

Fall/Winter 2018-19



Communities
connected
to nature

through a system
of trails



The Pinyon Trail

An East Valley destination in cool seasons

When you're looking for a change in perspective and a pleasant, non-strenuous hike, mountain bike, or equestrian trail ride with beautiful views in all directions, the Pinyon Trail in the Pine Nut Mountains east of Carson Valley is your destination. Named for Nevada's state tree, the single-leaf pinyon pine, the Pinyon Trail is open to hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, and dogs. The shoulder seasons, April to June and September to December, are the best times to hike this trail, which gets too hot in mid-summer. But you may be able to hike or ride there all winter, because when our Sierra Nevada trails are covered with snow, there's a good chance that the Pinyon Trail will be snow-free, or close to it.

The Pinyon trail is a non-motorized three-mile loop which crowns a large hill with continuous views of the Pine Nut and Carson Ranges. From the trailhead, a one-mile "spur" gently climbs through the pinyon forest, crossing twice with a motorized off-road track, to arrive at the trail junction where trail users can go either direction on the loop.

The return trip back to the trailhead from the junction results in a round-trip trail distance of about 5.2 miles. Taking the loop twice, which mountain bikers and trail runners often do, extends the length to about 8.2 miles. The trail elevation ranges from 5,700 feet at the trailhead to about 6,060 feet with a gentle grade of about 5%. The trail surface is soil, with patches of bedrock.

The Pinyon Trailhead is located on Pinenut Road, about 6.7 miles east of the Hwy 395/Riverview Drive traffic light at the south end of Gardnerville. From the light, head east on Pinenut Road. In about 2 miles, turn left onto Pinenut Road 2. After about 2 more miles, you will keep right at Out R Way where the paved road will become gravel. Continue 2.3 miles to the trailhead, on the left. The pull-through parking area is designed for autos and horse trailers. There are no water sources along this trail or at the trailhead. There are also no restrooms, water, or trash cans; please bring water and pack out any trash and dog/horse waste from around the trailhead.

President's Message

By Norah Gastelum

Autumn greetings. I hope you've had an opportunity recently to take in the beautiful views from the trails. With over 50 miles of trails in the Carson Valley now, there is so much to see and enjoy. In addition to being a great season for hiking, it also is the season of gratitude for all that's been accomplished and anticipation of dreams for the year to come.

We are grateful for the work of our volunteers who continue to build and maintain the trails to a standard that has given Carson Valley trails much recognition in the past year. The Trail Operations Report in this newsletter will give you a small taste of some of the work that has been completed. The weekly commitment by a few individuals was truly incredible and enabled the building of a 6.5-mile section of single-track trail connecting Spooner Summit to the Clear Creek Connector. This gives us 15 miles of incredible trail at Clear Creek.

Our appreciation extends to our membership and donors who choose to support CVTA's vision financially. Your contributions fund environmental assessments for new sections of trail, trailhead improvements, and the materials necessary for signage on the trails. Your donations make our volunteer work possible.

Finally, thank you to the hikers, bikers and equestrians who vote for the existence of trails with every footstep and pedal you take on our trails. We know that your lives are being enriched with opportunities to connect with the outdoors.

Hopes and dreams for the new year have been gathered from the trail users and key stakeholders through surveys. Your wishes were straightforward. Connectivity is number one. Having trails that connect to other existing trails is clearly a priority. Educational hiking events were another request. Toward that end, we'll continue to use our Trail Connections newsletter to share information about the history, flora, fauna and geology of our trails. If CVTA can recruit a complete Board of Directors and a solid volunteer base, we will move toward holding more educational hikes for the community. We'll continue to keep you posted. Please use our website to keep us posted, too!

Fresh tracks to all in the new year!

Special Events in 2019

By Tamara Lieberman

In late August 2018, CVTA sponsored a **Wilderness First Aid** class at the Nature Conservancy's Whit Hall Interpretive Center in Genoa. Bobbie Foster of Foster Calm instructed the class of 14 over two days. The class covered patient assessment, shock and bleeding, head and spinal injuries, musculoskeletal injuries, wounds, and heat and cold illnesses. The outdoor location at River Fork Ranch provided a perfect venue in which to practice first aid and leadership skills. **CVTA is planning on sponsoring the class again in 2019.** Anyone using our trails, or enjoying the outdoors in any remote location, may need these lifesaving skills.

The late summer **Moonlight Hike on the Pinyon Trail** was such a hit with those that attended that there will be another one in 2019.

Also watch for information on a **Wildflower Hike** at the height of the spring bloom and a **Local History Hike** focusing on an historical person or event related to the trails.

The **Annual Meeting in April 2019** will be a celebration of the **25th anniversary of the Carson Valley Trails Association!** You won't want to miss this special evening. More information will come as plans are made.

All of this information and more comes directly to you via email when you become a member of CVTA. Look inside this issue for information on how to become a member or go to our website at www.carsonvalleytrails.org.

And be sure to watch our website, our Facebook page www.facebook.com/carsonvalleytrails, and the Spring/Summer Trail Connections newsletter for information as to date and how to sign up for any of these activities, as well as to volunteer on trail maintenance days.

Mining the Mysteries of the Pine Nut Mountains

By Anne Thomas

Gazing east across the Carson Valley from one of our many trails in the Carson Range, the brown slopes of the Pine Nut Mountains rise, caramel to near-black. While the history, geology, wildlife, and plant communities of the Sierra Nevada are well documented and understood, the Pine Nuts are a comparative enigma to many hikers. We decided to do some virtual exploring.

The Sierra Nevada and the Pine Nut range were formed in the same way, through uplift and tilting. Like the Sierra Nevada, the Pine Nuts rise gently in the west and drop sharply on the eastern slope. While the dominant rock of the Sierra Nevada is granite, the western slope of the Pine Nuts is predominantly dark gray limestone and shale with some local occurrences of basalt. While granite does occur in the Pine Nuts, it is seen mostly on the eastern slopes overlooking Smith Valley.



The highest peak in the Pine Nut range is Mt. Siegel, 5-1/2 miles east of the Pinyon Trail, which can be seen from the trailhead parking lot and many places along the trail. Mt. Siegel and its close neighbors, Galena and Oreana Peaks, contain the headwaters of Buckeye Creek. On the slopes below, the Buckeye Placer Mine was the scene of sporadic prospecting and mining of gold, copper, and tungsten from 1872 until 1943. For the most part, the results were disappointing due to a lack of water and harsh conditions on the peaks.

“One of the most remote and inaccessible regions in the southern Pine Nut Mountains lies in the vicinity that embraces the summits of Mount Siegel and Oreana Peak. With lofty elevations of more than 9,000 feet above sea level, the barren and windblown rocky slopes are often ravaged with relentless and treacherous winter storms. Snow drifts accumulate to great depths during the winter season and in the summer the menacing winds contribute to vigorous thunderstorms. This briefly describes the environment that confronted the early day prospectors who once roved these rugged slopes in search of the wealth which became their perpetual dream.”

—Nyle Nation, *The Pine Nut Chronicle*, Pine Nut Press, 2000



About 4,000 feet lower in elevation and more protected, the Pinyon Trail is pleasant to hike or ride when trails in the Sierra Nevada are snowy. The surrounding area is dotted with old mines and crisscrossed by trails which are frequented by dirt bikers and other off-road vehicles. The Pinyon Trail intersects with the dirt bike trails in a few places, which are marked. To the north, fossilized remains of ancient versions of mammals including rhinoceros, bear, rodent such as rabbit and a weasel/marten/otter-type creature, and horse have been identified.

There is much geologic, natural, and cultural history to discover and reflect on as you hike, run, or ride the Pinyon Trail and take in the spectacular views of the Pine Nuts, Carson Valley, and the Carson Range.



The Pinyon Trail Story

By Jeremy Vican

The Pinyon Trail, along with three other connecting loop trails on the east side of the Carson Valley, were identified in 2007 by CVTA. These trail locations generally followed route alternatives in the 2003 Douglas County Comprehensive Trails Plan.

CVTA formally proposed these trail opportunities to the Bureau of Land Management in 2008. Due to a lack of BLM personnel and existing project commitments, the proposal was delayed for a considerable amount of time. However, ongoing trail discussions and meetings continued between CVTA, BLM, Douglas County, Carson City, U.S. Forest Service, the Washoe Tribe and non-profit partners between 2008 and 2012.

During 2012, the BLM was able to accept CVTA's trails proposal into their projects list. CVTA funded the BLM \$52,000 to begin an Environmental Assessment on what was called the East Carson Valley Trail System, which included the Pinyon Trail.

After an initial workshop and public scoping, the East Carson Valley Trail System was significantly reduced to include only the 5-mile Pinyon Trail and the 6-mile Juniper Loop in the Stephanie Way/Johnson Lane area. Numerous existing roads and an extensive network of user-created social routes were two reasons why the project was reduced in size.

Several alignment changes then occurred due to a combination of public input and biological and cultural resources identified in the Environmental Assessment. Additional workshops, public scoping and field analysis continued to fine-tune the detailed trail locations. During fall, 2013, the BLM completed the final scoping report and approved construction of the Pinyon Trail.

Between October, 2014 and March, 2015, the Pinyon Trail was constructed by community volunteers through CVTA. With approximately \$22,000 in CVTA funds still remaining from the Environmental Assessment payment, the BLM used approximately \$16,000 to construct the Pinyon Trailhead, which accommodates autos and equestrian trailers. CVTA then used the remaining funds to purchase and install trail signage, trailhead signage and the trailhead kiosk. The Pinyon Trail opened in March, 2015.



The Recent Travels of Pinyon Pine

By Jim Morefield



singleleaf pinyon pine

It goes without saying for most visitors to our Carson Valley trails that the Pinyon Trail provides a very different botanical experience from any of the west-side trails. In several different ways, we have geology to thank for this, starting in the age of the dinosaurs.

Sometime between 100 and 200 million years ago, the limestone that now underlies much of the Pinyon Trail was first deposited in a sea-bottom environment. When later exposed at the surface, the calcium carbonate in limestone creates difficult growing conditions for many plants, but allows different, carbonate-tolerant species to grow and compete there instead. The Pinyon Trail is our only trail through limestone soils, and has a much different flora to show for it (see accompanying guide to the trees and shrubs).

Next fast-forward to the past 10 million years. Travelers across the present-day Sierra Nevada often notice how abruptly the vegetation changes as they cross into (or out of) the east-side deserts. Scientists have long recognized that the Sierra Nevada rain shadow creates one of the strongest and most sudden ecological transitions in all of North America. Over a distance of 15 miles or less, tall conifer forests give way to sparse desert shrublands and woodlands. Average annual precipitation drops from about 31 inches at the top of Kingsbury Grade, to about 16 inches at the Pinyon Trail trailhead, and about 9 inches on the valley bottom in between. But this hasn't always been so.

Ten million years ago the Sierra Nevada and Pine Nut Mountains were hardly bumps on the landscape, and they didn't start their greatest uplift until 2 to 3 million years ago. Before that time, the prehistoric Nevada and California vegetation was much more uniform from east to west, and was composed of different species adapted to a wetter climate. Most of the dominant drought-adapted woody species that we now take for granted in western Nevada, like sagebrush, rabbitbrush, and juniper, are relative newcomers. Not nearly as new, however, as our pinyon pines.



big sagebrush

Now fast-forward to the end of the most recent North American glaciation, about 12,500 years ago. The Sierra Nevada and Pine Nut Mountains had reached their present-day heights, that ancient sea-bottom limestone was now exposed at the surface and weathering to form soil, and the Sierra Nevada rain shadow was in full force. Early Native Americans were populating the continent. Much of our current woody flora was already present, though generally at lower elevations than now. But pinyon pine was nowhere to be found.



rubber rabbitbrush

Several lines of fossil evidence show that singleleaf pinyon pine (*Pinus monophylla*) was confined mainly to the Mojave Desert during the last glacial period. As the glaciers retreated and the climate warmed beginning about 12,500 years ago, the average limit of summer monsoon rains started shifting farther northwest into the Great Basin. This plus warming winters allowed pinyon pines to begin a slow march northward into the Great Basin, only reaching their namesake Pine Nut Mountains roughly 2,000 years ago.

There is no reason to think that this northward migration has stopped yet, and indeed it could now be accelerating. Efforts by some range managers to "control" invasion of pinyon-juniper woodland in the Great Basin may be akin to plugging a leaky dam with chewing gum. There are greater forces still at work, and the results are there to see along our Carson Valley trails.

These are the major woody species (plus the rare Lavin eggvetch) found along the first mile of the Pinyon Trail:



singleleaf pinyon pine (*Pinus monophylla*)



Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*)



purple sage (*Salvia dorrii*)



Indian tea (*Ephedra viridis*)



mountain sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata vaseyana*)



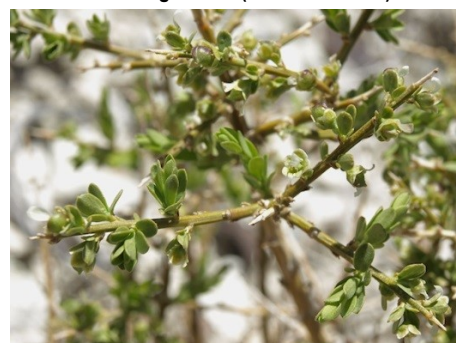
black sagebrush (*Artemisia nova*)



pinyon buckwheat (*Eriogonum microthecum*)



antelope bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*)



Nevada greasewood (*Glossopetalon spinescens*)



bush wirelettuce (*Stephanomeria pauciflora*)



smooth horsebrush (*Tetradymia glabrata*)



pineapple bush (*Brickellia microphylla*)



desert snowberry (*Symphoricarpos longiflorus*)



desert gooseberry (*Ribes velutinum*)



Lavin eggvetch (*Astragalus oophorus lavinii*)

How to Renew Your CVTA Membership Online

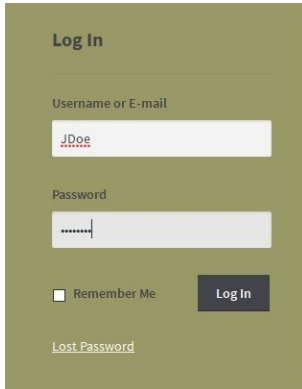
By Michael Hartstein

One of the main reasons CVTA redesigned our website last year was to make it easy for you and for CVTA to manage your membership. You can now sign up to become a member and renew your membership online. And since CVTA is an all-volunteer organization, it really helps us to reduce our administrative burden when you pay by credit card or PayPal. But if you prefer, we're still happy to accept your paper checks.

CVTA Memberships come with no obligations to participate in CVTA activities but do come with an automatic subscription to the Trail Connections newsletter and email notifications of CVTA activities. Your annual membership dues and donations 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. All proceeds go toward trail construction and maintenance, project planning, community events and trail access in the Carson Valley. You can renew your membership in 3 easy steps:

1. Log on.

Go to our website, <https://carsonvalleytrails.org/>. Look for the Log In box on the right side of the page and enter your user id or email, your password, and click the **Log In** button. (If you don't remember your password, or never set a password, then click on the **Lost Password** link and you can reset it.) After you successfully log in you will be taken back to the homepage, but the Log In section of the page will now have a Welcome message with your name.

A screenshot of the CVTA website's login interface. It features a 'Log In' heading at the top. Below it are two input fields: 'Username or E-mail' with the text 'JDoe' and 'Password' with masked characters. There is a 'Remember Me' checkbox and a 'Log In' button. A 'Lost Password' link is located at the bottom left of the form area.

2. Go to the Membership Page

On the main menu, go to **Support > Become a Member or Renew**, which takes you to <https://carsonvalleytrails.org/membership-levels/>. Scroll down and you will see the list of CVTA membership levels. The one which has the Renew button indicates your current membership level. You can renew your membership at the same level by selecting that button, or you can change to a different membership level.

3. Enter Your Billing Information

If you wish, you can select the **Auto-Renew** option to automatically renew your membership each year.

Then, select your payment method. You can pay by credit card or PayPal, or mail us a paper check. You should then verify your billing details.

If you are paying by credit card you must enter your credit card number, then click the **Submit and Check Out** button.

If you are paying by PayPal click the **PayPal Check Out** button. You will be taken to a PayPal page to enter your account information.

If you are paying by check then click the **Submit and Check Out** button.

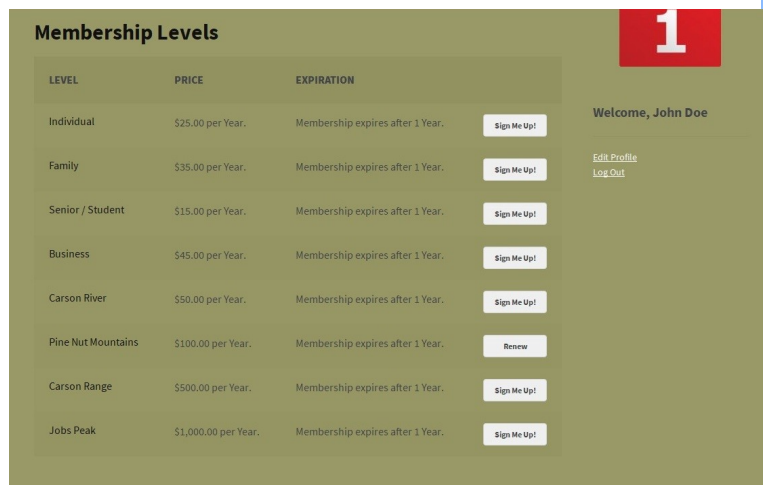
Your Membership is Renewed

That's it! You should now be taken to a Membership Confirmation page summarizing your membership details. You should also receive a confirmation email from CVTA which you can save for your financial and tax records.

Problems?

If you have any problems we are happy to help you. Just click the **Contact CVTA** menu link, which goes to <https://carsonvalleytrails.org/contact-cvta/> and we will follow up with you.

Thank you for supporting the Carson Valley Trails Association!

A screenshot of the CVTA website's membership levels page. It features a table with columns for 'LEVEL', 'PRICE', and 'EXPIRATION'. The table lists various membership options: Individual, Family, Senior / Student, Business, Carson River, Pine Nut Mountains, Carson Range, and Jobs Peak. Each row has a corresponding button: 'Sign Me Up!' for most, and 'Renew' for Pine Nut Mountains. To the right of the table, there is a 'Welcome, John Doe' message and links for 'Edit Profile' and 'Log Out'. A large red box with the number '1' is in the top right corner.

TRAIL OPERATIONS

By Jeremy Vlcán

Bently Heritage Trail

Brush removal was performed on portions of the trail with help from members of **LifePoint Church**. Two broken fiberglass trail marker posts were replaced and arrow stickers added.



Clear Creek Trail

The **Silver State Pony Club** helped clean up trash around both the lower and upper Jacks Valley Trailhead areas, and the Genoa Canyon Trailhead.

The upper 6.5-mile section of the Clear Creek Trail was completed and opened in early August. The Clear Creek Trail is now 15 miles long between Spooner Summit and Jacks Valley Elementary School. **Grace Christian Academy and GE** participated in trail work days along with several community volunteers throughout this past spring and early summer. One fallen tree was cleared from the trail. Routine maintenance was performed on the upper and middle portions of the trail including brushing and tread repair.

Clear Creek Tahoe armored the backslope and trail base at the emergency access road crossing with large rocks to address road drainage issues (photo, right).



Fay-Luther/Jobs Peak Trail System

Qualcon Contractors completed the repaving of 2,500 square feet at the Fay-Luther Trailhead parking entrance. The cost was \$17,000 paid by CVTA.

The entire south half of the trail system had general maintenance performed including drainage work and minor brushing.



Genoa Trail System

The Genoa Loop was walked and routine maintenance completed including brushing, and clearing slough and rocks. Two fallen trees were removed from the trail.

Lower Genoa Canyon, lower Sierra Canyon and Adams Canyon were cleared of encroaching brush and tread maintenance performed.

The upper and middle Sierra Canyon Trail was brushed out and rocks cleared off. Significant brushing was done on the upper couple miles of trail.

Pinyon Trail

Routine tread maintenance on the entire trail was completed.

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!



Year-End Campaign

By Tamara Lieberman

It is once again time for our annual year-end fundraising ,campaign and donation requests will soon be arriving in members' mailboxes. This year volunteers built 6.5 miles of trail between Clear Creek Junction and Spooner Summit, with a connection to the Tahoe Rim Trail. In addition to building trails, volunteers removed trees and debris, changed water channels, removed rocks, and fixed or replaced trail signs. CVTA improved the Fay-Luther Trailhead by hiring a contractor to repave the parking lot.

Your continued support is important to keep our trails beautiful, well-maintained, and available to the public. It's easy to donate, either by mail or by going to www.carsonvalleytrails.org.

With your support, 2019 will be another great year. Thank you!



Benefits of Membership

By Lee Elson

We're sometimes asked about the benefits of membership in CVTA. CVTA is a 501(c)(3) Nevada nonprofit organization and obtains nearly all of its operating budget through contributions. Memberships account for about half of that. These contributions support all the activities of CVTA, including trail building and maintenance. Therefore CVTA is able to continue its mission and members have the satisfaction of knowing they are supporting a worthy cause while possibly taking advantage of tax deductions for donations made to a nonprofit organization.

There are other benefits to members as well. Information about occasional "members only" events—such as the amazing **Moonlight Hike on the Pinyon Trail, pictured above**— as well as newsletters, annual meetings and other timely information is distributed to members. Proceeds from all donations, including membership, go entirely toward the activities mentioned above. There are no salaried positions in the organization. You can join, renew, or donate to CVTA by using the website. This cuts down on our workload significantly. Please refer to the How To Renew Your Membership article in the newsletter for details.

For more information about CVTA membership, email membership-manager@carsonvalleytrails.org.

Thanks for your support!

Carson Valley Trails Association

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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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