

CAMP FIRE

# Cal Fire: PG&E lines started blaze

Investigators say sparking lines in Pulga, second ignition source near Concow and Rim roads were determined to have started the fire

**By Robin Epley**

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**SACRAMENTO** » Cal Fire investigators officially announced the cause of the Camp Fire today in a press release.

Sparking Pacific Gas & Electric lines in Pulga, and a second

ignition source near Concow and Rim roads were determined to have started the deadly Camp Fire on Nov. 8, which burned more than 153,000 acres, destroyed 18,804 structures and resulted in 85 deaths and several firefighter injuries.

The Camp Fire is the deadli-

est and most destructive wild-fire in California history to date.

According to the release, Cal Fire investigators were immediately dispatched to the Camp Fire to determine the origin and cause of the fire.

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## Fire

**FROM PAGE 1**

“After a very meticulous and thorough investigation, Cal Fire has determined that the Camp Fire was caused by electrical transmission lines owned and operated by Pacific Gas and Electricity located in the Pulga area.”

Investigators said they determined the fire started in the early morning hours near Pulga, where high winds and red flag wind conditions “caused extreme rates of spread, rapidly burning into Pulga to the east and west into Concow, Paradise, Magalia and the outskirts of east Chico.”



Water drops are made on the fire line burning around PG&E transmission towers Nov. 12, 2018, east of Pulga. The deadly Camp Fire was first reported burning a few miles west up Highway 70.

KARL MONDON — BAY AREA NEWS GROUP FILE



KARL MONDON — BAY AREA NEWS GROUP FILE

Firefighters drive towards the Camp Fire climbing a mountainside off Highway 70 west of Pulga, early on Nov. 11, 2018.

The investigation also identified a second ignition site near the intersection of Concow and Rim roads, almost exactly between the two towns of Concow and Pulga.

“The cause of the second fire was determined to be vegetation into electrical distribution lines owned and operated by PG&E,” stated the release. “This fire was consumed by the original fire which started earlier near Pulga.”

The news broke Wednesday afternoon while PG&E’s new CEO, Bill Johnson, was speaking to the California Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy. The state’s largest utility provider declared bankruptcy in January, after a slew of lawsuits stemming from fires in 2017 and 2018, including the Camp Fire.

Johnson told the committee he had expected the utility would be blamed for the fire and that he’d “made the as-

sumption when I got here that PG&E equipment caused the fire.”

“It’s a disappointment that this happened,” he told the lawmakers. “Let’s not do it again.”

Cal Fire’s investigative report has been forwarded to the Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey, who said his team is working with Attorney General Xavier Becerra’s office to further investigate any criminal liability in the cause of the fire. He called the information “nothing earth-shattering.”

“This is information we’ve known from the beginning,” Ramsey said. “This is Cal Fire doing its due diligence and getting its report done.”

Ramsey said his office will determine if there was any criminal negligence from PG&E or any of its personnel “that they

might have been directly involved or were grossly negligent in maintaining that line.”

Paradise Mayor Jody Jones told the Associated Press that she was not surprised to hear the news and said she hopes the findings help its legal case against the utility.

Jones said, “it’s nice to have a definite answer” about the cause of the blaze.

PG&E released a statement Wednesday evening in response to the report that said it accepted the findings of the investigation.

“Our hearts go out to those who have lost so much, and we remain focused on supporting them through the recovery and rebuilding process,” the statement said.

The company reiterated that though it has not reviewed the report, Cal

Fire’s report that PG&E transmission lines were the cause of the fire “is consistent with the company’s previous statements.”

However, the utility did not acknowledge responsibility for the second, concurrent fire in Concow.

“We have not been able to form a conclusion as to whether a second fire ignited as a result of vegetation contact with PG&E electrical distribution lines, as Cal Fire also determined,” said the statement.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom said PG&E shouldn’t get an extra six months to reorganize the company. Stock in PG&E was down 30 cents at the end of the trading day.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report. Contact reporter Robin Epley at 530.896.7776.*

# Chico continues to turn back on fire victims

Chico Enterprise Record  
5-16-2019

Folks from Paradise must really be wondering about Chico. Not that that's anything new, but in the wake of the Camp Fire, it's different.

Chico has long been working to horn in on Davis' monopoly as the "weird uncle" municipality of the Sacramento Valley, except for the brief interludes when the populous recognizes that feel-good initiatives take money away from essentials like filling potholes, and puts a conservative majority on the City Council to righten the ship.

But this time, it's different. Paradise was destroyed by the fire last November, and every time Chico has been asked to help, or given the opportunity to help, its people and elected leaders have balked.

Oh sure, citizens have donated money and patted themselves on the back for it, then drawn the drapes retired to their TVs to binge watch "Game of Thrones."

I donated to the Butte Strong Fund. I've done my share. Now go away.

Chicoans haven't been there when it counts, if helping intrudes on their comfort. How about if we put some temporary housing in north Chico? Oh no, that will mess up traffic. How about if we put a temporary facility to sort non-hazardous waste in south Chico? Oh no, that will mess up traffic.

How we can consider temporary traffic problems more significant than the destruction of a neighboring town is quite a mystery to us, and it must be to the folks from Paradise living here now, through no fault of their own.

There are a lot of them, more than 19,000 according to state Department of Finance estimates. Sure, some of them are from Butte Creek Canyon and Concow, but they all must be feeling a sense that they aren't wanted here.

The sense only had to be reinforced by the City Council's rejection of AB430, which would have removed the largest uncertainty that discourages the private sector from investing its money in building more housing: the threat of California Environmental Quality Act lawsuits.

CEQA is a grand law, but it is subject to abuse, because anyone can sue over any action that requires review under the law. A lawsuit doesn't even have to make much sense, but it takes time and money to sift through any legal action, frivolous or otherwise.

AB430 wouldn't toss CEQA

out, but in the case of five cities — Chico, Oroville, Gridley, Biggs and Orland — would exempt any project under 50 acres in size that conforms to that city's general plan from being taken to court after it was approved.

The cities would still have to approve projects. Environmental review could still be required. Conditions could be imposed to mitigate impacts.

But the law proposed by Assemblyman James Gallagher, R-Yuba City, recognizes that those five cities have experienced a jump in the rate of growth unforeseen in their general plans, and offers them a tool to help them catch up.

It doesn't change the general plans — the document every city has to prepare to designate how it wants to grow. It just eases the way for the cities to grow as they have planned to grow, in light of the surges of population caused by the destruction of so much housing by fire.

But now Chico's out of it, because ... AB430 takes away local control and there is a "loss of CEQA review," or something. All the excuses sound a lot like the earlier objections to traffic.

In so doing, the City Council has likely annoyed the one legislator — Gallagher — who has done the most to try and assist the area in recovery from the fire. And as we pointed out in this space a week ago, we're going to need the help of the state and federal governments to get back toward normal.

We've just shrugged off our best ally. Good luck getting him to stick his neck out again to help.

But for those displaced by the fire, it's just another hint that they aren't wanted in Chico. Those people living in trailers and RVs, or jammed into housing inadequate for their need, have to think that when city leaders turned away from a chance to help them out.

It may be the case that some of our elected officials don't want them here. That 19,000 people translates to 9,000-10,000 voters, from a community far more conservative than Chico. If they're still in Chico when November 2020 comes around, that could pose a problem for City Council liberals.

Unless those potential voters can be persuaded to leave, they're likely to remember, and not be happy.

Editorial

# There are two right answers on burned log piles

As the months have rolled by since the Camp Fire, peoples' attitudes about responding to the aftermath have fallen into a spectrum from "It's still an emergency!" to "You guys are getting annoying."

In government, that translates to a range stretching from a belief in expedient action at any cost, to the idea that the fire recovery is just another problem that can be handled through routine, plodding government processes.

Locally, we haven't quite pinned out at the two extremes, but the division is visible.

That was an aspect of the debate over Assemblyman James Gallagher's AB430, which would have exempted housing projects meeting certain restrictions, from California Environmental Quality Act lawsuits.

It was also an aspect of Tuesday's sometimes testy discussion by the Butte County Board of Supervisors over unauthorized log decks that have sprung up around the county.

These are composed of burnt trees that had to be cut down for safety purposes along utility lines and roadways. The logs had to be hauled away and piled up someplace before the burned areas could begin to recover.

However the county's zoning code only allows such piles in certain areas, and some of PG&E's contractors built their piles outside those areas.

County staff asked the board whether the law should be amended to allow the piles temporarily.

**There are tens of thousands of burned trees that still need to be removed before Paradise, Magalia, Concow, Butte Creek Canyon and points between can begin to recover.**

Doug Teeter of Paradise and Bill Connelly of Oroville — whose districts include almost all of the Camp Fire burn footprint — are firmly in the "It's still an emergency" school and said go for it. Debra Lucero and Tami Ritter of Chico were more hesitant, concerned about impacts and precedents.

We wouldn't suggest Lucero and Ritter are to the stage of being annoyed by the problems presented by the fire, but they're a step or two removed from the urgency Teeter and Connelly feel for their constituents. And it's a step or two enough to make for some fireworks between the four of them.

This is one of those strange cases where both sides are actually right.

In the case of the PG&E piles, they should be gone by early summer, according to utility spokesman Paul Moreno. That being the case, it makes perfect sense for government to get out of the way and let it happen as quickly as possible, as Teeter and Connelly believe.

But the PG&E logs are just the tip of the iceberg. There are tens of thousands of burned trees that still need to be removed before Paradise, Magalia, Concow, Butte Creek Canyon and points between can begin to recover.

These are trees on private property, that are not threats to utilities or roadways, and are the responsibility of the property owner to remove. There will not be a market for these logs — burnt timber loses its economic value in just a few months — so there's a big question where that wood is going to go.

That's an answer that should be developed through a careful, deliberative government process that takes into consideration the kinds of concerns raised by Lucero and Ritter. We just can't pile the logs up ... someplace.

The county — in concert the town of Paradise — ought to be working on that answer right now.

Chico Enterprise Record  
5-24-2019

# Chico Enterprise Record

## 5-29-2019

### CAMP FIRE

# Butte Strong announces more grants

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#### Staff reports

The Butte Strong Fund announced Tuesday that it has awarded five grants totaling more than \$100,000 for Camp Fire recovery efforts.

#### Recent grants

**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH (\$22,200)** » To help pay for maintenance at the facility in Chico. St John's has housed several fire-related groups that meet at its facilities regularly, including the Camp Fire Long-Term Recovery Group, the American Red Cross and others.

**WHITE PONY EXPRESS (\$5,000)** » White Pony Express and North State Food Bank are providing additional fresh produce to more

than 400 Camp Fire survivor families living in Concow and in FEMA trailers in other counties.

**LISTENING SESSIONS AND COMMUNITY BASED RECOVERY (\$22,500)** » For Collaborations Works Consulting and the Upper Ridge Community Council to host two listening sessions each for Magalia, Concow and Centerville. After, Collaborations Works Consulting will prepare a final report and proposed plan that will be presented to the Butte County Board of Supervisors and the Upper Ridge Community Council.

**SACRAMENTO GROVE OF THE OAK (\$25,000)** » To fund Campaign Propane, which provides refilled propane tanks for fire survivors. Some of the tanks are delivered to fire victims while others are

left at the Hope Center in Paradise to meet emergency needs.

**PARADISE ALLIANCE CHURCH (\$27,272)** » To cover the continued expenses of the regular Community Dinner for another three months.

To date, the NVCF has awarded more than \$14 million in grants related to Camp Fire relief.

The Butte Strong Fund was established earlier this year as a partnership of three major fundraising efforts by the NVCF, Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. and the Aaron Rodgers NorCal Fire Recovery Fund.

The Butte Strong Fund provides funding for eligible organizations or local government entities that are directly serving peo-

ple affected by the Camp Fire.

Individual assistance is handled through those organizations.

Organizations interested in applying for Butte Strong Fund grants can visit [ButteStrongFund.org](http://ButteStrongFund.org) to determine if they qualify for funding. Those that do can submit a brief grant inquiry before being invited to submit a full application. Staff at NVCF will facilitate the application process.

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*The Butte Strong Fund is still receiving donations. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to Butte Strong Fund, 240 Main St., Suite 260, Chico, CA 95928 or by visiting [www.buttestrongfund.org](http://www.buttestrongfund.org).*

## **BUTTE COUNTY**

### **Deputy safely removes suicidal man on Cherokee Bridge**

Chico Enterprise Record  
5-29-2019

Butte County Sheriff's Office (BSCO) deputy John Thomas was dispatched to Cherokee Bridge, located on Cherokee Road, for reports of a distraught, suicidal man standing on the bridge at about 8:45 a.m. Tuesday, according to a Sheriff's Office press release.

When the deputy arrived, he found the man leaning over the bridge, making suicidal statements. The deputy was able to make contact with the man and safely remove him from the bridge, after which the deputy talked with the subject and further de-escalated the situation, according to the release.

The deputy then took the man to a local hospital for a mental health evaluation. A clinician with Butte County Behavioral Health met with the deputy and the subject.

Anyone having suicidal thoughts is encouraged to contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. Confidential help is available for free, 24 hours a day.

# Chico News and Review

5-30-2019

**opinions** > guest comment

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## If these walls could talk

Part of the iconic Rock House in Yankee Hill survived the Camp Fire, but now faces FEMA

By Karen MacGowan

This article was published on 05.30.19.

The walls of the historic Rock House restaurant stand bare—no roof above or electricity within. They look like a castle ruin. They stand as a testament to the people who built them with local rocks they gathered. There is a white rock angel built into the wall in the apex of the second story. But the Camp Fire swept through and emptied the rock walls of their usefulness. It took the roof and the carpet, the tables and chairs. It took the candles and the flowers, the artwork and the curtains. The fire took the guitars, pool tables and juke box.

The fire took everything except the memories.

People stop even now and take pictures. Perhaps to remember what was, perhaps as a testament to the beauty that still stands. The walls represent those who came before us. The handcrafted details show the builders had pride in their work. The colors of the rock are the colors around us—they are not imported from faraway lands, not manufactured in a factory. The rocks were in the riverbeds, they were moved from mines, from roads, from the earth where we plant our feet each day.

Squint your eyes and you can imagine torches along the walls and candles twinkling at tables. You can almost see a bride being led through those walls to an altar and a groom. You can hear the music, see the guests dancing, smell the banquet. The walls have seen these moments before, they have stood through time, through prime rib dinners and Thanksgiving feasts. They have held back the sun, wind, rain, hail and snow.



The author and David Stookey, co-owners of the Rock House in Yankee Hill, have been reviving it as a country cafe and venue for local musicians since 2014.

Now they stand alone.

With the right plan, the right professionals, people who care and want to help, we may once again walk among the walls and feel the history. We may sit quietly with a cup of coffee and relive old memories. We may have a meal with friends, listen to local musicians and create new memories.

Unfortunately, without these heroes, the walls will be demolished to meet FEMA standards of "debris removal." The walls and the foundation and soil below will be removed, leaving a scar where the Rock House once stood.

# Action News Now

## 6-18-2019

### CAMP FIRE SURVIVORS LIVING OUTSIDE OF PARADISE SHARE THEIR CONCERNS



Camp Fire survivors living outside of Paradise shared their concerns in a listening session Tuesday night. Action News Now reporter Laura Eng spoke with survivors from Concow and Yankee Hill.

Posted: Jun 18, 2019 10:20 PM

Updated: Jun 18, 2019 10:28 PM

Posted By: Laura Eng



**CONCOW, Calif.** -- Camp Fire survivors living outside of Paradise shared their concerns in a listening session Tuesday night. Action News Now reporter Laura Eng spoke with survivors from Concow and Yankee Hill.

"My heart is here, but my mind says, I'm 70 years old, maybe I shouldn't be in this high fire danger area," said Larry Mauch, a Camp Fire survivor. Mauch lost his Concow home in the Camp Fire.

"Eight months of trying to find a place to live and bouncing around," Mauch said.

Mauch said it's challenging to stay hopeful sometimes he and other survivors will ever return for the long term.

"You go, well, maybe you can rebuild and have something by February of next year, but it's a lot to ask," Mauch said.

Survivors in the Concow and Yankee Hill area came together for a listening session. Mauch said the meeting creates transparency and attention in Concow and Yankee Hill that has long been overdue.

"The problem is we don't have a municipality up here so we're trying to say what we need and how we can get help," Mauch said.

"I'm 82 years old, I want to get back into my house before I die. I don't want to be dying before I get back into my house," said Charles Silveira, a Camp Fire Survivor who has property in Yankee Hill.

He said he's reached out to FEMA and Butte County for help.

"It burned all of our outbuildings, all five of them, and burned the living room in the house," Silveira said.

Silveira said it's been frustrating not having any word yet on when his debris can be cleared. He told us why it's worth the wait though to come back home.

"It's just freedom of the open country. Like I said, it's a beautiful area. Hopefully when it comes back it will come back a nice clean community," Silveira said.

There will be two more meetings on Wednesday and Saturday for people living in Centerville, Honey Run and Butte Creek Canyon at the Centerville School House. On Wednesday the meeting is from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. and on Saturday the meeting is from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.



# Chico Enterprise Record

6-20-2019

## FIRE HAZARD

### PG&E turns off line that lit Camp Fire permanently

#### Utility found hundreds of high-risk problems on its equipment

**By Camille von Kaenel**

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Pacific Gas & Electric Corp. has permanently de-energized the Caribou-Palermo transmission line, which sparked the Camp Fire, after finding damage on the structures that the utility categorized as among the riskiest in its coverage area.

The line, which runs along the west side of the Feather River, has already been turned off since December.

The discovery of additional problems along the line came as part of a wildfire safety survey PG&E has been conducting of all of its infrastructure since December, said Summit Singh, vice president of PG&E's Community Wildfire Safety Program, on a call with media on Wednesday.

The survey found hundreds of "immediate safety risk" problems on PG&E equipment, some similar to the flaws on the Caribou-Palermo line that sparked the Camp Fire. Specifically, it found other lines in the system that had problems with the same piece of hardware, called a "C-hook", that was found broken near the ignition point of the blaze.

The utility, pressed by the California Public Utilities Commission, has since contracted Exponent, a scientific and engineering consulting firm, with doing a full records-based review of that Caribou-Palermo line. The review is scheduled to come out in a couple of months.

PG&E is now working with a third-party generator to provide reliable service to customers in the area of the Caribou-Palermo line, Singh said. A couple of other lines to the area have been continuing to provide power over the past few months.

PG&E's safety survey, which it raced to complete before fire season, found about 100 high-priority problems on transmission lines, 1,000 high-priority problems on lower-voltage distribution poles, and 100 high-priority problems on substations. All repairs have been completed except a few projects on distribution poles that will wrap up soon, Singh said.

Around 15 to 20 of all the high-priority issues on transmission lines were on the Caribou-Palermo line, Singh said.

Since December, PG&E analyzed around 50,000 electric transmission structures, 700,000 distribution poles and 222 substations using drone and helicopter imagery. An in-house forensics team then sought out any sign of wear, corro-

sion, woodpecker holes or other damage that could increase the risk for wildfires. The company will publish a breakout for each city and county next month.

"When we look at these numbers, the portion is small, compared to the size of the overall system, but the numbers we found here are unacceptable from my point of view," said Singh.

# Chico Enterprise Record

## 6-22-2019

CALIFORNIA

## Local tribe responds to governor's apology

By Natalie Hanson  
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**MOORETOWN RANCHERIA** » In a landmark statement, Gov. Gavin Newsom made an official apology to California's Native American citizens Tuesday.

The governor met tribal representatives at the future site of the California Indian Heritage Center, including council members from Butte County tribes, where he called the treatment of indigenous tribes "genocide."

In the meeting, Newsom also announced the creation of a council to analyze the state's role in historical campaigns of extermination of Native Amer-

icans and exploitation of land they lived on, a role which California's government was key to carrying out.

Several representatives of local tribes were present at the meeting with the governor. Chairman Benjamin Clark of the local Mooretown Maidu Rancheria tribe, a federally-recognized tribe headquartered in Oroville, was present for the entire statement.

Clark, whose rancheria owns and operates several businesses in Oroville including Feather Falls Casino, said he felt positive about the meeting and the governor's intentions.

**APOLOGY** » PAGE 3



RICH PEDRONCELLI — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Assemblyman James Ramos, D-Highlands, of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, fifth from left, opens a meeting with tribal leaders from around the state, attended by Gov. Gavin Newsom, fourth from left at the future site of the California Indian Heritage Center in West Sacramento.

## Apology

FROM PAGE 1

"I felt he was sincere," Clark said, mentioning how the governor referred to massacres and other events which are not in textbooks used by many public schools in the state.

"I hope to see some action on these things," he said. "I know other leaders have said that it's a start ... but it's gonna take a lot of healing."

Clark felt what he called "historical trauma" is

passed down through a tribe's generations.

"Our identity was taken from us," he said. "It's caused a big gap in our people."

Overall, Clark said that he "feels good" about the promises Newsom made in the meeting, including efforts taken to improve his knowledge and relationship with California's indigenous peoples, although the governor has "a lot more to learn," he said.

"It's good to have a governor who knows California's real history," he said.

While other governors

have apologized for specific episodes in the state's history, Newsom is the first to apologize for all of the state's historical treatment of tribes and to call it "genocide." However, he has not yet called for any specific changes.

The Mechoopda tribe based in Chico could not be reached for comment for this story. The Berry Creek Maidu Rancheria declined to comment.

*The Associated Press contributed to this story. Contact reporter Natalie Hanson at 530-896-7763.*

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# CIN&R

## Chico News & Review

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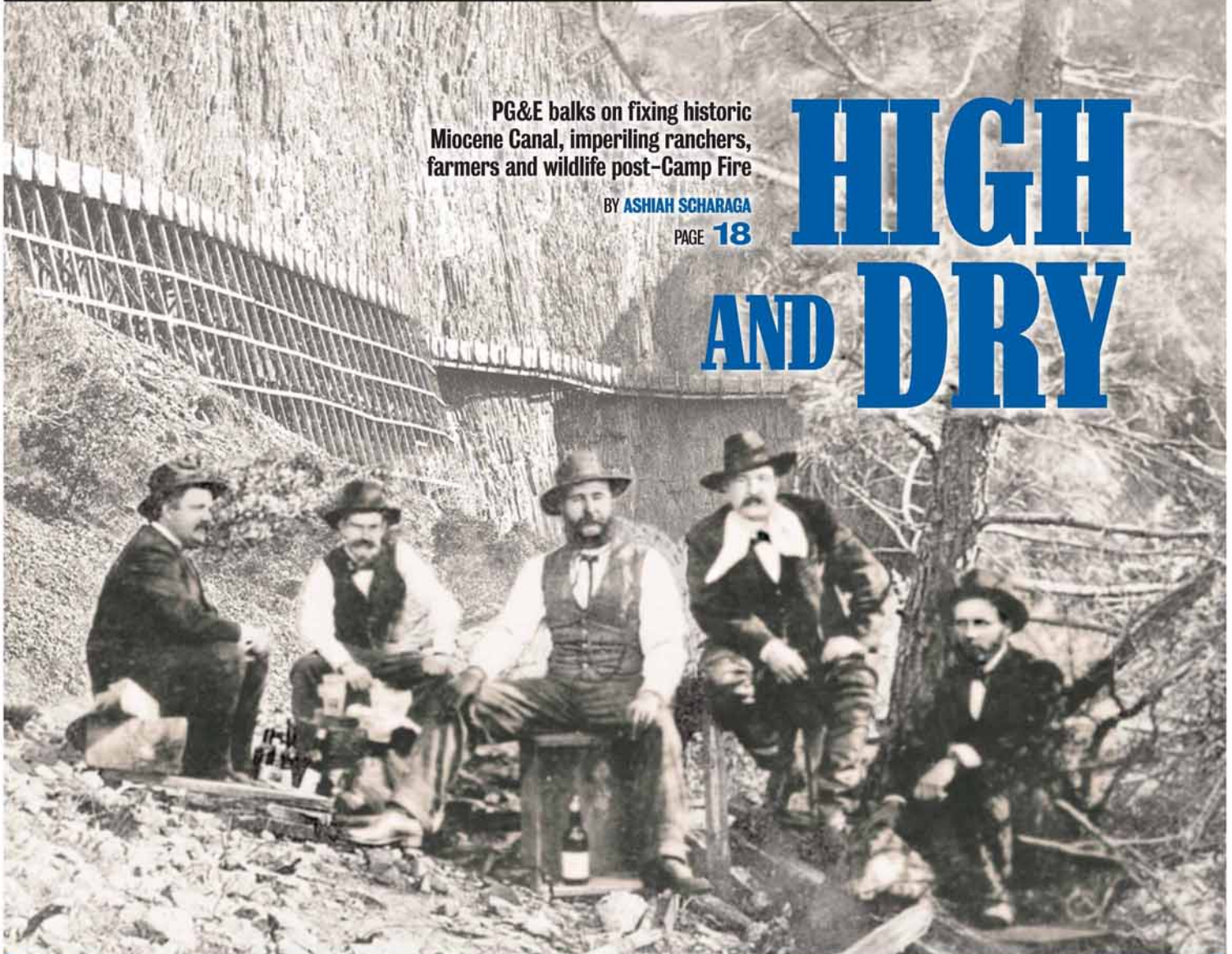
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PG&E balks on fixing historic  
Miocene Canal, imperiling ranchers,  
farmers and wildlife post-Camp Fire

BY ASHIAH SCHARAGA

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# HIGH AND DRY



**8** DYING ON THE STREETS

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**26&32** SUMMER PARTY SUPPLIES

# Dried up, desperate

**PG&E balks on repairing its Camp Fire-scorched canal, imperiling the Butte County farms, ranches and wildlife that relied on the infrastructure for generations**

by  
**Ashiah  
Scharaga**  
ashiahs@  
newsreview.com



A view from a destroyed section of the Upper Miocene Canal east of Adventist Health Feather River Hospital off of Pentz Road in February.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT C. SHAW

**A**s Kurt Albrecht walked among the rows of his family's apricot trees on a recent blustery morning, parched, yellow grass crunched beneath his boots. There's no longer any irrigation nourishing this orchard, but the small orange fruits hung from the boughs above him, ready for harvest, "due almost entirely to our weird rainfall this [May]," he said.

Next year, it's likely these trees—20 acres of apricots, cherries and peaches, some that have been there for 50 years—will no longer exist at Chaffin Family Orchards, Albrecht told the CN&R.

Albrecht and his wife, Carol Chaffin Albrecht—third-generation owners and operators of the farm—are in a tough spot. The Miocene Canal, the primary water source for their 2,000 acres of orchards and cattle pastures in Butte Valley, has run dry since Nov. 8, when the upper portion of it—otherwise known as the Paradise flumes—was destroyed by the Camp Fire.

If they remain without water, the Albrechts will have to sacrifice those stone fruit trees. The couple's 200 acres of century-old olive orchards, their primary crop, can handle going dry this year, but how they will fare is uncertain.

For example, if a hot summer gives way to a relentless fall, Albrecht said, come harvest time there could be no olives to pick and press for oil.

"It's definitely going to translate to less

# Chico News & Review

## 6-27-2019

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Paul Gosselin, director of Butte County's Department of Water and Resource Conservation, has served as a mediator of sorts in discussions between water users and PG&E—it is the county's goal to help the region retain surface water rights that have historically flowed through the Miocene Canal.

PHOTO BY ASHIAH SCHARAGA

have joined forces, forming the Miocene Canal Coalition and advocating for restoration of water to the Middle and Lower Miocene, which were not damaged in the fire. While Butte County has assembled various agencies to discuss short- and long-term options, nothing concrete has emerged.

In the meantime, landowners are devising ways to get through the summer. Chaffin Family Orchards, for example, can draw from a private reservoir to provide water for cattle and irrigate citrus trees, which otherwise would not survive.

"We're going to try to spread water too far, too thin to stay viable for a long-term sustainable plan [of] operation," Albrecht told the CN&R. "Financially, it's devastating. ... We're having to tap [family savings] in order to get through this year."

## Miocene history

The Miocene Canal is a byproduct of California's Gold Rush era. The 25-mile-long, man-made infrastructure—a system of ditches and wood-supported metal channels—was originally created in the late 1860s or early 1870s by the Miocene Gold-Mining Co., which owes its name to the Miocene Age, when basalt flows covered up placer deposits in eastern Butte County and beyond. The flumes diverted the Feather River so miners could excavate, according to the "Miocene Ditch" edition of Diggin's, the Butte County Historical Society's magazine, published in 1983. Gold miners were the first water-system builders in the Sierra Nevada foothills: It is estimated that over 8,000 miles of ditches were constructed at the height of hydraulic mining, which used canal systems to pressurize water and direct it against banks of gravel that would then disintegrate and wash over sluices.

CANAL CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

## Where the wild things aren't

### Wildlife disappearing in Miocene Canal's absence

For decades, Jim and Laura-Lyn Burch have enjoyed watching hundreds of ducks, geese and red-winged blackbirds visit the pond on their property off Pentz Road in Oroville.

Lately, they have no idea where the birds have gone. Since the Miocene Canal was damaged in the Camp Fire and stopped flowing, the wildlife they've grown accustomed to sharing their lives with have disappeared or even died as a result.

As the pond dropped dangerously low this year, the couple's grandchildren carted 5-gallon buckets of polliwogs to a neighboring pond with more water. But they couldn't save them all: Hundreds were left flopping about.

"[Our granddaughter] was so upset ... and there's nothing we can do," Jim said.

The man-made Miocene Canal—25 miles of earthen and cement ditches and wooden and metal flumes spanning from Magalia to Oroville—is more than a century old. However, the full extent of its environmental impact has never been publicly documented.

Memos dating back to 2013 from PG&E to the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) obtained by the CN&R provide some information regarding the life sustained by the canal. Biologists performed fish rescues of brown and rainbow trout, California roaches and Sacramento suckers during annual maintenance outages. At the same time, they reported observing and saving foothill yellow-legged frogs, which are on the CDFW's list of state and federally threatened animals as of April.

The Miocene Canal Coalition pleaded with the CDFW to survey the canal during the rainy season post-Camp Fire, before it dried up. "We just got stonewalled left and right," said Ed Cox, coalition spokesman. "I spent weeks leaving messages for people."

In April, Henry Lomeli, CDFW biolo-

gist for Butte, Yuba and Glenn counties, issued a memo to Cox stating that a dry canal could result in the "indirect" deaths of foothill yellow-legged frogs (a state candidate for listing) due to habitat loss and increased vulnerability to predators. The habitat of another species (listed as threatened), the California black rail, also could be in jeopardy, he added.

"Without immediate corrective action to restore minimum water flow down the [ditch] before May 15, 2019, 'take' of the threatened species listed above is likely to occur ... alternative temporary measures are strongly encouraged to be evaluated that provide a minimum flow to sustain life to these listed species," the memo reads.

The department asked PG&E to do a survey for foothill yellow-legged frogs in early

May, said MaryLisa Cornell, water unit supervisor for the CDFW's north central region.

The survey was completed the day after Lomeli's deadline of May 15 and came back with no sign of the species. There's not much more the department can do, Cornell says, because the canal is privately owned and is not a natural stream.

"It's a very different situation if PG&E has for some reason stopped releasing water into a natural waterway ... then it becomes a public trust resource and the department will always step in," she said.

Cox expressed frustration at how the environmental concerns have been handled. Debris removal operations have been halted for threatened species in Paradise—why is the Miocene any different?

"That's absolutely true they aren't there today," Cox said of the frogs. "They've allowed it to go so long that now the environment is radically changing, and not for the better."

—ASHIAH SCHARAGA  
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A view of the canal before the Camp Fire.  
PHOTO BY CARPE DIES VIA FLICKR

product, but it also makes it very difficult to plan and have any predictability in crop sizes ... which relates to gallons of oil, in our particular case," Albrecht said.

The Miocene Canal has a rich history. Its roots go back approximately 150 years. PG&E has owned portions of the canal since 1917. This year, however, the utility giant—filing for bankruptcy and finding itself culpable for the deadliest and most destructive fire in state history—announced it would not repair the system.

It's a devastating turn of events not only for the Chaffin family and the two dozen other contracted water users—including ranching and farming families that relied upon the Miocene for generations—but also for many other residents and wildlife in this rural stretch of Butte County. The system's water has sustained thousands of acres of ranch and farm land throughout its history.

Several landowners have reported that their wells, streams and ponds are now drying up. As a result, some have spent thousands of dollars to purchase water tanks and have water delivered. But it still isn't enough to support their livelihoods. Orchards are going dry, livestock are being sold or moved.

A group of concerned property owners



A foothill yellow-legged frog.

PHOTO BY ALESSANDRO GATENAZZI VIA FLICKR

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CANAL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

In the late 19th century, these systems started being used for hydroelectric power generation. The Oroville Water, Light and Power Co. (known later as the Oro Electric Co.) purchased the Miocene, constructing a head dam in the west branch of the Feather River Canyon, east of Magalia, in 1909. This water flowed down the Upper Miocene, then into Kunkle Reservoir off of Pentz Road before winding through the turbines at the company's Lime Saddle Power House, built in 1906. From there, the water moved through the Middle Miocene, flowing southwest through Butte Valley, where it reached the Coal Canyon Powerhouse, built in 1907, and entered the Lower Miocene, a part of the conveyance system that runs roughly parallel to Highway 70 before reaching the Cherokee Reservoir.

PG&E purchased the Miocene and both powerhouses in 1917, including the water delivery system for Oroville, according to PG&E spokesman Paul Moreno. Ten years later, the company sold the Oroville water system, including the Lower Miocene, to what later became California Water Service Co., which owns that section to this day and has a contract to purchase water from PG&E.

Moreno told the CN&R that PG&E performed annual maintenance and repairs on its portion of the canal, shutting off water temporarily for those efforts: Most years, according to families the CN&R spoke with, PG&E gave farmers and ranchers notice so they could store water. The utility would shut the canal down during the rainy season, in early spring, for about four to five weeks, so it would have minimal impact.

Many of the property owners adjacent to the canal, like the Albrechts, have purchased water from PG&E for so long their contracts are written in miner's inches, a measurement of water representing flows

through miners' sluices.

Two years ago, PG&E put its portion of the Miocene Canal system and powerhouses up for sale. Moreno explained that, in the company's view, "the value of the power generation doesn't really cover the cost of running and operating the system."

PG&E had a potential buyer before the Camp Fire destroyed the Upper Miocene. Washington-based Tollhouse Energy Co. still is interested, company engineer Adam Cleveland said at a recent public meeting, but needs "to determine if it would make economic sense for us."

Moreno told the CN&R that water rights could be part of a sale but would not disclose further details.

## A coalition emerges

Members of the Miocene Canal Coalition have been pressing PG&E since the fire and in April took their concerns to the Butte County Board of Supervisors.

Ed Cox, the group's spokesman, has argued these main points: The canal is a historical landmark that should be repaired and preserved, and its water feeds Kunkle Reservoir and ponds downstream that are an invaluable resource for fire suppression, as well as habitat for wildlife, including imperiled species (the latter has been debated—see "Where the wild things aren't," page 19).

Per the direction of the supervisors, Paul Gosselin, director of the county's Department of Water and Resource Conservation, essentially has served as a mediator between PG&E, Cal Water, the coalition, other water users and providers. However, because the canal is privately owned, there's not much more the county can do to steer the outcome. County Counsel Bruce Alpert said as much at a supervisors meeting in late April.

"We can't tell PG&E what to do with

[the Miocene Canal] or what water to take into [it]," Alpert said. "It is up to individual landowners, unfortunately, in this situation to hire counsel to take whatever action they deem appropriate or they think they have a right to take."

Earlier this month, the parties assembled and attempted to carve a path forward during a three-hour meeting at the Feather River Tribal Health auditorium in Oroville. It was the first gathering at which water users were brought to the table with representatives from PG&E, Del Oro Water Co., Paradise Irrigation District (PID) and other stakeholders to hash things out.

It was at times a tense exchange—frustration and fatigue were evident as coalition members pressed PG&E and Cal Water for answers periodically throughout the meeting. Every time, their representatives offered a similar reply: They understand and were there to be a part of the solution. However, they didn't offer specific ideas. PG&E representatives did confirm that the company would not repair the Upper Miocene, and had not considered building a pipe to get water flowing into the Middle Miocene from nearby Lake Oroville, as water users have suggested.

Former county water commissioner John Scott, a longtime advocate for groundwater protection in Butte Valley, was the first to address the elephant in the room: "The people that burned the Miocene Canal down ... and who had obligations to a lot of people sitting at these tables should be coming to the table and telling us what they're going to do other than just saying, 'We're out of here.'"

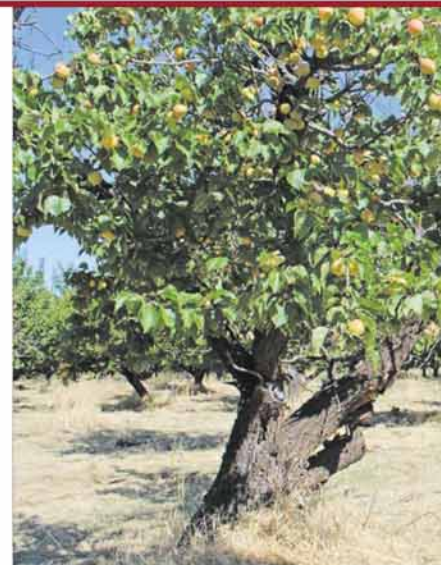
Gosselin quickly interjected: "Some of us have different lawsuits against some of the people around the table, but we're ... going to keep it focused on ... solutions," he said.

When it was their turn to take the floor, many landowners shared stories similar to that of the Chaffin family: facing uncertain crop yields, moving livestock temporarily, paying exorbitant prices to truck in water.

Cattle rancher John Crowe said the latter is just not affordable to sustain operations. "You could burn the Butte County roads up all you want ... but it's not going to irrigate olive orchards ... hauling water is not in the cards. Hauling water is for flushing toilets," he lamented.

Toward the end of the meeting, a few possible solutions were discussed. Del Oro is researching the cost of drawing 20 acre-feet per day from Lake Oroville, which would be enough to return flows down the length of the Middle and Lower Miocene.

PID, Del Oro and PG&E also are exploring a partnership to use existing infrastructure shared by



PID and Del Oro to get water flowing into Kunkle Reservoir. But both face capacity challenges when it comes to providing enough water to the Miocene, and it isn't cheap for the companies to purchase water from PG&E.

In the meantime, the coalition pressed PG&E on its contract language, arguing that the company had promised to deliver water in emergency situations such as this. Moreno told the CN&R later that PG&E "is happy to discuss" water delivery with its contracted users.

There could be funding available through grants as well. The U.S. Department of Agriculture can provide funds to help property owners dig wells, put in storage tanks and stock ponds. There's a caveat, however: because the foothills rest on fractured rock, not in the basin, well-digging is "a lot less reliable" and "unpredictable," Gosselin said. Grant funding is available to deliver water to low- to moderate-income families, according to Casey Hatcher, county spokeswoman.

What it boiled down to for the water users, however, is that they don't see a path forward that doesn't involve refilling most of the leaky Miocene because of the streams, ponds and habitat it has created and supported for more than a century.

## What comes next?

A second meeting with the agencies and water users has been scheduled for mid-July. The county has applied for several "planning grants," Gosselin said, which could fund research on the envi-



Laura-Lyn Burch stands before two water tanks the family installed after a 2016 fire took the Miocene offline for six months. PHOTO BY ASHIAH SCHARADA

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Kurt Albrecht, of Chaffin Family Orchards, examines the farm's apricot crop. Next year, it's likely the family will have to let 20 acres of stonefruit trees (including the ones pictured) die if there is no water flowing in the Middle Miocene Canal.  
PHOTO BY ASHIAH SCHARAGA

no water. They already lost last year's crop due to smoke contamination from the Camp Fire.

Additionally, they typically lease nearby property for their small herd of cattle but cannot this year because of the lack of water. They're having to move the herd to less-than-ideal land—where they have to haul water and feed—and may have to sell some cattle because of the disruption it has had on calf weaning. They are using their domestic well to pump water to tanks they have purchased for the livestock.

"We're just kind of winging it," Tozier said. "I'm just hoping and praying there will be some solution where they can recharge the canal."

Albrecht said if the family loses those 20 acres of apricots, cherries and peaches, they won't replant until they know if or when water is available. Even if they get water back next fall, it's not a quick turnaround.

"We're looking at probably four or five years before we get significant harvest of [those trees]," he said. "We'd use the opportunities to change varieties, [that's] probably the upside, but it'd be a lot easier to do that in small blocks of time, not to be forced, because there's not new revenue ... for a number of years."

It's a complete shift in operations, he continued. Then there's the potential loss of the farm's client base, who will now go out and find fruit elsewhere.

"It's pretty difficult from a marketing standpoint. ... We'll lose those customers and have to find them again after we've regrouped," Albrecht said. "For a long time, I always thought ... if PG&E decided to turn the canal system off, they would write us a check ... that we would be compensated for the loss of revenue."

When asked what a second dry summer could mean, many property owners told the CN&R they would have no choice but to downsize their operations. Many, like Albrecht, said that they felt PG&E has a responsibility to make things right, or to compensate their families for the loss.

Tozier says so many people think of the canal for the recreational value it had for their families. Her kids and grandkids have enjoyed playing and walking near the canal and watching wildlife, too. But the bottom line is that the water is needed for irrigation and livestock.

"Everybody in our situation has felt somewhat guilty because we still have our homes," she said, "but we're still a casualty of the fire." □



Cindi Williams stands before the dry pasture bordering her home on Pentz Road, near Highway 70. Typically, it'd be green and trim from browsing goats.  
PHOTO BY ASHIAH SCHARAGA

## Defense challenge

### Property owners adjacent to the Miocene Canal have no water to draw from for fire suppression

In a typical year, the Williams family would have a large herd of goats munching down the fields surrounding their home on Pentz Road for a few reasons: meat, supplemental income and fire suppression.

Since the Miocene Canal went off-line after the Camp Fire, the family—Cindi, her mother and son—has but four sheep in its parched pasture near Butte Valley. The Williamses can't afford to provide water to any more livestock—Cindi has shelled out more than \$3,000 to install a 1,600 gallon water tank for their home and the sheep, and that doesn't include the \$200 to \$250 monthly expense to have water delivered to fill it.

"We're trying to get back a little bit of a herd because I can't imagine going out there and weed-eating that whole pasture," she said. Though goats are more ideal for fire suppression, the sheep help mow down the grass in the meantime—and aren't as wily.

When it comes to Cal Fire's abilities to respond to wildfire, Assistant Chief John Messina told the CN&R that Kunkle Reservoir, which feeds the Middle Miocene, is "absolutely" advantageous to draw from.

"If that reservoir has water in it, it makes it quick for our helicopters and water tenders to utilize it," he said. "But if it's not there, we will go to the next closest water source that's available."

The department can utilize nearby Lake Oroville or Paradise's hydrant system on Pentz Road.

The lack of water likely will be a more significant challenge for landowners: If they are no longer able to irrigate their fields to create a defensible space, that is a fire hazard, he said. By law, they will have to come up with another plan.

The Williamses are doing their best, but fear it won't be enough. Cindi's son, Brandon, spoke plainly about the family's concerns this fire season.

"We had a water source that supplied us ... with approximately 16,000 gallons of water a day. And then it went away," he said. "Not having a water source during the threat of wildfire season, it's bad. We're screwed. Some butthead could flick a cigarette butt in the pasture and poof, there goes the livestock, there goes the pasture, there goes the house."

—ASHIAH SCHARAGA  
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ronmental impact of the Miocene and, once solutions are identified, could inform the best way to proceed with applications and ideal funding sources.

"It does look like some of the more immediate, short-term things are going to be pretty limited for this season. That's the reality," Gosselin told the group. "The system's gone in and out [of service]—I mean you all know it—for a long time because of other fires and floods .... I think broadening the options for water supply is what we're looking at for resiliency along the line. That'll take some time and some creativity."

Cattle rancher Gail Tozier reflected after the meeting, telling the CN&R she appreciated seeing so many agencies willing to attend and participate with a "genuine desire" to come up with solutions. But in reality, she said, nothing came out of it. "They need to realize really and truly the only viable solution is to recharge the canal," she said.

Tozier lives just up the road from Chaffin Family Orchards. Her family has operated Tozier Ranch across 275 acres, raising cattle and tending olive orchards, for 16 years, but the property has been used for agriculture since the early 1900s.

The lack of water has impacted every aspect of her ranch's operation and increased the cost of doing business, she told the CN&R. Like the Albrecht family, they have 100-year-old olive trees going dry this season with "no idea what's going to happen" after a sweltering summer with



The Miocene Canal (shown in red) spans 25 miles, from Magalia to Oroville.  
MAP BY TINA FLYNN

# Chico Enterprise Record

## 6-29-2019

### CAMP FIRE

# Man who stole firefighter's truck sentenced

## Second man to be sentenced July 19

*Staff reports*

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey announced today that a Camp Fire looter, who stole a firefighter's truck, was sentenced in Butte County Superior Court to three years of felony probation, 48 days in jail and ordered to pay \$6,180.51 in victim restitution.

Ramsey said the case against William Michael Erlbacher, 40, of

Concow, began on Nov. 8 when Cal Fire firefighters returned to their station after fighting the Camp Fire to discover it had been burglarized.

As the fire threatened the building, firefighters worked to move vehicles and equipment to a safe area nearby only to discover one firefighter's personal truck had been stolen. A subsequent examination of surveillance cameras revealed images of the stolen truck being driven away.



Erlbacher



Depalma

The stolen truck was found on Nov. 16 at a Chico home. Witnesses there said Erlbacher and Robert Depalma, 60, of Concow, arrived with the truck on Nov. 8,

and that Depalma covered the vehicle's license plate with a board and back windshield with a blanket each time he parked it at the house. When confronted by law enforcement, Erlbacher admitted to taking the truck, and also admitted to entering the private

quarters of the fire station where he and Depalma located the keys to the vehicle.

Ramsey said the firefighter's truck was returned to him but it suffered extensive damage and Erlbacher was ordered to pay \$6,180.51 in restitution to the victim. Ramsey said Depalma has also admitted his part in the theft and is scheduled to be sentenced on July 19. Ramsey said his office has a zero-tolerance policy for looters as such persons victimize the community, and those apprehended for such crimes will be prosecuted to the fullest extent possible.



Fox 40 News  
7-10-2019  
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CONCOW -- Every night at supper time, you'll find Teri Rubiolo dishing out a message.

"People need to know they're loved and cared about," Rubiolo said. "It's that simple."

A warm meal for anyone in Concow who needs it.

"I absolutely love Jesus and he set the example when he had compassion and fed the multitudes. So I just want to try and follow in his footsteps the best I can," she said.

Roughly three years ago, she and her husband, John, started "I Am's Garden" to feed the homeless in their town -- not realizing they'd soon be without a home too.

**"I knew they would be back here and that they would still need us even more."**

"That's when we lost everything," Rubiolo said.

The morning of Nov. 8, the Camp Fire tore through their community. It remains the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California history.

"It was raining fire on us, all around here," Rubiolo said.

They barely escaped with their lives.

"I got out with the clothes on my back," John Rubiolo said.

Their home is now ashes, but they still came back.

"Because the people are still the same. They're still my family," Teri told FOX40. "I was taking care of them before then. I knew they would be back here and that they would still need us even more."

Living out of a trailer on their burned down property, she now makes close to 100 meals a day.

"I had three stoves and ovens in my other house. Big difference for me," Teri Rubiolo said.

It's no small feat in their tiny trailer powered by a generator.

"I usually start between 9 and 10 in the morning," Teri said.

They let neighbors come do laundry, take a shower or get a free change of clothes, all donated from nonprofits and food banks.

John even drives meals out to people who can't travel to them.

"The deliveries went way up," he said.

**"I'll feed an army if it helps one."**

For neighbors like Nicole Newman, it means everything.

"You can see the love that she puts into her food," Newman said. "I mean, I've never had bad food from her."

Newman also lost her home in the fire.

"It was really hard. I lost everything that I ever worked for and it's hard to start over because you don't know what's going to happen," Newman said.

Now living in an RV, most days her family would be eating canned food if not for the Rubiolos.

"Because it's hard to make a meal in a little trailer," she said.

"We have everything from a 96-year-old man, to veterans, to families that we're delivering too," Teri said.

And they don't plan to slow down anytime soon.

"I'll feed an army if it helps one," she said.

After all, now more than ever, people in Concow need some extra help to feed their families and their spirits.

"It's a special people up here. Mountain people are special people," Teri Rubiolo told FOX40. "So we're here doing what we can do to help."

*I Am's Garden is entirely run by donations from private donors and food banks.*

CAMP FIRE

# Rotarians work to help survivors

By **Kyra Gottesman**

*Correspondent*

**OROVILLE »** The Rotary Club of Oroville has been working behind the scenes to assist Concow, Yankee Hill and Big Bend victims of the Camp Fire reestablish their homes.

Shortly after the Camp Fire in November 2018 Rotary District 5180, which covers the area from Sacramento to Oroville but does not include Chico or Paradise, established a separate tax-exempt 501(c)(3) to collect funds to help victims.

“Within about 15 minutes of putting the word out about this fund, we had about \$150,000 in the account,” said Bryan Flicker, president of the Rotary Club of Oroville.

The funds were split between the Rotary Club of Gridley and Rotary Club of Oroville with one restriction: the funds had to be distributed or used directly for survivors and could not be given to an organization or other non-profit entity.

**“We decided that we wanted to use the money to make a significant impact for people who were reestablishing their homes in our communities rather than just give them a \$500 gift certificate to get them through the next month.”**

*—Bryan Flicker, president of the Rotary Club of Oroville*

The Oroville club established a Camp Fire Relief Committee and decided to focus assistance efforts on fire victims from the Oro-

ville-area foothills because “everyone else was focused on the Paradise survivors and we wanted the money we raised to be focused on survivors in our district,” said Flicker.

“We decided that we wanted to use the money to make a significant impact for people who were reestablishing their homes in our communities rather than just give them a \$500 gift certificate to get them through the next month,” said Flicker.

With that goal in mind the Rotarians began assisting people with things like getting their wells and septic systems functional again. They also started helping folks get potable water storage tanks installed, working out a deal with the local Tractor Supply store and the

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tanks' manufacturer for discount pricing to help stretch their dollars. To date the Rotarians have given a dozen 550- to 1,100-gallon tanks to survivors.

"Once people began getting clearance from (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) to move back in, we wanted to do what we could to help them make their property more livable," said Flicker.

One couple's home survived the fire but their water storage tank and the only access to the home, a wooden bridge, had both been destroyed. The club purchased a new tank and the lumber needed to rebuild the bridge.

An elderly couple that lost everything and decided to move to Oroville were able to get a new home with their insurance money, but then had nothing left to furnish the home.

"He's 70 years old and she is disabled, and they had nothing so we furnished it. We bought a washer and dryer, couches, art, everything they needed. The gentleman said he hadn't cried in 50 years but he was crying when we were getting things moved in," said Flicker.

The Rotary Club of Oroville stepped in to help TurkeyTail Farms in Yankee Hill get up and running again by purchasing a large refrigerator, a storage shed and a "carport-style barn."

For the Erickson's, a family of six, who lost everything, the Rotarians "made life livable again," said Emilia Erickson. When the family was able to return to their property they were living in a 15-foot trailer. The Oroville club assisted them with getting a septic system, full-size propane tank, a tankless on demand hot water heater, a freezer, refrigerator and a couple of sheds.

"What they did for us completely changed our lives. It completely improved the way we were living which, I call it 'perma-camping.' If not for them we'd be in a much worse situation. They returned a piece of normalcy to us. I am really, truly grateful," said Erickson.

To date the Rotarians have provided assistance to nearly 20 families. There are another dozen families slated for assistance once they are able to return to their properties.



CONTRIBUTED BY PEGGY MOAK

Rotary Club of Oroville President Brian Flicker, left, helps load a water storage container onto a trailer. The club has been assisting Camp Fire survivors from the Oroville-area foothills, because as Flicker said, "everyone else was focused on the Paradise survivors and we wanted the money we raised to be focused on survivors in our district."

## local stories

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### Small farms, big challenges

Community-focused businesses soldier on in face of natural disaster, market forces

By [Andre Byik](#)

This article was published on [07.18.19](#).

Natural disasters. Land prices. Unpredictable landlords. Market forces. Nonlocal competition. The challenges facing small-scale farmers in Butte County are many, and survival can come down to the ability to adapt and diversify.

“You can’t expect that it’s going to be easy. You have to be on your game,” said Francine Stuelpnagel, co-owner of the GRUB CSA Farm in Chico. “There’s a lot of moving parts.”

Stuelpnagel and her husband, Lee Callender, operate on 10 acres and offer more than 30 different types of vegetables. They run what’s called a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program, which means consumers buy products directly from a farm, paying for the product in advance.

“A lot of our stuff is going super fresh from the field straight to the kitchen, prepped, [then] on somebody’s plate—and that’s pretty neat,” Callender said.

For GRUB, the CSA means 85-100 families that pay monthly—like a magazine subscription—for shares of tomatoes, potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower and lettuce, among other available veggies.

“It’s really a great program for [the consumers], because they get a better deal, and it’s a good program for us because it’s guaranteed income,” Stuelpnagel said. She added: “We’re trying to make a living, and we’re trying to offer a great,



Francine Stuelpnagel, left, and Lee Callender run the GRUB CSA Farm on West Sacramento Avenue in Chico. PHOTO BY ANDRE BYIK

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amazing, diverse amount of vegetables to our community.”

It’s making a living that can be tricky. Callender says he believes fewer people are venturing into the small-farm business, or aren’t able to maintain one, and the reasons vary.

One friend, he said, was forced to abandon a farm last year on the south end of Chico because it became unsustainable, adding that housing costs may have played a role. Samantha Zangrilli, who runs TurkeyTail Farm, which also has a CSA, says meal-delivery services such as Blue Apron threaten her business, which she says operates under a similar model but is truly local.

Stuelpnagel, 41, and Callender, 39, went through an upheaval about six years ago, moving from a farm off Dayton Road because the landowner did not renew their lease. The couple took a year and a half to settle on their current property on West Sacramento Avenue.

Now, they are looking to buy the land they operate on, holding farm-to-table dinners to raise money for a down payment. Buying the land would mean long-term security, they said, and a defense against having their farm taken out from under them.



Seen here in 2017, Samantha Zangrilli and Cheetah Tchudi on their Yankee Hill property. CN&R FILE PHOTO

“We’re passionate about what we do,” Callender said. “I think it takes hard work—a lot of sweat—to do what we do.”

Like the folks at GRUB, neither Zangrilli nor her husband, Cheetah Tchudi, grew up with farming backgrounds. Zangrilli studied environmental politics at Chico State and was introduced to farming while living on a co-op in town. She says farming allows her to provide a “clean, organic” source of meat in place of “adulterated” sources whose labor practices pose animal rights questions. And Tchudi says he stumbled into farming as a student at Evergreen State College in Washington, where he worked on an educational farm.

Since 2008, they’ve run the 40-acre TurkeyTail Farm in Yankee Hill, which suffered massive destruction during the Camp Fire.

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Zangrilli and Tchudi were comfortable with the prospect of an evacuation. They knew their roles and the things they should take with them, so when they woke up the morning of Nov. 8 and saw the plume, they got to work. Tchudi began moving propane cylinders into the open and hitching trailers. Zangrilli grabbed the ducks, saving 60 out of 80 of them. The pregnant ewes and newborn lambs also were loaded up.

And then there were the products in storage. The couple had thousands of dollars' worth of meat that needed to stay cold or risk becoming rotten without power. That would go, too.

Several days after the Camp Fire roared through Butte County, Tchudi, 36, gained permission to bypass roadblocks and check out the community-focused farmstead he and Zangrilli, 33, had been cultivating.

“It was brutal,” Tchudi said. “We had a firefighter friend that confirmed that our house had burned down, and I wasn’t sure if I was going to find any animals. We had heard some reports through the sheriff that there was a pig herd running around, and so I was hoping that was us. But yeah, literally kicking through the ashes of my scorched home ... digging through where my bedside table was, hoping to find my keys. It was pretty crushing.”

As if running a farm wasn’t enough of a challenge in itself—TurkeyTail sold a variety of food products at Thursday Night Market, plus ran a successful CSA—they now faced the prospect of starting over.

Tchudi and Zangrilli say they contemplated leaving after the fire, but decided to rebuild, largely starting from square one. Where else could they go as farmers and *not* confront the effects of climate change? Why abandon the customer base they’d built over the last decade?

TurkeyTail maintains a presence at Thursday Night Market in Chico, selling duck eggs, herbs and flowers. Tchudi said he recently rebuilt greenhouses for mushroom cultivation—a specialty of his—on the foundation of the couple’s former home. They currently live in a fifth-wheel trailer, sharing space at a family home on the property that did not burn.

“We are staying because the Chico community has shown us so much support,” Zangrilli said, “and we do this because everybody needs food—everybody eats.”



# Chico Enterprise Record

## 8-9-2019

**FATAL**

# 1 dead in Concow Road collision

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**By Jake Hutchison**

*jhutchison@chicoer.com*

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**YANKEE HILL** » A 19-year-old man died Wednesday when the vehicle he was driving collided with a tree at Concow Road, north of Jordan Hill Road.

According to a press release issued Thursday by CHP Oroville, two men were driving a rented 1999 Hino Bobtail truck northbound on Concow Road when, at an unknown speed, the vehicle crossed into the southbound lane and went off the edge of the roadway.

The truck went down an embankment and collided with a tree, causing the driver, who was identified as Joshua Watkins, 19, of Aptos, to be ejected from the vehicle. The driver was transported to Enloe Medical Center where he was pronounced dead.

Anthony Ornelas-Silva, 21, of Watsonville, who was the passenger in the vehicle, sustained minor injuries.

The release said the incident is under investigation and officers are trying to determine whether drugs or alcohol played a role in the crash.

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*Contact reporter Jake Hutchison at 530-896-7750.*

**CAMP FIRE RECOVERY**

# Contract for tree removal approved

Contractor will remove 662 trees along Honey Run and Centerville roads

**By Camille von Kaenel**

*cvonkaenel@chicoer.com*

**OROVILLE** » The Butte County Board of Supervisors approved the county's first contract to remove hazardous trees from the Camp Fire along the right-of-way at its Tuesday meeting.

A San Jose-based company, Bay Area Tree Specialists, will start work removing and disposing of 662 trees previously identified as hazardous along Honey Run and Centerville roads in the next few weeks, said Dennis Schmidt, the county's director of public works.

The contract marks an important milestone in the next key phase of Camp Fire clean-up. There are around 600,000 dead, dying and diseased trees in the Camp Fire footprint that have yet to be removed. Pacific Gas and Electric, Co., has already taken down around 91,000 trees that were threatening power lines.

Butte County has identified around 7,000 trees threatening

public roads. Around two dozen trees have had to be taken down already because arborists said they were so damaged they could fall any second.

The rest will be removed in five stages, bro-

ken down by geographic area. Projects in the upper ridge; lower ridge (below the town of Paradise) and Pentz Road; Concow; and areas east of Highway 70 will follow the Centerville project. They will be staggered by three to four months, meaning the county will likely be removing hazardous trees from the right-of-way at

least through 2020. Public works staff prioritized the projects by available data and overall risk.

Bay Area Tree Specialists had the lowest quote, at \$784,949, of the eight bidders. That's around 18 percentage points below the engineer's estimate for the project.

The removal will be funded by Federal Emergency Management Agency public assistance funds. Under FEMA regulations, the county must also issue contracts for debris monitoring and biological monitoring. Both of those contracts will come before the Board of Supervisors for final approval at the next meeting, said Schmidt.

The town of Paradise has also said it will remove hazardous trees from its right-of-way with FEMA funds, but a contract has not yet been finalized.

Both Paradise and Butte County have asked the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services to secure immediate funds from FEMA to remove trees on private property. Officials are still finalizing the details of the program.

# Chico Enterprise Record

8-16-2019

**RECOVERY**

## Body found in Thermalito Afterbay now identified

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**By Jake Hutchison**

*jhutchison@chicoer.com*

**THERMALITO** » The man pulled from a truck that had been submerged at the Thermalito Afterbay has been identified by the Butte County Coroner's Office.

Daniel Gallick, 65, of Oroville was found last Friday when a Department of Water Resources employee discovered the truck, prompting deputies to respond to the scene for a recovery effort.

The Sheriff's Office public information officer, Megan McMann, said the cause of death has yet to be determined.

Butte County Search and Rescue were sent out to the scene at roughly 7:30 a.m. Friday to recover the truck

and found Gallick later in the morning.

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*Contact reporter Jake Hutchison at 530-896-7750.*

# Chico Enterprise Record

## 8-20-2019

OUHSD

### Oroville's 'most famous' soldier gets Hall of Fame honor

#### Arthur Riehl Wilson served in both World Wars

By Oroville Mercury-Register staff  
news@orovillemr.com

Oroville High School 1913 graduate Major General Arthur Riehl Wilson, United States Army, known as "Oroville's most famous soldier," is a 2019 Oroville Union High School District 2019 Hall of Fame Inductee.

Wilson, who was born in Cherokee in 1894 and buried there following his passing in 1956, served his country with distinction for 30 years through two World Wars.

Following his graduation, where he gave the salutary address, Wilson worked as a reporter for the Oroville Register before starting his post secondary education at the University of California,

Berkeley.

In 1916 Wilson left college and enlisted in the National Guard serving on the Mexican Border under General John A. Pershing. In 1917, he entered World War I a second lieutenant serving with the 346th Field Artillery at the Presidio in San Francisco and Camp Lewis in Washington.

In 1918, Wilson joined the American Expeditionary Force Regiment in France and following the Armistice he served with the American Army of Occupation in Germany.

In 1919, Wilson completed his degree at UC Berkeley and in 1920 he was commissioned in the regular army as a first lieutenant of field artillery.

By the start of World War II, Wilson, recognized as an expert in logistics and supply, was awarded the rank of Brigadier General in 1942.

That same year he led the first U.S. troops in the

Southwest Pacific Theater of War and assisted in working out a lend-lease agreement with officials in the Australian Government.

That same year, Wilson also served in England with General Dwight Eisenhower but was soon sent to Africa where he established the system that supplied troops with arms.

In 1944 Wilson was based in Naples, Italy commanding the Coastal Base Section and promoted to Major General.

Later he was appointed Chief of Staff for the 7th Army in France. Wilson retired from the army in 1946.

Wilson was a highly decorated military officer earning the U.S. Army Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit Award and the Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster.

The Italian government also honored Wilson by naming him a Knight of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Crown of Italy.

#### HALL OF FAME

Oroville Union High School District 2019 Hall of Fame Inductee Dinner

**Where:** Gold Country Casino, 4020 Olive Highway, Oroville.

**When:** 5:30 p.m. Sept. 14.

**Tickets:** \$45 at OUHSD Office 2211 Washington St.

**To reserve tickets call:** 538-2300, ext.1107.

Following his retirement from military, Wilson became vice-president of Trans World Airways and then vice-president of the Industrial Products Trading Company in Zurich, Switzerland. He was a member of the Oroville Masonic Lodge No. 103, Knights Templar.

Wilson's brother, Bill Wilson was inducted into the OUHSD Hall of Fame in 2012 and his nephew Dan Wilson was on the original OUHSD Hall of Fame committee in 2008.



CONTRIBUTED

Maj. Gen. Arthur Riehl Wilson served in the U.S. Army in both World Wars and is a 2019 inductee into the Oroville Union High School District Hall of Fame.

**FIRE RECOVERY**

# CONCOW FAMILIES REBUILD WITH LUMBER FROM THEIR BURNED TREES

Portable community sawmill shared among people with precarious housing



PHOTOS BY CAMILLE VON KAENEL —ENTERPRISE-RECORD

Left to right, Scarlett Erickson, 6, Colin Erickson, 8, and Logan Erickson, 10, sit with their chickens in front of a portable community sawmill turning burned trees into lumber in Concow on Friday.

**By Camille von Kaenel**  
[cvonkaenel@chicoer.com](mailto:cvonkaenel@chicoer.com)

**CONCOW »** Over the weekend, Chad Erickson built a small wooden deck for his family between the trailer that has been their home since the Camp Fire and a storage shed they use as a dressing room. The lumber came from the burned pine trees he felled on his property. He cut and planed them using a portable community sawmill run by a nonprofit, From the Ground Up.

The project is an example of the resilience and resourcefulness that the tiny, remote community of Concow has had to tap into after the Camp Fire, which destroyed nearly every single structure and burned the mountainsides so hot that what was a forest began to look like the moon. Nine months later, some brush and seedlings are regrowing. The red dirt hills are occasionally dotted with a trailer or a tent where people have moved back.

At least a dozen other families in Concow are in line to use the portable sawmill. Many of them want to rebuild shelter before winter comes. And they want to reduce the hazard from some of the hundreds of thousands of dead and dying trees from the Camp Fire.

“It saves a lot of money. It’s more sustainable,” said Emilia Erickson, whose husband made the deck as an outdoor living room where, among other activities, the kids could watch movies projected against the trailer’s wall. “And there’s just this satisfying feeling of taking wood from your own land and building something.”

Emilia Erickson grew up in Concow, two miles from where she now lives. Like many of her neighbors, she had to rebuild her life after fire once before. In 2008, when part of the Butte Lightning Complex Fires tore through the community, she lost her home. Keepsakes from college — rugby memorabilia, Burning Man outfits — were gone.

Her husband built the young family a new house. They had three children: Logan, now 10, Colin, 8, and Scarlett, 6. The kids went to Concow Elementary School, where their mother taught science. A few years ago, the family bought two and a half acres of their own on Granite Ridge, hoping to build up a small farm there.

And then came Nov. 8, 2018. Before tearing through Paradise, the flames destroyed parts of Yankee Hill and Concow, home to around 1,000 people. Eight died here, in their homes, on roads, in their gardens. The Ericksons escaped with their chickens and goats. Around a week later, in the middle of evacuations, they rushed to the hospital for the birth of their fourth child, Ronin.

The Camp Fire was worse than anything the community had previously experienced. In the rubble of their home, the Ericksons later found the melted remains of a glass heart that had survived the 2008 fire intact.



Logan Erickson, 10, plays on stacks of lumber made from burned trees in front of a new hay barn on his family's property in Concow on Friday.

“In 2008, I lost my young life stuff and this time I lost my family life stuff,” said Emilia Erickson. “It wasn’t just my stuff, but my kids’ stuff. And my own childhood stuff, because my baby photos at my mom’s house burned, too.”

But the cherry trees and rose bushes on their land up the hill survived. They could pump clean water from wells there. So after bouncing between emergency shelters, and with few other options left, the family went back.

“This is what I have left, and this is where my home will be,” she said.

Jenny Lowrey and Bruce Matthews, the founders of

From the Ground Up, also lost residences in the fire. They’re part owners at the Lake Concow Campground — where the fire left only concrete pit toilets standing — which they hope to reopen soon. Their nonprofit maintains gardens throughout the region, including Kentfield Gardens in Chico, that provide vulnerable groups with fresh food. Since the fire, they’ve poured themselves into helping Concow.

“It’s humbling to be both a fire victim and a fire helper,” said Lowrey. “Helping is easy for us to do, and there’s a lot of potential for help here.”

She’s part of a small group of other dedicated helpers. In Concow, people live off the grid with little access to resources like fresh food and medical supplies.

There are a couple of private sawmills in Concow and Paradise, but the idea for a community sawmill came about when they were driving around and talking about all the dead and dying trees that stood like sticks next to burned homes and cars.

The North Valley Community Foundation provided them with a \$25,000 grant to buy the sawmill. A friend lent them a vehicle to haul logs. Matthews' son, Jason Romer, taught himself how to use the machine.

Now he spends many hours each week volunteering with his neighbors in Concow to cut logs into finished lumber.

Some regulations limit what people are allowed to do with the lumber, which is mostly pine, but it's already been put to practical use. Another Concow family living down the road from the Ericksons and making do with cramped trailers has built a shed to act as a bathroom and laundry room. On Friday, the sweet smell of soap cut through the dust.

Nearby, the Ericksons have built shelves for their food and gear inside of a donated storage room. And they've built a small barn for hay that they feed their goats. A dozen or so chickens hang out there and lay fresh eggs.

The kids like to play on the remaining stacks of lumber, some of which have burned edges. Someday, it might be used to help rebuild a new house.



PHOTOS BY CAMILLE VON KAENEL — ENTERPRISE-RECORD

Emilia Erickson wants to get back into making goat milk products from her goats in Concow, pictured Friday.



A Concow family used lumber made from their burned trees to build a "wet room" on their property, pictured Friday.

"I say I'm sort of like a bowling ball, heading straight for a home," said Emilia Erickson.

She's juggling many projects at once: On top of caretaking and navigating the complicated rebuilding process, she's thinking of starting a science camp and a business. She wants to sell her homemade lotions and elderberry syrup. On Friday, she gifted a small pot of the syrup to Aindy Romer, another neighbor and friend.

Nine months ago, a burning vehicle trapped Romer on the winding dirt road off Granite Ridge. She hunkered down with chickens and a dog in a big house, fighting the fire with a water hose for a few days before she could get out. The house — visible through the trees from the Ericksons' property — made it.

"We knew our neighbors before, but now we really know them," said Aindy Romer. "We're having to rebuild the entire life support system here."

# Chico Enterprise Record

## 8-21-2019

### CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY

# SWAT team ends standoff with tear gas

## Concow woman accused of using bear mace on fire cleanup crew

*Staff reports*

**CONCOW** » A Concow resident was arrested and booked into Butte County Jail after a seven-hour standoff Monday.

Thea Lomker, 56, was arrested by Butte County Sheriff's Office deputies after she allegedly assaulted members of a California Office of Emergency Services contract crew with bear spray, injuring one worker. The

crew was assessing property as part of the Camp Fire clean up efforts.

Butte County deputies were called to a home on the 12000 block of Granite Ridge Road around 9:25 a.m. Monday after receiving the report of the bear spray attack.

According to deputies, Lomker barricaded herself inside her home and refused to speak with deputies, who said she allegedly

threatened to use weapons against them if they entered her home.

For the next seven hours, deputies attempted to communicate with her and get her to surrender. Deputies used a crisis negotiator on a public address system, as well as a clinician with Butte County Behavioral Health, without success, according to a press release.

Deputies obtained a warrant to enter the home and

take Lomker into custody. The Butte County SWAT team used tear gas to get Lomker out of the house. She was taken into custody without injury and booked on illegal use of mace, which is a felony. Bail was set at \$250,000.



**Lomker**



# Chico Enterprise Record

## 8-21-2019

### FIRE RECOVERY

# Dreams of a mobile mushroom lab

## Camp Fire survivors want to grow fungi to pull toxins from soil

By Robin Epley  
repley@chicoer.com

**YANKEE HILL** » After the Camp Fire destroyed his home, local farmer Chris “Cheetah” Tchudi was granted early access to his farm to feed and care for the

animals he wasn’t able to evacuate. But he was stuck there.

“I was sitting on my hands, and I couldn’t stand it,” he said.

So Tchudi, who co-owns Turkey Tail Farm in Yankee Hill with his wife Samantha Zangrilli, began working on an idea that would help his neighbors begin to recover from some of the most toxic aftereffects of the devastating fire: A mobile mushroom lab.

It’s not as crazy an idea as it might sound. In the burgeoning field of mycoremediation (“myco” is a Latin root meaning fungus), mushrooms and other fungi are used to help decontaminate soil from toxic waste and heavy metals. It’s been used to great effect removing heavy metals, organic pollutants, chemicals and in detoxifying wastewater. Tchudi himself has experience

in mycoremediation, having previously used the science to assist farmers in filtering E. coli infections and helping to clean up motor oil spills.

Tchudi said his mushroom greenhouse burned down but the fungi inside them survived, so while he was stuck on his property after the fire, he carefully cultivated the fungi and protected them from toxic runoff when the rains came by building wattle barriers around the remains of the greenhouse.

On his property alone, Tchudi recognized there would be toxic runoff from burned cars and around his pump house — where the remains of two 5,000-gallon water tanks were now two large plastic puddles, and inside the home he’d built with his own hands there were charred and destroyed electrical wires and lead-acid batteries leeching toxins into the soil.

“Burned paint (from the house and shed) would have created polychlorinated biphenyls, dioxins and benzene from melted plastics,” he said. “Lead, nickel, cadmium and zinc would also be present.”

And, Tchudi added, it’s like this on nearly every property affected by the Camp Fire. While the California Office of Emergency Services is engaged in removing the contaminated topsoil, Tchudi’s solution of employing fungi would leech the toxins out of the soil where it stands and break them down into their harmless components.

The scary thing is, Tchudi added, “very little is known and no one is testing on the soil for these persistent organic compounds” that are the toxic byprod-

ucts of urban wildfires.

Tchudi said he would like to focus his work on smaller parcels — such as those that are 120 square feet or less. His 501(c)3 company, Butte Remediation, would come onto a property, test the soil for organic compounds and toxic waste, then custom-grow fungi for clients that would be able to remove the specific toxins from the soil.

He has applied for grants and is hopeful that he can get those grants. If he does, he’ll get his mobile mushroom lab up and running, and he can start working on mycoremediation projects almost immediately, Tchudi said. He’s already begun to grow seven different types of fungi to be ready for immediate use when the grants come in; though he recognizes it’s a long process.

“Basically the fungal enzymes that are typically applied to degrading wood

can also help break down carcinogenic and disruptive materials,” Tchudi said.

In the meantime, he’s hosting a free workshop at the Chico Women’s Center on Sept. 19 that will teach attendees about the basics of mushroom biology, low-tech methods to propagate fungi, an overview of fire-related toxins and the concept of mycoremediation.

Tchudi is also hopeful Butte County can create a mycoremediation plan for other fire-struck communities to follow in the future — because, he said, there will be more in the future.

“I’m hopeful people will see the need and create a plan we can show off,” he said. “We’re facing a new normal, and we need ways to handle it that aren’t just a backhoe and a dump truck.”

Contact reporter Robin Epley at 530.896.7776.



CHRIS TCHUDI — CONTRIBUTED

An oyster mushroom is used to break down persistent organic pollutants in mycoremediation.

## SEWERAGE COMMISSION

## Recognition for 41 years of leadership

By Kyra Gottesman  
Correspondent

**OROVILLE** » When Ernie Reynolds retired as a commissioner from Sewerage Commission-Oroville Region earlier this summer the other commissioners recognized him for his “sense of humor, kindness, energy, wisdom and graciousness.”

Reynolds served on the commission for 41 years helping to organize special districts in the late 1970s, and he served as the first president of Local Agency Formation Commission.

“It took a lot of effort and hundreds of meetings to bring all the (districts) together. Ernie was a big part of merging the entities into an inter-agency facility. His decisions were always made for the best of the community and protection of the rate payers,” said Dave Pittman, fellow commissioner.

Born in 1930 at home on property his parents homesteaded in 1870, Reynolds was one of 10 children. He attended Big Bar grammar school in Pulga, and when he was 13 he fibbed about his age and took a job for the State Forest Service that paid \$460 a month and provided room and board. His parents had relocated to Oakland.

“That was the end of school for me. I had my dog, fishing poles, guns and traps. I was done with school. Well I thought I was then, (school authorities) came up and changed my mind,” said Reynolds.

Authorities placed Reynolds on King’s Ranch in Biggs where he worked for room and board and attended Biggs High School. He then went to work for the Long Bar Road Chicken Ranch, where his day began at 4 a.m., and then he walked to Oroville High School.

“I didn’t graduate high school. I took off when I was 16 and joined the Coast Guard and then became a merchant marine for 20 years,” said Reynolds.

In 1951 he married his long-time sweetheart, Sally, and the two celebrated 62 years of marriage before she passed away in 2012. The couple had nine children and today Reynolds said he has “more grandchildren than I can count.”

The couple settled in Oroville in 1962 and Reynolds founded his own busi-



CONTRIBUTED BY CHUCK REYNOLDS

Ernie Reynolds, right, receives an award for his career working for the Sewerage Commission of Oroville. His son, Chuck Reynolds, holds the award on the left.

ness, A-1 Masonry. He retired from masonry about 10 years ago but continued to serve on board of Sewerage Commission-Oroville Region until July and continues to serve on the Thermalito Irrigation District Board.

“I said I’d serve on the boards because the guys asked me to; I could make a few bucks; and it didn’t interfere with work. I stayed because they asked me to and we got good work done,” said Reynolds.

Included among the accomplishments he is most proud of achieving during his time serving with the sewerage commission and the Thermalito Irrigation District are the solar project that utilizes a tilt solar panel system at the Waste Water Treatment plant on South Fifth Avenue and the sewage and water treatment system in Thermalito.

“In Thermalito everyone

was on septic which failed because of the soil out there and in the summer months it wasn’t a good place to be. There was an overwhelming need for a sewage district but they couldn’t afford one of their own. Ernie played a big part merging that community into an inter-agency system,” said Pittman.

Reynolds said he’s “real happy” with the results of his efforts because now, “everything is more sanitary” and “everybody is safe, and no one gets sick because of the water or septic systems anymore.”

“Everything is taken care of now. It works beautifully and everybody’s happy. It was a big achievement,” he said.

The Sewerage Commission’s resolution isn’t the only time Reynolds has been honored for “distinguished” service to his community.

According to newspaper

reports, on May 25, 1972 while testifying in a Butte County Superior Court civil case one of the litigants pulled a gun. The litigant shot an attorney in the back of the head killing him. The gunman went on to shoot and injure a woman a judge. Reynolds chased the shooter into a hallway, grappled the man’s gun away from him and kept him subdued until deputies and bailiffs arrived.

In February 1973 then state Attorney General Evette J. Younger presented Reynolds with a certificate of valor for his heroic actions.

In March 2009 the Oroville City Council honored Reynolds with an Oroville Police Department Medal of Valor for his 1972 actions.

“I can’t think of a better example, a better role model for a hard working family man who served his community,” said Pittman.

# *Fire victims taking charge more and more*

Chico Enterprise Record  
8-28-2019

There have always been encouraging signs that we will crawl out of the hole burned into our community by the Camp Fire last November, but lately the signs have become better and better, in a subtle way.

The best of the bunch, of course, came Friday during Paradise High School's first home football games since the fire. The games themselves were memorable enough to draw national media attention, but the telling moment for us was at the start of the junior varsity game.

Someone decided to skip the "Star Spangled Banner" until the start of the varsity game in order to save time. When that was announced, it was resoundingly rejected by the crowd, which stood and sang the anthem despite the best-laid plans of officials. And we'd wager the song was sung with more enthusiasm than it's been sung in these parts for a long time.

It's a cool story on its own, a memory all who will there will cherish forever. But it's a sign of something more that's happening here.

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**We've been in a state of shock since the fire, and few have been of a mood to assert themselves in the face of well-meaning bureaucrats and their established way of doing things.**

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Recovery will succeed only when those scorched by the flames take the lead responsibility for bringing back their hometowns. There is much that we need from the governments in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. But they can't force fire victims back into their communities. And more importantly, the fire victims can't allow those distant powers to dictate the shape of any recovery.

We've been in a state of shock since the fire, and few have been of a mood to assert themselves in the face of well-meaning bureaucrats and their established way of doing things. But something as simple as the crowd saying, "Don't be silly, of course we'll have the national anthem before the JV game," is an indication that the public mood is moving in the direction it must.

We are taking back a bit of control over our future. And only if we do that, do we have a future.

The incident at the start of the JV game doesn't stand on its own. There's the case out of Concow, where residents stopped waiting for someone else to decide what to do with the burnt trees there. They got a grant from the North Valley Community Foundation, bought a small sawmill and started creating their own lumber. They won't be able to take care all of the burnt trees, but they're taking care of some, without waiting for some federal or state official come and tell them what to do and how to do it.

There are more and more of these stories appearing in the paper these days. And that bodes better and better for the days to come.

## CAMP FIRE

# Sheriff asks for help identifying unknown victim

### 3 more Camp Fire victims were positively identified

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*Staff reports*

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**OROVILLE** » The Butte County Sheriff's Office has released some details about one of the two Camp Fire victims who still remain unknown and asked the public for help to identify him.

The Sheriff's Office brought the total number of known victims to 84 on Monday afternoon when it released the names of three victims who were previously tentatively identified. These were Herbert Alderman, 79, of Paradise; Evelyn Cline, 81, of Paradise; and Isabel Webb, 68, of Paradise.

That leaves two complete unknowns on the official list of 86 victims. The sheriff has been trying to identify the remains using DNA analysis.

One of the unknown victims' remains were found commingled with the remains of someone else, identified as Ellen Walker, at 4220 Schwyhart Lane in Concow. The unknown victim was a larger older adult male who had dental work with crowns. The Sheriff's Office has not received a missing persons report matching that description. BCSO is asking members of the community with information or who haven't heard from someone who may have lived or was visiting the Concow area during the Camp Fire to call the Investigations Unit at 538-7671.

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9-10-2019

# Chico Enterprise Record

9-11-2019, page 1 of 2

CAMP FIRE

## Concow fire victim gets a new vehicle



PHOTOS BY RICK SILVA — PARADISE POST

Tarra Hill smiles as she was given a brand new car to help her make medical trips as she recovers from burns suffered in the Camp Fire.

By Rick Silva

[rsilva@paradisepost.com](mailto:rsilva@paradisepost.com)  
[@Post\\_RickSilva on Twitter](https://twitter.com/Post_RickSilva)

For Terra Hill, Nov. 8 was a living hell. Hill was trapped in her Concow home and suffered severe third-degree burns to 50 percent of her body and 25 percent her body sustained second-degree burns.

"It was hell," she said. "When you wake up and there's fire everywhere around you." Hill said she was saved by firefighters that morning.

"They put their lives at risk to drive down my road," she said.

Hill, a single mom with five kids, who was put into an induced coma immediately after the fire and was briefly on the deceased list, was surprised on Tuesday afternoon with a car restored by the Collision Pros Paradise franchise.

"This is everything to me," she said. Hill and her boyfriend have been making repeated trips to U.C. Davis in Sacramento and to San Francisco in his vehicle for continued recovery.

But that car was needing constant care to ensure that it completed those trips safely and it getting to the point where a new car might be needed.

That's when Collision Pros and its "Keys to the Future" car giveaway program turned out to be a godsend. The company worked with Northern Valley Catholic Social Service to find a Camp Fire victim to help.

They determined criteria and application process that Collision Pros' own Paradise-based employees, who were also victims of the Camp Fire, used to select a winner from a narrow pool of finalists.

That was Hill who won the car in the giveaway sponsored by CSAA Insurance, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, and Malta Cars.

The car, which was stolen, was provided to Collision Pros by AAA but didn't need a lot of work to ready for Hill.

"We wound up putting a hood, a fender, repaired the bumper, there was mirror broken off," Brian Von Tress, Collision Pros



Nate Smith prepares to sing his song "One of These Days."



Mayor Jody Jones spoke at the Keys to the Future giveaway.

# Chico Enterprise Record

9-11-2019

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**Hill**

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**FROM PAGE 1**

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owner said. "It was generally treated poorly for a few days."

He said that it took them two to three weeks to get the car ready, but it took them four to five months to get the paperwork through DMV.

"We needed to have her not have to pay any of the fees or registration," he said. "We wanted her to be able to step into it clean."

Now she has a fully refurbished to get to her medical appointments as her burns have caused life-long disabling injuries.

"I can't wait for everyone to leave so I can drive it around here," she said. "(Her boyfriend) will drive on the highway, but I want to say that I drove my car first.)

Collision Pros also immediately set up a GoFundMe, donated generously to it as a company and raised more than \$50,000. Collision Pros

Note: Article ends abruptly

TÁSMAM KOJÓM

## PG&E donates Humbug Valley land to Maidu

*Staff reports*

**CHESTER** » PG&E has donated 2,325 acres of land in the Humbug Valley in Plumas County to the Maidu Summit Consortium.

This land will be protected by a conservation easement held by both the Feather River Land Trust and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, said a press release issued Friday by PG&E.

The section of land donated holds ceremonial and spiritual sites along with Maidu ethnobotanical resources, according to the release.

Acting Executive Director of the Maidu Summit Consor-

tium Kenneth Holbrook said the land holds great meaning to the Maidu, who call the area Tásmam Kojóm in their language.

“The Maidu People take solace in the knowledge that we will forever be connected to our homeland, engaged with our heritage and our ways,” Holbrook said. “By owning Tásmam Kojóm, we have now reclaimed a future for our children that is uniquely Maidu. Our lives are renewed.”

PG&E took control of the land in 1917 when the company bought Oro Electric Corp. where a reservoir was intended to be built but never came to fruition.



CONTRIBUTED BY PAUL MORENO

Acting Executive Director of the Maidu Summit Consortium Ken Holbrook addresses a group during a celebration of receiving the land via donation by PG&E.

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9-21-2019  
page 2 of 2

A 2003 settlement led to PG&E agreeing to conserve the land and in some cases donate parcels.

As of the release, 11,968 acres of land have been donated to 18 groups, each with protections.

“This is a historic event about which we all should be proud. PG&E

is pleased to donate land in this beautiful and culturally significant valley, knowing this critical resource will forever be protected by the consortium and continue to be available for the enjoyment of future generations of the Maidu people and the public,” said Mike Schoneherr, director of strategic agreements at PG&E and member of the Stewardship Council board of directors.



CONTRIBUTED BY PAUL MORENO

A section of Humbug Valley that was donated by PG&E to the Maidu Consortium.



# Chico Enterprise Record

## 9-21-2019

### COMMUNITY

## NVCF hands out another \$1M

#### *Staff reports*

The North Valley Community Foundation's Butte Strong Fund announced on Wednesday that it has committed another \$1 million in cash assistance to Camp Fire survivors, \$500,000 to keep tree removals on track, a grant to help restore ambulance service to Paradise and money to fund two recovery centers in Magalia.

The latest grants now mean that the Foundation has granted \$21 million for community recovery via the Butte Strong Fund, Camp Fire Relief Fund and donor-designated funds.

More than \$5.7 million of that has been in cash assistance from the NVCF, including the Wednesday's \$1 million to an account to be distributed by partner organizations working through Butte 2-1-1 and a centralized case management system.

The NVCF says it funded caseworker positions because there weren't enough government-funded positions to address the need. Though there's still a waiting list for new requesters to be connected with an available case manager, more funds are getting to Camp Fire survivors — about \$200,000 a week.

"Our financial assistance program is a vital part of our recovery work," Giovanni Tricerri, NVCF director of response and recovery said in a press release. "The Butte Strong Fund is committed to continue providing financial

assistance to Camp Fire survivors as part of our overall efforts for long-term recovery. Thankfully the more robust system that we helped fund is getting that help more quickly now to those who need it."

The Butte Strong Fund also announced that \$500,000 will go to the Butte County Fire Safe Council to keep tree removal projects moving.

That money will help Fire Safe Council continue its projects in place while the Town of Paradise and Butte County waits to see if FEMA will pay for the costs of removing dead and dying trees from the burned area.

A \$49,000 grant to Adventist Health Feather River will help pay for a facility to allow ambulance service to return to Paradise. The Butte EMS ambulance station in Paradise was destroyed in the Camp Fire. The subsidy, augmented by the Feather River Health Foundation, will re-establish a base station in Paradise, enable 24/7 ambulance service and reduce ambulance response time to pre-fire levels.

A \$50,000 grant to the Magalia Community Church will keep its Resource and Recovery Center in operation. The church said it assists hundreds of Camp Fire survivors each day. Services include RV spaces, food, clothing, counseling, and laundry and shower facilities. The grant will help the center with utilities,

repairs and maintenance, gas and propane cards, and a fund that pays outstanding bills for survivors in need.

A \$22,900 grant request will allow the Magalia Pines Recovery Center, run by the Magalia Pines Baptist Church, to upgrade its temporary facility. The upgrade will include a temporary office area for case management.

A \$5,671 grant will allow the Yankee Hill Historical Society to rent toilets and hand-washing stations at the restored Messilla Valley Schoolhouse at 11666 Concow Road. The facility receives significant use because it's the only community meeting space in Concow.

The Butte Strong Fund provides funding for eligible organizations or local government entities that are directly serving people affected by the Camp Fire. Individual assistance is handled through those organizations.

Organizations interested in applying for Butte Strong Fund grants can visit [ButteStrongFund.org](http://ButteStrongFund.org) to determine if they qualify for funding. Those that do can submit a brief grant inquiry before being invited to submit a full application. Staff at NVCF will facilitate the application process.

The Butte Strong Fund is still receiving donations. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to Butte Strong Fund, 240 Main St., Suite 260, Chico, CA 95928 or by visiting [www.buttestrongfund.org](http://www.buttestrongfund.org).

# Chico Enterprise Record

## 9-26-2019

### CAMP FIRE

# Sheriff's Office revises victims list from 86 to 85

Some of the unknown remains  
actually belonged to another victim

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*Staff reports*

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**OROVILLE** » The Butte County Sheriff's Office has revised its official number of Camp Fire victims down from 86 to 85 after determining that some of the unknown remains actually belonged to a victim who had already been identified.

Anthropologists from the Chico State's Human Identification Lab determined that a bone fragment belonged to Robert Quinn, 74, of Paradise, who was identified as a Camp Fire victim on Jan. 24. They had initially suspected the fragment belonged to a separate victim because of a difference in size from Quinn's remains. It was too burned to extract DNA. Upon further analysis, the anthropologists determined that the extreme heat of the fire shrunk the fragment, causing the difference in size.

There is now only one unidentified victim, a man found in Concow, left on the list.

# PG&E shut-off winds down

The disruption exposed some gaps in preparedness

By **Camille von Kaenel**  
*cvonkaenel@chicoer.com*

A power shut-off by Pacific Gas and Electric Corp. because of high fire risk bled into Thursday for some customers as crews continued to inspect equipment for damage.

The shut-off, which began early Wednesday morning as windy, hot and dry weather raised the risk of a wildfire, left nearly 23,000 Butte County customers without power for most of Wednesday. It was the second shut-off this week.

PG&E was restoring service late Wednesday to some customers throughout Northern California after inspections along 2,785 miles of transmission and distribution lines. By 5:30 p.m., just over half of the Butte County customers, or around 12,000 customers, had restored service. But the company can only restore service during the daylight hours, so a few customers remained without power through the night and into the morning. Weather conditions were expected to then improve, so no more shut-offs were anticipated.

PG&E will reopen its two resource centers in the county on Thursday at 8 a.m. They are located at 14144 Lakeridge in Magalia and at the Harrison Stadium parking lot at Third and Mitchell avenues in Oroville. The centers will provide charging outlets and air conditioning.

The blackout caused widespread disruption because it affected so many people for a full workday. The footprint included parts of Bangor, Berry Creek, Brush Creek, Butte Meadows, Chico, Feather Falls, Forbestown, Forest Ranch, Maga-

PG&E » PAGE 4

## Chico Enterprise Record 9-26-2019

### PG&E

FROM PAGE 1

lia, Oroville, Palermo, Paradise, Stirling City and Yankee Hill. Other counties in the Sierra foothills and the North Bay also had their power shut off, but none more so than Butte County.

The disruption is likely a new norm for rural fire-prone communities, which will likely see more blackouts in the future as PG&E decides to turn off its equipment in high fire-risk weather. The week's event exposed some gaps in preparedness.

Schools in Paradise, Magalia, Concow and Bangor had to close because they didn't have enough back-

up generators to keep operations up. That included schools that had just reopened after the Camp Fire. Butte College canceled classes at its main campus. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is currently working on a needs assessment for generators at the rural schools in fire-prone areas so students can continue attending classes.

Some businesses had to close or limit operations.

Around 1,800 PG&E customers who depended on electricity for a medical condition had to get their back-up generators running or find other solutions.

Fourteen of Cal Fire-Butte County's 23 fire stations were affected by the shut-off, but they were all running on backup power, according to a tweet.

# Fire may have hurt plant diversity

Chico Enterprise Record  
10-3-2019  
page 1 of 2

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**By Camille von Kaenel**

*cvonkaenel@chicoer.com*

**CONCOW »** Concow, which was a lush forest a dozen years ago before burning twice in major fires, now looks a little like a desert.

Shrubs barely cover the bare, red dirt. In a few years, the area could have fewer types of under-story plants, like wildflowers, than areas that didn't burn quite as hot. That's based off of a new UC Davis study published Monday that looked into what eight burned areas in the Sierra Nevada looked like at least five years after the fire.

The main takeaway was that patches of land that went through high-severity fire came back with less plant diversity in the under-story than patches that didn't burn at all, while patches with low- or moderate-severity fire came back with more plant diversity. The findings are part of a growing literature showing that some parts of California's forests that historically thrived with frequent, low-severity fires are being turned into shrub-lands by higher-severity fires brought on by over-growth and drought. That's a loss for the ecosystem, said Clark Richter, a doctoral candidate at UC Davis and the main author of the paper.

"The under-story plant communities not only provide aesthetic value, but even small wildflowers provide important food for wildlife in

## Plants

FROM PAGE 1

the area and they contribute to the overall stability of the system and ability to bounce back after a disturbance,” said Richter. “If it’s dominated by shrubs, the diversity in the understory is much lower, and repeated fire into these shrub systems is going to repeatedly create these low diversity conditions. The larger these sites are, the less diversity there will be across the landscape.”

Because shrublands, which can be dominated by invasive species, can continue to thrive in high-severity fire, that means large swaths of California could be caught in a feedback loop. It wasn’t always like that. Historically, mixed conifer forests of California have thrived in fire, but it was mostly low- or mixed-severity fire like cultural fire used by indigenous people. But the type of fire that’s most prevalent in the state has changed.

Since 1972, the annual burned area in California has increased fivefold. Some of those fires are also burning more severely. The Camp Fire, for example, burned trees high into the canopy, leaving up to a mil-



CAMILLE VON KAENEL — ENTERPRISE-RECORD

A new study found that high-severity fire is turning some forests into shrublands across the Sierra Nevada. Concow, pictured here in August, is a prime example.

lion dead or dying.

“The biggest issue is not that high severity sites exist, because they always have existed,” explained Richter. “But as a function of past fire suppression policies and the effects of climate change, high severity is becoming more frequent and the area burned as high-severity is also becoming larger.”

Richter said that the research re-emphasized the importance of prescribed fire and some forest thinning to boost ecosystem resilience.



CLARK RICHTER — CONTRIBUTED

Researcher Paul Excoffier works in the field studying plant diversity and wildfire in the Sierra Nevada.

# Chico Enterprise Record

## 10-10-2019

### News Brief

#### YANKEE HILL

#### **Fire Safe Council holding swap meet**

The Yankee Hill Fire Safe Council will conduct its 10th annual Swap-Meet from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at 11666 Concow Road, and 10-by-10 spaces may be reserved for a \$10 donation by picking up reservation forms at the Pines Hardware.

Breakfast goodies and coffee available for early birds. Lunches of barbecued Costco hot dogs, water or soda and chips may be purchased for a \$6 donation.

Raffle tickets will be sold for \$1 each, with drawings held at 1:30 p.m.

Folks who cannot get to the event but wish to donate may mail checks made payable to Yankee Hill Fire Safe Council (Memo: Fire Recovery), P.O. Box 4242, Yankee Hill, CA 95965.

For more information, call Marji Corey, 534-4179; Suzi Casper, 533-6646; or Brenda Rightmyer, 534-4179.

# Power returns to Paradise, Oroville

Lights back on for most of Butte County, over 97% of customers statewide have power restored

By Jake Hutchison  
jhutchison@chicoer.com

**CHICO** » Power has been restored to Oroville, Magalia and Paradise as PG&E personnel continue to patrol for damaged power equipment in the north valley.

According to the company's outage map, Forest Ranch also has power once again, but some areas north of there are still without electricity, along with sections of Concow, Berry Creek and areas surrounding Oroville such as Bangor and the east side of Palermo.

The "all-clear" signal has been given to all 35 counties hit by the outages, said a press release issued by the company at 8:30 p.m. Friday. Kern County was the last county to get the "all-clear" signal.

PG&E reported Friday evening that 97 percent of customers impacted by Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) have had their power restored. Approximately 21,000 customers remain without power due to the PSPS.

Approximately 738,000 total customers were impacted by the PSPS event from the Northern Sierra to the Greater Bay Area to Kern County.

Safety patrols and inspections, which can only take place during daylight hours, will begin again at daybreak on Saturday. More than 6,300 on-the-ground field personnel and 44 staged helicopters are supporting restoration efforts, according to the release.

PG&E initiated a PSPS on Wednesday due to dry, windy weather across its service area. Wind gusts in excess of 70 miles per hour were recorded Wednesday evening and into Thursday.

PG&E has been conducting clean-up efforts with patrols checking power lines for potential damage before restoring power to areas.

As of 2 p.m. Friday, 31 percent of Butte County had been restored as well as 87 percent of Glenn County, 76 percent of Tehama County and 58 percent of Shasta County.

Denny Boyles, a spokesman for the company, said Friday afternoon there are still 29,272 customers without power in the north valley, but that number dropped as more circuits were cleared for restoration.

PG&E's online outage map showed at noon that

POWER » PAGE 4



MATT BATES — ENTERPRISE-RECORD

Local residents take advantage of the PG&E resource center Thursday in Magalia.

most areas in Butte County had no power, including Paradise, Magalia, Forest Ranch, Cohasset, Butte Valley, Yankee Hill, Berry Creek, parts of Oroville, Forbestown, Hurleton, Palermo and Bangor.

The Interstate 5 corridor from Willows through Orland to Corning has had power restored, according to the map. The western parts of Glenn and Tehama were without power at noon, as was northern Red Bluff and Rancho Tehama.

By 2:45 p.m., the map showed much of the city of

Oroville, Paradise and Magalia had had power restored, but the foothills, Palermo and Bangor were still without electricity.

This weather has improved since Thursday and the company gave the "all-clear" to begin inspecting power lines for potential damage before doing repairs and restoring power.

Customers in the affected areas will not be billed, the release said.

PG&E began ground and air patrols late Thursday afternoon for Glenn and Tehama counties to check on miles of power lines before restoring electricity to customers.

Shasta County and part of Yuba County are also being patrolled for downed or malfunctioning lines, said PG&E Public Information Officer Paul Moreno.

Butte College's main campus was closed Thursday due to the shutdowns, said the school's Director of Institutional Advancement Lisa DeLaby. The school's other sites remained open.

A press conference is being held in San Francisco with speakers including PG&E President Bill Johnson and Vice Presidents Sumeet Singh and Keith Stephens. Those interested in listening in can call 855-247-4312. The conference ID number is 1184985. PG&E will also be live-streaming the event on Twitter.

Power shut-offs have been going on throughout California as part of PG&E's plan to combat potential wildfires.

This story will be updated as new information is gathered.

Contact reporter Jake Hutchison at 530-896-7750.

# Chico Enterprise Record

## 10-17-2019

### **BUTTE VALLEY**

## **Volunteer painters wanted for school**

Azad's Martial Arts Center is looking for volunteers to help paint the Concow School at Spring Valley School, 2771 Pentz Road, this weekend.

Volunteers should bring their own painting tools. The event starts at 9 a.m. Saturday.

The majority of children, teachers and administrators lost their homes in the fires.

Anyone interested must email Grandmaster Azad at [grandmaster@azadsmartialarts.com](mailto:grandmaster@azadsmartialarts.com).



## CONCOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GETS NEW LOOK WITH HELP FROM COMMUNITY



When the Concow Elementary School moved to its new home at the Spring Valley School campus, they saw the improvements that needed to be done.

Posted: Oct 20, 2019 10:18 AM

Updated: Oct 20, 2019 10:25 AM

Posted By: Elita Goyer and Jafet Serrato



**BUTTE VALLEY, Calif.** - When the Concow Elementary School moved to its new home at the Spring Valley School campus, they saw the improvements that needed to be done.

The Concow campus was made unusable after the Camp Fire so the staff and students moved to the Spring Valley campus on Pentz Road, just off of Highway 70.

On Oct. 19, Azad's Martial Arts and the Concow community came together to paint their new campus.

There is one more expected painting day on Nov. 2.

Dozens of volunteers came Saturday to help repaint Concow School at Spring Valley it was vacant for nearly a decade before the Camp Fire broke out I spoke with one student and volunteers about how important it is to rebuild after the fire.

Annie Iles is a 6th grader in Concow School at Spring Valley.

"I'm thankful, people actually are recognizing us and having hope for us and some people like the kids don't even know the school and they're coming and painting," Iles said.

With buckets of paint on hand, dozens of volunteers grabbed their paintbrushes, climbed a ladder and made sure not to leave any spots behind.

"It's going to look nice as you can see," said Don Saul, a member of the school board.

Don Saul is a member of their school board, he says it's important for students like Annie who lost everything in the Camp Fire to look forward to new things in life.

"Kids are really resilient. They recover I think faster than the adults recover sometimes. We're doing everything we can to help our school community," Saul said.

Saul says Saturday's paint job would not be possible without volunteers like Grand Master Azad.

"It's said you make a living for what you do but you make a world and make a life from what you give. So the message of Azad's Martial Center is to always step out of your limit and do something for other people regardless of where you're at. So today my team and I are here to make a difference in people's lives," Azad said.

Annie says life isn't as easy playing outside she says she appreciates the help for her school.

"I've heard that our school is finally getting help more than we did last year. It's getting better," Iles said.

"Without volunteers, you don't have a community you don't have a school you don't have a city you don't have a church without volunteers. It's great to see all the volunteers helping us we really appreciate it," Saul said.

And how does Annie think her classmates will react to the new paint?

"I think they're going to be happy with this new fresh paint and our school is going to look better," Iles said.

The school principal says students should see the final product on Monday.

# Chico News & Review

## 10-24-2019



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## Cheese, burgers and Paradise

### Boutique catering company links local businesses; Jake's takes over Scooters Cafe spot; and Birkenstock's back on the Ridge

By [Meredith J. Cooper](#)

My first glimpse of **Brie + Olive Co.** was a photo of a fantastic spread of meats, cheeses, fruits and veggies promoting an event at **Upper Park Clothing's Provisions Gallery**. Being the cheese fanatic that I am, I immediately sent a message wanting to learn more.

I met up with Brie + Olive owners **Gabriella Warda** and **Giovanni Mendoza** at **Daycamp Coffee** to chat about it. It was my first time there, and as I drove into the **Meriam Park** development from a different entrance than the last time, I got horribly lost. The signage is a little lacking—but I asked someone in the parking lot and found my way. Cool vibe, delicious coffee—recommended!

Warda and Mendoza are cousins, and both work at **Build.com**. While they enjoy their day jobs, they told me, they were constantly being asked to put together party spreads for friends and their many family members. They decided to turn their skills into something lucrative. So, they opened their “boutique catering business” over the summer and so far, so good.

My favorite thing about the Brie + Olive model is its dedication to supporting other North State businesses, from farmers and ranchers to photographers and musicians. Find 'em on Facebook for more info.

Scootin' along Last week marked a big change along Highway 70. Long-beloved **Scooters Café** shut down—it normally does so for the winter—and its sign has been replaced by a new one. Turns out **Jake's Burgers and More**, out of Oroville, has taken over. **Jeff** and **Justine Jacobsen**, owners of Jake's, have been extremely busy of late. They opened up a food truck over the summer, and then this opportunity came up, Jeff tells me, when Scooters owners **Dan** and **Bonnie Salmon** decided to retire. They'll be open year-round rather than closing for winter, and feedback already has been positive. Right on! Search for **Jake's Burgers on the Hill** on Facebook for more info.

Back on their feet **Baker's Birkenstock** reopened its doors in Paradise last weekend, holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony and other festivities. The store maintained its presence following the Camp Fire through its Chico shop, but is excited to be back and at it on the Ridge. Stop by and say, “Hi”—and stock up on your winter sock selection!—at 691 Fir St.

Here's the kicker While it seems like a long shot (at least for me), **Mountain Mike's** is holding an online contest with the winner getting a chance to kick a field goal at the 49ers-Packers game Nov. 24. Go to [woobox.com/nrbwtd/rules](http://woobox.com/nrbwtd/rules) by 5 p.m. Friday (Oct. 25) to enter. Mountain Mike's is partners with the San Francisco team, so if you're just into the pizza, stop by the restaurant within two days after any game in which the team scores for 49 percent off a one-topping pizza. (Through Dec. 31, for some reason excluding the Oct. 31 game.)

# Chico News & Review

## 10-24-2019

### The science of fire

#### Local fire-mapping expert looks at history, landscape for dangers, solutions

By [Meredith J. Cooper](#)

Forest management has made a lot of headlines of late, what with wildfires growing in intensity and frequency, particularly in California. For pyrogeographer Zeke Lunder and many others, a key component to keeping fire from overtaking the urban landscape is actually to invite it into the wildland—or at least let it burn. What that accomplishes, he told a room full of students and community members during a seminar Monday (Oct. 21) on the Chico State campus, is reducing fuels that intensify wildfires.

Lunder, founder of Chico-based wildfire consulting firm Deer Creek Resources, had been invited to speak by Russell Shapiro, a professor in the Geological and Environmental Sciences Department. The goal of its regular seminars is introducing students to people working in related fields, plus revealing the newest science available. In a few weeks, Shapiro said, he's looking forward to hearing from a UC Davis expert talk on the relationship between groundwater and agriculture.

"If you do anything having to do with the science of fires and mapping, Zeke is the resource most of us turn to," Shapiro told the CN&R after the talk. "The reason you invite Zeke is he puts the science behind it; his [conclusions] aren't based on a gut feeling. He presents a very nuanced, carefully studied way to solve the problem."

Lunder works as a fire mapper. His firm is often called upon to provide maps for firefighters based on knowledge of the terrain, weather patterns and history of the land. That includes the location and types of trees and brush that cover the region. Showing a "landscape-scale" map of Concow as an example, Lunder explained that weather patterns are fairly predictable in the area due to the location of the Feather River and Lake Concow, as well as the topography. It's pretty common, he said, for winds of 10-15 mph to whip through the canyon at night.

"We know this about this area," he said. What that demonstrates is that we should have been better prepared both for the 2008 fire that ravaged the mountain community and the Camp Fire, which predictably burned straight through the canyon. But while the experts know the dangers that exist, without proper preparation, it's difficult to stop a fire from doing exactly what it wants to do—burn.

"We've got two ways that fires get started—they're started by humans and they're started by God," Lunder said. Human-caused fires tend to concentrate around urban areas, he explained while showing a gridded map of Plumas County with human ignitions over the past 30 years highlighted. They followed highway lines and clustered around towns.

When he flipped the slide to the same map, but with God-caused ignition points (most commonly lightning strikes) highlighted, the whole map appeared to be on fire. "We can prevent human ignitions, but Smokey the Bear can't really do anything about lightning."

By looking at historical data on what's been done to the landscape—and mapping it—over time, it's easier to see how to best manage the fuels that are now there, Lunder said. For instance, "Logging has been a big part of Butte County's history since the Gold Rush." Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) is currently a huge landowner in the North State, with over 2 million acres in California and Washington, per the SPI website. And its goal is to maximize profit off of the timber. Another major landowner in the region is the federal government (33 million acres in California are part of the National Forest Service). Its forest management focuses more on fisheries, the ecosystem, etc.

"I worked on some fires last summer in Shasta County and they really hammered home some big-picture problems we have with land ownership patterns," Lunder said. "When a fire gets large, like the Camp Fire or the Carr Fire ... as firefighters we have to back off and look at strategies as far as the ridge tops and the rivers and the roads. We've got these sort of imaginary lines, these land-ownership lines, and this is called a checkerboard. ... It's pretty much a nightmare to manage."

The Ridge—and most of California, really, Lunder said—is much the same story, with various private and public entities owning parcels in a checkerboard fashion, with no single vision when it comes to land management.

"Paradise, you couldn't build a better system—you couldn't design this better if you were trying to design a place that's going to kill people during a wildfire event," Lunder said. "Right now we have an opportunity to really try a new approach in Paradise."

That, however, might almost take an act of God—one that allows all the land to be owned by a single entity, and a unified plan put in place. Until then, Lunder said, learning from our past mistakes and being willing to take different approaches—like prescribed burns—to managing the land, is the best we can do.



As a pyrogeographer, Zeke Lunder is an expert at mapping fires.

PHOTO BY MEREDITH J. COOPER

#### GEOS Seminar Series:

For information on future talks, which happen about once a week, go to

[www.csuchico.edu/geos/seminar/index.shtml](http://www.csuchico.edu/geos/seminar/index.shtml).

# Chico Enterprise Record

## 10-29-2019

### CAMP FIRE

## Emotions high as fires rage, one-year mark approaches

'Time has flown by and crawled by at the same time'

By Camille von Kaenel  
cvonkaenel@chicoer.com

It's a troubled time for the tens of thousands who lost loved ones, homes, businesses and a sense of security in the Camp Fire nearly a year ago.

First, there's the fires burning through other parts of the state and the dry winds: they recall the conditions in which malfunctioning Pacific Gas & Elec-

tric Corp. equipment sparked the fire that destroyed much of Concow, Paradise, Magalia and other communities. Then, there's the one-year mark, less than two weeks away, that is forcing people to take stock of a recovery process full of additional hurdles, from insurance to relocation to rebuilding, and confront often traumatic images from the disaster itself.

FIRE » PAGE 6

"There's a lot of mixed feelings, I think, for the day," said Jody Jones, the mayor of the Paradise. "Time has flown by and crawled by at the same time. It's kind of strange, and I've heard a lot of other people say the same thing."

### Commemorations

There are dozens of events planned around the milestone. They've been months in the making and range from a moment of silence on Nov. 8 to a memorial ceremony at Paradise Alliance Church in the evening to an arts show on Sunday, Nov. 10. Some will have bounce houses and games for children — and most will have counselors on hand, coordinated by the Long Term Recovery Group's Emotional and Spiritual Wellness committee.

Kelley Conner, who's been helping coordinate the events with the Paradise Ridge Chamber of Commerce, said the overall vision for the milestone events was to take the load off of staff to create a space for everyone to reflect, honor the loss, and look forward.



Paradise Mayor Jody Jones sits on a bench in the front yard of her home in Paradise on Nov. 14, 2018. Her house was burned during the Camp Fire.

RANDY VAZQUEZ  
— BAY AREA  
NEWS GROUP  
FILE

"I don't want to look back on the fire; I want to look forward, and the events are forcing me to look back, so that's kind of hard," said Jones. "I think it will be cathartic for the community, and the events planned are appropriate for the conversation. They'll help people to continue to move forward."

### Bereavement

Scott Nichols, the medical director of Enloe Medical Center's Behavioral Health, said feelings of sadness triggered by anniversaries and other reminders of loss are a normal part of grief in a Facebook live event last week.

"In the normal bereavement process, those become less intense and less frequent as time goes on, but in a trauma like this, we have a lot of post traumatic stress disorder symptoms," he said. "If something has threatened us in the past, what will happen is if something meets the general pattern or is familiar, it will trigger something in our brain that sets off responses to try to protect us, so people in this situation will find things like a change of weather or wind or clouds or being in a place where they were traumatized can all set off really strong emotions."

"Those emotions and behavioral scripts are basically designed to try to keep us alive, but they're not always helpful in a situation like this," he added.

He recommended people, including those who were evacuated and those who had friends go through trauma or who lost loved ones, practice "exquisite self-care" during the difficult one-year mark and holiday season.

"For some people, they will really benefit from all the events and activities that are going on and the remembrance services," he said. "For other people, that's the exact wrong thing for them."

# Chico Enterprise Record

## 10-31-2019

**BUTTE COUNTY**

## Frustration eases as power restored

PG&E found 83 instances of damage

**By Camille von Kaenel**

*cvonkaenel@chicoer.com*

Residents of the Sierra foothills in the north state are emerging from a nightmarish month with infrequent power as Pacific Gas & Electric Corp. restored service Wednesday evening.

Since late September, PG&E has shut off power in parts of Butte County six times, so frequently the outages sometimes bled together. Over the past five weeks, there have been at least a dozen days without power. Some customers in Butte county were without power for seven straight days since last week.

For an area still reeling from the Camp Fire, it felt like a pummeling. Schools canceled so many classes, they ran out of snow days. Residents with medical equipment went without or spent hundreds or thousands on back-up power.

As of Wednesday afternoon, most of Paradise and Oroville had power, according to a PG&E outage map. Last night, the utility's crews were inspecting power lines, some of which were damaged by wind or by fallen branches or trees, to restore service to some remote areas around Forbestown and Yankee Hill.



MATT BATES — ENTERPRISE-RECORD

Power lines zig zag through trees off of the Skyway on Oct. 23 in Paradise.

Statewide, less than 123,000 customers remained without power Wednesday evening, according to PG&E. More than 200,000 had their power restored. More than 6,300 PG&E workers and 46 helicopters were part of the process to inspect, repair and restore service. PG&E had also secured mutual assistance of approximately 1,100 electric workers from other utilities to help with inspections and repairs.

The utility said it had found at least 83 instances of downed power lines and branches, including in Butte County.

Scott Strenfel, PG&E's Chief Meteorologist, said the winds over the weekend were stronger than earlier this month and stronger than the 2017 period that fueled the destructive Tubbs Fire. The winds at a weather station in Redding broke records for the strength of gusts and length of winds above 40 miles per hour.

Strenfel said there were no more strong winds on the horizon. There was no rain in the seven-week forecast, either.

# Chico Enterprise Record

## 11-5-2019

### Camp Fire anniversary events

*Staff reports*

#### Thursday, Nov. 7

2 to 6 p.m.: There will be a community cookout, live music and Thanksgiving turkey sign-ups at Magalia Pines Baptist Church and Recovery Center at 14098 Skyway, Magalia.

Noon to 8:00 p.m.: Paradise Ice Rink reopens.

7:30 p.m.: Theatre on the Ridge's play "A Bright Star" opens. It will run for three weeks Thursday through Saturday nights and a Sunday matinee. 3735 Neal Road, Paradise. 877-5760.

#### Friday, Nov. 8

##### PARADISE

10:30 a.m.: The town of Paradise will open its Building Resiliency Center at 6295 Skyway.

11:08 a.m.: Eighty-five seconds of silence for the lives lost will be observed in Paradise, Chico and other Butte County locations.

11:15 a.m.: The "Key Phoenix" project will be unveiled at the Building Resiliency Center, 6295 Skyway.

Noon: A groundbreaking will take place on a Camp Fire memorial at the Hope Park at the Skyway/Foster Triangle, 6148 Skyway.

2:30 p.m.: World Kitchen will serve a free community meal at the Paradise Alliance Church, 6491 Clark Road.

3 to 8 p.m.: The Paradise Alliance Church will hold a Camp Fire art display at 6491 Clark Road.

6:30 pm: The Town of Paradise will hold a Camp Fire Remembrance Ceremony at the Paradise Alliance Church, 6491 Clark Road.

##### CHICO

10 to 11 a.m.: Enloe Medical Center will host a short program reflecting on the Camp Fire at Enloe Park, Sixth and Arcadian avenues. A time capsule will be assembled and the public is invited to write a message of hope to be included.

10:45 to 11:15 a.m.: A Camp Fire remembrance ceremony will be held at the Chico City Plaza, Fourth and Main streets.

11:08 a.m.: Eighty-five seconds of silence for the lives lost will be observed in City Plaza and several locations on the California State campus.

#### Saturday, Nov. 9

##### PARADISE

11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Adventist Health will hold a

Camp Fire remembrance gathering at its Feather River Hospital campus, 5974 Pentz Road Paradise. It will include a luncheon.

10 to 11:30 a.m.: A community worship service keyed by Alex Bryan, the mission identity executive at Adventist Health, will be held at the Paradise Performing Arts Center at 777 Nunneley Road in Paradise.

3 to 7:30 p.m.: A "We Stand Together" family fair will be held at Paradise Alliance Church, 6491 Clark Road, Paradise.

##### MAGALIA

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Magalia will hold a "Ridge Lives On" community fair at Cedarwood Elementary School, 6400 Columbine Road.

There will be food vendors, arts and crafts, climbing wall, music and games, in addition to a free medical clinic by Medspire Health.

##### BUTTE CREEK CANYON

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.: A one-year anniversary event will be held at the Honey Run Covered Bridge site in Butte Creek Canyon, put on by the Honey Run Covered Bridge Association.

Board members will provide updates on efforts to rebuild the bridge and commemorative items will be available for purchase to raise money.

11 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Centerville Recreation and Historical Association will conduct a memorial event at the Honey Run Covered Bridge site, Butte Creek Canyon. Continuing information about the bridge rebuild effort will be provided.

1 to 4 p.m.: A commemoration of the Camp Fire will take place at the Colman Museum and Centerville Schoolhouse, 156348 Centerville Road, 893-9667.

##### CONCOW

12 p.m. to 4 p.m.: The Concow and Yankee Hill community will commemorate the Camp Fire at Crain Park on Jeffery Pine Lane in Concow.

#### Sunday Nov. 10:

2-4 p.m. and 5:30-7:30 p.m.: Paradise Performing Arts Center is hosting an art event called "Joy Will Find a Way" featuring poetry, film, music and photography from Paradise students and artists.

Tickets must be purchased in advance online at [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) or in person.

# GRIDLEY



## HOMETOWN NEWS

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

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## Plethora of events scheduled to mark Camp Fire anniversary

**By David Vantress**  
*Correspondent*

It's hard to believe, but the one-year anniversary of the Camp Fire has arrived.

The worst wildfire in California history erupted on Camp Creek Road near the town of Pulga in the early morning hours of Nov. 8, 2018.

By the time it was finally extinguished several weeks later, it had devastated the communities of Paradise, Magalia and Concow, leaving more than 80 people dead.

A number of events are slated around the area to commemorate the anniversary. Here's a brief list of some of those events:

- Nov. 7-24, 7:30-10 p.m.: Theatre on the Ridge presents "Bright Star," at Theater on the Ridge, 3735 Neal Road, Paradise;

- Nov. 7-Jan. 20, noon each day: Paradise on Ice is open, Terry Ashe Park, 6626 Skyway, Paradise;

- Nov. 7, 2-6 p.m.: "Comin' On Strong," Magalia Pines Baptist Church and Recovery

**CAMP FIRE>>PAGE 3**



# Gridley Hometown News

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## Camp Fire events

**FROM PAGE 1**

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Center, 14098 Skyway, Magalia;

- Nov. 8, 9:30-10:30 a.m.: Camp Fire Memorial, Magalia Community Church, 13700 Old Skyway, Old Magalia;

- Nov. 8, 10:30-11:30 a.m.: Phoenix Key Project Tribute revealed, 6295 Skyway, Paradise;

- Nov. 8, 11:08-12:08 p.m.: 85 Seconds of United Silence, All of Butte County;

- Nov. 8, 10:45-11:15 a.m.: Camp Fire Remembrance, Chico City Plaza, 132 W. 4th Street, Chico;

- Nov. 8, 6-8 p.m.: Paradise Commemoration Ceremony, Paradise Alliance Church, 6491 Clark Road, Paradise;

- Nov. 8, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.: Paradise Parade of Flags To Honor Camp Fire Fallen, 6295 Skyway, Paradise;

- Nov. 8, 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.: Town of Paradise Building Resource Center Grand Opening, 6295 Skyway, Paradise;

- Nov. 8, 12-12:30 p.m.: Groundbreaking, Hope Plaza, 6148 Skyway, Paradise;

- Nov. 8, 2:30-6 p.m.: Community Meal, World Central Kitchen, Paradise Alliance Church, 6491 Clark Road, Paradise;

- Nov. 8, 3-8 p.m.: Camp Fire Art Display, Paradise Alliance Church, 6491 Clark Road, Paradise;

- Nov. 9, 10-11:30 a.m.: Adventist Health Remembrance Worship Service, Paradise Performing Arts Center, 777 Nunneley Road, Paradise;

- Nov. 9, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m.: Adventist Health Feather River Camp Fire Remembrance Event, Adventist Health Feather River Hospital Campus, 5974 Pentz Road, Paradise;

- Nov. 9, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.: The Ridge Lives On: Remembrance and Celebration Fair, Pine Ridge School, 13835 W. Park Drive, Magalia;

- Nov. 9, 3:30-7:30 p.m.: We Stand Together, Paradise Alliance Church, 6491 Clark Road, Paradise;

- Nov. 10, 3:30-8 p.m.: Camp Fire Art Display, Paradise Performing Arts Center, 777 Nunneley Road, Paradise;

- Nov. 10, 2-4 p.m. and 5:30-7:30 p.m.: Joy Will Find A Way: Experience Butte County's Resilience Through The Arts, Paradise Performing Arts Center, 777 Nunneley Road, Paradise.



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# ENTERPRISE-RECORD



FINALIST FOR THE 2019 PULITZER PRIZE FOR BREAKING NEWS REPORTING

Sunny: warm  
H: 81 L: 45  
PAGE B16

Friday, November 8, 2019

\$1.50 FACEBOOK.COM/CHICOER TWITTER.COM/CHICOER

chicoer.com

## Never to be forgotten

Today, one year after the Camp Fire, we take a look back at our tragic losses, the ongoing challenges faced by survivors, the impact on our communities and a forever-changed landscape where there are, indeed, a few seeds of hope.



Teresa Ammons



Rafaela H. Andrade



Carol Ann Arrington



Julian Binstock



David Bradburd



Richard Clayton Brown



Andrew Burt



Joanne Caddy



Barbara Jean Carlson



Vincent M. Carota



Dennis Clark Jr.



Evelyn Cline



John Arthur Digby



Gordon Dise



Paula Susan Dodge



Randall Paul Dodge



Andrew James Downer



Robert John DuVall



Paul Ernest



Jesus Pedro Fernandez



Ernest Foss Jr.



Elizabeth Gaal



Sally Lee Gamboa



James Doyle Garner



Richard Jay Garrett



William J. Godbout



Dennis Hanko



Shirley Haley



Anna "Toni" Irene Hastings



Jennifer Lynn Hayes



Christina Heffern



Ishka Heffern



Matilde Heffern



Dorothy Herrera



Lou Herrera



Evva Holt



TK Huff



Gary Lee Hunter



James Warner Kinner



Warren Lessard



Dorothy Lee Mack



Sara E. Magnuson



Joanne Dolores Malarkey



John Vincent Malarkey



Chris Maltby



David William Marbury



Deborah Morningstar



Helen Pace



Joy Porter



Beverly Ann Craig Powers



Robert Quinn



Joseph Rabetoy



Forrest M. Rea



Vernice Mathilda Regan



Ethel Colleen Riggs



Lolene Rios



Gerald Rodrigues



Christopher Salazar



Phyllis Salazar



Sheila Santos



Ronald Joseph Schenk



Berniece Schmidt



John Christopher Sedwick



Donald E. Shores Jr.



Kathy Lynn Shores



Judy Sipher



Larry Smith Sr.



Russ Keith Stewart



Victoria Taft



Shirlee Teays



Joan Carol Tracy



Ellen Victoria Walker



Donna June Ware



Marie Lorraine Wehe



David James Young

As of today, only one victim is yet to be identified. In total, 85 people died as a result of the Camp Fire on Nov. 8, 2018.

**Photos unavailable for:**

- Joyce N. Acheson
- Cheryl Marie Brown
- Rose V. Farrell
- Isabel Webb
- Herbert Alderman
- Larry Alan Brown
- Jean Forsman
- Kimber Wehr

- Carl James Wiley

Photos can be sent to: campfirelives@chicoer.com

REBUILDING CONCOW

# Remaking a fire-ravaged community, again

## 'We have each others' backs'

By Camille von Kaenel  
cvonkaenel@chicoer.com

**CONCOW** » Rachel Smith was dreaming of smoke in the early morning of Nov. 8, 2018, and then it was all around her Concow home. She grabbed pets, packed her cars to leave and asked her 14-year-old son if he felt confident enough to drive one of them down the hill. He said he could do it. As they pulled out, flames were approaching the house from all sides.

Before the Camp Fire destroyed most of the town of Paradise, it tore through the remote, off-the-grid community of Concow, where many residents had already gone through a fire in 2008 that destroyed hundreds of homes. A year later, the community is pulling together to come back, again.

On Nov. 8, Smith had to evacuate twice more as flames approached the homes where she had taken temporary refuge in Yankee Hill and again on the outskirts of Chico. Her children and other family members fled Paradise and Butte Creek Canyon. Smith, who was born in Concow and is also a part-owner at the Lake Concow Campground, was unmoored for a while.

"I was really confused for six months, but I have been feeling more and more that I do need to go back to Concow, to stay here and



CAMILLE VON KAENEL — ENTERPRISE-RECORD

A family living in Concow built an outdoor wet room with toilet and laundry on the property where they're living in trailers.

rebuild," said Smith. "I definitely feel like we need to be stronger as a community in helping each other maintain our landscapes, because fires come through here all the time."

The losses and the will to rebuild in Concow aren't necessarily reflected in county records. Some of the residential structures that burned didn't have all the permits in place before. A year after the fire, six new homes have been permitted in Concow so far, according to Butte County records, compared to hundreds in Paradise and Magalia. A few more are under review. But hundreds of former residents are back, living in trailers, tents and makeshift structures, trying to live off the land as

they're used to.

"It's rural up here, so you can go back faster," said Tabitha Janowski, who lives on Jordan Hill in Concow. "It's not like what we had before. But as a community we're all really strong and resilient, and we have each others' backs. That's what makes Concow Concow."

Janowski, too, knew something bad was happening as soon as she woke up on Nov. 8. Her husband went to fetch some gas, and by the time he came back, winds were whipping up flames in the basin below their property. He checked on the family's pigs, turkeys, ducks and chickens and hoped they would make it on their own. Meanwhile, Janowski packed her son and dog in

her car and drove to her parents' house in Paradise, where the flames would soon catch up with them.

She and her small family are now living in their in-laws' small surviving cabin, across the street from where their home burned down. They're planning to rebuild, even though they had no insurance, like the vast majority of Concow residents.

"As a family, rebuilding is the only thing we want," she said. "My kids don't know what life would be like without checking for eggs and playing with the pigs."

Residents meet up at Scooter's Cafe, a landmark on Highway 70 that survived, or the small goods

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## Concow

**FROM PAGE 1**

store they call the Dome. Some of them are building yurts for shelter in barn-raising-style workshops. They're milling burnt wood into lumber to use in rebuilding. It's part of a tradition of hard work and self-reliance in the community.

Sixty years ago, Lois Madsen's father moved up to Concow to dig tunnels for the railroad. In 2008, the homes where she and some of her family members lived survived the fire thanks to a crew of inmate firefighters. A unit burned on another property, and they replaced it with a small grant.

Then the Camp Fire came. Now, Madsen is waiting for the OK from the county to place a mod-

ular home on her family's property.

"This time it's just been chaos, and it's been that way for a year, and we're still homeless," said Madsen.

But she's committed to coming back, even though two major fires in 10 years have turned what was once a lush forest retreat into shrub-land.

"I just can't imagine living anywhere else," said Madsen. "A lot of the beauty is gone. Some of it is coming back, but the trees are going to take forever. I won't see them, but hopefully my grandchildren will be able to enjoy it."

On Saturday, Concow will commemorate the year since the Camp Fire with a potluck in Crain Park. On the menu: barbecued pork from one of Janowski's pigs that survived the fire.



CAMILLE VON KAENEL — ENTERPRISE-RECORD

Scarlett Erickson walks on planks of wood her family will use to rebuild in Concow in August.

# Chico Enterprise Record

## 11-9-2019

RETRO TECH

# Artists seek to address need for information with bulletin boards

‘Ancient, but simple and reliable form of local communication’

By Camille von Kaenel  
cvonkaenel@chicoer.com

The Camp Fire exposed ongoing problems with communication — and some community members are now trying to fix that old-school style.

A project coordinated through the Long Term Recovery Group is seeking to place up to 10 bulletin boards in rural or isolated places like Concow, Butte Creek Canyon and the Federal Emergency Management Agency community in Gridley to share community news and current information about available recovery-related resources. Friday morning, Cal Fire personnel wheeled out a prototype at a Camp Fire commemoration ceremony in Paradise. The bulletin board will soon be placed in front of Save Mart in Magalia.

The problem is glaring: some people just aren't getting the information they



CAMILLE VON KAENEL — ENTERPRISE-RECORD

Todd Hall pins information about recovery-related resources to a bulletin board that will be placed in Magalia soon during a Camp Fire commemoration ceremony in Paradise on Friday.

need. Not everyone is on social media, where Camp Fire survivors have to wade through what seems like hundreds of daily posts and groups related to recovery. That meant people who were trying to share information, like Patti Samons, a zone captain in Magalia,

must sometimes go door to door to alert neighbors.

“By the time some people hear about a deadline, it's passed,” said Todd Hall, a member of the Chico Arts Commission and the Long Term Recovery Group's Emotional and Spiritual Wellness Committee. “We're

hearing about seniors getting stranded because they don't know about changes to an event.”

So came about the idea for an “ancient, but simple and reliable form of local communication.”

Hall put most of the prototype together himself with friends. He finished it just on Thursday. Butte College's Maker's Space made some of the decorations, like the “Magalia” sign, using its laser cutter for the first time. Chico State funded some of the materials for the board. It has agreed to fund a staff member to monitor and update the bulletin boards weekly with the latest information.

“It's been a year, and we are seeing how much still needs to be done,” said Mary Gardner, who's also an arts commissioner and helping organize the project. “As artists, that's what we do, problem-solve and provide alternatives.”

CULTURE

# OROVILLE CELEBRATES THE NATIVE WAYS



PHOTOS BY MATT BATES — ENTERPRISE-RECORD

Kyle Kleier, 9, listens to Irvina French speak about artifacts during the Native Ways event Saturday in Oroville.

**By Mathew Miranda**

*mmiranda@chicoer.com*

**OROVILLE »** Oroville residents were given the opportunity to experience the traditions and practices of native cultures Saturday.

The Lake Oroville Visitor Center hosted a free Native Ways celebration that offered families hands-on experiences to learn about Maidu history and their current practices and skills.

Maidu, which means man, are a Native American people of Northern California.

The celebration featured Maidu craftsmen and teachers, dance demonstrations, museum tours and movies telling stories of Native American tribes from the area.

The Maidu craftsman displayed their hand-woven baskets, jewelry and artistry.

State Park Interpreter Michael Hubbartt discussed why he believes it is important for visitors to experience these cultures.

“I think we need to draw from the values of these ancient cultures that are still alive and still practicing today, and apply those values to who we are and what we do,” Hubbartt said.

“It seems like our culture today is becoming so divisive and yet when we draw people together like this, we see that there’s so much more we share and have in common,” Hubbartt added.

Hubbartt said the event began eight years ago as a way to recognize the cul-



Gunner Nelson, 4, works on his coloring skills during the Native Ways event Saturday in Oroville.

tural history of this area, specifically the Native American presence.

“These people histori-

cally have a deep connection to the landscape, deeper than our modern contempo-

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## Culture

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### FROM PAGE 1

rary society does," Hubbartt said.

Wallace Clark, cultural specialist for the Konkow Valley Band of Maidu Indians Tribe, helped lead a youth dance demonstration Saturday.

Clark explained why his group continues to share its culture.

"Some of the knowledge that we keep inside of us is not known to these people, the non-Indian people," Clark said. "I feel that we have to announce to the world that we're still here that they didn't get rid of us."

Hubbartt credited the in-

volvement of individuals like Clark who continue to participate in cultural events across the community.

"What makes this so powerful is meeting all the people, getting to see their skills, their talents and how their culture and creativity come out," Hubbartt said. "The biggest mistake people have

is this was long ago, and it's not. It's still going on today."

The Lake Oroville Visitor Center is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. 362 days of the year, excluding Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

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Contact reporter Mathew Miranda at 530-896-7758.

# Chico Enterprise Record

11-26-2019

## FIRE RECOVERY



PHOTOS BY KARL MONDON — BAY AREA NEWS GROUP FILE

Josh Peete, principal of Concow Elementary School welcomes his students back to school, Monday, Dec. 3, 2018, for the first time since school was halted by the deadly Camp Fire in November 2018. The Golden Feather Union School District reopened Spring Valley Elementary School, a campus in on Pentz Road that had been shuttered.

## Butte Strong, Aaron Rodgers funds support Concow playground, sheds

### Staff reports

A playground for Concow's school children and the Camp Fire shed project are the latest recipients of grants from the North Valley Community Foundation's Butte Strong Fund and Aaron Rodgers NorCal Recovery Fund.

The Camp Fire forced Concow School to close, displacing K-8 students to Spring Valley School on Pentz Road near Highway 70. The campus had been closed since 2010 and had fallen into disrepair. Josh Peete, the superintendent of the Golden Feather Union School District and principal at Spring Valley, said replacing the 25-year-old playground equipment, which lacks safe "fall zone" materials, was a priority.

The Aaron Rodgers NorCal Fire Recovery Fund and the Butte Strong Fund each



Concow Elementary School survived the Camp Fire, though some playground equipment remains melted, Monday, Dec. 3, 2018, in Concow. While the school remains closed, most of the student body began school a few miles away at Spring Valley Elementary on Pentz Road. The Spring Valley school will get a new playground thanks to a donation from Aaron Rodgers and the North Valley Community Foundation's Butte Strong Fund.

contributed \$50,000 to the \$250,000 cost of the new playground. It will have physical fitness equipment,

a play structure and a seesaw, which was a coveted student request.

"Play is an important

part of healing," Peete said in a press release. "Our new playground will encourage the habit of exercise and foster the healthy physical development of children in our community."

The two funds also combined to issue a \$100,000 grant for the Camp Fire Shed Project, run by the Paradise Adventist Church and Maranatha Volunteers International. The volunteers have built and begun distributing 200 large, weather-proof sheds to provide storage for residents in the burn scar.

With the latest grants, the North Valley Community Foundation has awarded more than \$29.3 million for community recovery via the Butte Strong Fund, Aaron Rodgers Fund, Camp Fire Relief Fund and donor-designated funds.



Chico Enterprise Record  
11-27-2019

**EDUCATION**

# Concow school to receive new playground

**By Rick Silva**

*rsilva@paradisepost.com*  
*@Post\_RickSilva on Twitter*

Spring Valley School is getting a new playground.

The North Valley Community Foundation's announced its Butte Strong Fund, with the help of a \$100,000 donation from Aaron Rodgers, will be able to provide the school with new equipment.

The Camp Fire forced Concow School to close sending Concow students to Spring Valley School on Pentz Road near Highway 70. The school had closed in 2010 due to declining enrollment and fell into disrepair from lack of use. One of the items at the top of the wish list for the reopened kindergarten through eighth-grade school was a playground.

According to NVCF, Josh Peete, superintendent of the Golden Feather Union School District and Spring Valley principal, had submitted a grant request to the Butte Strong Fund to cover part of the estimated \$250,000 cost for playground equipment. The Aaron Rodgers NorCal Fire Recovery Fund, held at NVCF, and the Butte Strong Fund each contributed \$50,000.

"The playground structure at Spring Valley School is about 25 years old and it's falling apart," said Peete. "We are so thankful to North Valley Community Foundation and Aaron Rodgers for this very generous donation toward a new playground for Golden Feather students. Play is an important part of healing. Our new playground will encourage the habit of exercise and foster the healthy physical development of children in our community," added Peete.

The school noted that the playground equipment poses safety hazards, including the lack of safe "fall zone" materials. The new playground will have physical fitness equipment, a play structure and a seesaw, which was a coveted student request.

The Aaron Rodgers NorCal Fire Recovery Fund and NVCF also combined to issue a \$100,000 grant for the Camp Fire Shed Project. The project is building 200 large, weather-proof sheds to provide storage for residents living on their property in recreational vehicles and other temporary housing. The sheds are being built by Paradise Adventist Church and Maranatha Volunteers International.

With the latest grants, the North Valley Community Foundation has awarded more than \$29.3 million for community recovery via the Butte Strong Fund, Aaron Rodgers Fund, Camp Fire Relief Fund and donor-designated funds.

The Butte Strong Fund is a partnership of fundraising efforts led by NVCF, Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. and the Aaron Rodgers NorCal Fire Recovery Fund.

The Butte Strong Fund provides funding for eligible organizations or local government entities that are directly serving people affected by the Camp Fire.

Organizations interested in applying for Butte Strong Fund grants can visit [ButteStrongFund.org](http://ButteStrongFund.org) to determine if they qualify for funding. Those that do can submit a brief grant inquiry before being invited to submit a full application. Staff at NVCF will facilitate the application process.

The Butte Strong Fund is still receiving donations. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to Butte Strong Fund, 240 Main St., Suite 260, Chico, CA 95928 or by visiting [www.buttestrongfund.org](http://www.buttestrongfund.org).

# Winter brings hardships to survivors

Hundreds are living in trailers waiting to rebuild

**By Camille von Kaenel**

*cvonkaenel@chicoer.com*

The first big winter storm of the season exposed the vulnerabilities of hundreds of people living in temporary, precarious housing like trailers on their properties after losing homes in the Camp Fire more than a year ago.

A winter storm with freezing temperatures and winds hit Butte County hard on Tuesday, dropping inches of snow in the mountains and at elevations as low as lower Paradise. The National Weather Service forecast more winter storm conditions throughout the week after a short reprieve during the day on Wednesday. For those living in trailers, vehicles or tents, the snow has meant extra expenses for fuel for generators and freezing nights in poorly-insulated housing.

"We spent the last money we had on propane and gas," said Jimi Stephens, who lives in an old trailer in Concow with his wife after being among the first to lose their home to the flames on Nov. 8 last year. They both live with disabilities and get by on fixed incomes.

"Ever since we barely escaped the fire, it sort of progresses until all the happy is gone," he said. "You're worried all the time. Are you going to run out of gas? Are

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you going to run out of heat? We're learning how to deal with it. It's like we're on permanent camp-out."

The number of people living in temporary housing in the burn area has shot up in recent months as debris is trucked away and lots approved for re-occupation. Many are living back on their lots they have nowhere else to go as they wait for the resources to rebuild.

Local authorities don't keep track of all those living in temporary housing on their properties, so it's hard to get an exact estimate. The town of Paradise put the number of those living in temporary housing within its bounds at 500, according to Colette Curtis, though it was unclear if that referred to people or households. There are 152 households with permits to live temporarily on their burned properties in Butte County, according to spokesperson Casey Hatcher. But those tallies don't include households who are camping without a permit.

Shell Morley, an elder and office manager at Magalia Community Church, estimates the number of people living in precarious temporary housing in the burn scar may be two times higher. The church has been distributing food and supplies to Camp Fire survivors and sees dozens of brand-new families each month signing up for the aid, an indication that more people are moving back to the ridge ahead of the winter. A winter supply distribution last weekend by Tzu Chi Foundation brought out 75 new people in one day alone. Last month, the church served 450 people living in RVs and trailers and dozens each living in tents and vehicles, she said.

"When we heard the storm was coming, we knew folks were going to be in trouble," she said. "I've never met an RV that didn't leak. They are not meant to live in. They are not insulated."

Even the newest RVs are not weatherized for

winter, meaning the pipes underneath the trailer can freeze. On Tuesday, the Magalia Community Church was distributing tarps to those in need to help protect RVs from the precipitation and the cold. The Oroville Hope Center donated a first batch of tarps. The North Valley Community Foundation provided the church an emergency grant to order 100 more, which are expected to arrive on Saturday.

It's been almost impossible to even get supplies in to Concow, where hundreds are living off-the-gird on their burned properties, because snow and fallen trees blocked the roads. One of the most pressing emerging issues there is the lack of pump houses and insulation on wells to replace those that burned, according to Marianne Paiva, a lecturer in the Department of Sociology at Chico State who has been recording the stories of Concow residents. Without protection from the elements, the pumps can freeze.

"We need pump houses, we need storage sheds, and we need a team of people who can build the sheds and do things like winterize trailers," she said. "There's a lot going on up there, and there are some agencies working really hard up there, but there are still people who are being left behind."

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Cheryle Harrell, who lives in a trailer in Concow by herself, said she can't afford the extra propane for heat. She already pays \$700 a month to keep the generators running and gets by on a fixed income. So she's bundled up with blankets to get through the freezing nights.

"It's been really rough," she said. "You're going on a wing and a prayer and you just deal with the day."

Soon, she hopes to be able to hook up a portable electric heater to the power pole on the other side of her property. The storm caught her before she was ready.

"I was laughing at myself because I was so trying to make sure I had everything else going up and running that I forgot that I don't have any snow boots, I forgot I didn't have any gloves," she added.

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## Leading by example

### Teri and John Rubiolo

John Rubiolo was hard at work constructing a deck a few weeks ago with a volunteer laborer from Germany. They were laying a foundation to stretch between the two RVs on Rubiolo's Concow property—one of them he and his wife, Teri, live in; the other serves as a kitchen. Teri, meanwhile, was out delivering a freezer to a neighbor. It had been donated and she'd matched it with a woman in need. That's what she does best—she connects the dots.



Teri and John Rubiolo in their large storage shed, where they keep food, toiletries and clothing to supplement the aid their neighbors receive at formal food pantries and donation centers.  
PHOTO BY MEREDITH J. COOPER

The Rubiolos, like the majority of their neighbors, lost their home to the Camp Fire. But they're not letting that hold them back. They've lived in Concow since 2001—having moved down from Paradise—and had built a welcoming home there over those years. A shared love of Jesus sent them on a path of helping others—for Teri, "it's not about religion, it's about relationships. Jesus had compassion and wanted us to truly love one another and take care of one another."

About four years ago, the Rubiolos started opening their home to hungry neighbors. Teri said everything fell quickly into place. Their refrigerator had broken and she was offered one out of the blue. "We didn't even have a dining room table," she said. But that week, her daughter said she had a table she needed to get rid of. Then Teri's brother called asking if she'd like half a pig. Obviously, they'd chosen the right path, she decided. They dubbed their home I Am's Garden.

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"We started out making dinner for four people," she said. "Then there were five. And then we were serving 35 to 50 people six days a week."

That was before the Camp Fire. Since then, most of the Rubiolos' regular dinner guests have returned, Teri said. And now there are more. They still serve about 35 to 50 people at their home, these days just three times a week. The other three days, they make deliveries—to anywhere from 90 to 120 people. Needs go up later in the month, Teri explained, as paychecks and Social Security begin to dwindle.

"A lot of older people lost their vehicles [in the fire] and can't get out," she said. So, deliveries became a necessity. Generous donors keep the Rubiolos' storage shed full of everything from canned goods to shampoo to clothing. They also get larger donations of generators, propane and even cars and trailers. The couple know who in their community needs those things the most and connect those dots. When their neighbors come over for dinner, they're welcome to their washer and dryer, and their shower. Many of them are sleeping in tents.

"We're working on building a shower house," she said, pointing to one area of their property. On the other side are the horses, pot-bellied pigs, donkeys, chickens and a mule—they also take in animal rescues. Five of the horses came from slaughter yards and one from a racetrack, she said, and four, like the Rubiolos, were Camp Fire survivors.

"I know we're doing what we need to be doing because there's always someone helping us to help others," Teri said, gesturing toward their German visitor who was constructing the deck for people to eat on out of the elements. "It's about leading by example. I'm basically homeless, but my life is good still and I want to share that."

**CAMP FIRE**

# CPUC: PG&E never inspected tower that started Camp Fire



KARL MONDON — BAY AREA NEWS GROUP FILE

High voltage towers cling to the steep canyons around Pulga on Nov. 9, 2018, near the reported start of the Camp Fire blaze that destroyed the town of Paradise and killed at least 85 people.

**By Rick Silva**

*rsilva@paradisepost.com*  
*@Post\_RickSilva on Twitter*

The Public Utilities Commission's Safety and Enforcement Division (SED), has alleged in a report that PG&E committed 12 safety violations related to the 2018 Camp Fire that killed 85

people and destroyed Concow, Paradise and parts of the Magalia and Butte Creek Canyon.

Among those alleged violations is a failure to inspect the Incident Tower (where the fire began) thoroughly and failed to detect an immediate Safety Hazard or Priority A condition on the incident C-hook.

In a Nov. 26 filing by Emily Fisher for the Safety and Enforcement Division argue the violations identified in SED's Camp Fire Report must be addressed and resolved before the PG&E plan of reorganization can be approved.

It also asks that the court to expand the PUC's an Order In-

stituting Investigation (OII) regarding the role Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E) electrical facilities had in igniting fires in its service territory in 2017 to the 2017 Lobo and McCourtney Fires, and the 2018 Camp Fire.

The alleged violations in

clude a failure to replace or reinforce the C-hook on Tower :27/222 (Incident Tower) before its safety factor was reduced to less than two-thirds of the safety factor. That's the tower that started the fire.

The company is also accused of failing to maintain the C-hook supporting the transposition jumper on the Incident Tower :27/222 for its intended use and regard being given to the conditions under which it was to be operated.

Failure to inspect Incident Tower thoroughly and failed to detect an immediate Safety Hazard or Priority A condition on the incident C-hook.

The filing also said that PG&E failed to follow its procedures by failing to document the factors and reasons that led to the delay in the repair work on the Incident Tower.

PG&E is also alleged to have failed to conduct detailed climbing inspections when conditions to trigger climbing inspections were evident as specified by internal procedures.

"Wear on the original working eyes that remained on the Incident Tower is an indication of a known condition with (the) potential to recur on the added hanger plates with working eyes, which should have triggered detailed climbing inspection to examine the added hanger plates," the report added.

The filing also noted

that Tower: 24/199 has issues too. It alleged that the condition of the C-hook (material loss > 50%) supporting the transposition jumper on that Tower demonstrated that PG&E did not maintain the tower for its intended use and the company failed to inspect that tower thoroughly and detect an immediate Safety Hazard or Priority A Condition on the C-hook.

The report also said C-hook on that had a material loss of over 50 percent and PG&E failed to detect and correct the Priority A condition as specified in PG&E's procedures.

PG&E also is alleged to have violated a safety rule by assigning an incorrect priority for an immediate Safety Hazard (disconnected insulator hold-down anchor on Tower :27/221), which 800 feet from the incident tower. The filing also alleges that PG&E failed to follow its procedures by using an outdated inspection form during the detailed climbing inspections that PG&E conducted from Sept. 19 to Nov. 5, 2018. PG&E failed to report "the reportable incident on the Big Bend 1101 12kV Distribution Circuit in a timely manner," according to the report. That's the The report also says that "Failure to maintain an effective inspection and maintenance program to identify and correct hazardous conditions on its transmission lines in order to furnish and maintain service and facilities, as are necessary to promote the safety and health of its patrons and the public."

**FIRE RECOVERY**



MATT BATES — ENTERPRISE-RECORD

Large tents full of donated supplies intended for those in need sit Nov. 27 in the snow outside Magalia Community Church in Magalia.

## Nonprofits supply winter gear to fire burn scar

**By Camille von Kaenel**  
*cvonkaenel@chicoer.com*

**MAGALIA »** Nonprofit groups are preparing to distribute winter supplies to residents living precariously in the Camp Fire burn scar as rain returns to the area.

Hundreds of residents with nowhere else to go as they wait to rebuild are living in trailers or other non-winterized temporary housing on their properties now that they're cleared of debris. They face freezing pipes and leaky roofs. Local stores are running low on some of the supplies, like tarps.

The North Valley Community Foundation has approved several emergency grants ahead of winter. One, approved right before Thanksgiving, supported the purchase and

distribution of tarps to residents by the Magalia Community Church. Since then, two other relief grants were approved.

From the Ground Up Farms received \$24,250 to help fire survivors in Concow, Yankee Hill, Jarbo Gap, Big Bend and Cherokee. Most rely on private wells for water there, but the fire damaged many of the protective pump houses. Without them, there's a risk the wells won't work in freezing temperatures, leaving people without water. The grant will go towards the purchase and distribution of 30 sheds and 30 anchoring kits. It will also go towards some small space heaters for RVs and about 100 heavy-duty tarps.

Another \$19,969.94 grant went to the Coral Apple Foundation to pur-

chase 111 large heaters, 111 small heaters, 60 heavy-duty tarps, 1110 filled propane tanks and gas gift cards. These supplies will be distributed to those living in trailers and RVs.

The groups make up a wider network of relief organizations donating time and supplies to Camp Fire survivors, from building and distributing sheds to providing generators and propane. One of them will be holding a distribution on Saturday. Reach Out WorldWide, a relief nonprofit as ROWW, will be distributing supply kits including some small generators, heaters, blankets and other winter emergency supplies to pre-registered Camp Fire survivors.

Contact reporter Camille von Kaenel at 530-896-7764.



**BUTTE STRONG FUND**

# Nearly \$474K granted to local recovery organizations

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*Staff reports*

In December, the North Valley Community Foundation's Butte Strong Fund continued to approve grants to organizations involved in recovery after the Camp Fire.

A \$250,000 grant to Butte County will go towards developing planning blueprint for Magalia and the upper ridge.

A \$102,101 grant will help the Magalia Commu-

nity Church keep its resource center open an additional six months.

A grant of \$22,728 will help Paradise Alliance Church continue free weekly dinners on Thursdays.

A \$7,540 grant will pay data rates for students in the Golden Feather Union Elementary School District, where T-Mobile donated 29 digital MiFi devices to students and additional devices to staff.

A \$2,000 grant helped From The Ground Up Farms Inc. host a barbecue and events on the anniversary of the Camp Fire. Another \$24,250 will help the group provide 30 sheds to protect pump houses for fire survivors in Concow, Yankee Hill, Jarbo Gap and other affected areas.

A \$20,000 grant will help Oroville police add one K-9 team.

A \$40,259 grant will help Chico State develop

a Resiliency Collaborative, which will focus on supporting research, securing resources, implementing projects and telling stories focused on the recovery and resiliency of the region.

The Bidwell Junior High School Foundation will provide students whose families were directly affected by the fire with resources like clothing, shoes, and school supplies using a \$5,000 grant.

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# Chico Enterprise Record

## 12-21-2019

### CAL FIRE

# Person found after days in woods

## Crews seek 2nd person lost near Concow

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### *Staff reports*

**CONCOW** » One person lost in the Flea Mountain woods for days has been found, and rescue crews are searching for a second person.

A tweet from Cal Fire-

Butte County said the Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team and a helicopter from the California Highway Patrol are helping with the search of a vehicle and the second person.

Radio traffic indicates

the medics and rescue crews are staging near Concow Road and Dixie Road northeast of Concow and northwest of Pulga.

Efforts to contact Cal Fire-Butte County for a potential update were unsuccessful before this paper's deadline.

MAGALIA

# RIDGE KIDS GET EARLY CHRISTMAS PRESENTS



MATT BATES — ENTERPRISE-RECORD

From left to right, sisters Haven, 3, Mikayla, 4, and Delila Ascherman, 8, carry their new toys during the Ridge Kids Christmas event Saturday in Magalia.

**By Mathew Miranda**  
mmiranda@chicoer.com

**MAGALIA** » More than 1,000 kids were able to open at least one gift a few days before Christmas.

The Ridge Kids Christmas brought together children from Paradise, Magalia, Stirling City, Yankee Hill and Concow for a

day filled with sweets and presents.

“My tummy got full from all the sweets,” said 10-year-old Everett Mohler.

Along with offering an abundance of candies, cupcakes and cookies, the annual holiday event also allowed children to pick their own Christmas gifts.

Presents were separated by age group, 0 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 14 and 15 to 18.

Mohler decided on a six-shooter Nerf Blaster.

“I thought it would be cool,” Mohler said. “It’s like a shotgun, but different.”

“I’m not going to wait until Christmas to open it,” Mohler

quickly added.

E&J’s Mobile Kitchen Owner and event coordinator Elizabeth Jernberg said the event is intended to give kids a rare opportunity.

“The key is for the kids to pick their own gift, not the parents,” Jernberg said. “Some-

**RIDGE KIDS** » PAGE 3

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## Ridge Kids

**FROM PAGE 1**

times Christmas gifts don't fit their personality, so we figured, why not let the kids pick? That way, they go home with exactly what they wanted."

Nearly all the gifts were donated by people across California.

Jernberg designated various drop-off locations in Butte County and even gave out her home address.

"I gave out my address, which was hard and brave, but as they're putting their trust in me; I have to put my trust in them," Jernberg said.

Jernberg, who's been leading the giveaway for three years, explained the importance of designing an event specifically for kids, many of whom are Camp Fire survivors.

"We want to focus on the kids more than anything because they need that extra little love and push to see and share kindness," Jernberg said. "My big thing at home, when my kids were

little, was explaining they're our future. I'm always trying to make sure the kids are super involved."

Families attending were required to show proof of a Camp Fire-impacted address.

"(It) doesn't matter if your home is standing or not, just proof you're from the ridge," Jernberg said.

Former Paradise resident and Camp Fire survivor Dave Green made the trip from Chico with his two daughters.

"We thought it would be fun to get together and spend some time with people going through the same situation as us," Green said.

Green expressed his gratitude for organizations like E&J's Mobile Kitchen which continue to offer support for people affected by the fire.

"For a lot of families, it's still so rough," Green said. "It's still a long way to recovery."

The Christmas event also featured a raffle toward the end, with four winners receiving a bicycle or tablet.

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*Contact reporter Mathew Miranda at 530-896-7758.*

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**CAL FIRE**

# 2 men found after being lost in woods near Concow for days

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*Staff reports*

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**CONCOW »** Both of the men who were lost in the Flea Mountain woods for days have been accounted for.

Butte County Sheriff's Office Public Information Officer Megan McMann said they were deemed safe at 3:49 p.m. Friday.

Cal Fire-Butte County located the first person earlier in the day and turned over the search to the Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team and California Highway Patrol.

Crews, unable to find the

second person or the vehicle, continued to search until being informed of his safety.

McMann said the second person, looking for help, hiked back to the car and drove home.

After arriving home, the man called law enforcement.

Radio traffic indicated the medics and rescue crews were searching near Concow Road and Dixie Road northeast of Concow and northwest of Pulga.

Neither person required medical attention.