



STAFF REPORT

Report To: Open Space Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: October 15, 2018

Staff Contact: Ann Bollinger, Open Space Administrator
Lyndsey Boyer, Senior Natural Resource Specialist

Agenda Title: For Discussion Only: Activities, projects, and grants located on Open Space properties within the Carson River area

Staff Summary: see below

Agenda Action: Other/Presentation

Time Requested: 5

Proposed Motion

N/A

Board's Strategic Goal

Quality of Life

Previous Action

N/A

Background/Issues & Analysis

Biocontrol Project

The Carson City Weed Coalition (CCWC), in coordination with the Nevada and Colorado Departments of Agriculture have been working on a biocontrol experiment examining the efficacy of a naturally occurring fungus, *Puccinia punctiformis* used to reduce Canada thistle populations along the Carson River. Two sites were selected for inoculation – Morgan Mill Preserve Open Space and Mexican Dam Open Space. At both of these sites, baseline monitoring was conducted prior to inoculation with the fungus to estimate the cover of Canada thistle. Inoculation with the fungus was completed over the course of several days in September and October. The fungus is applied by sprinkling it on the rosettes of the Canada thistle. If inoculation was successful, spores will be visible on the plants by next spring. The fungus is naturally co-occurring with Canada thistle, and will only impact the growth and reproductive ability of the Canada thistle, without harming other plants. If successful, reduction in the Canada thistle populations will be evident over the next several seasons. This fungus is one more tool in our Integrated Pest Management (IPM) toolbox, allowing us to treat noxious weeds without the use of chemicals.



CCWC Coordinator, Marenna Disbro applies the fungus to Canada thistle.



Canada thistle is one of the species of focus for treatment in Carson City.

Carson River Canyon Open Space

The repairs to the road were completed at the end of June. The erosional scar has been stabilized and backfilled with materials. Additionally, the slope of the road was adjusted to allow for water runoff on the opposite side of the road as the scar, preventing additional erosion from taking place. Increased staff presence in Carson River Canyon has reduced illegal activities such as dumping and camping. When the gate becomes fully operational, illegal nighttime activity will be further reduced. Previously there were significant amounts of graffiti in various areas of the canyon. Abatement is being accomplished by painting over the graffiti with flat, earth-tone spray paint in an effort to “camouflage” the graffiti. More traditional methods for graffiti removal aren’t appropriate for many of our open spaces so we have adopted this method and feel that it is efficient and effective. The amount of graffiti has now been greatly reduced and abatement is on-going.

Lastly, in August a fire started at the Carson City Rifle & Pistol Range and burned into the canyon, scorching much of the slopes as well as down to the Carson River. In October, staff will be conducting revegetation and slope stabilization activities in attempt to mitigate erosion.



Carson River Canyon after the Rifle Range Fire in August.

East Silver Saddle Ranch

The Public Works project for road reconstruction of Sierra Vista Lane and trailhead construction with grant funding from the Federal Lands Access Program is 100% complete. Staff was waiting for the manufacture and installation of the light-poles that are located near the restroom shelters at both trailheads. With the project finally complete, staff has begun implementing additional site improvements as identified in the conceptual site plan developed by Design Workshop. Jared Whitaker has been working to incrementally close motorized access to the river by installing bollards.



Bollard installation.



Completed bollards preventing motorized access in the riparian area.

Additionally, in the month of September several volunteer events were held at East Silver Saddle Ranch. A small event was held for National Day of Service in which volunteers learned about the improvements on the site and picked up 80 lbs of trash in a short amount of time. Next, working with 189 cadets from the NJROTC, 420 lbs of garbage from the river and surrounding roads were picked up. Lastly, on National Public Lands Day, four volunteers worked with staff to learn about beaver and cottonwood ecology, and wrapped 25 trees with chicken wire to prevent beaver damage.



Volunteers help clean-up East Silver Saddle Ranch on National Day of Service.



NVJROTC cadets search for trash and debris in the sagebrush.



Lyndsey Boyer delivers beaver ecology lesson to volunteers.



Volunteer wraps a small cottonwood to protect it from beavers.

Eurasian Watermilfoil

Eurasian Watermilfoil, a category-A aquatic noxious weed, has been identified in the Mexican Ditch and Carson River. This plant is extremely aggressive and has the potential to negatively impact waterways by outcompeting important native riparian vegetation and clogging up culverts and irrigation structures. The Carson City Weed Coalition is working with the Nevada Department of Agriculture to develop a treatment plan for the removal of this plant. Treatment will start this fall and continue into next season.



Eurasian Watermilfoil.

Prison Hill Recreation Area, 5th Street Trailhead

In January, GPS information for all proposed trail loops that will connect to the trailhead as a part of this project was collected. In March, staff met with Carson City Public Works staff to discuss the proposed trail loops, as well as to discuss a design for the facilities (picnic table/shelter and vault toilet). Currently, Public Works staff is working to gather estimates, design options and trail work information so that the bidding and contract process can be executed for this project. Additionally, staff has been working to review and provide comment to the 60% and 90% design plans. Once the plans are 100% finalized, the project will be ready to be sent to bid for construction. Construction on this project is anticipated for late fall 2018, or spring of 2019.

Silver Saddle Ranch

Silver Saddle Ranch hosted two successful events over the summer. One was the annual Jazz and Beyond event, and the other was the first wedding ever held at Silver Saddle Ranch while under Carson City management.

In addition to events, Open Space Maintenance Coordinator, Jared Whitaker has been busy working to improve and maintain the Silver Saddle Ranch and the Red House complex. Some activities include: weed abatement, beaver activity management on the Mexican Ditch and vegetation management, working to clear corridor along roads and trails. Additionally, he has been working extensively on improvements to the Open Space Maintenance Shop. He has increased our tool inventory, created a secure storage area, as well as building work benches and other necessary items in order to be able to build and fabricate signs, fencing and other projects.



Before: willow encroachment on the road/trail to the Mexican Dam.



After: pruning and removing willows along the road/trail.

Poo Poo Project: Teton Raptor Center, this program aims to prevent avian death by covering vents on vault toilets. A staff member from the BLM made us aware of this project, and subsequently vents were installed on both vault toilets at Silver Saddle Ranch. Additionally, other vault toilets Department-wide will be outfitted with these vents as they are inexpensive and easy to install. More information on this project can be found here: <http://tetonraptorcenter.org/our-work/poo-poo-project/>

Silver Saddle Ranch Stewardship Plan/SHPO

Staff has been working with State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and an architectural historian to develop a baseline survey and monitoring protocol for the historic structures at Silver Saddle Ranch, which will be incorporated as part of the stewardship plan. Phase 1 of field work and monitoring of the historic structures was completed at Silver Saddle Ranch in September. Now that field work has been completed, consultants will work to evaluate the condition findings, and prepare treatment and maintenance recommendations. Once the report is complete, the SHPO will be able to move forward with creating an architectural stewardship and monitoring program for Carson City.

All events:

Date	Event	Location
Sat, July 21	Jr. Naturalist/Carson Explorers	SSR
Sat, Aug 4	Capital Climb Trail Run	(West Side)
Sat, Aug 4	Environmental Education: Parks, Recreation and Open Space	SSR
Sat, Aug 4	Thistle-a-thon	Horsecreek Ranch
Wed, Aug 8	Tot Trek	Riverview Park
Wed, Aug 8	Boys & Girls Club Clean-up	Fulstone & path
Sat, Aug 11	Environmental Education: Local Plant Identification	SSR
Sun, Aug 12	Jazz and Beyond - A Day at the Ranch	SSR
Mon, Aug 13	FOSSR Monthly Meeting	SSR
Sat, Aug 18	Environmental Education: Wildlife, Predators and Prey	SSR
Sat Aug 25	Wedding	SSR
Sat, Aug 25	Environmental Education: Bear Aware	Carson River Park
Mon, Sept. 10	FOSSR Monthly Meeting	SSR
Tue, Sept. 11	National Day of Service, Trash Clean-up	E. SSR
Sat, Sept 15	NJROTC Carson River Clean-up	E. SSR
Sat, Sept 22	National Public Lands Day, Cottonwood Wrapping	E. SSR
Sat, Sept 22, 7:30am-12:00pm	FOSSR Bird Walk	SSR
Mon, Oct. 8	FOSSR Monthly Meeting	SSR
Sat, Oct. 13, 7:00pm-9:00pm - NOTE EVENING TIME	FOSSR Star Gazing	SSR
Sat, Oct 20	Fall Colors Hike	Carson River Park/Mexican Ditch Trail
Sat, Dec 8	FOSSR Holiday Open House	SSR

Applicable Statute, Code, Policy, Rule or Regulation

Carson City Municipal Code 13.06.140 - Maintenance and management

Financial Information

Is there a fiscal impact? Yes No

If yes, account name/number: N/A

Is it currently budgeted? Yes No

Explanation of Fiscal Impact: N/A

Alternatives

N/A