



# STAFF REPORT

## Agenda Item: 6.C

**Report To:** Open Space Advisory Committee

**Meeting Date:** October 17, 2022

**Staff Contact:** Lyndsey Boyer, Open Space Manager, [lboyer@carson.org](mailto:lboyer@carson.org)

**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

**Staff Summary:** See Attachment 1 - Senior Natural Resource Specialist and Open Space Manager Report

**Agenda Action:** Other/Presentation

**Time Requested:** 10 minutes

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### **Proposed Motion**

N/A

### **Board's Strategic Goal**

Quality of Life

### **Previous Action**

N/A

### **Background/Issues & Analysis**

See Attachment 1 – Senior Natural Resource Specialist and Open Space Manager Report

### **Applicable Statute, Code, Policy, Rule or Regulation**

N/A

### **Financial Information**

Is there a fiscal impact?  Yes  No

## Senior Natural Resource Specialist and Open Space Manager Report

Lyndsey Boyer, October 17, 2022

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### **Bird Surveys**

Annual bird surveys along Buzzy's Ranch Trail and Riverview Park were completed in May and June of this year with the help of three talented volunteers who assisted staff with the surveys. Survey data indicated that overall bird diversity and counts have increased from 2020. This is in part to having such talented volunteers work with us, who were adept at identifying bird calls in addition to bird sightings. Staff hope to work with these volunteers in future years, as well as the potential to expand our survey locations throughout the river corridor to evaluate bird populations throughout the River Trail.

### **Community Programs and Education**

#### *Carson City Source Water Assessment Day*

On September 10, Carson City Public Works in conjunction with River Wranglers, Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space and the Carson Water Subconservancy District hosted the first Carson City Source Water Assessment Day. This event was geared toward families and kids of all ages. After a brief talk by City utility officials, participants were invited to walk to the North Kings Canyon intake structure. There, River Wranglers led water quality sampling using their fun and interactive test kits. Participants learned about the sources of the water that is routed to the Quill Water Treatment Plant for treatment, then put into pipes for delivery to Carson City homes. The event hosted a variety of exciting family friendly booths where kids experimented with watershed and flood models and learned about protecting and preserving their drinking water.



#### *High Water Mark Mural*

On August 11, Public Works in conjunction with the Carson Water Subconservancy District held the unveiling ceremony for the high-water mark mural, located along the Freeway Multiuse Path under the 5<sup>th</sup> Street overpass. This high-water mark project is an outreach tool designed to let people know their flood risk and to underscore how floodplains and open space work together to reduce their flood risk. Open floodplain lands reduce flood damage by allowing water to slow down, spread out and sink in. These lands also recharge groundwater and filter pollutants. A variety of agency partners (and snow cones!) were invited to share information with residents.



before the mural unveiling. Parks, Recreation & Open Space staff also assisted with development of the interpretive sign which includes FEMA, stormwater and Open Space information.

## **Carson River Updates**

### *Noxious Weed Abatement*

Spring was a busy season for treating noxious and invasive weeds. Jared Whitaker, Open Space Maintenance Coordinator began the season by applying pre-emergent herbicide in key locations this March to suppress summer annual weeds. Starting later in April through June, spot treatment of hoary cress was treated, followed by perennial pepperweed treatment in early July. A three-foot buffer was treated along most trails in the river corridor to maintain accessibility. Particular focus on treating weeds and maintaining open corridor along the Empire Ranch Trail was a high priority this year since the nearby trailhead parking area was being improved. Staff also worked with Great Basin Institute conservation crews to remove weeds and clear corridor along trail.

### *Pollinator Garden Project*

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, staff presented about pollinator plants and their importance to the inmates who are working with the Sagebrush in Prisons Project. This project, in partnership with the Institute for Applied Ecology, aims to grow pollinator friendly native plants for use in establishing pollinator gardens throughout the river corridor. The inmates are growing things like milkweed, penstemon, tansy aster and others – and working with school groups and community members the plants will be planted in several garden locations throughout the river corridor, including Carson River Park and the Buzzy's Ranch Trail. Planting dates will take place in October, check out our Facebook page for information on volunteering!

### *River Clean-up*

This year's annual staff river clean-up was held on August 2. Staff walked from East Silver Saddle Ranch to Ambrose Carson River Natural Area, picking up trash along the way. This year marked the lowest volume of trash removed yet, with only microtrash like cigarette butts and bottle caps remaining. Additionally, staff found an overall reduction of the Eurasian watermilfoil population, however some pockets still persist. Next year, staff will move a different reach of the river, Ambrose Carson River Natural Area to Morgan Mill Preserve and Open Space.

## **Carson City Sheep-Grazing Fuels Reduction Project**

2022 marked the 16<sup>th</sup> year of implementing an important fuel reduction project in western Carson City at the wildland urban interface. Following the 2004 Waterfall Fire that burned over 8,000 acres, the Carson City Open Space Division led efforts to address a flush of fine fuels (e.g. cheatgrass) using targeted sheep grazing during the months of April and May to reduce future fire threats. Two bands of approximately 1,400 ewes and lambs from the Borda Land and Sheep Company grazed the west side of Carson City from April-May. During this time, staff completed extensive monitoring to track before and after data on fine fuels removal, vegetation species diversity and recapture long-term repeat photos. Additionally, staff lead an interpretive talk on April 26 at the C-Hill



Trailhead on McKay Drive, offering community members a firsthand look of the sheep in action, as well as an opportunity to learn more about the project.

### **Forest Legacy Parcel – Site Visit**

On September 26, Open Space staff spent the day visiting the parcels at the top of Ash Canyon that were acquired in 2009 with Forest Legacy Program funding. Given the location, many staff had not visited the property. Staff spent the day evaluating the condition of the trees and fuel load at both properties. These properties are currently on the list for naming, with the proposal of 'Ash Canyon Gateway' which was the name of the Forest Legacy Project at the time of acquisition. Staff found the property to be in good condition, though some areas showed diseased trees and accumulation of fuels that will be addressed.



### **Kings Canyon Road**

Road repair, maintenance and drainage improvements were completed in March 2022. The dirt road portion from the Kings Canyon Trailhead to the entrance to Horsecreek Ranch is now passable by high clearance vehicles. Users should still exercise caution during weather events and avoid traveling the road during storm events as wet, muddy conditions may still be present.

### **Land Acquisitions**

#### *Clear Creek*

*No Updates since previous report: 2-22-2022*

#### *Old Woods Ranch*

Since approximately 2007, Carson City has been in discussions with the landowners of the Old Woods Ranch, LLC property to potentially enter into a conservation easement. The property consists of two parcels totaling 130 acres, located between Kings Canyon Road and U.S. Highway 50 West. The landscape includes irrigated lands, conifer forest, sagebrush uplands and a riparian area with mature aspen. The parcels are adjacent to the Carson City held Horsecreek Ranch conservation easement, and one parcel includes the southern part of the irrigated pasture that spans both properties. The other parcel is adjacent to Tahnu Leweh Open Space. The properties are identified on the Carson City Open Space Opportunities Map as potential for acquisition based on values of scenic views, watershed protection and wildlife habitat.

Carson City has been working in partnership with the Nevada Land Trust (NLT) to identify strategies and funding sources to preserve this property. Additionally, NLT has been working closely the past few years with the landowners of Old Woods Ranch, LLC to identify their needs related to the tenets of the conservation easement. Recently, the family has come to agreeable terms related to the draft easement and is ready to proceed with vetting the tenets of the easement with NLT and staff. The primary area of interest to the City would be whether public access to the property would be granted to allow for future trail connectivity between the Ash-to-Kings Trail and Clear Creek.

Additionally, in 2020 an application to the Forest Legacy Program (FLP) was submitted by the Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) in conjunction with NLT and Carson City to fund the acquisition. NDF

administers the FLP, whose mission is to: “protect ‘working forests’, those that protect water quality, provide habitat, forest products, opportunities for recreation and other public benefits”. The application submitted included two additional properties that NLT is also coordinating preservation of to strengthen the nomination because larger tracts of land receive greater consideration under the grant program criteria. The two other properties are in Washoe Valley and upper Clear Creek and are not associated with Carson City. The total cost for these acquisitions is estimated to be approximately \$4.125 – 5.7 million, depending on appraised value. If awarded, a 25% match will be required for the grant, but Carson City would only be responsible for helping with matching funds for the Old Woods Ranch portion, which is estimated to be approximately \$50,000; however, final matching amounts are dependent on appraised value, as well as costs for appraisals, environmental site assessments, staff time, surveys etc. In the summer of 2022, FLP announced that the application is tentatively approved for funding, pending a commitment of match from the respective partners.

Next steps for Carson City include coordinating a site visit for OSAC members and staff with NLT and the Old Woods Ranch, LLC next spring. After, the draft easement will be brought before OSAC for consideration and recommendation of matching funds to the Board of Supervisors in April 2023.

### **Pollinator Parade**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual ‘Bee Kind Carson City – Protect Pollinators’ Pollinator Parade was held Saturday June 25 to celebrate June which is Pollinator Month. Several other educational events were held throughout June to celebrate Pollinator Month, including a display at the Carson City Library and a Bee Hotel Tour with a group of elementary school students.

### **Prison Hill Fire and Restoration**

Follow-up monitoring of the burned area on Prison Hill took place in early May. Staff were delighted to find an abundance of native wildflowers growing throughout the burn, as well as native shrubs beginning to resprout. It’s still too early to start seeing seeded species emerging, but staff anticipate seeing recruitment of seeded species in the spring of 2023 as the site received significant precipitation following aerial seeding in December 2021.

### **Personnel**

- **Senior Natural Resource Specialist:** Georgia Vasey ended her position with Carson City in the beginning of August. Samantha Essig started as the new Senior Natural Resource Specialist just following Georgia’s departure. Sam joins us with a wealth of technical knowledge of noxious weed abatement and restoration techniques, previously working for the Walker River State Recreation Area in Yerington.
- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Chelsea Kincheloe returns to Carson City as the new full- time Volunteer Coordinator, starting in the beginning of September. Chelsea had previously worked for the Department in 2018 as the AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer Coordinator and was responsible for establishing the first Volunteer Program for our Department.
- **Recreation Intern:** Casey Fox spent the summer working for the Open Space Program as the Recreation Intern – assisting with trail maintenance projects throughout Open Space, and the Prison Hill OHV Area.
- **Trailhead Caretaker:** Gillian Hammons started with the City in August as our first Trailhead Caretaker. This is a rebranding of the Silver Saddle Ranch Caretaker – Gillian assists with facility opening and closures, along with maintenance projects throughout Open Space.
- **Open Space Maintenance Worker:** Markoz Domingues started as the first full time Maintenance Worker in the Open Space program. He will assist our Maintenance Coordinator with maintenance



tasks throughout our Open Space Areas.

### **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/>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Primary Staff and/or Other Notes</b>
Sat, May 7	Kid's Community Fishing Day	Bailey's Pond	
Sat, May 7	Mother's Day Botany Walk	Dead Truck Canyon	Park Rangers
Sun, May 8	Silver Saddle Ranch – Historic Tour	Silver Saddle Ranch	Park Rangers
Sat, May 14	FOSSR Spring Open House	Silver Saddle Ranch	Lyndsey Boyer
Sun, May 15	Spring Full Moon Hike	Wildhorse Trail	Park Rangers
Sat, May 21	Kids to Parks Day; Junior Ranger Adventure	Mills Park	Park Rangers
Wed, May 25	Choose Your Cruise Bike Ride	TBD	Gregg Berggren
Sat, June 4	National Trails Day	Kings Canyon Trailhead	Gregg Berggren
Sat, June 11	Adopt-a-Trail Clean-up	Mexican Ditch Trail	Amy Bridgham
Sun, June 19	Tails and Trails	Riverview Park	Park Rangers
Tues, June 28	Camp Carson Field Trip	East Silver Saddle Ranch	Recreation staff
Sat, June 25	Bee Kind, Carson City - Pollinator Parade	Farmer's Market	Lyndsey Boyer
Sun, July 3	Silver Saddle Ranch - Historical Tour	Silver Saddle Ranch	Park Rangers
Sat, July 9	Summer Tot Trot	Prison Hill, 5 <sup>th</sup> Street	Park Rangers
Sat, July 30	Scorpion Search	Wildhorse Trail	Park Rangers
Tues, August 2	Camp Carson Field Trip	East Silver Saddle Ranch	Recreation staff
Sat, August 6	Carson River Bike Tour	Morgan Mill – Mexican Dam	Park Rangers
Thurs, August 11	Summer Full Mook Hike	N. Kings Canyon	Park Rangers
Sat, August 13	Jazz and Beyond 'Day in the Country'	Silver Saddle Ranch	
Sat, August 27	Bird Walk	Carson River Park	Park Rangers
Sun, Sept 4	Silver Saddle Ranch - Historic Tour	Silver Saddle Ranch	Park Rangers
Sat, Sept 10	Coyote Walk	Carson River Park	Park Rangers
Sat, Sept 10	CASI 5k Walk/Run Fundraiser	Riverview Park	CASI
Sat, October 15	Light after Dark Run/Walk Fundraiser	Riverview Park	AEDV
Sat, October 15	Prison Hill OHV Area Grand Re-Opening	Prison Hill OHV Area	All staff
Sat, October 22	Haunted Cemetery Tour	Lone Mountain Cemetery	Park Rangers

## Budget Update

Below is the Quality of Life – Open Space budget approved by the Board of Supervisors in May 2022.

REVENUES	ACTUAL PRIOR YEAR ENDING 6/30/2021	ESTIMATED CURRENT YEAR ENDING 6/30/2022	BUDGET YEAR ENDING 6/30/23	
			TENTATIVE APPROVED	FINAL APPROVED
TAXES				
County Option 1/4 Percent Sales and Use Tax				
Other	3,811,924	3,811,925	3,811,925	3,811,925
INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUES				
Federal Grant	1,594,938	342,477	-	-
State Grant	1,762	-	-	-
Other Local Government Grants	-	22,275	-	-
SUBTOTAL	1,596,700	364,752	-	-
CHARGES FOR SERVICES	1,504	-	-	-
MISCELLANEOUS				
Interest	9,356	20,000	20,000	20,000
Gifts/Donations	1,650	29,195	-	-
Other	7,368	9,900	-	-
SUBTOTAL	18,374	59,095	20,000	20,000
SUBTOTAL, REVENUE ALL SOURCES	5,428,502	4,235,772	3,831,925	3,831,925
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES:				
OPERATING TRANSFERS IN (Sched T)				
General Fund	-	-	-	-
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE				
TOTAL BEGINNING FUND BALANCE	3,028,878	4,843,794	150,000	290,268
TOTAL AVAILABLE RESOURCES	8,457,380	9,079,566	3,981,925	4,122,193
EXPENDITURES				
Culture and Recreation				
Park Maintenance				
Salaries & Wages	82,432	117,183	124,657	182,001
Employee benefits	21,906	29,572	33,310	63,875
Services & Supplies	215,775	564,394	288,215	288,215
Capital Outlay	-	241,769	111,785	111,785
SUBTOTAL	320,113	952,918	557,967	645,876
Parks Capital				
Salaries & Wages	-	-	-	33,208
Employee benefits	-	-	-	19,151
Services & Supplies	59,701	72,688	55,266	55,266
Capital Outlay	305,290	2,229,472	832,132	832,132
SUBTOTAL	364,991	2,302,160	887,398	939,757
Open Space				
Salaries & Wages	293,708	452,139	475,423	589,296
Employee benefits	140,699	182,426	197,553	257,351
Services & Supplies	242,808	544,043	507,802	507,802
Capital Outlay	1,418,958	3,509,102	351,992	178,321
SUBTOTAL	2,096,173	4,687,710	1,532,770	1,532,770
TOTAL EXPENDITURES-ALL FUNCTIONS	2,781,277	7,942,788	2,978,135	3,118,403
OTHER USES				
OPERATING TRANSFERS OUT(Sched T)				
Debt Service Fund	642,686	644,005	645,372	645,372
General Fund	189,623	202,505	208,418	208,418
ENDING FUND BALANCE	4,843,794	290,268	150,000	150,000
TOTAL FUND COMMITMENTS AND FUND BALANCE	8,457,380	9,079,566	3,981,925	4,122,193

CARSON CITY  
SCHEDULE B  
FUND: QUALITY OF LIFE

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