

Carson River Aquatic Trail Map

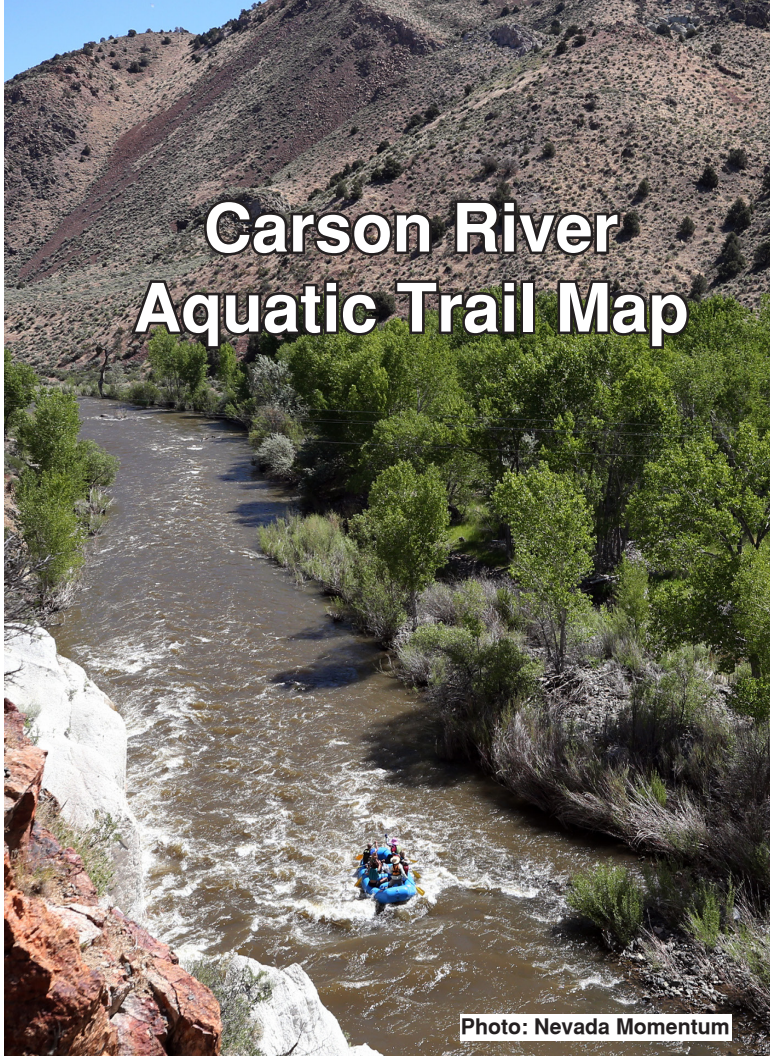


Photo: Nevada Momentum

Using This Map

River recreation, like any outdoor activity involves risk, and you are responsible for your own safety. This map is only a guide and in no way a substitute for experience, skill, judgement, and common sense. Hands-on education from qualified instructors, clubs, experienced boaters and commercial companies are always the best ways to ensure your adventure will be safe and memorable.

The Carson City Aquatic Trail Map is made possible by:



Cathleen Allison/Nevada Momentum
Carson River Canyon

Know Your Responsibilities

- Always paddle in a group.
- Always wear a properly fitted PFD (Personal Floatation Device).
- Wear appropriate clothing which includes closed-toe shoes and synthetic materials (no cotton!).
- Plan to get wet and plan for changes in weather and temperature.
- Wear a helmet, carry a whistle, and bring food, water, sunscreen, and extra clothes.
- Every boat should have a throw bag, first aid kit, and spare paddle.
- Use dry bags for your gear and make sure everything is secured with straps.
- Be aware of current flow rates and conditions.
- Watch for hazards; remain alert and sober.
- Respect the rights of other waterway users.
- File a float plan with someone you trust, and be prepared to conduct self-rescue.
- The river below Morgan Mill contains rapids and should only be attempted by skilled boaters in suitable kayaks or rafts.

General Description

The "Carson River Aquatic Trail" is a lovely 13.7 mile stretch of the Carson River. What makes the Aquatic Trail special is that most of the corridor through Carson City is preserved in perpetuity as part of Carson City's Open Space Program. The awesome views, wildlife habitat, and the flood plain, are effectively protected and the river follows its natural channel unimpeded. When you float the Aquatic Trail you will experience a river that has captivated people for centuries. The average annual high flow for the Carson River is 1300 cfs (cubic feet per second). During historically large events, like the floods of 1955 and 1997, the flow has reached 30,000 cfs.

Natural History

As you float the river you will be treated to impressive cottonwood galleries, streambanks filled with thick willows, and seasonal wildflowers.

Throughout the year over 200 avian species can be identified along the river; some are permanent residents, and some are just brief visitors. Red-tailed Hawks, herons, and swallows are a common sight, and owls are frequently spotted perching in the cottonwoods.

Several mammals frequent the waters of the river, including Mule Deer, mountain lions, coyotes, weasels, muskrats, and beavers.

The Carson River is also host to several reptiles including the Western Pond Turtle. Fish include catfish, bass, and rainbow trout.



Carson City Parks Recreation & Open Space
Great Horned Owl

Cultural History

First People

Evidence indicates that humans settled along the river over 10,000 years ago. Prior to white men's arrival, the Washoe People and the Northern Paiute People lived in the watershed.

Silver Saddle Ranch and Carson River Park

Orchards, dairies, sheep and cattle ranches, as well as hay farms, were once common in Eagle Valley. Silver Saddle Ranch and Carson River Park are reminiscent of that era. To this day, Silver Saddle Ranch is a working ranch, but it is now protected as part of Carson City's Open Space.



Carson City Parks Recreation & Open Space
Silver Saddle Ranch



Charles Lynch Collection, Carson City Historical Society
The Morgan Mill circa 1900

Empire City

The Morgan Mill River Access Area is located in the midst of what was once Empire City, a 19th Century milling town that had its beginnings as a trading post along the California Overland Trail. Nicholas Ambrosia, also known as Nicholas Ambrose, or "Dutch Nick" opened a trading post and saloon here in 1849. Following the 1849 discovery of gold in Gold Canyon and the 1859 discovery of the Comstock Lode, Empire City became a lumber and gold milling community. Wood was floated down the river from Alpine County and Lake Tahoe to the mills. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management office is located on the former site of the Morgan Mill, and the Empire Ranch Golf Course is the former site of the Mexican Mill.



Carson City Parks Recreation & Open Space
Flat water section near Carson River Park

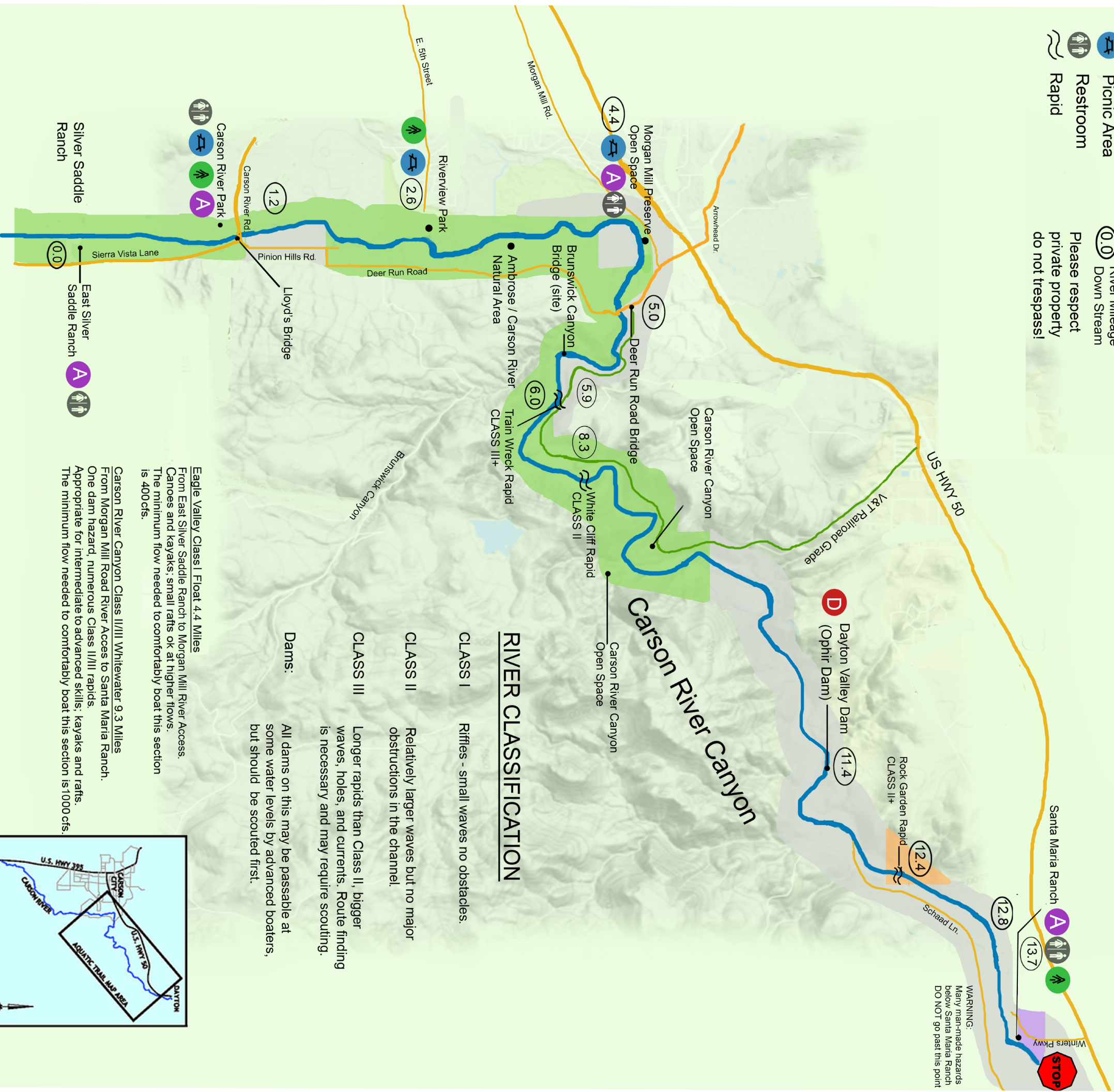
Carson River Canyon

Just beyond the Deer Run Road Bridge you enter the beautiful Carson River Canyon which was at one time home to more than a dozen ore reduction mills and saw mills.

In 1869, the Virginia and Truckee Railroad made its way into the canyon, hauling ore from the mines to the mills and returning laden with timbers for the mines, firewood, and lumber. During the height of the lode, more than 40 trains shared the short line's tracks daily. As you float this now quiet section of river you can imagine the sights and sounds of those earlier days.

LEGEND:

- D Dam
- A River Access Area
- P Park
- PA Picnic Area
- R Restroom
- W Rapid
- Private Land
- Carson City Managed Land
- BLM Managed Land
- Lyon County Managed Land
- 0.0 River Mileage Down Stream
- P Please respect private property do not trespass!



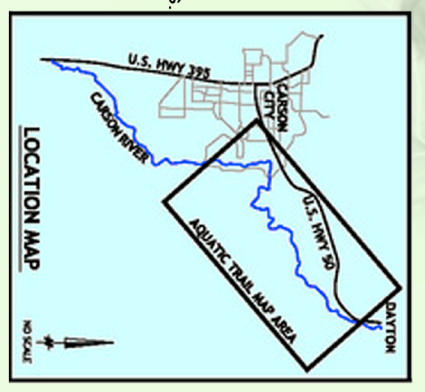
WARNING:
Many man-made hazards below Santa Maria Ranch. DO NOT go past this point.

RIVER CLASSIFICATION

- CLASS I** Riffles - small waves no obstacles.
- CLASS II** Relatively larger waves but no major obstructions in the channel.
- CLASS III** Longer rapids than Class II, bigger waves, holes, and currents. Route finding is necessary and may require scouting.
- Dams:** All dams on this may be passable at some water levels by advanced boaters, but should be scouted first.

Eagle Valley Class I Float 4.4 Miles
From East Silver Saddle Ranch to Morgan Mill River Access. Canoes and kayaks; small rafts ok at higher flows. The minimum flow needed to comfortably boat this section is 400 cfs.

Carson River Canyon Class II/III Whitewater 9.3 Miles
From Morgan Mill Road River Access to Santa Maria Ranch. One dam hazard, numerous Class II/III rapids. Appropriate for intermediate to advanced skills; kayaks and rafts. The minimum flow needed to comfortably boat this section is 1000 cfs.



Check the flow information here:
https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nv/nwis/uv/?site_no=10311000