



STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item: 9B

Report To: Open Space Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: October 18, 2021

Staff Contact: Lyndsey Boyer, Open Space Manager, lboyer@carson.org
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Agenda Title: For Discussion Only: Senior Natural Resource Specialist and Open Space Manager Report - Activities related to projects managed by the Open Space Division, including updates within the Carson River corridor. (*Lyndsey Boyer*)

Staff Summary: See below.

Agenda Action: Other/Presentation

Time Requested: 15 minutes

Prison Hill Fire and Restoration

The Open Space Division was awarded the Dream Tags Charitable Fund on August 20, 2021, which provides emergency relief funding for restoration. A diverse seed blend has been purchased from Comstock Seed which will be aurally applied by helicopter later this fall. We hope to time the application with sufficient precipitation in the forecast so that the seeds can germinate and take root.

Photo monitoring points will be set up by mid-October in up to ten locations to document change over time. These locations will also be the starting points to lay permanent vegetation transects to evaluate native plant recruitment and invasion of non-native species. Follow-up monitoring will be conducted the following spring.

Community volunteer events are planned for this November. Volunteers will help direct seed and rake in native bunch grasses at the northern summit of Prison Hill. In addition, volunteers will be recruited to help collect local sagebrush seeds to propagate fall '22 sagebrush seedlings, grown by the Sagebrush in Prisons Project. Lastly, we plan to experiment with "sagebrush caching," a technique developed by Kent and Caleb McAdoo. This technique removes nearby adult sagebrush with ample seeds to re-stake in plant islands within the burned areas to augment the recruitment of sagebrush seedlings.

Prison Hill, OHV Area Baseline Monitoring Report

See agenda item 7 for updates on this item.

Carson River Updates

Eurasian watermilfoil

The Carson River Watershed Invasive Species Working Group was unable to meet this fall to assess the Eurasian watermilfoil issue due to the recent Caldor Fire and poor air quality. While the infestation in the river appears to decline as the weather cools, active monitoring and management are planned to continue next spring.

Canada thistle

Annual release of the Canada rust thistle fungus, *Puccinia punctiformis*, occurred in early October. This host-specific rust fungus can infect healthy Canada thistle, a noxious weed in Nevada. Since 2018, Open Space staff have been releasing and monitoring the effectiveness of the rust fungus in a formerly large Canada thistle patch near the Mexican Dam. Vegetation sampling along a permanent transect includes monitoring the density of Canada thistle, which appears to be reducing in number and is noticeably less healthy.



Counting Canada thistle individuals using a quadrat while vegetation monitoring.



Lyndsey Boyer, Open Space Manager releasing the Canada rust thistle fungus.

Community Programs and Education

While we have not hosted volunteer programs since mid-August, we are excited to have programs on the calendar for later this fall. On Friday, October 15th, Open Space staff plans to help support Snapshot Day, an educational and community-science volunteer stream monitoring event in the Carson River watershed. The following week on Tuesday, October 19th, we will be helping River Wranglers host Empire Elementary at Moffat Open Space. Rotations of students will help us outplant in a formerly burned area, while the other groups of students will engage in educational activities. We plan to lead a community volunteer planting program the following day to finish these efforts.

This November, Open Space staff plan to host 1-2 volunteer programs outplanting native grasses, forbs, and shrubs at a disturbed area along the new trail next to Buzzy's Ranch. This particular location was used as a staging area for large equipment when the trail was constructed in 2020. We are excited to restore and diversify this area to enhance the aesthetic value of the trail and make it more desirable for wildlife.

Cultural Review (Section-106 Projects)

Activities on lands conveyed during the 2009 Omnibus Public Land Management Act, including maintenance, require State Historic Preservation Office review under the 2012 Programmatic Agreement. As a result, staff have been working extensively over the last year to complete cultural reviews throughout Open Space to remain compliant with the PA and the NHPA and to allow for both projects and maintenance activities to take place.

Current and recent projects include:

- Prison Hill – West
- Prison Hill North Loop Fire – revegetation
- Pete Livermore Sports Complex Access Road – COMPLETE
- Class I Inventory of all OPLMA conveyed lands – COMPLETE
- Prison Hill OHV Area, Snyder memo – COMPLETE
- Silver Saddle Ranch Automatic Gate Project – COMPLETE
- Silver Saddle Ranch fencing – COMPLETE

In addition to the work being completed to ensure compliance with the NHPA and the PA, Carson City is also working with SHPO and the Nevada Site Stewardship Program (NSSP) to establish a volunteer monitoring program for the archaeological resources at Silver Saddle Ranch and Carson River Canyon. This will fulfill the monitoring obligations identified in the PA for existing historic resources identified on OPLMA conveyed lands. SHPO and Carson City will work to recruit, train, and manage volunteers who will monitor the archaeological resources quarterly to ensure no vandalism or theft is occurring. Staff met with NSSP coordinators in mid-August to begin establishing the program. Training for staff will be completed in March 2022, and training for volunteers will begin afterward. Staff are working with the Friends of Silver Saddle Ranch to identify volunteers from their group that will be responsible for the monitoring at Silver Saddle Ranch.

Kings Canyon Road and Trailhead

Kings Canyon Dirt Road

In 2019, Carson City was awarded \$142,000 from the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) to fund the repair of the first two miles of the dirt portion of Kings Canyon Road, from the Waterfall Trailhead up the saddle of Kings Canyon Road near Horsecreek Ranch. The project bid process was completed in August, and the construction contract has been awarded. Construction on the project will begin after completion of the Kings Canyon Trailhead project, anticipated for early to mid-November.

Kings Canyon / Waterfall Trailhead

See Trails Coordinator Report for an update on this project.

Land Acquisitions

See agenda item 6 for updates regarding the Old Woods Ranch conservation easement.

Personnel

No updates since previous report: 8-16-2021.

Quality of Life Celebration

The Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department is planning a celebration at Silver Saddle Ranch on Friday, October 29th, from 1:00 – 5:00 to celebrate the passage of the Question 18, Quality of Life Initiative in 1996. The passage of this ballot initiative has led to countless improvements in our community including land preservation, creation of exciting trail routes with regional connectivity and construction of new recreation facilities. Staff are so proud and excited to celebrate this incredible accomplishment within our community. Please join us at Silver Saddle for an afternoon of live music featuring the Sierra Sweethearts, cowboy poetry, wagon rides, refreshments and more!

Events (Carson River area and elsewhere)

Please see below for events put on by our Department throughout Open Space and Parks. For more information on joining an event, please visit our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/CCPRDept/>

Date	Event	Location	Primary Staff and/or Other Notes
Sat, October 9	Fall Tot Trot	Riverview Park	Park Rangers
Sat, October 9	Fall Colors Kayak	Twin Lakes	Recreation staff
Mon, October 11	Kayak on Lake Tahoe	Lake Tahoe	Recreation staff
Sat, October 16	Fall Colors Hike	Carson River Park	Park Rangers
Sat, October 16	Fall Hike	Marlette Lake	Recreation staff
Sat, October 23	Haunted Cemetery Tour	Lone Mountain Cemetery	
Thurs, October 28	Carson City Boo-nanaza	Mills Park	Dan Earp
Fri, October 29	Quality of Life Celebration	Silver Saddle Ranch	Lyndsey Boyer
Sat, Oct 30	Nevada Day Parade	Downtown Carson City	N/A
Thurs, November 4	Quality of Life Presentation	Board of Supervisors	Lyndsey Boyer Jen Budge
Fri, November 5	"Can't Dodge This" Dodgeball Tournament	Carson City MAC	Parks, Recreation & Open Space Dept
Sat, November 6	Silver Saddle Ranch Historical Tour	Silver Saddle Ranch	Park Rangers
Sat, November 6	Autumn Trail River Bikeride	Carson River Trail	Gregg Berggren
Fri, November 19	Fall Full Moon Hike	V&T Trail	Park Rangers
Sat, Nov 20	Jr. Ranger Day	Carson River Park	Park Rangers