



Bidwell Ranch Mitigation Bank Development Project Project Overview



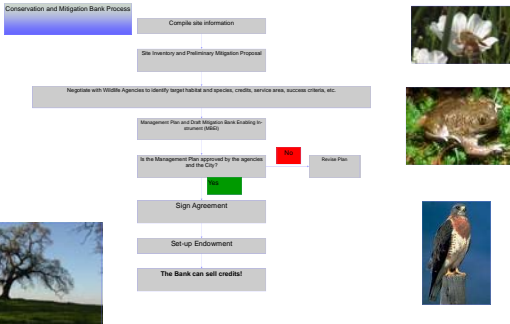
What is the Bidwell Ranch Mitigation Bank Development Project?

In fall 2006, River Partners began working with the City of Chico to develop a conservation and mitigation bank on the Bidwell Ranch property. River Partners will review and compile the technical information and produce the documents necessary to establish the Bank. River Partners will develop the information and agreements. The City will ultimately decide whether to move forward with the mitigation bank. The project provides a mechanism to protect natural resources on site, ease regulatory burdens on City capital and private development projects, and pay for the long-term management of the site. Public participation is an important part of the project and citizens may join the email list for the project or join the Citizen Work Group to provide input. As part of the project, opportunities for public access will be examined that protect environmentally sensitive areas (and mitigation credits).

What is a conservation or mitigation bank?

A conservation or mitigation bank is land managed for its natural resource values. In exchange for permanently protecting the land, the bank operator may sell habitat credits to developers who need to satisfy legal requirements for compensating environmental impacts of development projects. Conservation banks must be approved by the wildlife agencies, such as the Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mitigation banks are generally approved by the wildlife agencies and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

What are the steps in setting up a mitigation bank?



What is the process for developing the conservation and mitigation bank?



What documents will be produced for the Bidwell Ranch Mitigation Bank Development Project?

River Partners goal is to provide the City with information about the site's potential as a mitigation bank and complete the necessary mitigation documents. The following documents are the main part of this project:

Anticipated Date	Document
Spring 2007	Draft Wetland Delineation
Summer 2007	Final Wetland Delineation
Summer 2007	Draft Site Inventory and Preliminary Mitigation Proposal
Winter 2008	Final Site Inventory and Preliminary Mitigation Proposal
Spring 2008	Draft Management Plan and Mitigation Bank Enabling Instrument (MBEI)
Fall 2008	Final Management Plan and Mitigation Bank Enabling Instrument (MBEI)
Fall 2008	Record conservation agreement



Bidwell Ranch Mitigation Bank Development Project Potential Species of Interest



What are potential species of interest?

Conservation and mitigation banks protect habitat and species. We have developed a preliminary list of species that may be a part of the Bidwell Ranch bank. We will collect information on the regulatory status, local observations, and site characteristics, to see if these species or others may be appropriate for bank credits.

Terrestrial Animals of Interest

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)

This small owl is pale brown with whitish spots and has long legs and a short tail. It hunts in open grasslands, nesting and roosting in abandoned animal burrows or crevices. It can often be seen perching on the ground or on fence posts.
Regulatory Status: Species of Concern

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

This slender hawk has a reddish breast and white belly with dark wings. It hunts in open grasslands, but perches and nests in riparian forests.
Regulatory Status: Species of Concern

Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*)

This beetle has long antennae and reddish orange wing covers (male) or dark wing covers (female). It depends on its host plant, the Mexican elderberry, for most of its life cycle.
Regulatory Status: Federal Endangered Species

Western Spadefoot Toad (*Spea hammondi*)

This small toad is dusky green or gray with stripes on its back. It occurs in vernal pools where it feeds on insects and earthworms.
Regulatory Status: Species of Concern



Aquatic Animals of Interest

Conservancy Fairy Shrimp (*Branchinecta conservatio*)

This small crustacean, about 1 inch in length, only occurs in vernal pools where it eats algae, bacteria, protozoans and detritus.
Regulatory Status: Federal Endangered Species

Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*)

This small crustacean, about 1 inch in length, was discovered in 1990. It only occurs in vernal pools where it eats algae, bacteria, protozoans and detritus.
Regulatory Status: Federal Threatened Species

Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*)

This crustacean, about 2 inches in length, only occurs in vernal pools where it eats small invertebrates and organic debris.
Regulatory Status: Federal Endangered Species

Flowering Plants of Interest

Butte County Meadowfoam (*Limnanthes floccosa* ssp. *californica*)

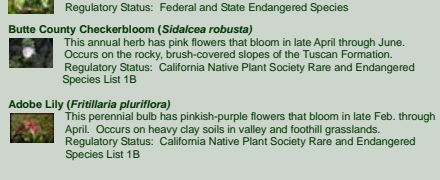
This densely hairy, winter annual herb has white flowers that bloom in late March through April. Occurs along the edges of vernal pools and seasonal streams.
Regulatory Status: Federal and State Endangered Species

Butte County Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea robusta*)

This annual herb has pink flowers that bloom in late April through June. Occurs on the rocky, brush-covered slopes of the Tuscan Formation.
Regulatory Status: California Native Plant Society Rare and Endangered Species List 1B

Adobe Lily (*Fritillaria pluriflora*)

This perennial bulb has pinkish-purple flowers that bloom in late Feb. through April. Occurs on heavy clay soils in valley and foothill grasslands.
Regulatory Status: California Native Plant Society Rare and Endangered Species List 1B





Bidwell Ranch Mitigation Bank Development Project Public Participation

River Partners and the City of Chico invite interested members of the public to help shape the project through your participation in a Citizen's Working Group (CWG)



What is the role of the Citizen Group?

- The Citizen Group will provide interested participants a means to provide direct input to the Bidwell Ranch Mitigation Bank Project Team (The City of Chico and River Partners) to help achieve project objectives.
- The Citizen Group is not a decision-making body; however, the group's input that will be factored into the development of the conservation and mitigation bank for the project.

What is the minimum time commitment for the Citizen Group?

- Intention to participate fully in the workgroup during the 18-24 month long process.
- Attend approximately 4 Citizen Work Group Meetings (held on weekday afternoons, approximately 2-3 hours each).
- Work respectfully and cooperatively with other Citizen Work Group members who may possess different points of view.
- Provide constructive input to help the Project Team on the management plan and to develop the site as a Conservation and Mitigation Bank.
- Review and comment on Draft Documents (Site Inventory and Preliminary Mitigation Proposal, Draft Management Plan and Mitigation Bank Enabling Instrument).
- Communicate effectively to members of the workgroup and community.
- Access the internet and receive email.



Schedule and Meeting Format

- The Citizen Work Group will meet approximately 4 times:
 - ◆ Spring (April) 2007 - Site Visit and Tour
 - ◆ Summer 2007 - Site Inventory and Preliminary Mitigation Proposal
 - ◆ Winter 2008 - Management Plan, and
 - ◆ Summer 2008 - Update on Management Plan.
- Citizen Work Group meetings will be informal working sessions attended by Project Team and Citizen Work Group members, and potentially key agency staff.
- Members of the Citizen Work Group will also be asked to review drafts of the Site Inventory and Preliminary Mitigation Proposal (Summer 2007), Management Plan (Spring 2008), and associated products.
- For the general public wishing to stay informed regarding Citizen Work Group meeting results, a summary of each meeting will be posted on the River Partners website, or may be picked up at the River Partners office.

Other Ways to be Involved and/or Stay Informed about the Project

- Contact Project Team members at tonight's meeting to ask questions or make comments and suggestions.
- Check the River Partners Website (www.riverpartners.org) for project documents, updates, and meeting summaries (www.riverpartners.org/where-we-work/bidwell.html).
- Sign-up for our email list and receive notices and updates.
- Talk to Citizen Work Group members.
- Email (info@riverpartners.org), call (530-894-5401), or write (River Partners, 580 Valombrosa Ave, Chico, CA 95926). Please indicate that you are interested in the Bidwell Ranch project.

For more information: Please contact Dan Eiseaff (deiseaff@riverpartners.org) (530) 894-5401 ext 21) or visit our website www.riverpartners.org.



Bidwell Ranch Mitigation Bank Development Project Frequently Asked Questions



What is the role of River Partners on Bidwell Ranch?

River Partners is working with the City of Chico to develop a mitigation and conservation bank on the Bidwell Ranch property. River Partners will complete the tasks necessary to develop the site as a conservation and mitigation bank. Once completed, the City will make a decision on whether the benefits of converting the property to a conservation and mitigation bank outweigh other uses of the property. Federal and State agencies must certify and approve the documentation before the site can operate as a conservation or mitigation bank. Chico-based River Partners is a nonprofit, public benefit organization and has extensive experience in natural resource management and working with agencies and the public to provide solutions to complex environmental questions.

What is a conservation or mitigation bank?

A conservation or mitigation bank is land managed for its natural resource values. Habitat credits are sold to entities that need to remedy environmental impacts. A conservation bank protects habitat for threatened and endangered species. Mitigation banks specifically compensate for unavoidable wetland losses. These different goals account for differences in the policies guiding operations of the two banks.

Why create a conservation or mitigation bank?

A conservation or mitigation bank is privately or publicly owned land managed for its natural resource values. In exchange for permanent environmental protection, the bank operator may sell habitat credits to developers who need to satisfy legal requirements for the environmental impacts of development. A conservation or mitigation bank is a free-market enterprise that:

- Offer landowners economic incentives to protect natural resources;
- Save developers time and money by providing them with the certainty of pre-approved compensation lands;
- Consolidate small, fragmented wetland mitigation projects into large contiguous sites which will have much higher wildlife habitat values; and
- Provide for long-term protection and management of habitat.

How long will the project take and what's involved?

- The project will take approximately 2 years to complete. The main tasks of this project are to:
- Review and summarize existing documents and information.
- Establish a Citizen Group to provide advise us on the project approach and review key documents.
- Complete and submit a Site Inventory of biological resources and Preliminary Mitigation Proposal to State and Federal agencies.
- Develop a Management Plan and Mitigation Bank Enabling Instrument (MBEI).
- Prepare and record a conservation agreement. The entity that holds the agreement will be determined during the course of the project.
- Establish the mechanism for the endowment account with the appropriate entity.



How much will the conservation and mitigation bank cost?

Selling habitat credits will allow the City to recoup costs associated with the property acquisition, and pay for the long-term maintenance of the property. The value of credits will be determined as the inventory of the property is completed and in consultation with the regulatory agencies. Depending on the habitat protected and the demand in an area, mitigation and conservation credits can be sold for tens of thousands of dollars an acre.

What will happen to the property if it becomes a mitigation bank?

As a mitigation or conservation bank, the general nature of the property will remain as open space that supports habitat for a variety of plants and wildlife. Mitigation and conservation banks must have a sufficient area to support the intended biological resources being preserved. It is anticipated that future active management activities will be needed to enhance the property for habitat. If approved, the property will be entered into a conservation easement and be managed for its natural resources.

What is the role of the public on the project?

Public input is very important to the project. Citizens may sign-up to receive project updates and comment on draft documents. River Partners will also seek input through a Citizen Work Group. The citizen group will advise the project team on the long term management of the site and the development of the conservation and mitigation bank. Please contact River Partners to get on the mailing list or join the citizen work group.

Will the public be allowed to access the property?

We will examine public uses of and recommend uses that are consistent with the site as mitigation and conservation bank. Regulatory agencies often impose limits on the recreational uses on protected areas. Given this constraint, not all recreational activities that people enjoy in upper Bidwell Park are likely to be compatible with the use of the property as a conservation and mitigation bank. However, we intend to develop a management plan to protect environmental resources and maximize public access.

For more information: Please contact Dan Eiseaff (deiseaff@riverpartners.org) (530) 894-5401 ext 21) or visit our website www.riverpartners.org.