



CITY OF CHICO
BIDWELL PARK AND PLAYGROUND COMMISSION (BPPC)
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
(Commissioners Emmerich, Moravec, and Brentwood, Chair)
September 13, 2012, 6:00 p.m.
Municipal Center - 421 Main Street, Conference Room 2

Materials related to an item on this Agenda are available for public inspection in the Park Division Office at 965 Fir Street during normal business hours or online at <http://www.chico.ca.us/>.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. REGULAR AGENDA

2.1. DISCUSSION OF DRAFT MANAGEMENT UNITS AND TRAIL INVENTORY FOR UPPER BIDWELL PARK

This item continues opportunities for public input in updating Bidwell Park's Natural Resources Management and Trail Plans. The NRC continues this discussion with a brief inventory of existing Upper Park trails and solicitation of public input on problems, needs, and attributes of the trail system and help with identifying the Park's landmarks and feedback on proposed zones for Bidwell Park with a focus on Upper Park. *Staff seeks input on 1) draft Management Units; 2) proposed names for certain landmarks; and 3) an inventory of trails in Upper Bidwell Park that will aid in the development of a Trails Plan.*

2.2. UPDATE ON MIDDLE TRAIL GRANT PROJECT

Park Staff will present a verbal briefing on the next portion of the Middle Trail Rehabilitation Project. The improvements are part of a \$175,802 California Department of Parks and Recreation grant. The project incorporates a variety of sustainable trail design and building techniques to minimize resource damage and improve the trail experience. *Staff seeks public and Committee input on the upcoming work.*

2.3. PUBLIC INPUT ON MONKEY FACE TRAILS IN UPPER BIDWELL PARK.

The Bidwell Park Master Management Plan's Trail Plan lists the Monkey Face trails as a priority for "known problem areas". Issues of erosion and safety are paramount and according to the MMP, should be considered a high priority. At this meeting, staff will present a proposed conceptual plan for sustainable trail solutions that meet user group interests based on input to date. *Staff seeks public and Committee input on the plan to re-route the trail to the Monkey Face overlook and the initial steps that will begin this fall and winter.*

3. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourn to the next regular meeting on 11/8/12 at 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room 2, Chico Municipal Center building (421 Main Street, Chico, California).



Please contact the Park Division Office at (530) 896-7800 if you require an agenda in an alternative format or if you need to request a disability-related modification or accommodation. This request should be received at least three working days prior to the meeting.



DATE: 09/06/12
TO: Natural Resource Committee
FROM: Dan Efseaff, Parks and Natural Resources Manager
SUBJECT: Draft Management Units and Trail Inventory for Upper Bidwell Park

Recommendation

Staff seeks input on 1) draft Management Units; 2) proposed names for certain landmarks; and 3) an inventory of trails in Upper Bidwell Park that will aid in the development of a Trails Plan.

Background

The Natural Resource Committee met on 1/12/12 and 03/08/12 to discuss and provide input on elements needed to update Bidwell Park's Natural Resources Management Plan and on the development of a Trails Plan for the Park. The Committee reviewed drafts of management units and a trails inventory for Lower and Middle Bidwell Park.

The proposed management units will assist park staff in communicating goals, tracking progress and provide a more effective description of areas to park crew, volunteers and emergency responders. Staff anticipates several meetings are needed to consider various elements of the Natural Resource Management Plan.

The NRC continues this discussion with a focus on Upper Park trails and proposed management units and solicits public input on problems, needs, and attributes.

Natural Resource Plan - Management Units

Our approach to establishing management units relies on landmarks such as roads, access, and geographic features (as opposed to the vegetation community approach in the 1994 management plan). Since each area will encompass different vegetation communities, management strategies will be different in sub areas of a unit. For example, annual grassland occupies roughly 10% of Bidwell Park; however, these areas are distributed in over 50 separate areas of the park; and it will be more effective for goals for this community to be folded into the operational approach for particular areas.

One principal criterion for defining these areas is that each area will be readily identifiable in the field and share access points. Based on a combination of the 32 management zones defined in the 1994 plan for the Park (Hardesty 1989) and current needs, we've identified the following management units (Figure 1).

Each area has been given a descriptive name, and a management unit code. The code denotes the area of the park (Upper, Middle, Lower), and a numbering system that starts from north to south and west to east. For example, Upper Park units will receive the code UP-#. The sections below will provide a description of the area, a list of infrastructure or improvements, invasive plant issues, vegetation communities and special considerations. In addition, each unit will be evaluated for resource issues, strategies, recommended practices, safety issues, communication needs, etc. Staff seeks input on the boundaries and names of these proposed management units. The revised names will be used for the Management Plan.

The lists represent an interim step toward creating Upper Park management zones. Species list and management strategies pertaining to these zones will be discussed at future committee meetings. Staff will develop specific management strategies and annual goals for the highest priority species.

Proposed Upper Park Management Zone Units:

- UP-1. Monkey Face
 - a. Rim
 - b. Slope
- UP-2. North Rim
 - a. West

- b. East
- UP-3. The Bears
 - a. West
 - b. East
- UP-4. Sentinels
 - a. West
 - b. East
- UP-5. Roads End
 - a. South
 - b. North
- UP-6. Ten Mile House
- UP-7. Homestead
- UP-8. Hog Farm
 - a. West
 - b. East
- UP-9. Peregrine Point
- UP-10. Canyon Oaks
 - a. East
 - b. West

Staff seeks input on the locations and boundaries of the units, landmarks or places that may be worthy of names (or have historical names).

Trails Plan – Inventory and Needs Assessment

The BPPC conceptually approved a Trails Plan in 2002; however the plan was not finalized. The Bidwell Park Master Management Plan (BPMMP) included a draft Trails Plan (Appendix E), and also called for the development of a more refined trails plan. A Trails Plan serves as a guide for future trail maintenance, improvement, construction, and closure within Bidwell Park. It will also help prioritize budget expenditures and ensure that future improvements are consistent with the vision, goals, and objectives set forth in the BPMMP (EDAW 2008).

The BPMMP notes that the Trails Plan contained the following assumptions:

- Trails that are functioning correctly and safely will remain.
- Utilize functioning existing trail corridors for relocations or combine new trail routes where possible.
- New trails should be carefully located to avoid impacts to sensitive resources to the greatest extent possible.
- Re-routing of existing trails should be considered where the trail can no longer be maintained in its current location due to issues such as steep slopes, legally protected cultural or natural resources, groundwater seep, erosion or where user safety will be jeopardized.
- No specific plan revisions or re-alignments of trails shall occur without careful evaluation of impacts on trails within those areas and their connections within the overall Park system.
- Reasonable restoration of soils and plant communities should accompany trail route closures where exposure of significant soilless hard pan surface or other significant erosion has occurred.
- Trails that provide duplicative access or experiences should be closed.

This agenda item restarts the effort with the collection of public input to help develop a trails system in the Park that meets visitor and resource needs. The Committee will seek input from the public on their perceptions of problems (what they don't like), attributes (what they do like), needs (what would improve things), special considerations (concerns or issues), and improving the inventory of existing trails.

Table 1. Preliminary Trail Distances Bidwell Park, Chico, California. (Revised 9/1012)

Area	Paved Roads (mi)	Unpaved Roads (mi)	Bike Paths (mi)	Designated Trails (mi)	Undesignated Trails (mi)	Total (mi)
Upper	1.62	5.92	-	34.74	21.09	63.37
Middle	2.6	0.54	1.84	10.35	12.2	27.53
Lower	5.67	0.15	3.43	6.45	7.39	23.09
Total	9.89	6.61	5.27	51.54	40.68	113.99

Notes: Based on 2009 Aerial Photography and with 2011 and 2012 Field Reconnaissance. Data are preliminary and will be refined with further analysis and verification (especially with undesignated trails in Upper Park).

Table 2. Preliminary Trail Percentages Bidwell Park, Chico, California. (Revised 9/1012)

Area	Paved Roads (%)	Unpaved Roads (%)	Bike Paths (%)	Designated Trails (%)	Undesignated Trails (%)	Total (%)
Upper	1%	5%	-	30%	19%	56%
Middle	2%	0%	2%	9%	11%	24%
Lower	5%	0%	3%	6%	6%	20%
Total	9%	6%	5%	45%	36%	100%

This is one of the first steps in the development of a revised Trails Plan. We will follow a similar process as we develop information for trails in Upper Park. All of the information will be folded into the Trails Plan.

Special Upper Park Note

Upper Park poses some unique challenges. Upper Park’s thin soils, abundant resources, and steep topography make it more prone to damage. Trails are often poorly marked and undesignated (bootlegged, or social) trails are common. Park users often are unaware of park rules or unwilling to follow them.

We will make special note of a disturbing finding in the Park -- a new trail has been created on the far eastern side of the map. The trail has fresh mounds where jumps have been created and carved out, along with banked turns. This is an area of the park that currently does not have trails and is without any resource surveys. The trail is about 0.7 mile (3,696 feet) long and plunges from the North Rim down to Upper Park Road. The overall slope is 16% (over 20% if the first, relatively flat section is removed) with a maximum slope of 68%. We expect this trail with continued use to see severe erosion over the next 2 years without further action.

Long lasting trail solutions in the park will require not only a thoughtful system, but good trail building practices, education of park users (and development of a new ethic on how they interact with the Park), vigorous enforcement of park rules, and signs.

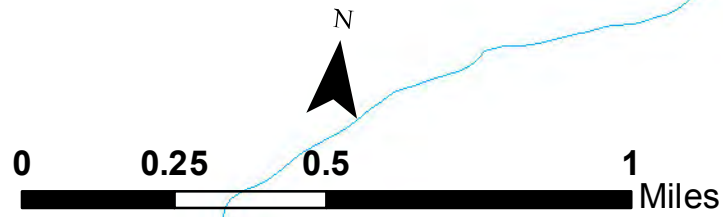


Figure 1. a and b. a) Unauthorized Upper Park trail with sawed wood to create ramp (left) and b) created banked turn (right).

Attachments: Upper Park Management Zones and Trails

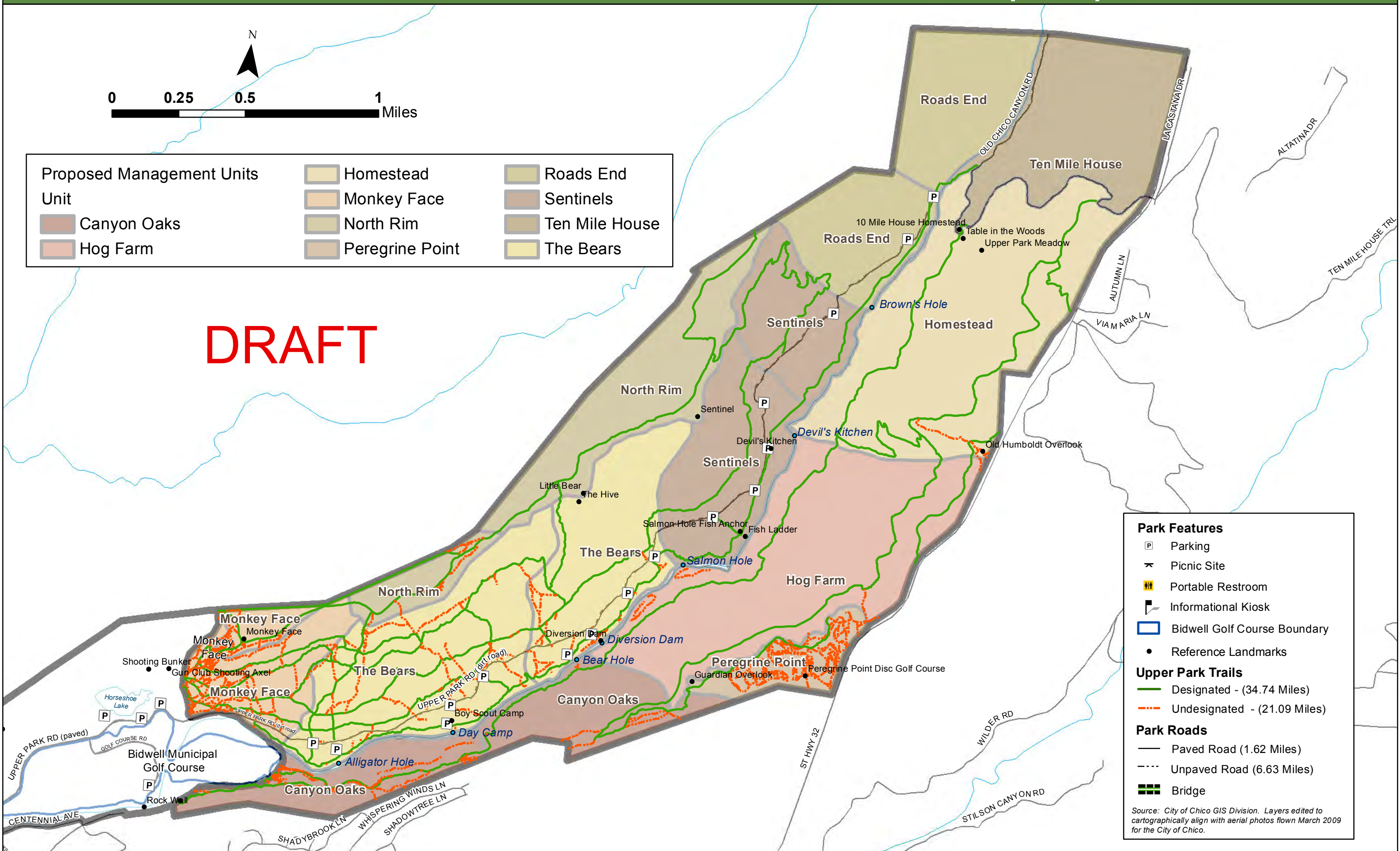
Distribution: BPPC and trail user email list-serve.

UPPER BIDWELL PARK - TRAILS INVENTORY (2011)



Proposed Management Units		
	Homestead	
	Monkey Face	
	Canyon Oaks	
	Hog Farm	
	North Rim	
	Peregrine Point	
	Roads End	
	Sentinels	
	Ten Mile House	
	The Bears	

DRAFT



Park Features	
	Parking
	Picnic Site
	Portable Restroom
	Informational Kiosk
	Bidwell Golf Course Boundary
	Reference Landmarks
Upper Park Trails	
	Designated - (34.74 Miles)
	Undesignated - (21.09 Miles)
Park Roads	
	Paved Road (1.62 Miles)
	Unpaved Road (6.63 Miles)
	Bridge

Source: City of Chico GIS Division. Layers edited to cartographically align with aerial photos flown March 2009 for the City of Chico.



DATE: 09/10/12
TO: Natural Resources Committee (NRC)
FROM: Dan Efseaff
SUBJECT: 2.2 Update on the Middle Trail Improvement Project

Recommendation

Staff seeks public and Committee input on the upcoming work.

Report in Brief

Staff will provide a brief presentation to update the NRC on the continuation of the Middle Trail improvement project. Work on the Middle Trail portion will rehabilitate 6,040 linear feet with sustainable design features and restore erosion damaged areas. The Middle Trail project was funded by the CA Department of Parks and Recreation. Once completed, the results will be a more user friendly trail for park visitors and protection of natural resources.

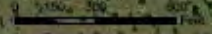
Park staff has held several informational meetings on this trail project throughout its progress. Staff will provide a status report and discuss sections started last spring that will be continued and the start of work on Segments 2, 3, and 4. In addition, haul routes will be rehabilitated and rerouted to improve long term viability.

The goals of this meeting are to share information about the project and to provide a forum for public input.

Attachments: Middle Trail segments

Distribution: BPPC and trail user email list-serve.

Phase I Middle Trail Rehabilitation Project



- Middle Trail Features**
- Haul Route
 - Segment 1
 - Segment 2
 - Segment 3
 - Segment 4
 - Segment 5
 - Segment 6
 - Segment 7



DATE: 09/10/12
TO: Natural Resources Committee
FROM: Dan Efseaff
SUBJECT: 2.3 Update on Re-Route of Trail to the Monkey Face Overlook in Upper Bidwell Park

Recommendation

Staff seeks public and Committee input on the plan to re-route the trail to the Monkey Face overlook and the initial steps that will begin this fall and winter.

Background

The Bidwell Park Master Management Plan's (BPMMP) Trail Plan lists the Monkey Face area as a known priority problem area. The MMP's Horseshoe Lake Area Objectives, Implementation Strategies and Guidelines section (I. HL-1.) states "the Monkey Face area suffers from severe erosion, improper trail design, multiple unofficial paths, and wet season use." It recommends that multiple trails be consolidated and that appropriate routes should utilize switchbacks, stairs and other measures to reduce erosion. The issues of erosion and safety are paramount and according to the MMP, should be considered a high priority and receive the focus of maintenance funding and staff (BPMMP, Appendix E. Trail Plan p. 15).

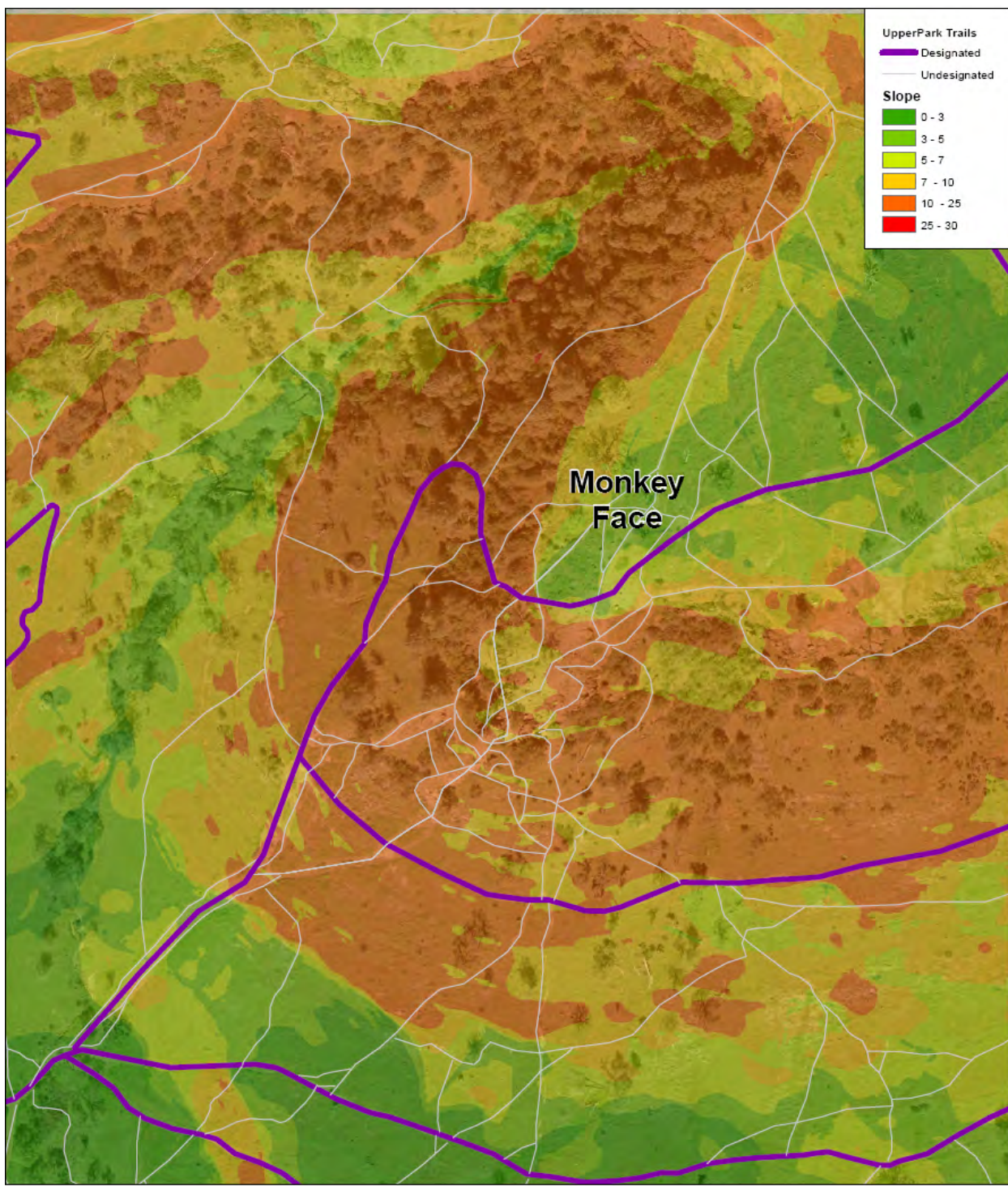
Accordingly, Staff and the BPPC have devoted recent consideration to options, with the Natural Resource Committee receiving public input on proposed re-route of the trail leading to Monkey Face at previous meetings (see for example the 01/12/12 meeting).

At this meeting, staff will present a proposed conceptual plan for sustainable trail solutions that meet user group interests based on input to date. Staff will present details on the following concepts:

- Phase 1 – a new reroute (western) approach to tie into part of the existing trail, and aggressive decommissioning of fall line trails, including erosion control, temp fencing, education, and enforcement.
- Phase 2 – rehabilitate and add a new trail that follows the Monkey Face outcropping.
- Phase 3 – a new trail (makes it possible to complete a loop) to the east of Monkey Face and connects to the Upper Trail.
- Phase 4 (complete at a later date) – develop a connector trail between the Maidu and western Monkey Face trails.

Attachments: Monkey Face Slope Map

Distribution: BPPC and trail user email list-serve.



Monkey Face Slope Map
City of Chico

