

Friends of Bidwell Park
P.O. Box 3036
Chico, CA 95927

June 20, 2003

Dear ,

A few years ago, the Park Dept. decided to minimize the use of herbicides to control invasive plants in Bidwell Park. This was and still is a decision strongly supported by the community. However, alternative methods of control are labor intensive and the Park Dept is presently able to focus only on the worst-of-the-worst—Giant Reed (*Arundo Donax*), Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus*) and Himalayan blackberries. Many other invasives are taking over large sections of the park. With the proper tools, some of these plants could be removed by park volunteers.

A tool called a *weed wrench* is an effective way to remove plants that have woody stems and long tap roots, such as Privet, Spanish Broom and Bladder Senna. This tool makes it easy for volunteers to remove these invasive shrubs and trees.

We're asking a few community leaders and organizations to purchase weed wrenches (available only through mail order) and donate them to the Chico Park Dept. To provide the greatest accessibility to the wrenches, they would be kept in the park's volunteer equipment trailer. Organizations that already are involved in park invasive weed removal projects such as the California Native Plant Society, Streaminders, Kids & Creeks and Friends of Bidwell Park could borrow the wrenches. Park maintenance staff as well as the California Conservation Corps and Salt Creek crews working in the park could use them.

The Park Dept recently ordered two medium weed wrenches. Our goal is to add 1 heavy, 3 medium, 3 light and 3 mini wrenches (see enclosure for prices and ordering information). This would allow the park volunteer coordinator to add major weed removal projects to the range of activities available to groups who want to have a volunteer day in the park. For a demonstration of weed wrenches in action, check the calendar at our web site www.friendsofbidwellpark.org for upcoming weeding activities.

If you or your members are interested in purchasing and donating a weed wrench, please contact Park Director Dennis Beardsley at 895-4972 for information regarding shipping the tool directly to the Chico Park Dept. If you'd like more information about this proposal or have ideas about other programs for the betterment of Bidwell Park, please contact me at 892-1666 or smason@pacbell.net.

Sincerely,

Susan Mason
Friends of Bidwell Park, Chair