



STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item: 8

Report To: Open Space Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: August 17, 2020

Staff Contact: Lyndsey Boyer, Open Space Manager, lboyer@carson.org
Gregg Berggren, Trails Coordinator, gberggren@carson.org

Agenda Title: For Discussion Only: Discussion regarding the submission of an application to the SNPLMA Round 18 grant program for the Buzzy's Ranch Wetland Enhancement Project and/or Carson River Trails Phase III.

Staff Summary: The BLM is accepting nominations for Round 18 of the SNPLMA grant fund. Staff are proposing the submittal of two nominations: Buzzy's Ranch Wetland Enhancement Project and the Carson River Trails Phase III Project under SNPLMA's Parks, Trails and Natural Areas category. Nominations are due to SNPLMA on September 14, 2020.

Agenda Action: Other/Presentation

Time Requested: 30 minutes

Proposed Motion

N/A

Board's Strategic Goal

N/A

Previous Action

N/A

Background/Issues & Analysis

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is accepting Round 18 nominations for projects authorized by the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 (SNPLMA), in the following categories: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas (PTNA), Capital Improvements (CIP), Conservation Initiatives (CI), Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisitions, Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention (Fuels), Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project (ENLRP) and Clark County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan and Implementation (MSHCP). Round 18 funding has not been finalized but it is expected to be over \$200 million.

All nominations must be submitted during a sixty-day period, beginning Thursday, July 16, 2020, and ending Monday, September 14, 2020. Carson City is eligible under two categories, the PTNA and Fuels. Entities can submit a maximum of three nominations per category. Carson City Open Space has the following two project proposals for discussion, which both would be submitted under the PTNA category.

Buzzy's Ranch Wetland Enhancement Project:

In an effort to begin acquiring permanent water rights to support and maintain Buzzy's Ranch, Open Space is proposing a grant application to purchase 154.3 acres of water, or 694.35 acre-feet annually (AFA), currently permitted from Vidler Water Company, to apply to the 36.7-acres (APN 010-071-21) of mitigation wetlands on the southwestern portion of the property, and to the approximately 112.35 acres (APN 010-071-26 and APN

010-071-27) in the middle portion of Buzzy's Ranch where, the Ducks Unlimited Wetland Restoration/Enhancement Project was completed in 2016. Acquiring water rights for this section of property would allow for the development and establishment of a more permanent wetland system in both locations, as the current water regime lends to an ephemeral wetland when adequate water is not present. Additionally, it would ensure the sustainable continuation of the goals and objectives for the Ducks Unlimited Project, which were to improve pasture management capabilities while also enhancing the existing wet meadow pasture habitat for the benefit of waterfowl and other wetland-associated species.

When discussing the project proposal with SNPLMA staff, it was noted that, in order to be eligible under the PTNA category, the water rights must be applied to the creation or enhancement of a natural area. Based on their criteria for natural areas, SNPLMA staff indicated that agricultural lands were not eligible under this category. Therefore, staff are focusing the grant application on specifically enhancing and developing the wetlands present on the property.

In addition to water rights acquisition, the proposal would also include funding for: the water rights purchase appraisal; any infrastructure such as head gates or water meters needed to better control the irrigation water to these sites; any fees for the application process to move the water rights; and, possibly, a short trail or boardwalk connecting the Mexican Ditch to the mitigation wetlands to the south. A boardwalk may be incorporated into the proposal because one of the significant criteria to qualify under the PTNA category relates to connecting people to places. If not, staff will emphasize the opportunity to develop regular interpretive programs such as bird watching, to be conducted in the wetlands as a means of providing educational opportunities to the public.

Staff are proposing an allocation of \$50,000 match from the Q18 Quality of Life funding to strengthen the application. This funding would be allocated from the match that was previously budgeted for the Carson River Trails Project Phase II. Since bid prices came back so low for this project, the \$50,000 match will no longer be required for that project and can therefore be utilized elsewhere.

This project would support the following PTNA strategic goals:

1. Protects or improves the integrity of resources to enhance quality of human experience;
2. Increases natural, cultural, and historical resource interpretation;
3. Promotes projects that are representative of the environment (aesthetically cohesive).

Carson River Trails, Phase III:

This proposal will seek to continue the ongoing development of a system of connected trails within the Carson River/Prison Hill area. Previous phases I and II are both SNPLMA funded projects that included the construction of the Eagle Creek Bridge, and the on-going construction of three miles of pathway on Prison Hill and along the Carson River. The current proposal is to construct about 4.5 miles of multi-use pathway to further the goal of circumnavigating Prison Hill. This proposed pathway would begin at the south end of the existing Mexican Ditch Trail, at the Mexican Dam, then continue around the south end of Prison Hill and up the west side of Prison Hill, ending at the Koontz Lane trailhead. The nomination would also seek to make improvements to the Koontz Lane trailhead, such as: access road repairs, enlarging and improving the parking lot, and adding a vault toilet and a picnic table with a shelter.

This project would support the following PTNA strategic goals:

1. Promotes connectivity between new or existing recreational opportunities;
2. Connects and integrates projects from previous and new SNPLMA rounds;
3. Increases natural, cultural, and historical resource interpretation;
4. Protects or improves the integrity of resources to enhance quality of human experience;
5. Develops a recreational environment of diverse and holistic parks, trails, and natural areas;
6. Promotes projects that are representative of the environment (aesthetically cohesive).

Applicable Statute, Code, Policy, Rule or Regulation

N/A

Financial Information

Is there a fiscal impact? Yes No

If yes, account name/number: \$50,000 match from Q18

Is it currently budgeted? Yes No

Explanation of Fiscal Impact: TBD

Alternatives

Board Action Taken:

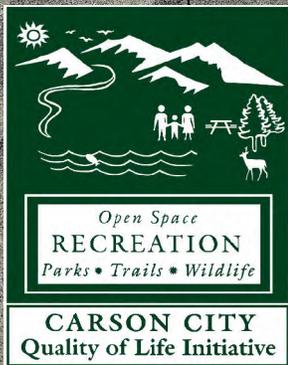
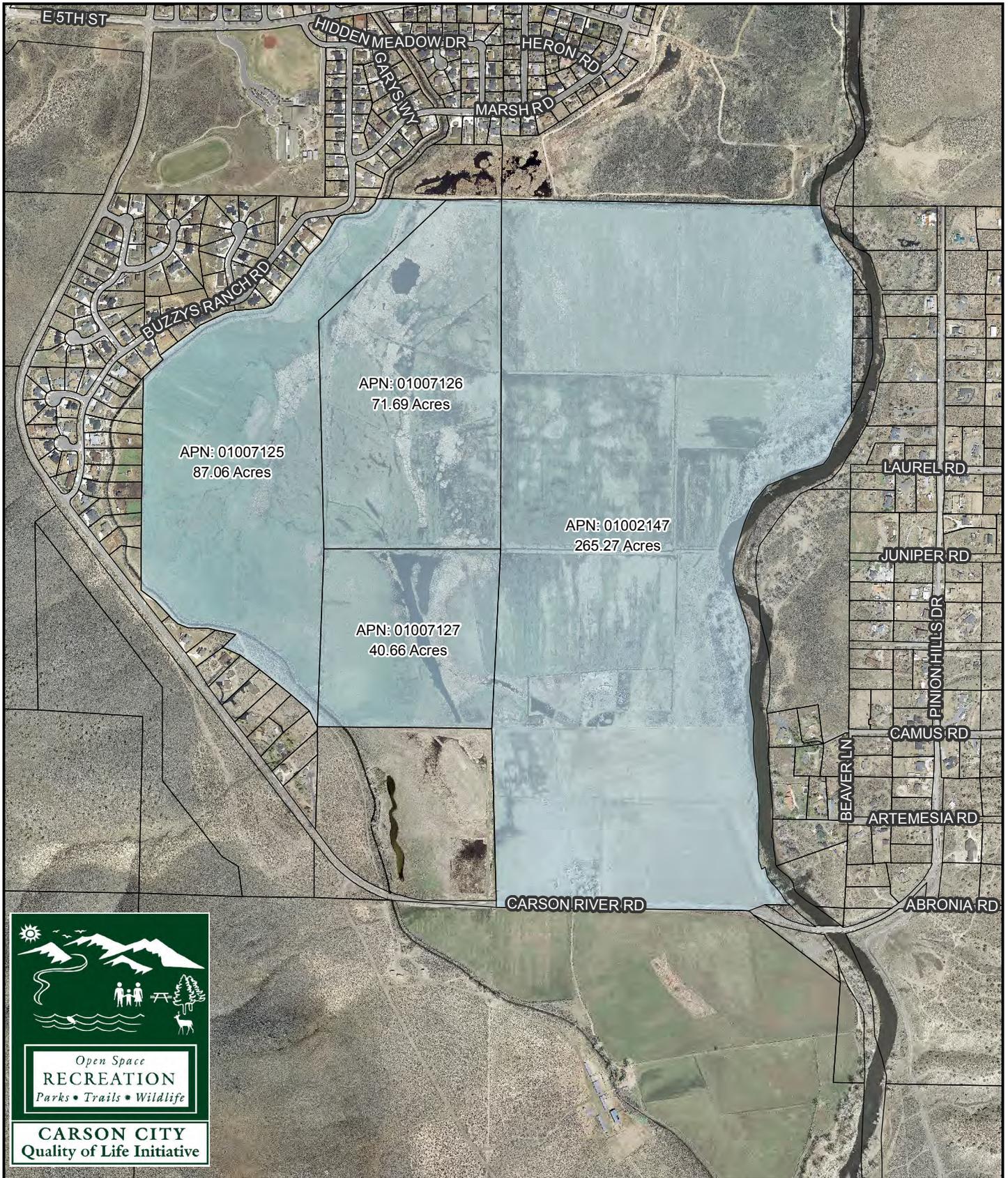
Motion: _____

1) _____

2) _____

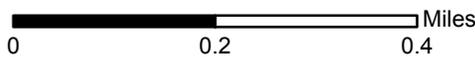
Aye/Nay

(Vote Recorded By)



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Carson City Open Space - Carson River Road -



THIS MAP IS PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF CARSON CITY FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY. IT DOES NOT REPRESENT A SURVEY. NO LIABILITY IS ASSUMED AS TO THE SUFFICIENCY OR ACCURACY OF THE DATA DELINEATED HEREON.

SNPLMA Round 18 Grant Proposal:

Carson River Trails Phase III - Prison Hill



Background and History



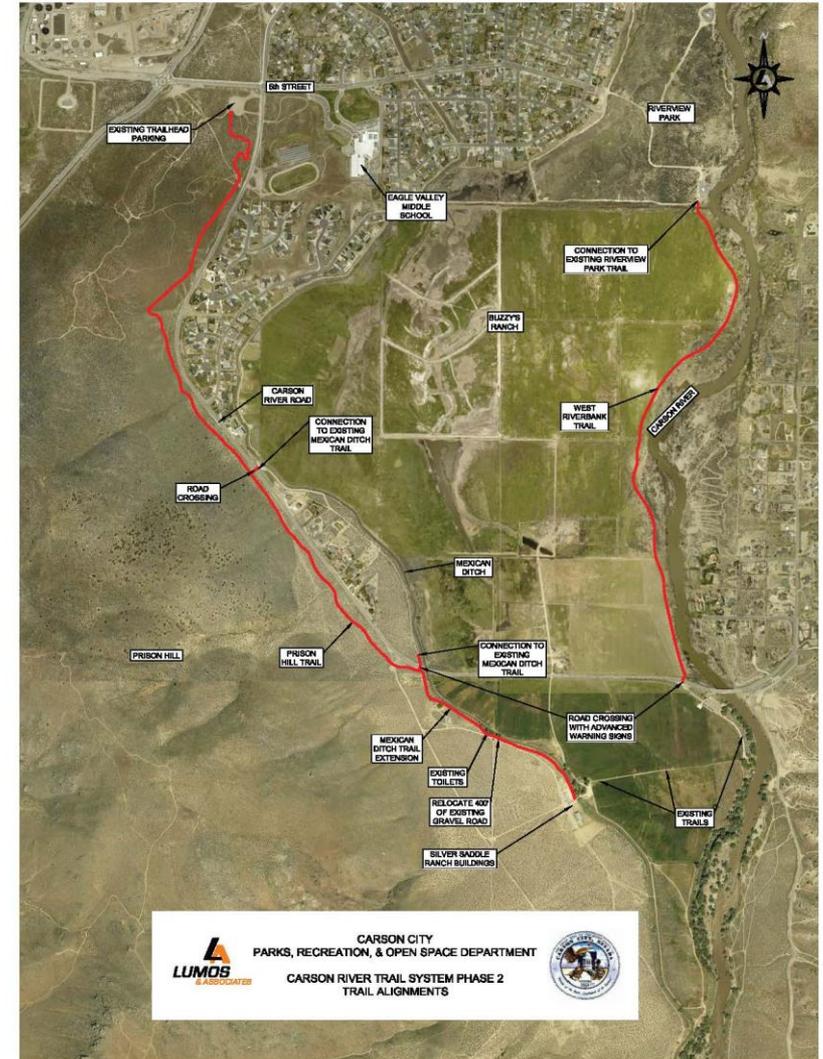
Planning for trails in the Carson River / Prison Hill area:

- **1995 – Eagle Valley Trail System.** A plan by Parks & Recreation Department, proposed a trail to circumnavigate Prison Hill.
- **1996 – Carson River Master Plan.** Created recommendations for trails.
- **2006 – Unified Pathways Master Plan (UPMP).**
- **2008 – Creating a Community Vision: Silver Saddle Ranch and the Carson River.** Community-wide effort, included recommendation for multi-use trail around Prison Hill.
- **2017 – Eagle Valley Trails Committee: Community Trail Inventory, Review, Evaluation and User Needs Report.** Community-wide volunteer effort.
- **2020 – Draft Prison Hill Master Plan** – includes recommendation for loop trail around Prison Hill, approved by OSAC June 2020.

- **Previous Carson City SNPLMA grant phases:**
 - Phase I -- Eagle Creek Bridge (connects Riverview Park with Empire Ranch).
 - Phase II -- Carson River Trails, Ranch Connection.

Phase II - under construction

- Connects 5th Street trailhead with Silver Saddle Ranch and the Mexican Ditch Trail.
- Connects Carson River Park with Riverview Park and the Empire Ranch Trail.
- About three miles of trail.



Strength of Nomination



Supports these PTNA strategic goals:

1. Promotes connectivity between new or existing recreational opportunities.
2. Connects and integrates projects from previous and new SNPLMA rounds.
3. Increases natural, cultural, and historical resource interpretation.
4. Protects or improves the integrity of resources to enhance quality of human experience.
5. Develops a recreational environment of diverse and holistic parks, trails, and natural areas.
6. Promotes projects that are representative of the environment (aesthetically cohesive).

Questions?

