



STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item: 11A

Report To: Open Space Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: February 22, 2021

Staff Contact: Gregg Berggren, Trails Coordinator, gberggren@carson.org

Agenda Title: Trails Coordinator Report: Activities related to trail projects managed by the Open Space Division, including updates on the SNPLMA grant project, Waterfall Trail/Kings Canyon Trailhead, Prison Hill Recreation Area, Carson River Aquatic Trail, and the Capital to Tahoe Trail.

Staff Summary: See below

Agenda Action: Other/Presentation

Time Requested: 10 minutes

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

On October 30, 2020, we hosted the ribbon cutting for one of Carson City’s largest trail projects ever – the Carson River Trail System, Phase II (see map attached), which was funded through a grant from the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA).

The project included three new segments of family-friendly trails totaling three miles:

- Prison Hill Trail East connects the 5th Street trailhead with Silver Saddle Ranch.
- Mexican Ditch Extension completes a missing segment of the Mexican Ditch Trail through Silver Saddle Ranch.
- Buzzy’s Ranch Trail connects Carson River Park with Riverview Park.

Together, these three segments of trail enhance connectivity with other trails in Carson City, enable endless possibilities for loops, and make it possible to walk or ride a bicycle or horse along five miles of the Carson River from Morgan Mill to Mexican Dam. A few small items remain to be completed in 2021, including the addition of interpretive panels at several locations.

The trails became popular almost instantly; below is our trail count data for November 2020-January 2021:

Year	Site	Jan	Nov	Dec	ADT	ADTx365	Days with data	Year start	Year end
2020	Buzzys Tr. - S End		3,120	1,901	68	24,977	37	2020-01-01	2021-01-01
	PH Trail E - 5th St		4,397	2,789	100	36,744	38	2020-01-01	2021-01-01
	SSR Bridge		2,760	2,637	86	31,545	37	2020-01-01	2021-01-01
2021	Buzzys Tr. - S End	3,184			103	37,493	25	2021-01-01	2022-01-01
	PH Trail E - 5th St	3,618			117	42,603	25	2021-01-01	2022-01-01
	SSR Bridge	3,519			114	41,435	25	2021-01-01	2022-01-01

Prison Hill Recreation Area

Motorized (OHV) Area

Updates are posted periodically at www.carson.org/ohv. We are currently waiting for clearance from the State Historic Preservation Office before moving forward with planned construction projects, hopefully this spring. This past November a group of OHV recreationists conducted a volunteer clean-up event (photo).



5th Street Trailhead

In August, the Great Basin Institute conducted training for a trail crew at our 5th Street Loop Trails. Their crew completed the connection of our Sagebrush Loop trail with the new Prison Hill East trail, at no cost to our Department. Also, staff placed four interpretive panels on the 5th Street Trails. We placed one panel for each loop – Sagebrush, Bitterbrush and Rabbitbrush, and a fourth panel was placed at the Ranch Overlook which highlights the 5000 acres of Carson City Parks and Open Space that may be viewed from this location. This RTP funded project is now 100% complete, and the new trailhead has become very popular as it provides access to a number of new trails. On weekends we have counted as many as 24 cars in the parking lot.



New interpretive sign on the Sagebrush Loop.



New interpretive sign at Ranch Overlook.

Carson River Aquatic Trail

With completion of the safety improvements to the crossing of the intake at the dam we are now able to move forward with exciting enhancements to the Carson River Aquatic Trail. Muscle Powered recently widened a segment of the once very narrow foot trail to the south of the dam, and the Carson Water Subconservancy District (CWSD) received a 2021 RTP grant that will include construction of a take-out adjacent to the foot trail just south of the dam. This will enable extension of the Carson River Aquatic Trail upstream to the River Fork Ranch in Carson Valley, effectively creating a 14-mile flatwater segment of river trail. Boaters will utilize the take-out, widened trail, and the new intake crossing to safely portage around the dam. In addition, the RTP grant will fund the placement of uniform signage throughout the length of the Aquatic Trail and the printing of a new map.

Waterfall Trail

Trail Improvements

We recently completed a project that included:

- Widening of the trail at the top near the waterfall, making it much safer.
- General maintenance on several segments of the trail.
- Decommissioning of several steep short-cut social trails.
- Removal of graffiti.
- Placement of several bounders on the north side of the waterfall to give it a more natural look.
- Decommissioning of the old trail along the creek, including replacement of missing signs, replacement of broken fencing, and additional fencing at both the top and bottom.

Kings Canyon Trailhead Status

We are currently reviewing the 95% plans that we recently received from Central Federal Lands. These plans incorporate several design modifications for the parking lot based on public and committee comments received at the RTC meeting on 6/10/20 and the joint OSAC/PRC meeting on 6/15/20. Design element changes include one-way access through the parking lot which will reduce the overall footprint and the required excavation, reduction of the number of parking spaces to 25 vehicles (from 30), relocation of the vault toilet and trailhead to be at the south end of the parking lot where it will be furthest from homes, addition of curb and gutter as well as ‘no parking’ signs to restrict parking outside of the parking lot, and new driveway connections to adjacent properties. We are waiting for confirmation of anticipated construction dates.

Capital to Tahoe/Lincoln Bypass Trails

Muscle Powered just received funding from two Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants to complete these projects! All environmental and cultural reports have been submitted to the USFS for the segment that will cross their property. The segment of the Capital to Tahoe Trail that passes through the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park was completed last summer by Muscle Powered, in part by a private contractor, and in part by volunteer builders. Recently, staff walked the entire alignment with members of Muscle Powered and the USFS District Manager and Recreation Officer. The USFS likes the alignment, supports the project, and committed to finalizing clearances in the near future. Our hope is to begin work on the Lincoln Bypass this spring or summer and complete it this year. Capital to Tahoe should be completed by 2022 at the latest.

WNC Trail Agreement

We signed an agreement with Western Nevada College to allow public access to the existing single-track trails on their property. Carson City, with the help of Muscle Powered, will assume responsibility for maintenance of these trails. This is another piece of the puzzle for completing trail connectivity on the west-side of town which will help to connect Foothill Drive and the V&T trail with trails further to the west. The Nevada Division of State Lands has property to the west of WNC on which exist desired trail connections. Prior to issuance of a license they have asked us to begin maintenance activities and placement of signage.

West-Side Trails Signage

Muscle Powered, working in cooperation with our Department and using funding they received from a Caesars Foundation Grant, has purchased wayfinding signs for various trails, primarily on the west-side of town. They began placement in



December and will continue throughout the winter and spring as weather permits. In addition to the wayfinding signage, this project includes a few small trail modifications and improvements with the hope that we can reduce the creation and use of social trails.

Centennial Trails

Plans include connections to Washoe Lake State Park, McClellan Peak, and eventually Virginia City. This is a multi-county project with several partners including Muscle Powered, Carson City, Washoe County, BLM, Culture and Tourism Authority (CTA) and the Great Basin Institute (GBI). Story County has also recently expressed interest. A 2021 RTP grant application submitted by GBI for Section 106 cultural analysis of the segment to Washoe Lake State Park was unsuccessful, so we are currently reviewing other options.

E-Bike Working Group

Public Works and the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department have jointly created an E-Bike Working Group which includes representatives from OSAC, PRC, BOS and RTC.

The group is reviewing existing Nevada Statutes related to E-Bikes, E-Scooters, and Bike Share programs, and looking at what other communities are doing, and then discussing whether Carson City needs our own Municipal Codes. We presented recommendations at the joint PRC/OSAC meeting and RTC in December. Synopsis of recommendations:

- No immediate need for Carson City ordinance on E-bikes. We can default to NRS which essentially allows E-bikes wherever standard bikes are allowed unless there are local restrictions.
- Moratorium on bike-share and scooter-share businesses until Carson City has an opportunity to develop an ordinance to regulate such businesses.

“Share the Trail” Campaign

Our trails are experiencing growth in usership, both in terms of numbers and the variety of users. These trends have seen a huge spike in the last year due to Covid-19 but are expected to continue even after Covid concerns go away. Along with these trends we are also beginning to see occasional conflict between the various user groups which include hikers, runners, bicycles, horses, strollers, wheelchairs, those with dogs, wildlife viewers, families with children, and more. We see a need to pro-actively manage these issues.

Often times people are simply are not aware of current trail etiquette and practices between user groups and so we beginning to address this through messaging and education. For example, all of our new trailhead signs display the yellow Trail Courtesy diagram and include various “Share the Trail” messages. One of those messages is the slogan “Go Slow and Say Hello”. In addition to signage we are currently working on a video that will share perspectives from various trail users and show examples of proper interactions which will always include “Go Slow and Say Hello”. The CTA is helping us with filming, and our own Ranger Kerver has offered to edit.





Trail Courtesy diagram and an example of our new signs.

