



# STAFF REPORT

**Report To:** Board of Supervisors

**Meeting Date:** July 6, 2017

**Staff Contact:** Ann Bollinger, Open Space Administrator

**Agenda Title:** For Possible Action: To approve the Open Space Advisory Committee's Annual Report for 2016.

**Staff Summary:** Carson City Municipal Code Section 13.06.090 requires that the Open Space Advisory Committee provide an annual report of their activities to the Board of Supervisors. The attached report contains information on the activities of the Open Space Division organized into the following categories: Acknowledgements, Activities and Events, Capital Improvement Projects, Land Acquisitions, and Land Management. (Ann Bollinger, abollinger@carson.org)

**Agenda Action:** Formal Action/Motion

**Time Requested:** 15 minutes

## **Proposed Motion**

I move to approve the Open Space Advisory Committee's Annual Report for 2016.

## **Board's Strategic Goal**

Quality of Life

## **Previous Action**

N/A

## **Background/Issues & Analysis**

As required by ordinance, staff has prepared the report on behalf of the Open Space Advisory Committee describing the most notable activities of the Open Space Division carried out in 2016. It is staff's intention to use this report as a communication tool in presenting the functions and successes of the Open Space Division.

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

Carson City Municipal Code 13.06 – Open Space

## **Financial Information**

Is there a fiscal impact?  Yes  No

If yes, account name/number:

Is it currently budgeted?  Yes  No

Explanation of Fiscal Impact:

## **Alternatives**

Not to approve the Annual Report

**Board Action Taken:**

Motion: \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

Aye/Nay

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Vote Recorded By)



# OPEN SPACE



## Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department

### Report to the Board of Supervisors of the Open Space Advisory Committee Activities January – December 2016

Dear Mayor Crowell and Board of Supervisors,

As required by Section 13.06.090 of the Carson City Municipal Code, it is my honor to present to you the following report of the activities conducted by the Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) in 2016. The information provided is arranged into the following categories:

- Acknowledgments
- Activities and Events
- Capital Improvement Projects
- Land Acquisitions
- Land Management

Per request from the Open Space Advisory Committee, the Acknowledgements category was added to specifically highlight extra assistance provided to the Open Space Program. This includes grant awards and volunteers efforts.

### Acknowledgements

#### Grant Awards

Project Name / Area	Grantor	Grant Award	Period	Quality of Life-Open Space contribution (cash or in-kind)
<b>Ash Canyon Road</b>				
	319(h) Nonpoint Source Stormwater Planning / Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP)	\$10,000	Ends 12/31/2017	\$10,000
<b>Carson River Trail System, Phase 2 – Ranch Connections</b>				
	Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act	\$1,843,685	Not yet received	\$50,000
<b>Golden Eagle Lane Erosion Control</b>				
	Carson Water Subconservancy District (CWSD)	\$75,000	6/30/2017	
	State of Nevada Conservations and Resource Protection (Question 1)	\$40,636	6/30/2017	\$34,364
<b>Prison Hill Recreation Area, 5<sup>th</sup> Street Trailhead</b>				
	Recreational Trails Program / Nevada State Parks and Federal Highways Administration	\$200,000 (pending cultural clearances)	Not yet received	\$41,141

## Volunteer Activities and Events

Summary: The Open Space Division proudly recognizes volunteer efforts provided by individuals and organizations. While this summary only recognizes those who have submitted official applications, have official agreements, and/or have participated in scheduled activities, the Open Space Division acknowledges and appreciates any and all who help to clean and maintain our precious lands.

Mr. Dick Wipfli remains engaged and regularly patrols Ash Canyon and Kings Canyon by motorized means. Mr. Paul Sinnott assists in the Prison Hill Recreation Area with trash clean-up and trail repair. Muscle-Powered continues to help plan and maintain single-track trails throughout Carson City. The Friends of Silver Saddle Ranch have been very involved with management of lands along the Carson River, particularly the Silver Saddle Ranch.

### Award Recognition from the Foundation for Carson City Parks and Recreation

The OSAC is proud to report that the Carson High School Navy Junior ROTC (NJROTC) received the award for Organization of the Year from the Carson City Foundation for Parks and Recreation. The NJROTC has partnered with the Open Space Division on many programs along the river. Below is a copy of the nomination.

### Carson River Cleanup Event

The Annual Carson River Cleanup event took place on Saturday, September 17, from 8 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. 210 Carson High School Naval Junior ROTC Cadets and 60 volunteers from our community worked on the cleanup of the Carson River Canyon Open Space and Ambrose Carson River Natural Areas. The cadets helped clean approximately 1.5 miles of the canyon by breaking up firepits and removing trash and debris. The White Trash Brigade, a four wheel drive group, helped to cleanup areas that were difficult to access. They removed car parts, televisions, and household garbage. About a week later, two volunteers from Mallard Realty returned to remove an old boat from a canyon east of Sierra Vista Lane. There was a \$100 donation received anonymously which helped purchase lunch for the volunteers. Overall, the group removed approximately 40 cubic yards of waste during this event. The Carson City Kiwanis and the Kiwanis Club of Sierra Nevada also helped with the cleanup and provided a barbecue lunch for all participants. The Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF), State Motor Pool Division, and Carson City Recreation Division provided vans for transporting the cadets into the canyon. Waste Management kept the cost of the event down by donating two 30-yard dumpsters. The Kiwanis Clubs helped to break up an illegal campsite and wrapped cottonwood trees for protection against beaver damage.

### **Organization of the Year: Carson High School NJROTC**

*Carson High School's Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program was established in 1974. Sometimes struggling to maintain 100 cadets in the early years of the program, it has now evolved into being one of the largest units in Nevada and the west coast. This year's current enrollment is 275 cadets, which is an increase of 37 cadets from last year. The program is cadet run under the watchful eye of the instructors. The cadets are very proud of their unit and love giving back to the community. The NJROTC has assisted the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department with two specific projects: 1) the annual Carson River Cleanup Event and 2) wrapping wire around cottonwood trees to protect them from beaver damage. The NJROTC has assisted with the Carson River Cleanup Event for the past nine years. In 2016, the NJROTC had 209 volunteers who helped remove illegal dump debris, remove fire pits and pickup household garbage along the Carson River. This group focused their efforts in Carson River Canyon and they removed 30 yards of debris from Carson City Open Space. Last year at the Ambrose Carson River Natural Area, the NJROTC cadets helped wrap chicken wire around 300 trees to protect them from beaver. Our department looks forward to continued efforts with the NJROTC.*

Church of Latter Day Saints Workday

Staff worked with the Church of Latter Day Saints to clean up the Carson River area 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.

Eagle Scout Candidate Jake Kordonowy – Ash Canyon

Jake is a local scout who joined up with the Open Space Division to complete a volunteer project and earn his rank as an Eagle Scout. He selected one project phase of erosion control work in Ash Canyon. The project funding was through a grant from NDEP, 319 Nonpoint Source Grant Program. It is part of an ongoing effort to meet objectives identified in the Ash Canyon Erosion Control Plan established by Carson City in 2014. Jake recruited 45 volunteers from Carson City, local scout groups, NDF and the Masonic Lodge #1. Staff worked with a local contractor to place logs across “access routes” into the eroded areas, scarify soils, and help dig holes for plants. Volunteers planted 498 trees and shrubs and reseeded 6,000 square feet of bare soil. NDF donated the seed, pine logs and staff time to assist with the planting.



Church of Latter Day Saints, Riverview Park – May 14, 2016



Eagle Scout Jake Kordonowy and volunteer group, Ash Canyon – October 2016



Ash Canyon erosion control and reclamation project

### Muscle Powered Trash Mob Event(s)

Muscle Powered conducts monthly Trash Mob events throughout Carson City, which is an hour-long event focused on the trash clean-up of one specific area. In 2016, the Open Space Division was the direct beneficiary of two of those events. Led by Mr. Randy Gaa, 14 volunteers attended the March event and focused on cleanup of East Silver Saddle Ranch along Sierra Vista Lane. The project started at Lloyd's Bridge and continued south, removing trash, tires and other garbage along the Carson River.



Muscle Powered Trash Mob event, East Silver Saddle Ranch – March 2016

In July and at the inaugural Trash Mob/bull thistle dig at Horscreek Ranch, 11 volunteers were treated to the exclusive opportunity to visit the ranch. Staff worked with the Dan Anderson (Carson City Weed Coordinator) to organize the bull thistle dig. Former Open Space Manager Juan Guzman joined the event and enthusiastically shared his knowledge and history of the area. Landowner Mr. Michael Fagen was also present and he expressed his sincere appreciation with the volunteers. The event was a great success and approximately 18 fifty-gallon trash bags of bull thistle was removed. This effort reduced the potential of further weed spread into the Clear Creek drainage and Carson River watershed.



Volunteer crew digging bull thistle at Horscreek Ranch Saturday, July 16, 2016

### White Trash Brigade Work Day

Park Ranger John coordinated a clean-up event between the White Trash Brigade, a local off-highway vehicle group, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The June event focused on area around Sedge Road and Brunswick Canyon. Approximately 21 volunteers from the White Trash Brigade and two BLM staff helped to 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.



White Trash Brigade, Sedge Road and Brunswick Canyon area – June 5, 2016

## **Activities and Events**

In addition to volunteer efforts, the OSAC is very pleased to be engaged with various environmental education activities and other events throughout the year.

### Carson High School

Staff continued to work with Ms. Julie Koop and Carson High School's Honors biology class to finish the monitoring project in Quill Ranch. The project started in 2012 with a grant from the Dream Tags Charitable Fund at the Community Foundation of Western Nevada to address a Russian knapweed infestation and to provide students with an outdoor education opportunity. Students were taught about wildlife observations, plant identification, re-seeding methods and how to collect vegetation data. The grant for this project will end in 2016. Mrs. Koop intends on writing an abstract about the project that will highlight the results of the Russian knapweed treatment and the re-establishment of desirable vegetation.

Additionally, staff worked with River Wranglers, Ms. Koop and her high school class, and local elementary school students at the Ambrose Carson River Natural area. This is an annual event where staff teaches high school age students different activities such as water quality testing, re-seeding and monitoring techniques, tree wrapping, micro invertebrates, wildlife habitat and the Carson River watershed. The high school students will teach what they learn to elementary school age children during their trip to Ambrose.

### Carson River Snapshot Day

In November, staff participated in the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Carson River Snapshot Day at Carson River Park. The NDEP and the Carson River Coalition Education Working Group co-sponsored this event. Snapshot Day offers students, parents, and educators the chance to experience the river first-hand and interact with resource experts who care for this lifeline that connects our communities. Snapshot Day data is collected from

multiple sites at the same time on the same day, documenting an annual “snap shot” of the river. The primary purposes of this event are to document and study riparian habitat, measure water quality, and increase the public’s awareness of our precious watershed. Under the guidance of resource experts, student monitoring teams conduct field tests for dissolved oxygen, conductivity, pH and temperature. Additional water samples were collected for laboratory analysis of nutrients, turbidity and bacteria. Monitoring teams also complete a habitat assessment of their site, which includes visual observations and photo documentation of vegetation and stream conditions. The event had 55 4<sup>th</sup> grade students from Carson Montessori School along with their parents and teachers. There were five educational stations which included water quality, habitat, invasive weeds, floodplain /watershed and flood modelling. Staff explained the benefits of treating invasive weeds and how the weeds negatively affect water quality, native plant communities, and wildlife habitat.

### National Trails Day

On Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 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 were 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.

### Silver Saddle Ranch

There were several events in 2016, and there is the potential for more events in the future.

- Friends of Silver Saddle Ranch: Monthly Boards Meetings, Spring Open House, and Christmas Open House
- Escape from Prison Hill half marathon and 10k running events
- Sheriff’s Office Mounted Unit training
- Eagle Valley Dog Tracking Club
- Jazz and Beyond concert
- Carson River Clean-Up Day and BBQ lunch

In 2016, the Jazz and Beyond Music Festival inquired about the potential of hosting a concert venue at Silver Saddle Ranch. The event held on August 7<sup>th</sup> was hosted by the Mile High Jazz Band in conjunction with the festival and the Quality of Life Initiative 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. Four bands played across two stages, with the main “stage” being a flatbed truck donated by Meeks Lumber and Hardware. Approximately 250 folks visited the venue throughout the day. The Wild Ass Women were present with their adopted burros and two food trucks were on-site for attendees to purchase food and drinks. Ann Bollinger and City Manager Nick Marano welcomed the audience and said a few words about the Quality of Life Initiative. Also present were Mayor Crowell, Supervisor Bagwell, and Supervisor Bonkowski. The event was a success, and the festival organizers look forward to another year.







Silver Saddle Ranch: Event hosted by the Mile High Jazz Band in conjunction with the Jazz and Beyond Music Festival and the Quality of Life Initiative 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – August 2016

### Tours

Staff participated in two annual presentations: 1) CWSD's Get on the Bus Tour and 2) the Chamber of Commerce Leadership Institute – Quality of Life Tour. Each year, the CWSD 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

CWSD – Open Space Tour: As a result from comments received on their annual Carson River Watershed Tour and made possible through a grant, the CWSD planned the first in-depth tour of the watershed. Carson City was selected for the inaugural tour, and in October, staff conducted a half-day tour of open space properties along the Carson River. The tour was open to the public and about 16 people were in attendance. An evaluation was given after the tour and all response were positive.

## **Capital Improvement Projects**

### Carson River Trail System, Phase 2 – Ranch Connections

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA): 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. Carson City's project ranking was #5 out of 18 applications.

### East Shore Trail

Previously referred to as the Nevada Stateline-to Stateline Bikeway, the East Shore Trail saw the completion of some important construction elements to the North Demonstration Project (Incline Village to Sand Harbor) in 2016. Managed by the Nevada Department of Transportation, Granite Construction was hired to act as the Construction Manager-at-Risk (CMAR). A new tunnel at Tunnel Creek was installed below Highway 28, which will allow recreationists to travel safely from one side of the highway to the other. Trail construction will continue 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.

#### Golden Eagle Lane Erosion Control Project

The project area is located at the south end of the Prison Hill Recreation Area, adjacent to the Golden Eagle Open Space. The project goal is to reduce erosion and improve the watershed directly above the Carson River. Staff received two grant awards (CWSD and the Nevada Division of State Lands Question #1 Program) to assist in the watershed stabilization measures. Project design and construction should be completed in 2017.

Old Buzzy's Ranch Wetlands Enhancement: In cooperation with Ducks Unlimited, three ponds were expanded to attract migrating waterfowl. Levees were constructed to accommodate access and water control structures were installed to assist in the management was water levels.

#### Prison Hill Recreation Area, 5<sup>th</sup> Street Trailhead

A grant application was submitted to the Recreational Trails Program for the trailhead improvement and trails re-alignment project. The project will improve the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Trailhead as identified in the Unified Pathways Master Plan and rehabilitate more than two acres of non-sustainable trails. The project has been tentatively awarded pending cultural review clearances. Muscle Powered has offered to help with the trail design, layout, and construction. It is hoped that project design will begin in 2017 and potentially project construction as well.

## **Land Acquisitions**

While no acquisitions occurred in 2016, work continued on two previously approved projects and will continue into 2017.

#### Old Woods Ranch and Schulz Investments properties

The Old Woods Ranch LLC owns 130 acres which includes forested land and the southern portion of the meadow shared by Mr. Fagen/Horsecreek Ranch. Staff has actively been working with the family as well as with NDF and the Nevada Land Trust towards a conservation easement and an application for grant funding from the Forest Legacy Program. The NDF is also working with the family to develop a forest stewardship plan.

Consisting of some family members of Old Woods Ranch LLC, the adjacent Schulz Investments LLC properties consists of two parcels 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 property

Mr. W. Michael Fagen owns 20 acres along U.S. Highway 50 and near the Clear Creek interchange. The

parcel is important for a regional trail connection between Clear Creek and Kings Canyon. Staff has actively been working towards a fee title acquisition with Mr. Fagen and hopes to successfully complete an acquisition in 2017.

As of December 2016, approximately 6,900 acres of land have been protected or obtained through purchases, donations, or transfers with a Quality of Life / Question 18 cost of \$10,437,282. Grants or other supplemental funding have provided \$8,606,757 for a total of cost of \$19,069,569.

## Land Management

### Ash Canyon

In 2012, the Open Space Division received the first 319(h) grant specific to Nonpoint Source Stormwater Planning from the NDEP. Two years later, the Ash Canyon Maintenance and Erosion Control Plan was finalized. With the grant, the City committed to preparing and implementing the plan as funding allows with the project objective to reduce erosion from Ash Canyon Road and thus sediment in Ash Canyon Creek, a municipal water source for Carson City. With another grant award for \$10,000 in 2016, two non-sustainable roads were closed and rehabilitated through planting and seeding efforts (see Eagle Scout Jake Kordonowy's project above). The Open Space Division annually budgets \$10,000 to maintain Ash Canyon Road, which fulfills a cash match requirement for the NDEP 319 grant. In May, a local contractor worked from mile marker .05 up to mile marker 2.5, performing this year's Ash Canyon Road maintenance. The work included smoothing out ruts, removing excess sediment, and repairing existing water bars.

### Silver Saddle Ranch

Staff has been working hard on maintenance projects and improvements around Silver Saddle Ranch. Activities have included weeding, mowing, pruning, watering, and repairing bridges. Staff worked on replacing broken fence posts around the red house, replacing rehabilitation area fences, replacing wood planks and applying wood preservatives on the bridges.

### Fuels Management

Fuels management on acquired lands, as well as natural parks and the wildland-urban interface, is a top priority for the Open Space Division. Our well-received fine fuels management program through the use of sheep continued. The 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year with targeted sheep grazing was conducted April – May, lasting 6 ½ weeks. Due to recent past and predicted drought conditions and the desire to maintain desirable species, just one band was used to graze herbaceous fuels on less than 2,000 acres. 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.



Sheep grazing project – April 2016

In addition to the grazing option, the Open Space Division also hires contractors to assist with mechanical removal of grasses and shrubs. On the Prison Hill Recreation Area, staff worked with the Carson City Fire Department to complete mowing treatment of 15 acres which had been masticated previously by BLM while under their management. This mastication site had accumulated substantial fine fuels such as tumble mustard, cheatgrass and foxtail. These fuels tend to dry out early and become an easy ignition source

increasing the potential of fires. The Carson City Fire Department provided a fire watch and had fuel crews identify and remove hazards for the operator.

### Park Ranger Patrols

With our new Park Ranger, the City's presence in the Carson River Canyon area has been increased. Cleanup efforts have increased and new signs that emphasize rules and regulations were 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. Water is always carried in the vehicles and it 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. The goals for the Carson River Canyon will continue to be to encourage safe, passive recreation in this area while enforcing rules and regulations.



New signage



Abandoned vehicle

On behalf of our Committee and staff, thank you very much for the opportunity to present this report.