

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: June 27, 2016

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 4A

STAFF: Ann Bollinger, Open Space Administrator
Rich Wilkinson, Senior Natural Resource Specialist

REQUEST: Staff update on activities, projects and grants located within the Carson River corridor.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

The following provides a summary of activities throughout the last few months in the Carson River Corridor.

BLM and White Trash Brigade Work Day

Ranger Costello focuses his efforts on city-owned properties, but he also inspects common sites for illegal dumping on BLM, U.S. Forest Service, and privately-owned lands. Recently, he coordinated a clean-up along Sedge Road and Brunswick Canyon with the BLM and the White Trash Brigade. On Sunday June 5th, 21 volunteers from the White Trash Brigade and two BLM staff arrived to help clean-up illegal dump sites. Many volunteers worked an entire day from 8am to 5pm. A 30-yard dumpster was filled, and yet there was more to pick up.

From the White Trash Brigade Facebook Page, May 1:

Prison Hill meeting Update. Few things were covered. John explained that there were a few areas of concern at this moment. These areas are a combination of BLM land and Carson city public land. The land is being used as an illegal dump site. James is going to coordinate the removal while working close with the Open Space Division Park Ranger, John Costello. The BLM looks to be providing the dumpster. Sounds like a 20 yard container is going to be needed. We discussed ideas and options and how to protect the area and ways to end illegal dumping in the Carson area. This is a good time if you are local and want to get involved with supporting clean and open access for everyone to enjoy. We are proud to be partnering with the local agencies and hope to build a long term relationship. John is easy to work with and he is dedicated to protecting our public lands. Thank you John and thank you everyone that is involved and supporting the white trash brigade.

[#whitetrashbrigade](#) [#onebagatatime](#) [#carsoncity](#) [#blm](#) [#parkranger](#)



White Trash Brigade clean-up event, Sedge Road and Brunswick Canyon area – June 5, 2016

Carson River Clean-Up Day

September 17th is the next annual Carson River Clean-Up Day. Sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Sierra Nevada and the Carson City Kiwanis, the event will be hosted at Silver Saddle Ranch again. The Carson High School Junior ROTC will assist with clean-up activities and the public is invited as well. A BBQ lunch will be provided afterwards.

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act grant application

The final grant application requested \$1.8 million dollars towards several trail improvements on the Prison Hill Recreation Area, Mexican Ditch Trail, Silver Saddle Ranch, and the old Buzzy's Ranch. Due to questions and concerns regarding the trail along the old Buzzy's Ranch, the application identified this trail as a "Secondary Objective". That is, staff stated that wildlife surveys would need to be conducted to determine whether there would be wildlife impacts along this section of trail. There were 18 total applications received. After the initial review, Carson City's application ranked as #9. The first committee's recommendation was to fund the top 12 projects. There are at least two more reviews prior to the final recommendation to the Secretary of Interior.

Carson City Weed Coalition

Staff has been working with the Carson City Weed Coalition to spend the remaining fiscal year funds for noxious weed treatment along the Carson River corridor. The field inventory and mapping started in March and has continued through June. All mapping data will be submitted to the EDDMapS West database. These are remaining funds through the Carson Water Subconservancy District and the Nevada Department of Agriculture/United States Forest Service grants, which expire on June 30th.

The treatment areas include:

- Carson River Canyon Open Space
- Arraiz acquisition (Freeway Multi-Use Path)
- Ambrose Carson River Natural Area
- Silver Saddle Ranch
- Morgan Mill Preserve Open Space
- The Old Buzzy's Ranch
- Vidler-donated property

Targeted weeds include:

- Canada Thistle
- Hoary Cress
- Perennial Pepperweed
- Russian Knapweed
- Yellow Starthistle

June is “Invasive Species Awareness Month” and the Carson City Weed Coalition set up a month long display at the Carson City Library. The display shows the importance of proper weed management, control, and how detrimental noxious weeds are to Carson City and our natural resources. The Coalition hopes to educate and inform everyone in the community about the problems of noxious weeds and their personal responsibility to control and help manage the problems.

On June 15th, the Carson City Weed Coalition hosted a public invasive weed workshop to continue education and outreach to our community. The workshop was held at the Carson City Community Center. It covered proper plant identification, herbicide use and application, equipment calibration, and herbicide/noxious weed laws. The event was funded entirely by the Carson Water Subconservancy District and it was free for everyone to attend. The goals were to spread the word about the importance of weed treatments and identify who is responsible for treating noxious weeds in Carson City.



Carson City Weed Coalition display at the Carson City Library

Carson River Canyon

With our new Park Ranger, the City's presence in the Carson River Canyon area has been increased. Our cleanup efforts have increased and new signs that emphasize rules and regulations have been installed. The majority of the Park Ranger's contacts are educational; however, during the evenings and weekends, the bulk of the contacts continue to be illegal camping and campfires. Staff always carries water in our vehicles and has had to extinguish unattended campfires in the past. While there are still illegal activities (illegal dumping, graffiti, campfires, camping and shooting), there has been an improvement in the overall appearance of the canyon. Our goals for the Carson River Canyon will continue to be to encourage healthy passive recreation in this area while enforcing rules and regulations. Throughout the Memorial Day weekend, Ranger Costello contacted eight groups regarding camping, extinguished two illegal campfires, and advised one group regarding target shooting. He has been advising citizens about the modifications of the existing gate and new closing hours.



New signage



Abandoned vehicle

Staff is working with a local contractor to modify the existing Bertagnolli gate with signs that only allow access from dawn to dusk. The modification of the gate will include conversion into an automatic gate that closes with a solar powered photocell. This gate will help reduce the late night activities and help minimize negative impacts to the area.



Existing swing gate Brunswick Canyon Road heading east into Carson River Canyon

Ducks Unlimited

Staff has been working directly with John Ranlett, Biologist with the Ducks Unlimited office in Northern California. Staff just received a final preliminary design plan set from Ducks Unlimited on June 14th. According to John Ranlett, all of the items listed as suggested changes have been addressed in the new plans. Ducks Unlimited intends on starting and completing construction this fall although there are concerns that the area will be too wet for heavy equipment. Staff has asked John Ranlett to start installing fence first, which will allow the ability to manage cattle during the project. Staff will provide another update once we have had time to review the preliminary design for the wetlands enhancement project.

Golden Eagle Lane project

On May 19th, the Board of Supervisors approved the recommendation from OSAC to submit a grant application to the Nevada Division of State Lands Question #1 Program for erosion control and watershed improvement projects near Golden Eagle Lane. Staff is completing the grant application for \$40,000 to help provide enough funding to complete the project.

Prison Hill Recreation Area, 5th Street Trailhead:

Staff submitted a grant application to the Recreational Trails Program for the 5th street trailhead improvement and trails re-alignment project. Presentations to the review committee are scheduled for June 28th. There were 15 total applications received for motorized and non-motorized trail projects. There is no specified award date, but typically the Nevada Division of State Parks sends out a notice of award and an authorization to proceed sometime in the fall. The estimated project costs are anticipated to be around \$250,000. The project will improve the 5th street trailhead as identified in the Unified Pathways Master Plan and rehabilitate over two acres of non-sustainable trails. This project will complement the work previously completed by staff. This work included installing split rail fencing and boulder placement to close access for OHV users and install signs that show no motorized vehicle access.

Riverview Park and Church of Latter Day Saints Workday

Staff worked with the Church of Latter Day Saints to clean up the Carson River and hiking trails in Riverview Park. The event took place on Saturday, May 14 from 8am until 12:30pm. During the event, volunteers picked up one bag of trash and wrapped/ re-wrapped 128 cottonwood trees for protection against beaver damage. In total, 65 people participated in the volunteer event.



Volunteers from the Riverview Park tree wrapping and cleanup project May 14, 2016

Silver Saddle Ranch

- Upcoming events:
 - June 13 – Friends of Silver Saddle Ranch monthly board meeting
 - July 9-10 – Eagle Valley Dog Tracking Club
 - July 11 – Friends of Silver Saddle Ranch monthly board meeting
 - August 7 – Jazz and Beyond concert
 - August 8 – Friends of Silver Saddle Ranch monthly board meeting
 - August 13 – Muscle-Powered BBQ / Picnic
 - September 12 – Friends of Silver Saddle Ranch monthly board meeting

- Staff worked with a local arborist to improve tree health, remove dead limbs and minimize safety hazards for trail users along the River Trail at Silver Saddle Ranch. The work occurred in May and Open Space staff continues to improve resource conditions at the Silver Saddle Ranch.



Arborist removing dead limbs along River Trail at the Silver Saddle Ranch

RECOMMENDED ACTION: This agenda item is for informational purposes only. No formal action can be taken at this time.