

**OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
STAFF REPORT**

MEETING DATE: October 17, 2016

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 4C

STAFF: Ann Bollinger, Open Space Administrator
Rich Wilkinson, Senior Natural Resource Specialist

REQUEST: Staff update on activities, projects and grants located on Open Space properties within the Carson River area.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

The following provides a summary of activities throughout the Carson River area.

Carson River Mercury Superfund Site

On November 1st, 1-4pm, the Carson Water Subconservancy District (CWSD) is hosting a “Get on the Van Man” tour of the Carson River Mercury Superfund Site. The Carson River Mercury Superfund Site is quite extensive. In Carson City, the site begins at the Empire Ranch Golf Course and continues down the river corridor including Morgan Mill Preserve Open Space and Carson River Canyon Open Space. The tour is being coordinated with Dave Friedman from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection and Andrew Bain from the Environmental Protection Agency as speakers. The tour will start at the Morgan Mill Road River Access Area. From there, participants will hop in a van, ride and look at particular sites while Dave and Andy discuss the history and next steps. The tour is open to the public but seats are limited. If anyone is interested, please contact Brenda Hunt at the CWSD at 887-9005.

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) grant application

In August, staff participated in a conference call to review and discuss project nominations with the Executive Committee. While the process is not yet completed, staff is pleased to inform the Committee that the Carson River Trail System – Ranch Connection project for \$1.8 million was highly recommended (ranked #5 out of 18 nominations) and was recommended to the Secretary of Interior for funding.

Carson River Canyon Open Space

Staff has been working with seasonal crews to keep the Carson River Canyon Open Space clean and debris free. This year has been very challenging due to multiple incidents of vandalism, graffiti, and illegal dumping. Recently, staff became aware of the destruction of seven signs including the monument sign, which resulted in over \$5,500 in damages. We are currently working on making the solar power gate functional and looking into the possibility of installing surveillance cameras. Ranger Costello is continuing to patrol this area and make contact with visitors. He has been working diligently to inform visitors of the rules and regulations in an effort to educate the public.

Carson River Cleanup Event

This year's 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 fire pits and removing trash and debris. The White Trash Brigade, a four-wheel drive group, helped to clean areas that were difficult to access. They removed car parts, televisions, and household garbage. About a week later, two volunteers and Mallard Realty returned to remove an old boat from a canyon east of Sierra Vista Lane. 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. A \$100 donation received anonymously which helped purchase lunch for the volunteers. The Nevada Division of Forestry, 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.



Volunteers cleaning up around the Yerington Smelter in Carson River Canyon



Volunteers removing old boat from canyon east of Sierra Vista lane

Ducks Unlimited

Staff has been working with John Ranlett, Senior Biologist, and Jesse Ross, Engineer, on the revision of plans for the Wetlands Enhancement Project at Buzzy's Ranch. In the last Open Space Advisory Committee meeting, staff discussed the issue of all contractor bids exceeding the established budget for the project. As a result, Ducks Unlimited had to reduce the project scope of work and modify bid item quantities. After the final plans have been completed, Ducks Unlimited will negotiate a contract with the lowest perspective bidder (High Mark Construction) and set the start date for construction. John Ranlett is anticipating Monday, October 31, 2016 as a potential start date for construction. Ducks Unlimited has authorized the installation of a boundary fence on the east side of the Wetlands Enhancement Project. Tyndall Fencing completed the installation of 3,850 feet of barbed wire fence on September 23, 2016.

Golden Eagle Lane Erosion Control project

Staff submitted a grant application to the Nevada Division of State Lands on August 25, 2016. To date, we have not received formal confirmation of an award. However, we have been told that the funds are not competitive and should be approved soon. The grant application is for \$40,000 and will help supplement the erosion control and watershed improvement work planned for the Golden Eagle Lane area. Carson City has been awarded \$75,000 from the Carson Water Subconservancy District towards the completion of this project. A contract request has been submitted to Public Works Project Manager Robb Fellows who will assume the contracting and on-site responsibly. The Open Space Division will continue to be involved in the project scope, design, and grant administration. We are anticipating the start of construction by the spring of 2017.

Prison Hill Recreation Area, 5th Street Trailhead

The Nevada Division of State Parks Recreational Trails Program has awarded Carson City \$200,000 towards the trailhead improvement at the corner of 5th Street and Carson River Road. Included in the project scope is the re-alignment of trails in the Prison Hill Recreation Area and includes the removal of all non-sustainable trails or roads. Staff is awaiting confirmation of the formal award letter and draft contract. Once received, staff will start working with Public Works on the design and layout of the new trailhead along with the realignment of the trails. Muscle Powered has offered to help with the trail design, layout, and construction.

Silver Saddle Ranch

Staff has been working with seasonal crews to clean up Silver Saddle Ranch. Activities include weeding, mowing, pruning, watering, and repairing bridges. This season, crews have weeded the arena, adjacent corrals, and the yards at the red and white house complexes. Staff has worked on replacing broken fence posts around the red house, replacing rehabilitation area fences, replacing wood planks and applying wood preservatives on the bridges. Crews have mowed weeds on all roads and trails, and pruned willows along the Mexican Ditch Trail.

- Upcoming events 2016:
 - October 10 – Friends of Silver Saddle Ranch monthly board meeting
 - November 14 – Friends of Silver Saddle Ranch monthly board meeting
 - December 3 - Friends of Silver Saddle Ranch – Christmas Open House

Carson City Weed Coalition

The Carson City Weed Coalition has worked diligently along the Carson River corridor this season. These activities include the following: a bull thistle dig at Riverview Park wetlands, coordination of herbicide treatments on Buzzy's Ranch, Silver Saddle Ranch, and the Northern Nevada Correctional Facility. The Coalition has worked with Nevada Department of Agriculture to complete post treatment mapping in multiple areas along the Carson River. The Weed Coordinator has continued to look into additional funding sources. The Coalition has received \$15,000 from the Carson Water Subconservancy District, \$15,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and \$6,500 from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The majority of invasive weed treatments will occur along the Carson River and its tributaries and may include property that is adjacent to BLM.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: This agenda item is for informational purposes only. No formal action can be taken at this time.