

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: June 27, 2016

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 4B

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

REQUEST: Staff update on activities, projects and grants located throughout Open Space Properties.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

The following provides a summary on the activities throughout the last few months throughout other areas of Carson City.

Acquisitions

- Old Woods Ranch: This 130-acre parcel is located just south of the Horsecreek Ranch conservation easement and includes the southern part of the irrigated pasture. Staff is actively working with the family towards a conservation easement including an application for grant funding from the Forest Legacy Program. The Nevada Division of Forestry is also working with the family to develop a forest stewardship plan.
- Schulz Investments LLC: Consisting of two parcels, these parcels are located along U.S. Highway 50 west and near the Hutchinson acquisition and Horsecreek Ranch conservation easement. Staff is actively working with the family on a conservation easement on 135 acres, possibly to be combined in a project with the Old Woods Ranch conservation easement.
- W. Michael Fagen: Staff has actively been working towards a fee title acquisition with Mr. Fagen. Due to financial limitations, Mr. Fagen is agreeable to a trade and/or other options. Currently, staff is reviewing a parks parcel for a potential trade. On June 7th, the Parks and Recreation Commission approved a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to pursue a land exchange provided that geotechnical surveys and appraisals do not exceed 20% of the parcel's value. A Major Project Review is scheduled on June 21st with City staff to determine whether there are any city-wide concerns or needs for this parks parcel. A geotechnical survey and possible trenching will be conducted to determine if the subject parcel lies along an earthquake fault. The survey will also evaluate the development potential of the property. If the above steps are successful, staff will prepare a grant application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund in late summer 2016.

National Trails Day

On Saturday, June 4th, 15 volunteers participated in trail maintenance on the Ash Creek Trail. The planning efforts and crew leaders were led by Muscle Powered and many volunteers are also Muscle Powered members. Four volunteers joined us from American Buildings, and coffee and pastries were donated by Starbucks. The Ash Creek Trail was identification for maintenance in preparation of the Epic Rides mountain bike event on June 17-19.



National Trails Day

Nevada Stateline-to Stateline Bikeway

Similar to one section on the South Demonstration Project, the Nevada Department of Transportation is utilizing the Construction Manager-at-Risk (CMAR) process. Granite Construction was hired to act as the CMAR and is currently acquiring construction quotes. Bids should be presented at the NDOT Board in early August and construction on the parking area near Ponderosa Ranch and the tunnel at Tunnel Creek should begin this fall. Trail construction will likely occur during Spring 2017 and Spring 2018.

In Carson City's political jurisdiction, the segment from Sand Harbor State Park to Spooner Summit or also known as the "Central Corridor", the U. S. Forest Service has been contracted to complete the Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA is expected to take one year to complete. The Incline Village General Improvement District, as well as Nevada Energy, are looking at the options to co-locate utilities within the trail corridor.

Additionally, Washoe County has led the efforts for a Signage Master Plan along the bikeway including way-finding signage, vista points, etc.

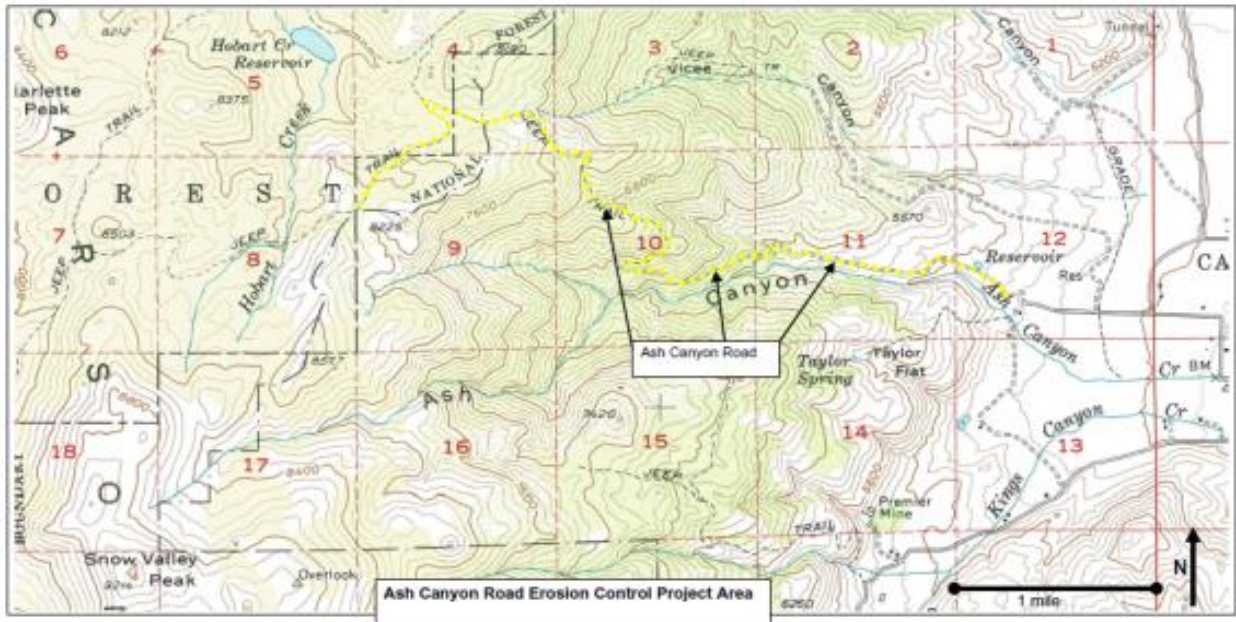
Tours

Staff participated in two annual presentations: 1) Carson Water Subconservancy District's Get on the Bus Tour and 2) the Chamber of Commerce Leadership Institute – Quality of Life Tour. Each year, the Carson Water Subconservancy District conducts a two-day Carson River watershed tour from Alpine County down to the Stillwater Wildlife Refuge. The Open Space Program is a featured speaker to discuss the ballot initiative, land protection and land

management along the Carson River. The Chamber of Commerce Leadership Institute is another annual occurrence. The focus differs each year. This year, our department focuses on the 20th Anniversary of the Quality of Life Initiative. The presentation was taken on the road and for 2½ hours, we toured projects funded by the sales tax.

Ash Canyon

Staff is planning a volunteer workday in the fall to plant and re-seed two new disturbed areas in Ash Canyon. These areas have been impacted by OHV use over the years. The result of this usage has caused erosion affecting Ash Creek and the Carson City Municipal water supply. Our goals for the project are to close access at two locations and to re-plant and re-seed the disturbed areas with desirable vegetation.



Fuels Reduction Project using Sheep

Staff has been monitoring our fuels reduction project in the wildland urban interface on the west side of Carson City. The sheep were delivered behind Greenhouse Garden Center on April 7th. They focused on the lower portions of our interface, adjacent to all of the residential areas. The contractor (Borda Land and Sheep) delivered 750 sheep and 1,100 lambs on the west side, and they grazed targeted areas for approximately 6 weeks. Staff monitors specific locations prior to grazing, post grazing and at the end of the growing season. While monitoring each site, staff looks for impacts on the cheatgrass, desirable vegetation, and soils. Two of the monitoring tools used for this project include stubble height and landscape appearance measurements. These monitoring techniques help determine utilization of plants by the sheep during the project. Pre-grazing monitoring occurred from April 3rd - June 2nd. Post grazing monitoring occurred from April 19th - June 2nd. The end of the growing season monitoring will occur in September. Staff noted that the areas grazed appeared to have minimal utilization during the project. The abundant spring rains resulted in new germination and further growth of the plants. The sheep are just one tool to help reduce the fire risk to our community. Residents are encouraged to utilize precaution measures around their home as well.



Pre-grazing April 25, 2016



Post-grazing late May 6, 2016



Approximately 1850 sheep released on April 7, 2016 behind Greenhouse Garden Center

Horsecreek Ranch

- The annual monitoring visit for the conservation easement is scheduled for June 20th.
- Staff has planned a Muscle Powered trash mob weed pull for the Horsecreek Ranch on Saturday, July 17. We will be meeting at 8:00am and drive up to our destination. Because access is difficult, we will need to carpool to Horsecreek Ranch and 4-wheel drive vehicles are required. If any members of the Committee would like to participate, please contact staff.

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