



STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item: 4D

Report To: Open Space Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: May 18, 2020

Staff Contact: Lyndsey Boyer, Senior Natural Resource Specialist

Agenda Title: For Discussion Only: Activities, projects, and grants throughout other areas managed by the Open Space Division.

Staff Summary: See below.

Agenda Action: Other/Presentation

Time Requested: 10 minutes

Ash Canyon Road

The goal for re-opening the gate on Ash Canyon Road every year is May 1, in order to coincide with the start of fishing season at Hobart Reservoir. However, based on current snow levels at the top of Ash Canyon Road we will not be able to meet this goal. Currently, staff are evaluating the accessible portion of the road and completing road repairs and drainage control measures, as necessary. As the snow melts, staff will continue to evaluate the road for damage and identify any additional road repairs that need to be completed prior to opening the gate. In previous years, the gate was re-opened in mid-June, but given our reduced snowpack this year we hope it will be sooner.

Carson City Weed Coalition

Our Invasive Plants Coordinator, Shyla Pearson, resigned from her position in March. Due to the intensive amount of one-on-one training this position requires, and current COVID-19 restrictions, we will wait to refill this position until we can safely on-board a new employee in the office. As a result, any noxious weed related questions or concerns can be directed to Senior Natural Resource Specialist, Lyndsey Boyer for the time being. Currently, we are working to coordinate treatment along the Empire Ranch Trail and Riverview Park, utilizing grant funds from the CWSD/National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. In addition, Open Space Maintenance Coordinator, Jared Whitaker is working to survey, monitor and complete noxious weed treatment in affected Open Space properties.

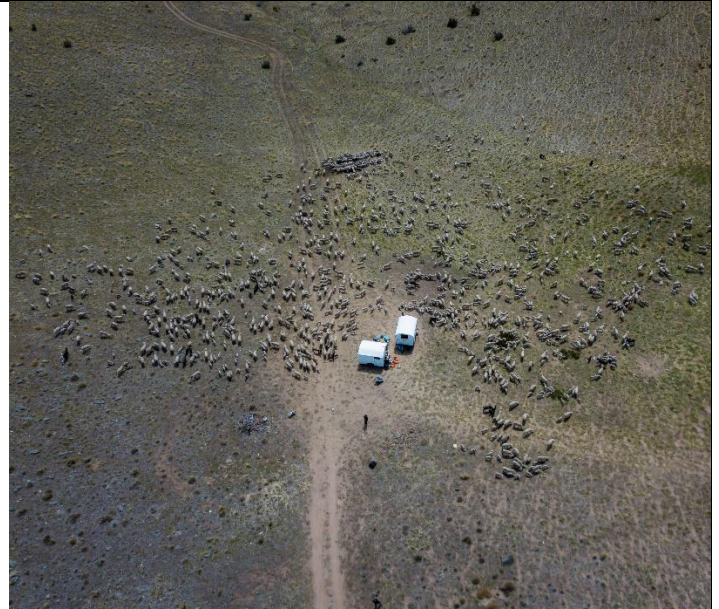
Fuels Reduction using Sheep

It has been an exciting year for the sheep program! Working with consultants, we have worked over the past year or more to update the grazing plan for the project. This was a multi-agency effort and included input from all stakeholders involved in the project. The plan has been presented to all stakeholders and was finalized in March. Additionally, this year was the first year that the project grazed on Washoe Tribal land, which is an important piece of property to reduce fuels on as there have been several wildfires in this area in the past. Additionally, the U.S. Forest Service received permission to graze Borda Meadow, which has not been included in the project previously and has begun accumulating fine fuels. Both of these additions provide greater continuity between grazed areas, increasing Carson City's overall resilience to devastating wildfire. The final update is this year Carson City coordinated two separate bands of sheep, one comprised of

ewes only to graze the lands north of Carson – specifically Lakeview, Vicee Canyon and behind WNC, and a second band comprised of lambs and ewes that focus in the usual project area – Greenhouse Garden Center, C-Hill and Kings Canyon. Coordinating two bands of sheep has allowed for more effective grazing across the entirety of the project area as we have been able to target cheatgrass during its prime palatability, resulting in more effective grazing. The sheep will be in Carson City through the end of May.



An ewe and lamb during 2020 grazing project.



Aerial photo captured by resident using aerial drone technology in the hills behind Greenhouse Garden Center.

Kings Canyon Road and Trailhead

Kings Canyon Road

After submitting an application to the Recreational Trails Program grant, Carson City was awarded \$142,000 to fund the repair of the first two miles of Kings Canyon Road. Additionally, Carson City was sub granted \$17,990 from the original 2017 grant between the Nevada OHV Program and the U.S. Forest Service which funded the repair design. This subgrant funding will be used to complete the section-106 cultural review process on the road. Once complete, the project will go out to bid for construction, but due to COVID-19 restrictions the Recreational Trails Program grant has been delayed in processing.

Kings Canyon / Waterfall Trailhead

In coordination with Public Works and a grant award from the Federal Lands Access Program, staff is working with Carson City Public Works on design of a new trailhead. 70% design plans have been received, however staff requested that the plans be further developed and refined in order to answer staff questions. We are currently still waiting to receive the revised 70% design plan set. Central Federal Lands pushed the project out one year, so construction is anticipated to take place in July 2021.

Land Acquisition(s)

Clear Creek

No updates from previous report.

October 21, 2019: Staff is working with Nevada Land Trust to help facilitate the acquisition of 100+ acres owned by the State of Nevada. An appraisal is underway. After a value has been determined, staff will resume discussions with the State regarding funding options.

Hamm property acquisition

The Board of Supervisors passed a motion to officially name the property as the “Eagle View Open Space.” Staff have also been working to record the public access route to the property in order to close the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant out and receive reimbursement. The grant deadline has been extended to December 2020.

Joost Land and Cattle Co.

No updates from previous report.

December 16, 2019: The subject property includes two parcels consisting of approximately 100 acres located on the west side of Carson City along Ash Canyon Road and just south of the Ash Canyon water tanks. The property has been in the Joost Family for nearly 100 years. Ms. Karen Joost was the most recent owner/occupant. Unfortunately, Ms. Joost recently and suddenly passed away. Her family would like to carry forth her wishes for a conservation easement or some other land protection (development restriction) on the property. Staff from the Open Space Division and Public Works Department have met with the family and family attorney to initiate discussions on the options. The southern part of the property is on the Open Space Plan and Opportunities Map. The northern part of the property is the homestead. While it was not on the Open Space Plan and Opportunities Map, it is currently part of the discussion for a holistic plan.

Old Woods Ranch

In November 2019, a grant nomination was submitted to the national committee of the Forest Legacy Program. The nomination requested funding to purchase a conservation easement on 130 acres of ranch land and conifer forest. In summer 2020, the grant awards will be announced.

Schulz Investments

No updates from previous report.

December 16, 2019: The Schulz Investments properties include two parcels consisting of approximately 355 acres located along the north side of Highway 50 west. While identified on the Open Space Plan and Opportunities Map for protection, staff has not actively been working with the family on an acquisition plan. Rather, the preferred option would be acquisition by the U.S. Forest Service since they are the adjacent land owner/administrator. The family is researching options for limited development on the properties. Staff has provided comments on the proposals, including the desire to keep the hillside undeveloped and protect the scenic views between Carson City and Lake Tahoe.

Personnel

-AmeriCorps VISTA members:

- Community Education Coordinator: position has been filled, and the individual will start after COVID-19 restrictions have lifted.
- Marketing & Outreach Coordinator: position is currently vacant.
- Volunteer Coordinator: position has been filled by Mackenzie Gargano. She has been on-board with the Department since December 2019.

- Invasive Plants Coordinator: position vacant; will re-fill when COVID-19 restrictions lift.
- Open Space Maintenance Seasonal Worker: filled by William “Bill” Beck, a returning seasonal maintenance worker. Bill will start with the Department on May 18.

Prison Hill, OHV Area Baseline Monitoring Report

In conjunction with the Prison Hill Master Plan, and the Plans that have been developed for the motorized portion of Prison Hill, staff are also working to compile a Baseline Monitoring Report that will allow for repeat photo monitoring activities to monitor changes to the land as it relates to project implementation and potential impacts from increased recreation on-site. The baseline survey and monitoring photos have been taken, and staff are currently working to compile the information into a comprehensive report.