

Information Sheet:

Prison Hill Recreation Area

What is the Prison Hill Recreation Area?

- The Prison Hill Recreation Area (PHRA) consists of about 2,500 acres in east Carson City. It was conveyed from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to Carson City in 2015 by an act of Congress. The terms of the conveyance stipulate how the land may be used. In general, Carson City is required to manage the PHRA as undeveloped Open Space. There is an exception in the conveyance which permits Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreation on the south end of Prison Hill (about 960 acres).
- Prison Hill offers many miles of popular trails which are snow-free for most of the year. Trailheads and pedestrian access points are available on all sides of Prison Hill. The south end of Prison Hill provides opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized users.
- The summit of Prison Hill stands at 5724' and affords sweeping views of Carson City, the surrounding valleys and mountains, and the Carson River. It lies on the boundary between motorized and non-motorized areas, and so is accessible to all users.
- The PHRA is managed by the Open Space Division within the Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department.

What is Open Space?

- Undeveloped lands protected in a primarily natural state with the intention of preserving our watershed, wildlife habitat, wetlands, scenic views, and to provide opportunities for passive recreation such as hiking, running, mountain biking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, and fishing. Typically, the only physical facilities are trails, supported by parking lots, picnic areas, interpretive facilities, and restrooms.

What is the property on the west side of Prison Hill identified as "Parks and Public Purpose"?

- This parcel at the east end of Koontz Lane is about 116 acres and it was conveyed by the BLM to Carson City in the same lands bill as the rest of the Prison Hill Recreation Area. It is not managed under the direct purview of the Carson City Open Space Division.
- Examples of typical uses of properties designated as Parks and Public Purpose are historic monument sites, campgrounds, schools, fire houses, law enforcement facilities, municipal facilities, hospitals, parks, and fairgrounds.

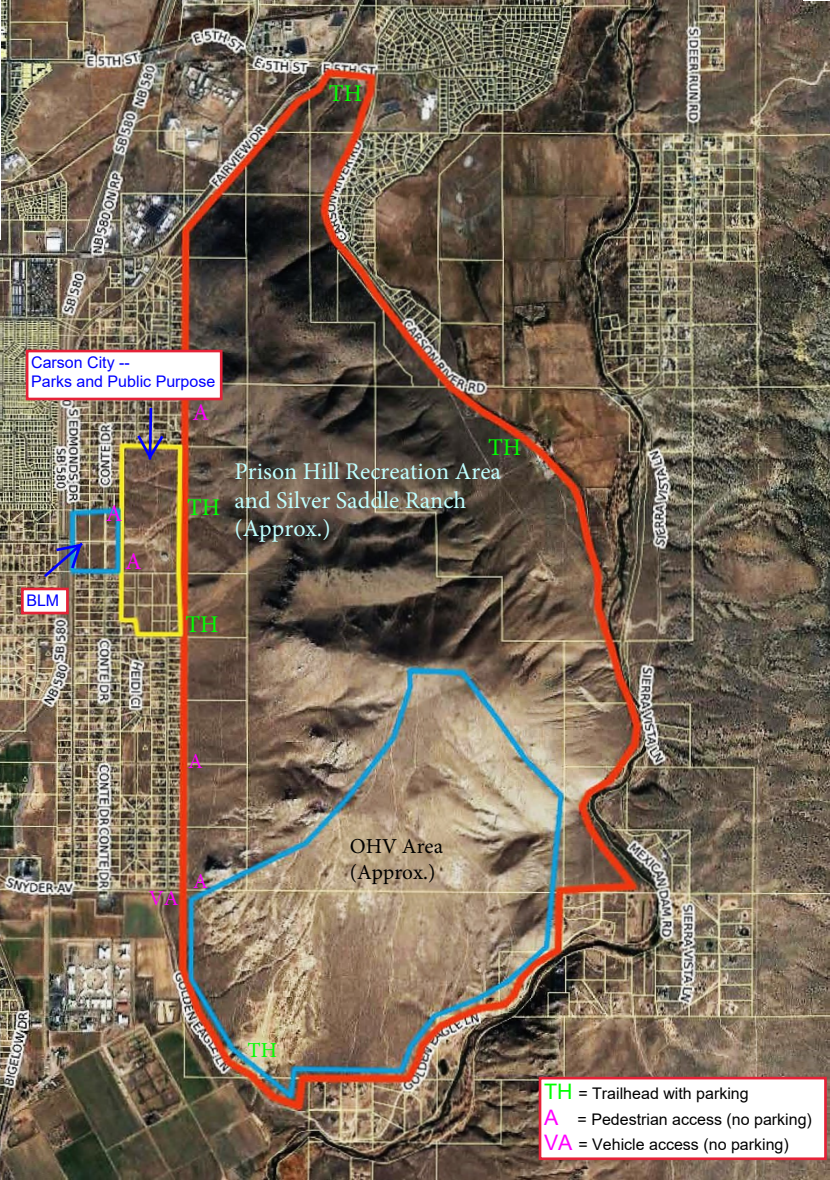
- The Carson City Public Works Department maintains a large municipal water tank on the property, as well as pumping stations.
- There are two existing trailheads on the property that provide access to the PHRA trails; one is at the east end of Koontz Lane and the other is at the east end of Clearview Drive. These trailheads were originally constructed by the BLM.
- This property has been largely unmanaged, resulting in the proliferation of roads, of which there are currently about seven miles.

What about the BLM parcel?

- Approximately 27 acres between Carson City's Parks and Public Purpose property and Edmonds Drive is currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management. There is a utility easement on the property, but a public recreational easement does not currently exist. There is also a possibility that the BLM may dispose of this property in the future.

What are some of the current plans and projects at the Prison Hill Recreation Area?

- 5th Street Trailhead and Trails. Funded by a grant from the Recreational Trails Program (Federal Highway Administration fuel tax), we improved the trailhead parking, fixed some drainage issues, added a vault toilet and covered picnic table, and created three short loop trails. This project is nearly complete.
- OHV Area. This area had been largely unmanaged when it was transferred to Carson City in 2015, resulting in a proliferation of trails, soil erosion, vegetation loss, wildlife habitat impacts, as well as noise, safety concerns, and user conflicts. With grants from the Recreational Trails Program and the Nevada Off-Highway Vehicle Commission, Carson City is in a multi-year phased project to make significant improvements. The goal is to provide sustainable high-quality recreational opportunities for a variety of users, while at the same time mitigating the earlier issues.
- Mexican Ditch Intake Crossing. A project is underway to improve the crossing of the Mexican Ditch intake at the Mexican Dam. The new 'bridge' will enable portage of small watercraft around the dam, and will provide a safe crossing for hikers, bicyclers, and horses. This project is funded by Carson City's Quality of Life Initiative and by a grant from the Carson Water Subconservancy District.
- Carson River Trails Phase II Project. Funded by a grant from the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA), this project includes construction of a multi-use pathway along the east side of Prison Hill from the 5th Street trailhead to Silver Saddle Ranch. It is a segment of what is envisioned to be a future loop trail all the way around Prison Hill.
- Trails. Muscle Powered, a local volunteer organization, recently completed a beautiful realignment of the North Loop. More improvements and additions to the trail system are planned, while some canyons and slopes will be left pristine.



Carson City --
Parks and Public Purpose

Prison Hill Recreation Area
and Silver Saddle Ranch
(Approx.)

OHV Area
(Approx.)

BLM

- TH = Trailhead with parking
- A = Pedestrian access (no parking)
- VA = Vehicle access (no parking)