



STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item: 4B

Report To: Open Space Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: August 19, 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: 10 minutes

Biocontrol Project

In 2018, staff worked with both the Nevada and Colorado Department of Agriculture to implement a biocontrol experiment looking at the use of rust fungus to control Canada thistle populations at Morgan Mill Preserve Open Space and Mexican Dam Open Space. Monitoring took place in late June to evaluate if the plants were successfully inoculated by the rust fungus. Unfortunately, staff did not find evidence of inoculation at either site. However, since the rust fungus treatment is free, staff will work to treat the site again this fall in hopes that an additional treatment will lead to successful inoculation in spring 2020.



Vegetation monitoring transect at the Mexican Dam Open Space.

Buzzy's Ranch Conservation Plan

No updates from previous report.

6-17-2019: Staff are working with consultants to develop a conservation plan for the Old Buzzy's Ranch property related to water rights. The property will be extensively surveyed in order to identify which areas of the ranch are most productive, which areas are naturally receiving the most water, and which areas will need to be restored to a more natural condition after they are no longer irrigated. One goal of the plan is to work to maintain the aesthetics of the ranch, keeping the fields green if possible. As a component of this project, test plots will be established in order to evaluate the most successful rehabilitation strategy to be employed. Strategies include interseeding, plow and plant, or increasing irrigation efficiency by updating irrigation infrastructure. Scientists from the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) have joined the project and are helping to provide recommendations and will continue with treatment implementation, follow-up monitoring and research. Test plot fencing will be established in late summer, and treatments and reseeding tests will be completed this fall.

Carson River Canyon Open Space

Plateau herbicide treatments to prevent cheatgrass and annual mustard establishment were completed in the burned area of Carson River Canyon in April. Both vegetation and photo point monitoring was completed before and after Plateau application to evaluate success. Staff found that the herbicide application was particularly effective in suppressing annual mustard growth. Aerial reseeding will be completed in winter 2019, and additional monitoring will also be completed before and after re-seeding to evaluate success.

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

Lumos and Associates have continued to work to determine the trail alignment for the Carson River Trails System; currently, the 60% plans are being developed. Wetland delineation surveys have also been completed. Additionally, Open Space staff worked with local consultants to conduct spring avian surveys in May and June to assess bird populations and potential impacts from the new trail. Through these surveys, staff evaluated overall presence and composition of bird populations along the proposed trail alignment at Buzzy's Ranch, as well as along existing trails at Riverview Park, for comparison. Staff did not find presence of any species of concern, but concluded that a seasonal closure of the trail during breeding season, or designation of the trail as dogs on leash only could mitigate any future conflicts, if needed.

East Silver Saddle Ranch

On June 17, a small fire started at East Silver Saddle Ranch and burned a portion of the property from Sierra Vista Lane down to the Carson River. Reports from the Carson City Fire Department concluded that the fire was likely human caused. Staff are working with contractors to get additional fencing installed in this area to prevent motorized vehicle trespass into the newly burned areas, and will work to complete revegetation activities this fall.



Left: burned hillside adjacent to Sierra Vista Lane.

Right: burnt and damaged cottonwoods from June 2019 fire.

Additionally, improvements to East Silver Saddle Ranch have been on-going. Staff has been working to close down all motorized access points to the river, and the site has been fully secured. Staff routinely monitors the area for vandalism and trespass into these decommissioned areas in order to respond quickly to damage. Staff will work to continue improvements to the site, planning for restoration and further road decommissioning activities this fall.

Eurasian Watermilfoil

The Natural Resource Management Intern, Kara Berggren has been working this summer to research, monitor and develop a management plan to address the Eurasian watermilfoil infestation in the Mexican Ditch. Additionally, as a component of this management plan, Ms. Berggren has also been working on an experiment examining various treatment methods for Eurasian watermilfoil, and evaluating their efficacy in our system. Specifically, Kara is evaluating occultation, solarization and UVC light treatments. In order to evaluate this, Kara set up an experiment using five gallon buckets filled Eurasian watermilfoil from the Mexican Ditch, and covered the buckets with black Visqueen plastic (occultation), clear plastic (solarization) and UVC light treatment. The UVC light treatment is the main method that has been employed in Lake Tahoe. Initial results from the experiment indicate that occluding the plant with black Visqueen plastic is the most effective method of removal. Based on these results, staff will work to set-up a treatment trial using black plastic on the Mexican Ditch this summer.



Left: Eurasian watermilfoil experiment: occultation, solarization and UVC light treatments are respectively evaluated.



Right: Eurasian watermilfoil from the Mexican Ditch.

Events (Carson River area and elsewhere)

Date	Event	Location
Mon, July 8	FOSSR Monthly Meeting	Silver Saddle Ranch
Sat, July 20	Thistle Dig	Horsecreek Ranch
Date	Event	Location
Sat, August 3	Ascent Capital Climb Run	C-Hill / Ash Canyon
Sat, August 3	Interpretive Program – Parks & Open Space	Silver Saddle Ranch
Sat, August 10	Interpretive Program – Local Plant Identification	Silver Saddle Ranch

Sun, August 11	Art Outside! Sunset Photo Hike	Silver Saddle Ranch
Mon, August 12	FOSSR Monthly Meeting	Silver Saddle Ranch
Sat, August 17	Interpretive Program – Predators and Prey	Silver Saddle Ranch
Sat, August 17	Trash Clean-up	TBD
Sun, August 18	Jazz and Beyond	Silver Saddle Ranch
Sun, August 18	Art Outside! Sketch & Trek	Waterfall Trail
Sat, August 24	Interpretive Program – Bear Aware	Silver Saddle Ranch
Sat, August 24	Citizen Science iNaturalist Workshop	Foothill Garden & Trail
Date	Event	Location
Sat, Sept 7	Weed and Seed – Volunteer Planting	Foothill Garden & Trail
Mon, Sept 9	FOSSR Monthly Meeting	Silver Saddle Ranch

Prison Hill, Motorized Area – Golden Eagles

No updates from previous report.

4-15-2019: Staff has been working with agency staff from the Nevada State Parks and Nevada Department of Wildlife to gather resources and information related to Golden Eagles around the Prison Hill Recreation Area. On April 1st, staff conducted the initial surveys with these professionals and discussed critical habitat areas. Additional surveys will be conducted the winter of 2019. With this information, staff can identify a strategy moving forward to balance wildlife management with the recreational improvements and management.

Silver Saddle Ranch Stewardship Plan/SHPO

Staff received the final draft of the Silver Saddle Ranch Preservation Plan in early July. The report contains background and history on Silver Saddle Ranch, as well as evaluation and assessment of the various buildings on-site. Specifically, the consultant worked to evaluate the condition of each historic building, identify any damage and provide recommendations on how best to mitigate the damage for the purposes of preserving the integrity and historic character of the building. This plan will be a critical resource as we move forward with stewardship of Silver Saddle Ranch. Additionally the photos and anecdotes that the consultant was able to compile during their research will be useful in developing interpretive opportunities at the Ranch.

The Preservation Plan, along with the baseline documentation report and forms will be finalized and sent to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review in August. After approved by SHPO, staff will work with them to initiate the stewardship monitoring plan for the architectural features.