



Chico Creek Nature Center - California Naturalist Course

Spring 2018

Instructor team

Caitlin Reilly (Course lead Instructor): creilly@chicorec.com, 530-815-5259

(Co Instructor)

(Course logistics lead):

Course Description

The California Naturalist course will immerse you in the wonders of natural history in the Big Chico Creek watershed, the foothills of the cascade mountains, the north valley, and the state as a whole. The 40 hour course offers presentations and discussions, field trips and project-based learning in the context of a science curriculum. It seeks to foster eco-literacy and a committed corps of naturalists and citizen scientists ready to take an active role in conservation, education, and restoration. We hope to inspire you to connect more deeply with the natural world.

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Understand what it means to be a naturalist
- Understand the abiotic, biotic factors that make California and the Big Chico Creek Watershed natural history and ecology unique
- Demonstrate skills in making and recording natural history observations in a field notebook and on iNaturalist.org
- Demonstrate skills in communicating and interpreting natural resource information

To become a certified UC California Naturalist, you will engage in seminars, attend field trips, take iNaturalist observations, keep a field journal, read the course text, and complete an 8 hour Capstone Project.

Registration & fees

The course fee will be \$375 - \$390 (not including the course text). Space is limited, and a small number of partial scholarships is available. Register through ChicoRec.com or BidwellPark.org. To be placed on an interest list for scholarships, please contact Caitlin (see contact info above).

On completing certification requirements, you are eligible for four academic credits through UC Davis Extension for an additional fee of \$80. Speak with Caitlin if you are interested in these credits.

Required materials

(Bring these with you to each class meeting):

- *The California Naturalist Handbook* by Greg de Nevers, Deborah Stanger Edelman & Adina Merenlender (2013)
- A field notebook for nature observations and drawings. A “Rite in the Rain” is recommended.
- A course notebook for class notes and homework (It is useful to keep these separate from field notes.) A laptop, tablet or smart device may be substituted for a paper notebook.
- Pencil and pen
- Smart Phone for iNaturalist observations
- Suggested but not required: hand lens (10x), small plastic ruler, binoculars,

Course components

Class: From March 28th through May 16, we will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-9 p.m. at the Chico Creek Nature Center, at 1968 E 8th Street in Chico. Evening classes will be a mix of lecture, discussion, exploration/activity, and delicious snacks. Dress appropriately for the weather—we might go outside at a moment’s notice!

Field Trips: We will take rich, fascinating (and required) field trips on four Saturdays: April 7, April 21, May 5, and May 19, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Meeting locations are detailed in the syllabus but are subject to change. Being in the field is among our greatest pleasures as a naturalist.

Graduation: Will be May 23rd at the Lakeside Pavilion from 5:30 pm to 9 pm. All students must attend and present their Capstone Project

Capstone Project: To prepare for service as a California Naturalist, you will plan and complete a Capstone Project focusing on stewardship, education/interpretation, citizen science, or program support. The project will be introduced on the first night of class and ought to require about 8 hours of work outside class. Caitlin will be happy to meet with you to discuss potential projects in more depth. You may work individually or in teams, as appropriate. Capstone Project proposal forms, available on the micro site, need to be submitted for approval by April 18. Everyone will present a 5-minute summary of their capstones on Graduation Day, May 23rd.

Attendance: To become certified as a California Naturalist, everyone must complete 40 hours of instruction. Only one evening session can be missed, and this must be made up on one’s own time. Because of the unique nature of the learning and exploration on field trips, these are required. In the case of an emergency that requires missing a class or field trip, please talk with Caitlin. While we understand that unexpected demands sometimes arise, it is difficult to substitute for the depth of experience gained in the scheduled sessions. We ask that you commit to attending all sessions when you enroll in the course.

Field Notebooks: Keeping a field notebook is one of the best ways to record observations for future reflection, to get to know a place intimately, and to grow as a naturalist. This course requires you to keep a

field notebook; you can choose the size and style that works best for you. We will talk about possibilities on April 4th.

iNaturalist: Taking at least one observation in our class project— CCNC Cal Nat—on an online citizen science site called iNaturalist.org, is a requirement of the course. We will discuss this on April 4th and practice it on our first field trip on April 7th

Course Micro Site:

Homework/Homeplay: Creating a weekly field notebook entry and reading the current chapter from *The California Naturalist Handbook* each week will support your learning in the course. Please do the readings before the class for which they are listed in the course schedule. Homework questions for each chapter will be posted to the course micro site; please write responses in your course notebook and be ready to talk them over with your classmates.

Snacks: We will share snacks at every class. Snacks will be provided by the Nature Center for the first class. After that small groups of students will take turns bringing snacks each week. Each student is required to sign up for a class they will bring some of the snack for. The signup sheet will be pass around the first day of class.

Going green: We hope to keep waste to a minimum in class. To each evening session, bring a mug or water bottle for drinks, a plate for snacks, and a fork. We will take turns bringing snacks; please avoid single-use items or excessive packaging. All workshop materials will be posted to the course micro site and any forms that need to be submitted and be done so electronically: please think before you print!

Volunteering: After completing the course, California Naturalists are strongly encouraged to volunteer at least 40 hours each year. To be logged for the California Naturalist program, volunteer activity must relate to California's natural or environmental history, occur in California, be sponsored by an organization, and be unpaid. We log volunteer hours on the UC Volunteer Management System, to be covered in class on April 4.

Course Schedule

Date	Topics, Activities and Goals	Presenter	Text Chapter
3/28 6:30 to 9 p.m.	Introduction California Naturalist Program, California bioregions Journaling & the Practice of Interpretation	<u>Caitlin Reilly</u> <u>Dr. Jon Hooper</u>	
4/4 6:30 to 9 p.m.	Interpretation Collaboration, & Citizen Science iNaturalist and Naturalist Practices	<u>Don Miller</u>	1
4/7 8:30am-1:30pm	Field Trip: BCCER – Research, Interpretation, Education, Management and Naturalist Practices	<u>Dr. Paul Maslin</u> <u>Jeff Mott</u> <u>Jon Aull</u>	
4/11 6:30 to 9 p.m.	Geology, Soils & Climate	<u>Todd Greene</u> <u>Dr. Jon Hooper</u>	2
4/18 6:30 to 9 p.m.	Water Resources	<u>Adam Henderson, DWR</u>	3
4/21 8:30am-1:30pm	Field trip: 5 Mile Recreation Area Water and Geology Citizen Science Project	<u>Timmarie Hamill</u> <u>Todd Greene</u>	8
4/25 6:30 to 9 p.m.	Plants & Plant Communities	<u>Dr. Kristina Schierenbeck</u>	4
5/2 6:30 to 9 p.m.	Wildlife	<u>Dr. Roger Lederer</u>	6
5/5 8:30am-1:30pm	Field trip: Plants & wildlife	<u>Dr. Kristina Schierenbeck</u> <u>Dr. Roger Lederer</u>	
5/9 6:30 to 9 p.m.	Forests, Woodland & Range, Resource Management	<u>John Hunt</u> <u>Jeff Mott</u>	5
5/16 6:30 to 9 p.m.	Energy & Global Issues	<u>Dr. Lee Altier</u>	7
5/19 8:30-1:30	Field trip: Evolution of Management and Its Implications in the modern day	<u>Dr. Don Hankins</u>	
5/23 5:30-9:30pm	Graduation and Capstone Project Presentations at Lakeside Pavilion	Class participants	

(Presenters in *ITALICS* have not been confirmed)