

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: November 16, 2015

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 4C

STAFF: Ann Bollinger, Open Space Administrator
Richard Wilkinson, Senior Natural Resource Specialist

REQUEST: Discussion only regarding activities, projects, and grants in general.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

This staff report provides information about additional activities of the Open Space Division.

- **Bureau of Land Management – Resource Management Plan:**
BLM has completed their review of the comments received on the Draft Resource Management Plan. More than 600 “unique” comments were received and thousands of form letters were received. Within the next few months, the final document should be released for public review. As the lead liaison for Carson City, Open Space staff needs to review and compare how Carson City comments were addressed.
- **Carson City Weed Coalition:**
In 2014, the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE) reduced their funding and efforts towards noxious weeds, resulting in a few layoffs statewide. The Carson City Weed Coalition (CCWC) was housed and supervised by UNCE, and therefore was directly impacted by the changes. The Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department offered to take charge, with the Open Space Division taking immediate supervision of the program. The Weed Coordinator position is primarily funded through grants, including \$10,000 from the Carson Water Subconservancy District. In August 2015, the CCWC officially reconvened and confirmed efforts to reduce the noxious weed problems within Carson City.

In 2015, the CCWC has implemented the following projects and locations to treat noxious weeds within Carson City County. The following areas have been surveyed, mapped, and treated in efforts to improve and control infestations. All spatial data has been uploaded to Eddmaps.org.

- Combs Canyon Road and Curry Street (Nevada State Lands)
- Empire Ranch Golf Course
- Hells Bells Road
- Linear Ditch Trail
- Moffat Open Space
- Morgan Mill Preserve Open Space
- Northern Nevada Correctional Center (NNCC)
- Quill Canyon
- Riverview Park
- Rafter PM Ranch (private property)
- Silver Saddle Ranch
- The Old Buzzy’s Ranch property

CCWC has used grant funding from the Nevada Department of Agriculture to hire contractors for treatment. The majority of the work has been on public and private lands adjacent to the Carson River. The Carson River is the biggest transport vector for noxious and invasive weeds, and due to the high risk of certain infestations, the work has been focused in these areas.

Educational efforts have continued as well. Public outreach has also been an important focus and a new informational brochure was printed this year. The strategic/action plan is being reviewed, which includes the following goals:

- **Planning** – Provide a forum for coordinating education and weed management projects between all landowners, managers, and weed management groups.
 - **Prevention and Exclusion** – Prevent the introduction and further expansion of noxious and invasive weeds.
 - **Identification, Inventory and Monitoring** – Compile a comprehensive noxious and invasive weed inventory.
 - **Treatment** – Perform eradication and control projects utilizing integrated weed management practices.
 - **Management Priorities** – Develop a management strategy for potential, new and established weeds.
 - **Restoration** – Include restoration practices as an integral and critical part of control projects.
 - **Education and Awareness** – Promote noxious and other invasive weed education and awareness programs and activities.
- Eagle Valley Trails Committee (EVTC):
The EVTC recently hosted three successful open houses for the public to review and comment on trails throughout Carson City. A website is also available to provide comments - <http://www.carsoncitytrails.org/>. The results will be summarized in a report and provided to Carson City as an updated planning tool.

- Foundation for Carson City Parks and Recreation:
On October 5th, the annual awards from the Foundation for Carson City Parks and Recreation were presented. The recipients included: Volunteer of the Year – Patrick McGuire; Volunteer of the Years – Eric Ingbar; **Organization of the Year – River Wranglers**; and Business of the Year – Capital Beverage. River Wranglers, in particular, has partnered with the Open Space Division on many programs along the river. Below is a copy of the nomination.



Linda Conlin representing River Wranglers receives the 2015 Award for Organization of the Year, with David Bugli and Roger Moellendorf

River Wranglers. *River Wranglers was formed in 1994 from a grant written by the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension with the initial goals to incorporate water*

quality monitoring of the Carson River into high school science programs and to provide field experience for science students. When the grant funds were exhausted, Linda Conlin, project coordinator, continued to volunteer and kept the organization intact. Now a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, River Wranglers has expanded environmental education by working with local, state and federal agencies, local schools, and citizen groups to help implement various events throughout the Carson River watershed. They have been a project partner with Carson City for many years and have coordinated several educational events - notably "Trout in the Classroom" and "Conserve the Carson River Days" - in our parks and open space areas. In "Trout in the Classroom," students raise trout from eggs to fry while learning about water quality, habitats, ecosystems, and conservation ethics. The project ends with a release of their trout at the Baily Fishing Pond. One of the longest running projects in Carson City for "Conserve the Carson River Days" occurs at the Ambrose Carson River Natural Area, in which the Honors Biology Class from Carson High School teaches lessons to 4th-grade students on the riparian environment, vegetation, water quality, wildlife, and stewardship of the natural resources.

- **Freeway Multi-use Path, between Highway 50 and 5th Street:**
In August, staff joined Carson City Public Works and many other interested parties to walk the alignment for the next phase of the Freeway Multi-use Path. The new path will be partially constructed on a property purchased by the Open Space Division – the Arraiz acquisition. In preparation of construction, staff has been spraying perennial pepperweed infestations in the area.
- **Park Ranger:**
On August 20th, the Board of Supervisors unanimously supported the Committee’s recommendation for a new park ranger position dedicated to the Open Space Division. Since that time, the job description was reviewed and revised, the job announcement was posted and closed, and a candidate was hired for the position. More than 180 candidates applied for the position, but only 25% or so were qualified. The new park ranger, John Costello, is tentatively scheduled to begin work on November 18th.
- **Staff Training and Conferences:**
Staff has also been busy throughout the past few months with various trainings and conferences including: the National Recreation and Park Association in Las Vegas, the Land Trust Alliance in Sacramento, and the Nevada Weed Management Association in Reno.



Carson City Weed Coalition display at the Nevada Weed Management Association

RECOMMENDED ACTION: This agenda item is for informational purposes only. No formal action can be taken at this time.