edge--Vote No!** We are in the process of planning the next seven months to educate, motivate, and inspire Chico residents to spread the word, donate, volunteer, and vote. Here's how you can help!

1) **VOLUNTEER:** We are currently recruiting people for a variety of volunteer assignments: canvassing, tabling, phone banking, etc. We need you! To volunteer and attend a training, please sign up at <https://www.mobilize.us/cadems/event/571498/> At publication time, we had one training on Tuesday, August 15, 6-8 PM. More should become available. After you sign up, someone will contact you with further information.

2) **DONATE:** To heighten awareness of our opposition to Valley's Edge, we are planning activities, such as leasing a billboard and creating a 30-60 second video that highlights the problems with Valley's Edge. These things are costly. We also need money for printing--training materials, doorknob hangers, and informational handouts and pamphlets. Contributions of any size will be most gratefully accepted.

Click on the QR code to donate online.

<https://flowcode.com/p/sDXmBCWNT>



Checks made to "Stop Valley's Edge" can be mailed to Stop Valley's Edge, P.O. Box 2234, Chico, 95927

3) **PARTICIPATE IN OUR EVENTS:** Our new website is Stop Valley's Edge--Vote No!

- Confirmed: Mark your calendars for a music event at the Chico Women's Club, November 5, 5-9 PM. Suggested donation: \$20
- Planned: Some other events to look forward to for the fall and winter are a Stop Valley's Edge Puppet Parade; a TurkeyTail Farm tour; and a Holiday Themed Art and Auction event. Check our website for details.

If you have an event you'd like to host please let us know--susantchudi@gmail.com. **And please** continue to talk to your friends and neighbors to keep this issue alive. Our message? Choose Chico and Stop Valley's Edge by Voting NO!

NO to increased traffic, increased air pollution and sprawl development.

The Valley's Edge (VE) development will add 23,000 vehicle miles traveled per day, contributing to Chico's traffic congestion, air pollution and deteriorating streets.

NO to increased fire risk.

The VE's 1,448 acres has, in past fires, provided a buffer for Chico. The Chico Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP 2022) and recent Cal Fire mapping reflects VE acreage a designation with high risk for wildfire.

NO to increased economic impact.

Chico is badly in need of street repairs and other public services. Neither new development fees nor tax revenues cover these services.

NO to water depletion.

The 6,000-7,000 residents will draw water from the Lower Tuscan Aquifer already determined to be in overdraft (Vina Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan).

NO to high-end housing (\$650,000-\$800,000).

Chico's pressing need is for affordable housing (Housing Element 2022). Only 6% of the proposed 2,777 housing units are multi-family units.

NO to loss of habitat and destruction of open space (1,448 acres).

This includes the loss of 200 acres of oak woodlands and 569 acres of grasslands.

CHOOSE CHICO INSTEAD!

A "NO" VOTE means

YES:

- to less traffic and improved roads;
- to open spaces, clean air, clean water and land resilient to fire;
- to smart growth within the City that provides housing for all who live here;
- to a healthy and sustainable future for our children.



Check our website for more details: <https://www.smartgrowthchico.org/valleys-edge.html>

STOP VALLEY'S EDGE--VOTE NO! MARCH 5, 2024

Acronym Confusion: What’s the difference between Vina GSA and TWD?

By Barbara Vlamis, AquAlliance



Newspaper articles, public meetings, even street corner conversations have brought some public awareness about the **Vina GSA** (Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency) and the **TWD** (Tuscan Water District), with not a little confusion about what they are and which is which.

Although it’s a subject not easily understood –like all NorthState water issues and policies – the chart below will clarify the important points.

What is the Vina GSA (Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency)?

In 2014 California passed the Sustainability Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which established local groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) to manage groundwater resources.

The Vina subbasin is part of the larger Sacramento Valley Groundwater Basin and is located entirely within Butte County (see map).

The Vina GSA Board is comprised of representatives of:

- Butte County Board of Supervisors
- Chico City Council
- Durham Irrigation District
- Agricultural well users
- Non-agricultural domestic well users

The GSA is required to create a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to reach groundwater sustainability in the Vina Subbasin by 2040.

What is the proposed TWD (Tuscan Water District)?

As proposed, the Tuscan Water District (TWD) is a new water district intended to implement the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Plan (Vina GSP).

The specific intention of the proposed TWD is: “Partnering with Butte County and other stakeholders to advance conjunctive use within the Vina sub-basin and a portion of the Butte sub-basin and to assist in the replenishment of groundwater by the strategic use of groundwater recharge...”

The proposed Tuscan Water District would comprise approximately 102,327 acres from the Tehama County line south to the northern border of the Western Canal Water District in the Durham area.

Opposition to Vina GSP

A lawsuit (by AquAlliance et al.) is pending against the Vina GSA, alleging that their GSP presents specific threats to the public dependent on groundwater and to the streams, rivers, trees, and species supported by healthy aquifers. The GSP and the formation of TWD continue a pattern and practice by Butte County government looking out for special interests and not the majority of Butte County residents.

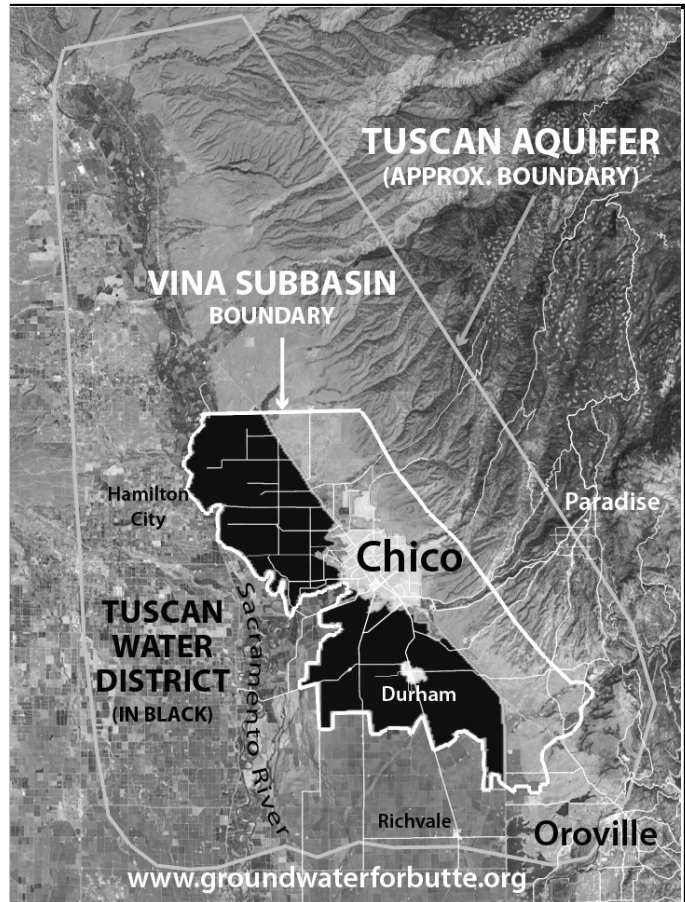
One issue is that SGMA requires the GSP to set “minimum thresholds” for monitoring basin well levels to detect whether groundwater declines are causing undesirable results. The Vina GSP accepts monitoring well thresholds that are unreasonably low, including some approximately 200% below normal operating ranges, before raising an alarm, which would leave shallow domestic and agricultural wells stranded. For example: for 58 years, well 25C001M in northern Butte County fluctuated within about a 30-foot range. The Vina GSP would allow an additional decline of almost 90 feet before the Vina GSA would take steps to stop the collapse – and only if the decline lasted for two years. The GSP also offers inadequate mitigation for the loss of wells by small farmers and residents. Additional analysis by statewide NGOs indicates that 88% of the wells in the Plan are not protected.

Opposition to the Tuscan Water District

The proposed TWD’s intention of advancing conjunctive use may be the demise of the NorthState. Conjunctive use may lead to large elaborate regional water management programs that store large volumes of surface water below ground, changing the ownership of groundwater from the constitutional right of overlying landowners to the water movers.

TWD claims that its intent to only move water within Butte County will prevent water from moving elsewhere. This couldn’t be further from the truth. State and local commitments and law are useless in the face of a Governor’s Emergency Proclamation, as we have observed during the last droughts. And TWD does not address the threat that overlying landowners will lose their water rights.

This is exactly what Sacramento Valley water districts have sought to do, so more river water could be sold south of the Delta – what AquAlliance has fought to stop in court for 14 years, mostly successfully. As one resident stated in a letter to the local newspaper, “The state’s been wanting to annex our Tuscan Aquifer into the state water system for decades.”



Relative footprints of the Tuscan Aquifer, Vina Sub-basin (identical to Vina GSA), and proposed Tuscan Water District.

Groundwater For Butte (GB4) is a new political action committee spearheading opposition to the Tuscan Water District.

Its website www.groundwaterforbutte.org explains in detail (with many maps) what brought Butte County to the brink of handing its public groundwater resources over to a landowner-controlled “water bank.”

Please visit, sign up for the email newsletter, and donate any amount you can to help “G4B” raise public awareness in the lead-up to the December 5, 2023, landowner-only election to establish the TWD.

Courtesy of Jeffrey Obser
G4B Communications Director

Lassen Forest Preservation Group

By Trish Puterbaugh

Lassen Forest Preservation Group - Forestry Committee of the Blue Oak Group Sierra Club



Deer Creek

What a beautiful long spring and lovely summer. I have lived in Butte County for 50 years, and I don't remember such a tremendous bloom of flowers and California natives. They just kept coming and flowering on and on!

It has been a hot July, but no large fires in our area - what a blessing. There are no excuses for not getting out and enjoying the heat in our flowing creeks and full lakes like we did at Deer Creek! Some of the campgrounds have just opened due to the heavy snowpack and damage, and others such as Juniper Lake in Lassen National Park may take a few years before they reopen.

Forest issues in Lassen (LNF) and Plumas National Forests (PNF) continue to focus on clean-up, salvage, restoration and replanting in the Dixie and other fire scars. I wrote about the Upper Butte Creek Project in the last newsletter. That Environmental Assessment (EA) will come out for public comment around January 2024. Our local Butte County Resource Conservation District (BCRCD) is heavily involved in planning that project. They are trying to balance the work of creating safe community access, egress and defensible space around Jonesville and Butte Meadows with the multitude of wildlife needs

and a critical anadromous fishery. Butte Creek has one of the only surviving salmon runs in the North State. Like all others, this fishery is struggling. This EA has to address the importance of connectivity and a resilient forest where California Spotted Owl, American Marten, Northern Goshawk and potentially fisher can live along with all the other birds and mammals in the forest. Salmon have to be protected from over zealous logging for fuel reduction. There are also plans for a large swath of low canopy, very thin forest along some roads. Like I said in the last newsletter, the effectiveness of these large fuel breaks is not proven and maintenance is forever. I will be encouraging the public to weigh in on this project.

Another project I have mentioned in the LNF is the West Lassen Headwaters Project. It will be large and our BCRCD is also doing planning on this project along with the Sierra Institute. This one will not be decided for at least another year - so stay tuned.

A project that can be commented on and looked at now is The Colby Mountain Recreation Project. This project creates 36 new miles of non-motorized single-track trails around Colby Mountain and Humboldt Summit. There will also be improvements to parking and accessibility at the Jonesville Snow Park. These will be mixed use trails for biking, equestrians and hikers. You can look at the project plan at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=63192> Here too, the Butte County RCD is involved in planning.

The high priority project for the Lassen is the Dixie Fire Community Protection Project. We have not seen any purpose and need or other official notice on this project as yet. This project will focus on the communities within the Dixie fire footprint including Lake Almanor areas, Warner Valley, Mineral and others up in the Hat Creek region. Much of it will be salvage and replant. We are not in favor of salvage logging - however, very near communities it is often necessary.

On the Plumas they have come out with the Plumas Community Protection Project. This is a huge project encompassing most of the Feather River Ranger District and surrounding communities. We are very pleased that the Sierra Forest Legacy is commenting and taking the lead on this poorly planned project.

The Region 5 Post disturbance Hazard Tree project is also in the wings. Again, this is all salvage - most along roads in the entire North State.

Other forest news is that the proposed Canyons National Monument encompassing parts of the Feather River Canyon - especially the wild and scenic middle fork has been put aside for now. At this time there is not enough local support for this proposition. Our congressmen, including federal and state are not wilderness advocates.

The Butte Prescribed Fire Association is planning for lots of fall season burns. Although some spring burns were performed, it was wet (no complaints) and fall is always the best time to burn.

Butte County Fire Safe Council continues to apply for and do extensive amounts of grant work, generally on fuel reduction projects using mastication, grazing and thinning in the foothills and forests of Butte County. Our community of Cohasset has benefitted greatly from their work.

Biomass planning is ongoing. There is a proposal for a large plant in the Burney Basin area. The proponents want to use “feedstock” (small logs and slash) to make pellets to burn in stoves in Europe and Asia! If this sounds completely ridiculous - we agree. It is hard to imagine this project will get off the ground - but unfortunately plenty of public money is being used to plan for it. There are lots of folks keeping their eyes on this proposal. As I have said, I am a proponent of small, local biomass to create electricity for the grid or community consumption. Unfortunately, we do have acres and acres of dead trees that will have to be removed for fuel reduction near communities and along roads and infrastructure in the near future.

As always, you are welcome to email me with questions or comments:

pputerbaugh@yahoo.com

Enjoy our great outdoors!

Trish Puterbaugh

BUTTE ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

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BIDWELL PARK &
CHICO CREEKS CLEANUP
AND RESTORATION PROJECTS**


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