

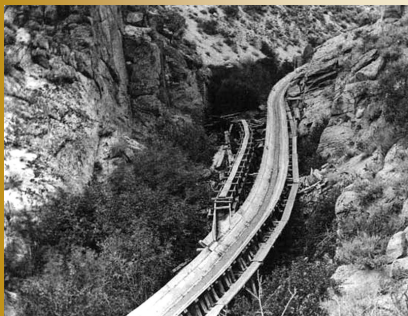
Fall 2017/Winter 2018



Communities connected  
to nature  
through a system  
of trails

#### Clear Creek and the Comstock

During the Comstock silver mining era, the Clear Creek watershed served as a conduit between the forests of Lake Tahoe and Virginia City. Wood from the Tahoe Basin was transported to Spooner Summit and transferred to an 11-mile long V-flume that extended from Spooner Summit down Clear Creek to Carson Valley. There the wood was loaded on the Virginia and Truckee Railroad for the rest of its trip to the Comstock. At its peak the Comstock consumed about 80 million board feet of lumber and 2 million cords of firewood each year. About 300,000 board feet of wood passed over Spooner Summit each day.



Western Nevada Historic Photo Collection



## A Brief History of the Clear Creek Trail

By Jeremy Vican, VP Trail Operations

Most people don't realize what goes on behind the scenes to make CVTA trails happen. In this issue we present the first of a series of articles that tell the stories behind our trails.

### Early Days

The history of the Clear Creek Trail began with recreational use on the Old Clear Creek Road. This road was once the highway between Carson City and Spooner Summit. In the late 1950's, it was replaced by the four-lane Highway 50. Vehicle use on Old Clear Creek Road then significantly declined, while recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding and cross-country skiing became more popular. With construction of the Tahoe Rim Trail at Spooner Summit, hiking and biking continued to increase on Old Clear Creek Road. As the upper portion of the road continued to deteriorate, it was designated for non-motorized recreational use only.

### The Clear Creek Trail Concept

In 2003, the Clear Creek Tahoe development was approved by Douglas County. As part of this residential project, Douglas County required a public access trail easement on a portion of the property adjacent to public land. The County, working in partnership with CVTA, negotiated the trail easement corridor along the southern property line, which borders U.S Forest Service lands at each end. This offered the potential of connecting the upper portion of Old Clear Creek Road with new Clear Creek Trail south, continuing east into the Jacks Valley area on public lands and private land. In addition to the Clear Creek Trail easement, an improved formal trailhead was required near the Highway 50/ Tahoe Golf Club Drive interchange to provide trailhead access from Highway 50. A designated trailhead at this location would avoid private property concerns, maintain connectivity with upper Old Clear Creek Road, and provide access for a potential future trail north, connecting to Carson City. These trail and trailhead concepts became part of the 2003 Douglas County and 2006 Carson City trail plans.

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## President's Message

By Sheryl Gonzales

### Enjoy the Trails During Fall's Splendor

In the summer months, I start my hikes either early in the morning or just before the day's twilight to avoid the heat. Summer is a wonderful time of the year for hiking or biking but I have to say, fall is my favorite season as the mountains begin to unveil their autumn charms. As the days become shorter and the temperatures begin to drop, I look forward to my fall hikes. The trails take on a different character in the fall. Below are my fivetop reasons that I enjoy the trails in the fall more than any other time of the year:

- ◆ Weather is crisp and cool making for much more pleasant hikes. The air quality improves as summer fires begin to calm and become contained, clearing the air from smoke, making for more breathtaking views of the Carson Valley and the Sierra.
- ◆ Less bugs as the cooler air drives them away, including the annoying mosquitos!
- ◆ Fall foliage in the foothills and mountains begin to take on vibrant colors of fiery red, warm yellows, and brilliant oranges making for gorgeous landscapes.
- ◆ Less crowds on the trails with the summer months behind us and vacationing visitors getting back to work and school.
- ◆ Fall is also the time when wildlife becomes more active preparing for the winter months. Deer are breeding at this time and males can be aggressive. Be careful to not approach a male deer and leave room for their escape. Bears are getting ready for a long hibernation and will be eating as much as 20,000 calories a day. Keep bird feeders and trash out of a bear's reach. And while driving, be aware of the animals being more active at this time. Slow down and be alert in areas where deer and bear are known to travel.

Pull out your sweaters and hiking boots; it's time for a fall hike. Enjoy the Carson Valley trails during this fall season!

See you on the trails!  
Sheryl



## **HELP WANTED! VOLUNTEERS TO JOIN THE CVTA BOARD!**

**Volunteers are needed to serve on the CVTA board. Two important board positions need to be filled for 2018:**

**➔Fund Development VP ➔Marketing/Publicity VP**

**Details about the responsibilities of serving on the CVTA board are posted at "Join the Board" on the CVTA website.**

**For more information, contact:**

Sheryl Gonzales (srecreate@charter.net, 775-781-9458)  
Norah Gastelum (norahgis@gmail.com, 775-901-3039)



## Late Bloomers on the Trails

By Jim Morefield



big sagebrush



curleaf rabbitbrush



Wright buckwheat

Wildflower season in Carson Valley is over -- or is it? As this year's prodigious spring bloom migrated up the mountain slopes with the onset of summer heat, most of the species near our trails, native and otherwise, turned brown and crispy and vulnerable to fire. But when the summer heat finally breaks, a curious thing happens. There is a smaller set of native species that stay huddled in their drab greenery through all the commotion of spring and summer, attracting no attention, just quietly storing up water and energy. When nights get cold enough again (or day length becomes short enough -- botanists aren't always sure what the trigger is), these plants finally burst forth in a "reverse" bloom, starting up high in late summer, and progressing back downward to the valleys into fall, until finally stopped by too many hard freezes.

Who are these late bloomers? Maybe foremost among them is Nevada's official state flower, sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), more specifically called big sagebrush. This species is seen abundantly in deep soils along the Clear Creek Trail and other west-side trails, and indeed across much of the interior west. Another species found on the east side of Carson Valley is black sagebrush (*Artemisia nova*), differing by its preference for shallow rocky soils, and its smaller size, shorter leaves, and narrower, fuzzless flower heads. There are about a dozen more species of sagebrush in the western U.S., all shrubby members of the genus *Artemisia*, named appropriately for Artemis, Greek goddess of the hunt. (The term "sagebrush" is also misused for any "brushy" high desert vegetation, which can include dozens more unrelated species in some areas.)



black sagebrush



rubber rabbitbrush

More conspicuous to our eyes (and noses) this time of year are the bright yellow rabbitbrushes. Curleaf rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*) and rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*) are two species often encountered along our trails. Believe it or not, the rabbitbrushes and sagebrushes are members of the Sunflower Family, along with many other late bloomers like goldenrods, asters, and ragweeds. Why don't they look like sunflowers? Since insect pollinators are not as reliable after summer drought and the first freezes, some of the latest bloomers have developed the ability to wind-pollinate instead (explaining why our noses notice them so much!).

Energy that would have gone into a few big, showy flower heads to attract pollinators is used instead to produce masses of much smaller flower heads, with abundant pollen that can be picked up by the wind. Those large, colorful ray flowers around the edge of a typical sunflower head would just get in the way of wind pollination and be a waste of resources.

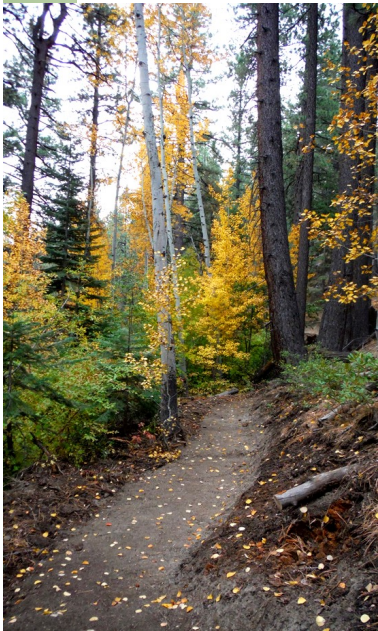
Beyond the Sunflower Family, a few other late-blooming species in our area come from groups like the wild buckwheats (genus *Eriogonum*) and the Goosefoot Family. In wet areas, members of the Gentian Family bring flashes of bright blue to otherwise mostly spent meadow vegetation. In years with extra summer rain, many other native plants grab the opportunity for a second bloom. For true late bloomers, though, now is their one and only chance. Don't miss your chance to see them before winter arrives!

Jim Morefield is Supervisory Botanist with the Nevada Natural Heritage Program.

We thank Jim for generously sharing his time and expertise so that we can better understand the nature we find on the trails.

## A Brief History of the Clear Creek Trail

Continued from page 1



In 2008, after the Clear Creek and Jacks Valley Trailhead locations were identified, a draft trail route using the Clear Creek Tahoe Trail Easement was laid out. CVTA then formally proposed the broader Clear Creek Trail concept and paid the U.S. Forest Service over \$65,000 to study the Clear Creek Trail and Genoa Trail System for approval. Some of the Clear Creek Trail partners included the U.S. Forest Service, Clear Creek Tahoe, Nevada Division of State Lands, Douglas County, The Nature Conservancy, Carson City, the Washoe Tribe and neighboring private property owners.

The Clear Creek Trail would travel west from the Clear Creek Trailhead off Highway 50 through State of Nevada and U.S. Forest Service Lands to Old Clear Creek Road, follow the upper road about a mile, then travel south and east on newly constructed trail through a combination of U.S. Forest Service lands and the Clear Creek Tahoe Trail Easement, eventually crossing Jacks Valley to James Lee Park and Highway 395. The upper portion of the Old Clear Creek Road connecting to Spooner Summit and the Tahoe Rim Trail would remain unchanged.

### Approvals and Cooperation

In 2011, the lower third of the trail between Jacks Valley Road and Highway 395, about a 6-mile length, was not approved for construction. However, the middle third was approved, which would still allow for a trail connection from the Clear Creek Trailhead at Highway 50 to Jacks Valley Road, along with the existing connection to Spooner Summit on upper Old Clear Creek Road.

The Clear Creek Tahoe Trail Easement was a key component of the trail project. Since the trail was supposed to fit within a 20-foot wide, straight east-west corridor for 1.5 miles along the property line, it was obvious this would be difficult to build, maintain or hike on. Biking and horseback riding would not be possible. However, the trail easement was also located within the Clear Creek Conservation Easement managed by The Nature Conservancy. Both Clear Creek Tahoe and The Nature Conservancy agreed that the narrow trail easement was impractical and were supportive of a solution. They agreed that the trail could meander within the Clear Creek Conservation Easement where needed. This resolved about a 1-mile portion of the 1.5-mile trail easement. However, two separate areas making up the remaining half mile were still forced within the 20-foot wide easement due to private lots on the north side and other private property on the south side. This issue was resolved through the support of the neighboring southern landowner who agreed to allow the Clear Creek Trail to come on their property in those two areas. This partnership proved invaluable in allowing the entire trail from Clear Creek Trailhead and Old Clear Creek Road down to Jacks Valley Road to be built without any major restrictions.

In addition to these trail easement location improvements, Clear Creek Tahoe and The Nature Conservancy supported trail location improvements elsewhere on the west side of the property in another, much larger area of the Clear Creek Conservation Easement. To remain within U.S. Forest Service lands, the trail would have climbed into higher, more difficult terrain. The route through Clear Creek Tahoe avoided the climb around the property and building in difficult terrain. The Conservancy was supportive of allowing about a mile of trail lower on the hillside within the conservation easement. Altogether, there would be about three miles of trail on Clear Creek Tahoe property.

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## A Brief History of the Clear Creek Trail

Continued from page 4

### Trail Construction and Lingerings Issues

In 2013, nearly all of the 10.5-mile trail was built. Through a grant from the Nevada Recreational Trails Program, approximately half of the trail was built by youth members with the Nevada Conservation Corps, a program operated through the Great Basin Institute. The other half of the trail was built by CVTA volunteers, along with several local and regional partners. These included Starbucks Carson Valley Roasting Plant & Distribution Center, Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Reno, Harveys Lake Tahoe, Harley-Davidson Financial Services, GE Measurement and Control, Southwest Gas, NPL Construction Company, Tahoe Rim Trail Association and The Nature Conservancy. About 500 different individuals, totaling 4,000 volunteer hours, helped build the Clear Creek Trail.

As the trail was being built in mid-2013, construction of the Clear Creek Trailhead was delayed when management direction on the Nevada State Lands-owned trailhead property changed. The State was no longer supportive of allowing the last few hundred yards of trail or the Clear Creek Trailhead on the property. Management directive was now to pursue a zoning change from conservation reserve to single family.

In early 2014, continued recreational use of upper Old Clear Creek Road was also of concern to a few private landowners whose property the road passed through. Though much of this upper road is on U.S. Forest Service lands, there are parts of the road that have become private easements and either don't allow public use or only allow those with specific permission to pass.

### Clear Creek Trail Opens

Despite the unfinished trailhead, and without continued public access on parts of the Old Clear Creek Road, the opening of the Clear Creek Trail occurred as planned in Spring 2014 at the lower Jacks Valley Trailhead, next to Jacks Valley Elementary School. Since the trail passes through an ancestral route of the Washoe Tribe who regularly travelled between the Eagle/Carson Valleys and Lake Tahoe, a blessing ceremony was performed by tribal elders.

An estimated 15,000 people currently use the trail each year from the two Jacks Valley trailheads, one at the school and the other where the trail crosses Jacks Valley Road east of the fire station, as well as hiking in from nearby homes. As more homes are built near the trail and the Carson City/Carson Valley area, these numbers will likely increase.

Discussions are ongoing to complete the Clear Creek Trailhead at Highway 50 and connect the last couple hundred yards of nearby trail. The 2014 deadline for the trailhead has been extended to the end of 2018 and we hope it will be completed before then.

### Onward to Spooner Summit

To avoid trespassing on portions of upper Old Clear Creek Road and maintain public access to Spooner Summit, CVTA paid nearly \$20,000 in 2015 to fund the U.S. Forest Service to study a bypass route for possible approval. This 6.5-mile route would avoid private property and be located entirely on U.S. Forest Service lands. A decision is expected sometime before the end of 2017.

Please visit our website, [www.carsonvalleytrails.org](http://www.carsonvalleytrails.org), for the latest news on the Clear Creek Trail extension to Spooner Summit and the Clear Creek Trailhead at Highway 50.



Volunteer trail building groups from top:  
Harrah's/Harvey's; General Electric;  
Starbucks/The Nature Conservancy

## TRAIL OPERATIONS

By Jeremy Vican

### Bently Heritage Trail



Lack of trail use due to flooding in May and June left very thick vegetation on roughly half of the trail system. Willows are also having their way along various sections of the trail. One day was spent brush clearing on the entire south loop of the trail. Two to three more work days were spent on the middle and north loops in September. The main boardwalk was repaired after spring flooding damaged a short section.



### Clear Creek Trail

The entire trail had routine maintenance involving some brushing and drainage work. Communication continues with Nevada State Lands, Douglas County, Carson City, NDOT and others on the location for the Clear Creek Trailhead near the Highway 50 interchange. Current construction deadline is the end of 2018. The U.S. Forest Service is expected to make a decision before the end of the year on approval of the upper portion of the Clear Creek Trail.

### Fay-Luther/Jobs Peak Ranch Trail System

Brush was cleared along the spring area in the aspen area by Jobs Peak Ranch. The southern half of the trail system had fall maintenance done including water drainage improvements and brush work.

### Genoa Trail System

A total of five fallen trees were removed on the Genoa Loop and Sierra Canyon trails. A piece of the handrail in Genoa Canyon was repaired. Riparian vegetation was removed along Genoa Creek above the Eagle Ridge Trailhead. Trails had general maintenance.

### Pinyon Trail

One day of routine maintenance occurred kicking off small rocks and trimming some brush.



## TRAIL WORK IS FUN!

Check the calendar on our new website at

[carsonvalleytrails.org](http://carsonvalleytrails.org) for scheduled trail maintenance days and contact CVTA at [info@carsonvalleytrails.org](mailto:info@carsonvalleytrails.org) to volunteer.





## Join or Donate Online and Receive a FREE CVTA Water Bottle!

Every hiker needs a water bottle to stay hydrated on those hot summer hikes. Now you can get a FREE Carson Valley Trails Association water bottle—a \$5 value—and support the trails.

With our new CVTA website you can sign up to be a CVTA member and renew your membership online. Previously, CVTA mailed postcards to all members before their membership expired, cashed the checks, and updated membership records individually. Now, our website automatically sends reminder emails before memberships expire and renewals can be made by credit card or PayPal, requiring no additional administrative effort. As an all-volunteer organization, CVTA has limited resources. This system allows us to allocate more time to our primary mission -- our trails!

As an incentive to try out our new credit card and PayPal option, from now through our 2018 Annual Meeting (early 2018, date TBA) we are offering a FREE CVTA water bottle to everyone who pays for their CVTA membership or makes a \$25 or more donation, and pays by credit card or PayPal. You can pick up your water bottle at the Annual Meeting.

Just follow these easy steps to get your FREE CVTA water bottle:

1. Go to the CVTA website, <https://carsonvalleytrails.org>
  - a. To renew or sign up go to Join / Donate -> [Become a Member or Renew](#), or
  - b. To make a donation go to Join / Donate -> [Make a Donation](#) (\$25 or more)
2. For payment method, pay by credit card or PayPal
3. Attend the CVTA Annual Meeting to pick up your water bottle!



Renee Hanson rides Clear Creek. Photo: Matthew Cannon Hanson

## Strategic Plan 10-Year Update—We Need Your Input!

By Norah Gastelum—Vice President/President Elect

In 2009, CVTA adopted a [10-year strategic plan](#) that outlined its vision, goals and major activities as related to the perceptions and trends in the community at that time. The current strategic plan has guided our efforts and initiatives for the past eight extremely productive and successful years. CVTA has built over 40 miles of trail and today maintains 8 different trails.

Now, we are in the process of collecting information to guide the 2019 Strategic Plan Update and Revision. Over the next year, a committee will examine survey results, membership reports, local trends and volunteer potential as they relate to trail building, trail maintenance and educational programs.

Please complete our [Community Questionnaire](#) online. We also welcome your comments, suggestions and questions on our [User Forum](#). Understanding the public's perspective and creating an attainable and sustainable shared vision for the future of our trails is our goal.

**2017 CVTA Officers & Board**

**President** Sheryl Gonzales

**VP/President Elect** Norah Gastelum

**Past President** Joni Jackson

**Secretary** Deby O'Gorman

**Treasurer** Marcia Kerl

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**VP Fund Development**  
Vickie Kieffer

**VP Outreach** Juan Guzman

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Barb Wilson

**VP Membership** Lee Elson

**VP Chief Information Officer**  
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**VP Volunteer Coordinator**  
Matt Savage

**Member-at-Large** Carlo Luri

**Newsletter Editor** Anne Thomas

**Carson Valley Trails Association**

**P.O. Box 222**

**Minden NV 89423**



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Your annual membership dues and donations to the Carson Valley Trails Association, a Nevada 501(c)(3) organization, may be tax deductible pursuant to the provisions of section 170.c. of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 170.c. All proceeds support trail construction and maintenance, project planning, community events and trail access in the Carson Valley.



The Carson Valley Trails Association is a non-profit, volunteer based organization working with partners to provide access to public lands through a recreational trail system for present and future generations to enjoy

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[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CARSONVALLEYTRAILS/](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CARSONVALLEYTRAILS/)

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## Clear Creek Conservation Easement



White-headed woodpecker  
Photo: Audubon

The Nature Conservancy holds a conservation easement at Clear Creek Tahoe, protecting 853 acres of the most scenic and ecologically rich stretches along Clear Creek.

The upper Clear Creek watershed area supports

over 70 mammal species, more than 170 bird species, and more than 20 reptile and amphibian species. Important habitats found at Clear Creek include alder and willow riparian, montane meadow, Jeffrey pine forest, and bitterbrush and sagebrush scrub. For more information, visit [www.nature.org/carson](http://www.nature.org/carson).

## Clear Creek Ride Report

*"Clear Creek is a blast. It wiggles and dances along the natural contours of the mountainous terrain. You barely feel like you're climbing. It's a smartly constructed single track, with the flow of mountain biking in mind. Sure, it is open to equestrian and*



Climbing to the sky through sagebrush and desert terrain

*hikers as well – but from the amount of tire tracks, it seems the most popular for bikes. That being said, you've still gotta keep a hairy eyeball scanning for people and horses as well. I love how you start in desert/sagebrush terrain, and before you know it, you're up in an alpine region, riding through trees and creek crossings."*

Text & photo courtesy Alan Jacoby  
[dirtyteeth.wordpress.com](http://dirtyteeth.wordpress.com)

## OUR MISSION

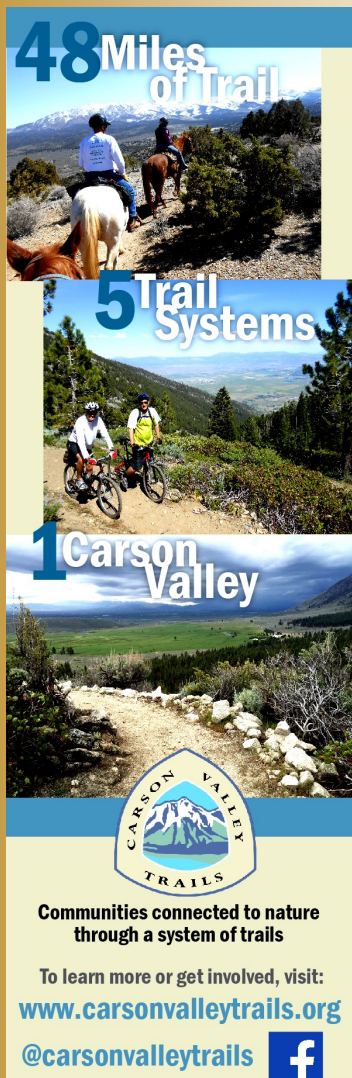
The Carson Valley Trails Association is a nonprofit, volunteer-based organization working with partners to provide access to public lands through a recreational trail system for present and future generations to enjoy.

## OUR VISION

Communities connected to nature through a system of trails.

## OUR VALUES

- ◆ We honor and celebrate our volunteers.
- ◆ We collaborate and work with many partners in our community.
- ◆ We work efficiently and act with integrity.
- ◆ We are committed to trail stewardship.



***Please join CVTA online—it's easy!***

***Visit our website: [carsonvalleytrails.org](http://carsonvalleytrails.org) and click on Join/Donate***

### Annual Membership Levels:

- ☐ \$25 Individual
- ☐ \$35 Family
- ☐ \$15 Senior/Student
- ☐ \$45 Business

**To join by mail, complete and mail this form with check payable to:**

**Carson Valley Trails Association  
P.O. Box 222, Minden NV 89423**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\*Email \_\_\_\_\_

\*Members receive the CVTA Newsletter and periodic notifications about CVTA events and volunteer opportunities.

We will not sell or share your mailing or email address.

Your donation to CVTA, a 501(c)(3) Nevada nonprofit organization, may be tax deductible pursuant to the provisions of section 170.c. of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 170.c.

