



STAFF REPORT

Report To: Open Space Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: February 25, 2019

Staff Contact: Ann Bollinger, Open Space Administrator
Lyndsey Boyer, Senior Natural Resource Specialist

Agenda Title: For Discussion Only: Activities, projects, and grants located on Open Space properties within the Carson River area

Staff Summary: See below

Agenda Action: Other/Presentation

Time Requested: 5 minutes

Carson City Weed Coalition – Eurasian Watermilfoil Abatement

Eurasian Watermilfoil, a category A aquatic noxious weed, was identified in the Mexican Ditch and Carson River in the summer of 2018. This plant was first observed in the Mexican Ditch in 2015 but the population remained small at that time. Since the floods of 2017, this plant has established a significant population in the Mexican Ditch. This plant is extremely aggressive and has the potential to negatively impact waterways by outcompeting important native riparian vegetation and clogging up culverts and irrigation structures. Recently, the Carson City Weed Coalition has been working with the Nevada Department of Agriculture, UNR's Global Water Center, Tahoe Resource Conservation District and professional consultants to develop a treatment plan for the removal of this plant – based on protocol used to manage this plant in other ecosystems. Mechanical treatment (hand-removal) was completed in the fall of 2018 with little success. Unfortunately the infestation is too large for hand-pulling to be efficient. Staff has explored all other options including dredging, herbicide treatment and cutting-edge Ultraviolet light-C (UVC) treatment, which all proved to be inappropriate for this system. Staff will continue to experiment and are looking at occultation using black plastic as a potential solution and will explore in the summer of 2019.

Carson River Canyon Open Space

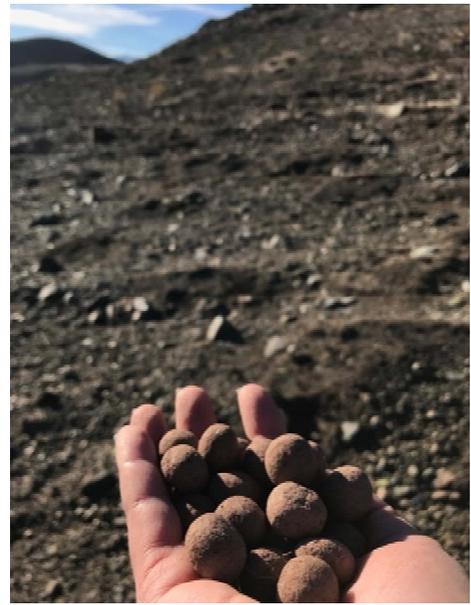
In late December and early January, staff worked to complete reseeding of the area that was burned in the 2018 Rifle Range Fire. Due to topography, staff completed revegetation activities in easily accessible areas in attempt to prevent establishment of cheatgrass and mitigate erosion and sediment entering the river. Staff completed a 'traditional' seeding, as well as an experimental 'seed bomb' treatment. Seed bombs are a novel restoration technique that staff are exploring. The 'bombs', or discs, are made of clay, soil and compost which protect the seeds from birds, rodents and insects. Additionally, since they are protected from the elements, they should have a high success rate of germination. Open Space staff will be monitoring the efficacy of these bombs to see if they can be used in other areas in the future. The bombs are simple and cheap to create, and are easier to distribute on the landscape than seeds alone.

Additionally, due to the extent of the fire and the topography, staff is working to complete a large scale revegetation effort, working with a local helicopter company to complete the re-seeding in 2019. In early February, staff submitted a grant application to the Community Foundation of Western Nevada, Dream Tags Charitable Fund Grant to support this large scale revegetation effort. Staff will attend the Dream Tags

Advisory Board meeting to discuss the grant on February 21st, and funding awards will be announced at that time. If funding is awarded, Plateau herbicide treatments will take place this spring to prevent cheatgrass establishment and the aerial reseeding will be completed in winter 2019.



Ann Bollinger and Lyndsey Boyer work to spread a native seed mix and pick up trash exposed by the fire



Seed bombs containing sagebrush seeds

Carson River Trail System, Phase 2 – Ranch Connections (SNPLMA)

Two project components are progressing. The memo from the Trails Coordinator provides an update and timeline for the trail design and project management. The work for the archeological surveys is estimated to begin in March 2019.

East Silver Saddle Ranch

No updates from previous report.

12-17-2018: Staff continues to implement the site improvements as identified in the conceptual site plan developed by Design Workshop. Jared Whitaker has been working to incrementally close motorized access to the river by installing bollards. A second parking area will be designated on the north end of the site by installing split rail fencing. After motorized access to the river is closed, staff will work to revegetate the disturbed areas and redundant roads.

Events (Carson River area and elsewhere)

Date	Event	Location
Sat, Feb 9	Ascent Physical Winter Trail Run Series	Prison Hill Recreation Area
Mon, Feb 11	FOSSR Monthly Meeting	Silver Saddle Ranch
Mon, March 11	Leave No Trace Awareness Workshop	Community Center
Sat, March 16	FOSSR & CH Senior – Birds Walk and Talk	Silver Saddle Ranch
Sat, April 6	Ascent Physical Winter Trail Run Series	C-Hill / Long Ranch Park
Mon, April 8	FOSSR Monthly Meeting	Silver Saddle Ranch
Sat, April 20	Escape from Prison Hill race	Silver Saddle Ranch & Prison Hill
Sun. April 28, 10am-3pm	Earth Day	Foreman-Roberts House
Mon, May 13	FOSSR Monthly Meeting	Silver Saddle Ranch
Sat, May 18	FOSSR Spring Open House & Kids to Parks Day	Silver Saddle Ranch

Russian Olive Mapping and Removal Management Plan

In summer 2018, Natural Resource Management Intern, Joey Kelso worked to survey and map Russian olive populations on all Carson City owned property in the Carson River corridor. After completing the survey, Joey worked to write a management plan for addressing the Russian olive infestation on the Carson River. His management plan included maps, removal and treatment protocol, restoration information as well as a property-specific evaluation of Russian olive density. Based on his findings, the Mexican Ditch Trail at Silver Saddle Ranch was identified as an initial treatment priority due to the abundance of trees present, many of which are juveniles, as well as the ease of access for treatment. Additionally, as a component of the Carson River Trail System, Phase 2 – Ranch Connections Project, Russian olive removal in the riparian area adjacent to old Buzzy’s Ranch will also be a priority. While this area does not have the highest density of Russian olive present, there a number of mature trees on-site. With relatively greater ease of access due to ranching operations, this would be a perfect area to experiment with different treatment methods for mature trees. This would allow us to hone our methodology before applying it to denser stands of less accessible mature trees.

Jared Whitaker will begin Russian olive removal this winter and continue throughout the year, starting with highest priority areas, such as Silver Saddle Ranch and moving to less densely populated properties. Treatment strategies include physical removal with an herbicide treatment, or girdling the tree and applying herbicide, depending on ease of access for removal.

Silver Saddle Ranch Stewardship Plan/SHPO

While there aren't significant updates from the previous report, staff is aware the architectural historian is still working on her report. Additionally, staff will be meeting with the State Historic Preservation Office in March to identify progress and next steps to complete the stewardship plan.

12-17-2018: Staff met with the architectural historian working on this project in late October to evaluate the Phase 1 condition findings, and initial treatment and maintenance recommendations. After reviewing these initial findings, staff provided the contractor with feedback and direction in order to begin working on Phase 2. The scope of work for Phase 2 includes preparing the baseline photo report for SHPO and an annual report that indicates changes in existing conditions and proposes a scope for construction and maintenance in the future. After the baseline report is complete, the SHPO will be able to move forward with creating an architectural stewardship and monitoring program for Carson City.