

Experiential Learning through the Big Chico Creek Watershed Tour

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Multidisciplinary 1-credit course at Chico State engaging students in **applied research activities** using the **local watershed** as a model for exploring complex, real-world **natural resources management** issues.

4 days, 1 overnight camping at Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve



The 5th annual 2022 Watershed Tour

45 students, freshman to MSc, majors ranging from Anthropology to Wildland Mgmt.

Collaborative faculty team from 6 departments (Ag., Bio., Civil Eng., Earth and Env. Sci., Geog.)



Focus: Health and sustainability of the watershed from its headwaters to the confluence with the Sacramento River

Headwaters

- Aquatic bioassessment
- Water quality
- Forest management



Mid-watershed: Ecological Reserve

- Geology
- Streamflow, water quality
- Aquatic bioassessment
- Herpetology
- Manzanita gall survey
- Prescribed burning



Lower watershed: Campus

- Streamflow, water quality, groundwater



Confluence with Sacramento River

- Riparian restoration, salmon habitat



Student feedback

Students unanimously felt **more confident engaging** with peers from other majors on natural resource management issues. They enjoyed using **multidisciplinary** research techniques and learning **hands-on**. This experiential learning opportunity allows students to build a **sense of place**, using the watershed to weave in learning about the cultural, environmental, and social issues of the region.

Acknowledgements

Funding: Student Learning Fee awards, Governor's award, College of Natural Sciences. Facilities and staff: Ecological Reserves, Aquatic Bioassessment Lab, Earth and Env. Sciences. Photo credits: Jason Halley, Maurice Ledoyen. Student assistants and faculty make this tour possible! Todd Greene created this tour, Dave Hassenzahl provided the vision and support.