

As you explore the area at River Fork Ranch, use this guide to help your child/children discover the wonders of our natural world. Find the objects and do the activities in order or mix them up! Have fun!

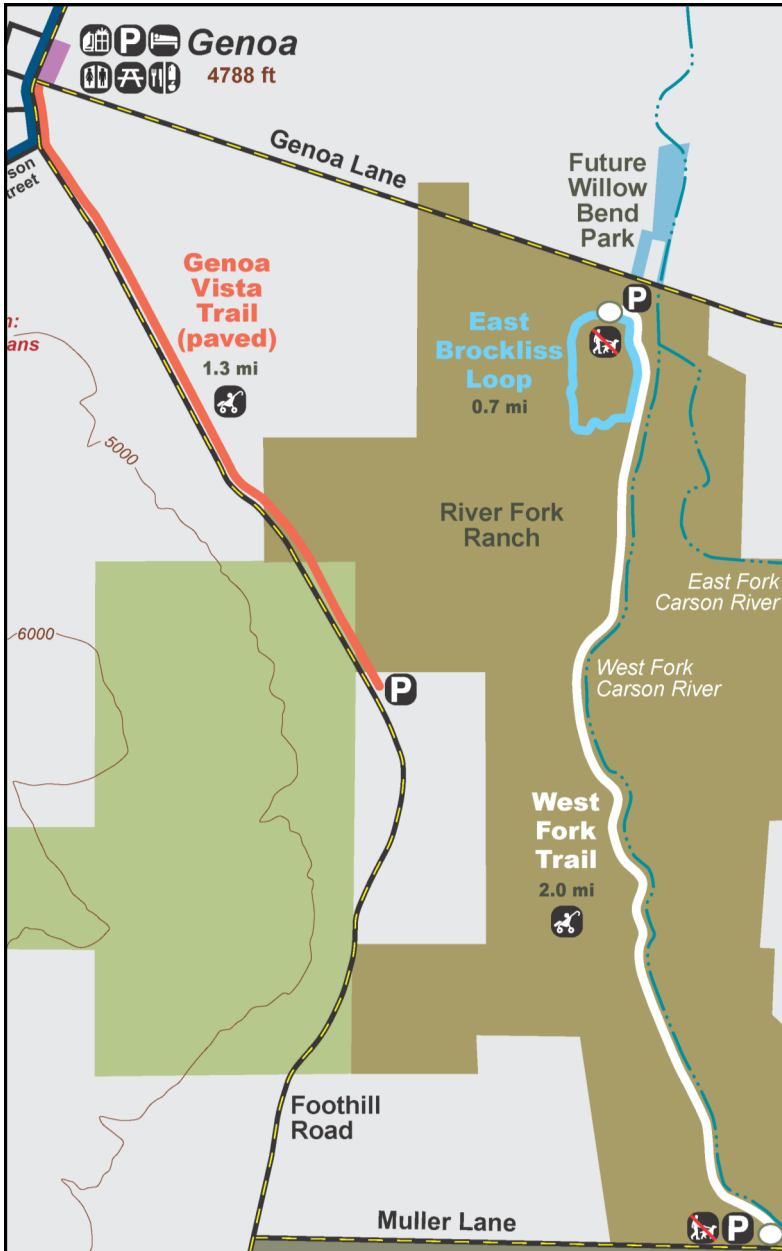
- Discover evidence that an animal has been on the trail. (Hint: You might find tunnels, tracks, bones, scat or chew marks.)
- What's the smoothest thing you can find?
- Find something that smells good ... or bad!
- Look for a Red-tailed Hawk soaring high in the sky hunting for rabbits. Spread your wings like a hawk and slowly soar in a big circle.
- Find a place where an animal would be happy.
- Find something that moves. (Hint: It doesn't have to be an animal. It could be clouds, water or wind.)
- Look for a Falcon such as an American Kestrel rapidly flapping its wings as it hovers in place to watch for grasshoppers or mice to eat. How long can you stay in one place while quickly flapping your arms? Did you see any grasshoppers or mice to eat?
- Look in the meadow or along the river for evidence of a flood. Think about where the pine cones or pieces of pine bark might have come from on their long whitewater journey to this spot.
- Find a place where an animal made a home.
- A coyote uses its voice to call its family back together after a hunt and to warn other packs to stay out of its territory. Try howling like a coyote so the rest of your group knows where you are and the other groups know to stay away.

- Listen for five sounds. What sounds come from nature and what sounds come from people?
- Watch along the Brockliss Slough for a Great Blue Heron standing with one leg drawn up in a resting position and balancing on the other leg. How long can you balance on one leg? What would happen if you fell asleep while standing on one leg?
- Find a place where a plant-eater would be happy.
- Spy on a bug. If you have to look under a log or rock be sure to carefully put it back when you are done.
- Find a pattern in nature.
- Find something that can live in water. (Hint: It doesn't have to be an animal.)
- Find a forest. Why do you think that the forest is way up there on the mountain and not here by the river?
- Search for the confluence where the East and West Forks of the Carson River come together. Where do you think all this water comes from? (Hint: Looking south from the confluence, you can see Silver and Highland Peaks where the headwaters of the river are located.)
- Look in all directions. How many different colors can you find?
- Use natural materials such as sticks, grass, pebbles and dirt to make a map of where you are.
- Look for evidence of plants that are preventing erosion or keeping pollution out of the river.

- Find a meadow. How is it different than the other kinds of habitat nearby?
- Look around for two things that all living things need to survive.
- Northern Leopard Frogs don't have sharp teeth or claws to defend themselves so they use their fantastic leaping ability to quickly escape to safety. How quickly can you hop away from danger?

Use this space to write down a trail treasure that YOU find or to draw a picture of something interesting that you see on the trail.

**THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S RIVER FORK RANCH**  
**381 GENOA LANE**  
**MINDEN, NV 89423**



## HIKING WITH KIDS

Hit the trail with your family and make some great memories! Here are some tips from the American Hiking Society ([www.americanhiking.org](http://www.americanhiking.org)) to make hikes “kid-friendly”:

- Have fun and be flexible.
- Give the kids some control. Let them set the pace and make some choices along the way.
- Bring snacks and plenty of fluids.
- Dress yourself and your children in layers and wear sturdy shoes.
- Pick a short, interesting hike and allow lots of time.
- Teach, sing and play games with your kids.
- Safety first! Consider giving each child a safety whistle and discuss how and when they should use it. Children sometimes “get it” better if they’re told to use the whistle to “find Mom or Dad” rather than if they’re lost, since being “lost” isn’t always readily apparent to them.



## LEAVE NO TRACE PRINCIPLES FOR KIDS

- Know Before You Go
- Choose The Right Path
- Trash Your Trash
- Leave What You Find
- Be Careful With Fire
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Kind To Other Visitors



The member-driven Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics teaches people how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly. This copyrighted information has been reprinted with permission from the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics: [www.LNT.org](http://www.LNT.org)

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The Nature Conservancy and  
The Carson Valley Trails Association present

# RIVER FORK RANCH TRAIL TREASURES



The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is working in the Carson Valley and around the world to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. For more information, visit the TNC Carson River website: [www.nature.org/Carson](http://www.nature.org/Carson).

The Carson Valley Trails Association (CVTA) is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization working with partners to provide access to public lands through a recreational trail system for present and future generations. For more information, visit the CVTA website: [www.carsonvalleytrails.org](http://www.carsonvalleytrails.org).