



# STAFF REPORT

**Report To:** Open Space Advisory Committee

**Meeting Date:** April 15, 2019

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

**Agenda Title:** For Possible Action: Discussion and possible action regarding an update to the budget for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 and approval for full funding of a full-time Trails Coordinator position.

**Staff Summary:** See below

**Agenda Action:** Other/Presentation

**Time Requested:** 10 minutes

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Since review and recommendation of the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget, staff would like to provide a couple updates to the Committee.

- Salaries – Full-Time Positions
  - Park Ranger: The previous staff report suggested that 35% of the salary be funded from Quality of Life – Open Space account. After further discussions, there will be a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to fund the position 100% from the General Fund, but in a supervisory capacity.
  - Trails Coordinator: The previous staff report suggested that 25% of the salary be funded from Quality of Life – Parks account or the General Fund. After all citywide funding requests were submitted; the Internal Finance Committee inquired whether the Culture and Tourism Authority (CTA) could fund the requested 25%. Conversations with CTA have been initiated, and it is believed there is sufficient funding in the current agreement. The current agreement expires on June 30, 2019; however, it is currently being reviewed for edits and updates for the following year(s). If funding cannot be secured from the CTA, staff is requesting approval from the OSAC for full funding for a full-time Trails Coordinator position at an approximately total cost (salary and benefits) of \$69,000 (updated and lower calculation).
- Fire Suppression:
  - “The citywide contract with the Nevada Division of Forestry will be going down significantly for the next fiscal year. Currently, the citywide contribution is \$150,000 and will be going down to \$10,750. This will significantly reduce each department’s contribution, freeing up some funds for other important items. This is obviously a dynamic budgeting tool, so we should always be prepared for it to go up, but we will enjoy the lower cost for now while it lasts.”
  - In the past, the Quality of Life – Open Space budget has been charged \$37,500 for ¼ of the cost. With the new calculation, approximately \$2,688 will be charged for the next fiscal year.

The Board of Supervisors will review and discuss the budget on April 18<sup>th</sup>.

## **Trails Coordinator**

If approved as a full-time position, the purview of the Trails Coordinator will be expanded beyond the Open Space Division and include all trails managed by the Department including paved pathways and other trail linkages throughout the City.

With the introduction of the Carson Off-Road Event to Carson City and publicity by the Cultural and Tourism Authority of Carson City as an outdoor and trail destination, trail demand and use has increased exponentially. Likewise, the Department has received increased requests for trail events.

### **Successes and accomplishments, April 2017 – January 2019:**

- **Unified Pathways Master Plan (UPMP)** – The Trails Coordinator was the lead to update the UPMP to include non-motorized, single-track trails based on the recommendations of the Eagle Valley Trails Committee. Completed March 2018.
- **Signage Master Plan** – The Trails Coordinator was the lead to develop a Signage Master Plan for the Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department. Completed March 2018.
- **City Development Plans** – The Trails Coordinator participated in city review of development plans located near or adjacent to public lands and provided comments related to trails and the Unified Pathways Master Plan, notably the Centennial Drive and Drako Way proposals.
- **Grants** – Involved in the application process of four successful grants totaling \$483,000:
  - **Land and Water Conservation Fund grant, \$250,000** – Helped to write this grant for purchase of the 206 acre Hamm property for Open Space.
  - **Nevada Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) grant, \$33,000** – Helped to write this grant and answered questions from the Nevada OHV Commission. This grant resulted in the creation of a Prison Hill Recreation Area OHV Management Plan in 2018.
  - **Nevada Off-Highway Vehicle grant, \$100,000** – Reviewed grant before submittal and answered questions from the Nevada OHV Commission. This grant will help fund layout and design and boundary designation/fencing for the Prison Hill OHV Area.
  - **Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant, \$100,000** – Reviewed grant prior to submittal and presented to the RTP Commission in Las Vegas. This grant will help fund layout and design of the Prison Hill OHV area.
- **Completed trail construction projects:**
  - **Foothill Trail / V&T Trail extension (1.1 miles)**. Worked with several partners on this project, including Carson Tahoe Health, Eagle Valley Children’s Home, Nevada Department of Transportation, the Greenhouse Project, and Muscle Powered. Celebrated National Trails Day with completion of the Foothill Trail with more than 40 participants including Mayor Crowell, Supervisor Abowd, Carson Tahoe Hospital COO Michelle Joy, members of Eagle Valley Trails Committee, Muscle Powered, Great Basin Institute, Carson Valley Trails Association, and Tahoe Rim Trail Association.

- **Wild Horse Trail (1.3 miles).** Worked with the Bureau of Land Management to amend our Recreation and Public Purpose Lease at Centennial Park to include non-motorized trails, which permitted us to construct this trail.
  - **Secret Trail (1.7 miles).** Worked with Muscle Powered on this project which was used at part of the Carson City Off-Road (Epic Rides) in 2018.
- **Aquatic Trail Map** – Coordinated an update and revision of the map which is scheduled for publication prior to the 2019 boating season.
- **Ash-to-Kings Trail connection to Clear Creek** – Worked with Muscle Powered to establish alternative routes.
- **Eagle Scout and Navy Junior ROTC (NJROTC) Projects**
  - Eagle Scout project constructed two bridges on Foothill and V&T Trails.
  - Eagle Scout project constructed two trail segments and placed two benches on north end of Prison Hill Recreation Area.
  - NJROTC project constructed a bridge on the Foothill Trail.
- **East Silver Saddle Ranch** – Project lead on development of a design for site improvements.
- **Media promotion of trails** – Several local newspaper articles; guest editorial in the Nevada Appeal and Carson Now celebrating trails; monthly “Trail Tales” article in PROS newsletter; Facebook video about Carson City trails in winter.
- **Nevada Division of State Lands (NDSL)** – Obtained right-of-entry from NDSL to perform trail and trailhead work on relevant properties associated with Carson City trails.
- **Established positive working relationships** with many groups and organizations, including the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Nevada State Parks, Muscle Powered, Carson Valley Trails Association, Pine Nut Mountains Trails Association, Nevada 4-Wheel Drive Association, Douglas County, Carson Tahoe Health, Carson City Culture and Tourism Authority, and a variety of local vendors.
- **Collaboration with our AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteers on several projects including:**
  - Adopt-A-Trail
  - Interpretive programs
  - Signage
- **Co-Chair of the Eastern Sierra Trails Coalition** – Helped to organize, coordinate, and facilitate the annual Trail Summit.
- **International Trails Symposium** – Member of the committee that is working to bring this large, national conference to our region in 2021. We will potentially be able to showcase the outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation that our area offers.

## The Next 3-5 Years:

- **Ambrose Carson River Natural Area** – Working on a trail plan which will include a new interpretive trail, a new River Trail, and a connection to the residential area on Deer Run Road.
- **Prison Hill Non-Motorized area** – The non-motorized portion of the Prison Hill Recreation Area offers significant opportunities for passive recreation. Many of the trails are either ‘user built’, or they are abandoned two-track roads, and they require realignment, maintenance or decommissioning. In addition, many new trails can be built, all with a goal of creating a network of fun, interesting and sustainable loops and connections. Some of the many in-progress and proposed projects include:
  - The 5<sup>th</sup> Street Trailhead and Trails Improvement Project. The Trails Coordinator is part of the team that is working this existing grant-funded project. Construction oversight will be essential to ensure a quality result.
  - A multi-use, family-friendly loop trail around the base of Prison Hill Recreation Area
  - A new, sustainable connection from the 5<sup>th</sup> Street trails to the North Loop
  - A proposed loop high on the hill that winds through unique rock formations and seeks ever-changing views. This trail is so exciting that we have proposed naming it “Odyssey”, which is defined as a ‘spiritual quest’.
- **Prison Hill OHV area** – The Trails Coordinator is the lead on this on-going grant-funded project that involves working with partners, consultants, residents and non-profit organizations. The goal is to create safe and fun recreational opportunities for all recreationists on the south end of Prison Hill, while simultaneously protecting the natural resources and respecting adjacent private property. In the last 18 months we have conducted several public meetings, met with non-profit organizations and residents, and acquired \$233,000 in grants to fund the planning. Additional grant funding will be necessary for the construction phase. This multi-year project will require a significant number of dedicated staff hours.
- **Capital to Tahoe Trail / Lincoln Bypass** – The Trails Coordinator is working closely with Muscle Powered, the U.S. Forest Service, Nevada Division of State Parks, the Carson City Culture and Tourism Authority, and several consultants to complete the planning, environmental and cultural clearances. In addition to providing some outstanding recreational opportunities for Carson City residents, these trails will also support our City’s outdoor recreation economy. Many staff hours have already been invested in this project, and many more staff hours will be required to support this project until completion.
- **Carson River Trail System Project** – The Trails Coordinator is part of the team working on this large, \$1.8 million grant funded project which will construct several miles of multi-use pathways in the Silver Saddle Ranch and Carson River area.
- **Centennial Park / Virginia Range projects** – This is an outstanding area for mountain biking and equestrian use because the volcanic soils are stable and generally not subject to significant erosion. Currently, the Trails Coordinator is working on a comprehensive trail plan for this area that may include:
  - National Interscholastic Cycling Association approved course for Carson High to host mountain bike competitions

- A connection to Washoe Lake State Park (we have already partnered with Washoe Lake State Park on this project)
  - Connection to Virginia City
  - Repair and realignment of existing 'user-built' trails
- **Data Collection** – Planning for future needs and trailhead improvements will require monitoring of usage using methods like bike/ped counters and user surveys.
- **International Trails Symposium** – If our region is selected, there will be planning required in the two years leading up to the conference.
- **Kings Canyon Trailhead** – The Trails Coordinator is the Department liaison to the Public Works Department regarding the Federal Lands Access Program grant for Kings Canyon Road which will include improvements to the Kings Canyon trailhead parking.
- **Maintenance Planning** – Carson City is fortunate to have many miles of trails, including paved multi-use pathways, natural surface single-track, and OHV trails. Many more miles are planned. A maintenance plan, and routine maintenance, will help to minimize maintenance costs over the long-term. The Trails Coordinator can be responsible for this planning and process.
- **Mapping** – Coordinate with other departments, agencies, and counties to enhance access to trail information and opportunities for recreationists.
- **Mexican Dam Ditch Intake Improvements** – An engineering design has been completed and a funding request was submitted to Carson Water Subconservancy District. When completed, this project will establish non-motorized access around the dam for recreationists including boaters, equestrians, hikers and bicyclists, and will support future trail connections and loops.
- **Nevada Division of State Lands** – The Trails Coordinator is working to obtain a “license” from the Nevada Division of State Lands for trails on several parcels. These trails will enable critical connections on the west-side of town near Western Nevada College and near the recent Open Space acquisition (Hamm property), on C-Hill, and on the north end of the Prison Hill Recreation Area.
- **Pine Nut Mountains** – Review and plan for enhancement of recreational opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized users into adjacent public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.
- **Signage** – On-going work with Department staff to implement the Signage Master Plan. This includes planning for locations, working on content and layout, and coordinating with fabricators and sign shops for best pricing and quality.
- **V&T Trail** – Carson City plays a central role in this project because this is where the V&T Railroad was based. Much needs to be done in order to complete segments through Carson City, including planning, site surveying, acquisition of easements, application for grants and environmental and cultural clearances. Currently working on obtaining easements for the section north of Coombs Canyon Road.