



## A Brief History of the Camp Fire Restoration Project

*or, Let's Gather Around the Campfire and Restore Paradise*

Some months before November 2018, former Camp Fire Restoration Project (CFRP) founder Matthew Trumm had learned about Ecosystem Restoration Camps International (ERC), and had heard its founder, filmmaker and ecologist John Liu's invitation to utilize permaculture concepts and work towards restoring Earth's ecosystems: *"Let's gather around the campfire, and restore Paradise..."*. At the time those words must have seemed a beautiful sentiment. But mere months later the same words resounded in Matthew's head as the Camp Fire ravaged the Ridge communities of Butte County and became, in hindsight, incredibly prophetic.

The CFRP began soon after as a permaculture-based response to the trauma of that day. Survivors and supporters alike pulled together with others who felt passionately that we needed regenerative and long-term solutions for rebuilding what had been lost - not only with regard to the land, but in our communities too.

Most of us agreed that the components of life on Earth are interwoven and interconnected, and so too are the reasons we find ourselves in this unprecedented ecological era. We also agreed on something else: that there are SOLUTIONS! And now the world was watching. What an opportunity and responsibility we had to be a living demonstration for the solutions that exist and need to be Implemented all around the planet! Matthew contacted John Liu, and at a community meeting at the Terry Ashe Center in Paradise, the first Eco Restoration Camp in North America was envisioned.

Since those early days we've accomplished so much! In 2019 we organized not one but two multi-day Ecosystem Restoration Camps. People gathered, camped and took part in various restoration activities around the county. The first "Camp Paradise" was organized by a small group of us in about a month (!) and our main project brought a large group to Pine Ridge School in Magalia. Camp 2 had various off-site projects as well and culminated with a HUGE action day on the site of the Paradise Community Guilds, where over 100 people from all over the state pitched in together with the Permaculture Action Network, got their hands dirty and created a sense of what we could accomplish together.

In January 2020, following a long weekend of strategic planning, a core group of us began meeting formally as a Board. Janeva Sorenson, whose family has roots here and land as well, stepped into the leadership role, as Matthew passed the baton in order to focus on other efforts. This organization has benefitted so greatly from the initial passion that

Matthew brought, and we have continued that legacy with Janeva's incredible capability to actively head up the project. We are so lucky to have her!

One of the first things spearheaded by Janeva was CFRP's grant application to the North Valley Foundation's "Butte Strong" fund, which we received. And with those funds in place, while in the midst of planning for our third eco camp, the pandemic hit. For CFRP, we decided a potent way to serve was to focus on holding smaller, more localized workshops and producing educational video content. At the same time, we began to address a desire to recognize and more actively partner with the TEK (Traditional Ecological Knowledge) efforts that were happening locally, especially with local Mechoopda Traditional Ecological Knowledge master teacher Ali Meders-Knight. CFRP is proud to sponsor TEK Chico's monthly native plant walks at Verbena Fields in Chico, with Ali and Raphael DiGenova.

Even with COVID, we were busier than ever. Tree and native seed giveaways, tree plantings, an Earthworks workshop (with the Concow Meadows Research Station), a Broom removal workshop, greywater and composting workshops, livestreams (thank you, April!) and fully-produced educational video content (thank you, Respectful Revolution!), and the Bear Fire wattle giveaway in Berry Creek (a collaboration with Matthew, whose property burned) - there has been no shortage of effort, ideas, or need.

In early 2022 we finalized a more structured (but still fun!) Board of Directors, reworking our mission statement, formally adopting a set of bylaws, and much more. We applied for and received our 501c3 status. We are excited about all these important steps, but let's be honest: we are REALLY READY to get our hands dirty and be in closer relationship with the land!!

CFRP looks forward to partnering with other groups, as well as continuing to create our own projects and offerings to our land and neighbors. We aim to build a network of resiliency - not just to address issues post-disaster but to strengthen our systems ahead of what is coming, as well as to help reconcile past trauma. We hope to do so with reverence, humility, generosity and joy. We hope you get involved with us!