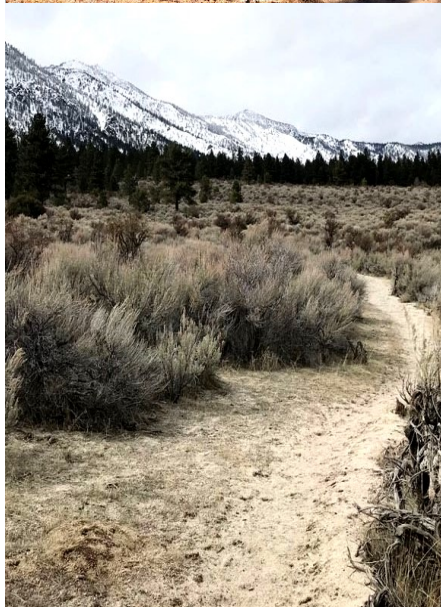


Spring/Summer 2019



*Connecting
people to the
outdoors
through a system
of trails*



CVTA SILVER ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



TRAIL CONNECTIONS

HOW IT ALL BEGAN:

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE FAY-LUTHER TRAIL SYSTEM

By Jeremy Vican

During the 1990's, locals noticed that many old roads that led into the Carson Range for recreation were becoming blocked off by new homes and proposed housing developments. So 25 years ago, in 1994, a small group formed Carson Valley Access Community (CVAC) with the vision of maintaining public access wherever possible, with their primary focus in west Carson Valley.

In the late 1990's, CVAC partnered with the American Land Conservancy to purchase 2.35 acres for the Fay-Luther trailhead from a willing private landowner. The trailhead was deeded to the U.S. Forest Service in 2000. Later that year, CVAC changed its name to the Carson Valley Trails Association (CVTA).

CVTA, along with Douglas County and the U.S. Forest Service, then identified several priority areas in Carson Valley for public access and trail systems. One of these priorities was a trail system in the Fay-Luther area that was connected to the nearby proposed Jobs Peak Ranch trailhead. There were many early challenges due to CVTA's small size, minimal funds, and the collaborative efforts needed to work with a private developer and three different public land agencies that crossed two counties in two states.

Public use of the Fay-Luther trailhead grew steadily. In 2006, the Jobs Peak Ranch trailhead was completed and CVTA constructed the Jobs Peak Ranch Trail within a Douglas County trail easement. At the same time, the Bureau of Land Management completed an environmental assessment for a trail system from the Fay-Luther trailhead. Soon, the trail system took shape with the Interpretive Loop in 2007 and the Valley View Loop in 2008. The two trailheads were connected in 2008, and the entire trail was named the Fay-Luther/Jobs Peak Ranch Trail. In 2009, trail signs and maps were installed and the trail system became the first formally recognized trail system in the Carson Valley. Later in 2010, interpretive signs were completed on the Interpretive Trail.

Trail improvements continue today through better trail alignments wherever possible. Recently, CVTA funded the repaving of a portion of the Fay-Luther trailhead. Currently, the trail system is about nine miles in length and provides a series of family friendly loop opportunities. Portions of the trail are on private land and allow for hikers only, but most of the trail system is open to equestrian and bicycles.

For more information, visit <https://carsonvalleytrails.org/fay-luther-trail/>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Norah Gastelum

Several events this past year helped solidify our commitment to a key line in CVTA's Mission Statement: "... a recreational trail system for future generations to enjoy." In completing the Strategic Plan Update, we reflected on how to continue our work toward this goal. Then, at the same time, we were approached by two amazing young people who represent this new generation of trail users.

First, Audry Keasling, a student from Douglas High School in Minden, began volunteering regularly to build trail with us on the new section of the Clear Creek Trail connecting to Spooner Summit. Her enthusiasm and interest led her to become the Carson Valley Trails Association's first Youth Board Member. She hopes to bring opportunities to the next generation of trail users and help the board to have a fresh perspective while developing the next generation of organizational leaders. In addition to her volunteer work with CVTA, Audry continues to be an outstanding mountain biker, trail runner and community member.

Additional inspiration came when we were surprised and honored with a \$1,000 donation from another teen, Jared Marchegger. Jared, a cross-country runner and graduate of Sierra Lutheran High School, earned the title of Gatorade Player of the Year for Nevada in 2018. Gatorade gave him the opportunity to give back to his community by providing money for a local nonprofit of his choice. With his donation Jared said, "The trails your group has built have been a large part of my life, and have inspired me to keep running in the beautiful Carson Valley area. I run Clear Creek Trail all the time and it is one of my favorite trails ever!"

When we think of Jared and Audry, or when we meet a family hiking out on the trails, we are further encouraged to continue the work of the Carson Valley Trails Association. Having youth who are connected to the trails and the experiences they offer will help protect and ensure public access to these amazing places.

Cheers,

Norah Gastelum
Carson Valley Trails Association, President

See the Strategic Plan:

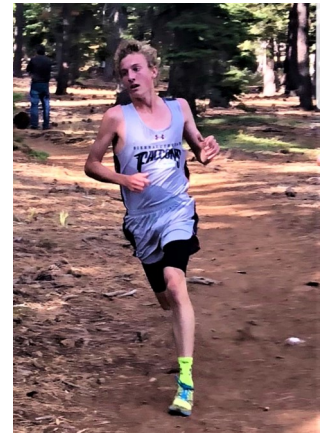
<https://carsonvalleytrails.org/about/mission-strategic-plan/>

See Audry and Jared on CVTA's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/CarsonValleyTrails/>

Meet our dedicated new board members:

<https://carsonvalleytrails.org/about/board-members/>



Do You Know ... ?

The Clear Creek Trail is now 15 miles long! At the upper end, the trail begins at the Spooner Summit South Trailhead behind the restroom. At the lower end, the trail begins at the Jacks Valley Trailhead on the southwest side of Jacks Valley Elementary School. The Clear Creek Connector is 2 miles long. The Clear Creek Trail is open to hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians and dogs.

For more info and maps:

<https://carsonvalleytrails.org/clear-creek-trail-2/>

SEEDBANKS AND SUPERBLOOMS: SURVIVING IN THE DESERT

By Jim Morefield

In 1903 my favorite desert author wrote, "*None other than this long brown land lays such a hold on the affections*" (Mary Austin, *The Land of Little Rain*). While sharing that sentiment, I have also come to appreciate how much life those long brown landscapes conceal, much of it as tiny seeds disguised as grains of sand, dormant but alive, awaiting the right conditions.

Hiding, waiting, and trying to predict the weather is how many plant species survive and thrive in the desert. Warmer areas of the world with low, irregular, and highly variable rainfall have always favored plant species with annual life cycles -- those able to quickly sprout, flower, scatter seed, and die again, whenever the right conditions come along. Just as importantly, such plants are able to lay low and survive in the soil "seedbank" between such times, for several years or even decades. While annual species can be found just about anywhere, they are most abundant and diverse in desert climates.



Carson Valley monkeyflower (*Erythranthe carsonensis*)
found near the Fay-Luther and Clear Creek trails



Steamboat monkeyflower (*Diplacus ovatus*), a seed-banking annual found near the Jobs Peak Ranch trail

Seeds, and lots of them, are key to the success of desert annuals. By producing many tiny seeds, instead of a few large ones, the chances of finding favorable growth conditions (and avoiding predators) increase. These seeds have also acquired a dizzying array of physical and chemical traits to help them detect and respond (or not) to the unpredictable conditions around them. The result is various combinations and amounts of (1) strong long-lasting dormancy, (2) thick seed coats, (3) chemical growth inhibitors, (4) sensitivity to moisture and light levels, (5) detection of past and present temperature patterns, and most importantly (6) differences between seeds of the same species in all these traits (known by the technical term "bet-hedging").

After enough time to wear down seed coats, rainfall to leach away chemical inhibitors, moisture in the soil, and optimum light levels and temperature patterns, all at the right times and in the right combinations, annuals will sprout and be ready to launch their rapid above-ground life cycle. Hedging their bets, seeds with different requirements will sprout in different years, keeping the seedbank diverse and resilient, and helping species avoid competition with each other. Most annuals sprout under winter or spring conditions, but there are also annuals that detect summer monsoon conditions, and have to grow even faster to beat the heat. They get called names like "six-weeks grass" and "six-weeks clover" for good reason.

How do plants develop seeds with such intricate ways to beat the heat and predict the weather? It's not too hard to imagine. Plants drop seeds with various kinds and amounts of growth inhibitors and triggers. Variants that sprout at the wrong times will shrivel and die before they mature, leaving no seeds of that kind to the next generation. Only variants with "the right stuff" to anticipate survivable growing conditions, in the face of anything the desert throws at them, will keep leaving seeds behind over the long haul. Generation by generation, the soil seedbank gets filled with only the best-adapted seed. Variants with the wrong stuff died off long ago.

Then there are the superbloom years, typically a decade or more apart, when all bets are off. Abundant moisture and perfect timing completely overwhelm all seed survival strategies, and nearly the whole seedbank germinates and reproduces. These occasional and spectacular above-ground events help to replenish both the quantity and diversity of seeds in the soil, preparing the seedbank to survive the normal, unpredictable drought and rain cycles that will follow. Whenever you are fortunate enough to witness a superbloom event, know also that you are witnessing a critical survival event for all of those colorful wildflowers.



Sand blossoms (*Linanthus parryae*), a Mojave Desert seed-banking species

(continued on next page)



Threadleaf phacelia (*Phacelia linearis*), a seed-banking annual found near the Fay-Luther-Jobs Peak Ranch trail

Technically, Carson Valley (and most of the Great Basin) is a semi-desert -- not quite dry enough to qualify for the real thing. But we are still dry enough to have our share of seed-banking desert annuals capable of producing a superbloom when conditions are right. Our last superbloom, when everything was out, was in 2016. This year we've had the right amount of moisture, but the timing wasn't quite optimal. The major precipitation didn't start until January, and then took a break in March and April before resuming in May. The result has been plenty of flowers for sure, but not quite an all-out superbloom. The good news, with our cold and wet May and heavy snowpack in the high country, is that the wildflowers are running on a delayed schedule, and there is still plenty to see if you don't wait too long.

As usual, Mary Austin said it best: "*The desert floras shame us with their cheerful adaptations to the seasonal imitations. Their whole duty is to flower and fruit, and they do it hardly, or with tropical luxuriance, as the rain admits.*"

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.

PINYON WILDFLOWER WALK

By Anne Thomas



May 27th dawned overcast with a threat of rain, but that didn't stop more than forty people from making the drive to the Pinyon Trail to join Ed and Linda Kleiner for a wildflower hike. Wildflower blooms are unpredictable, so the hike's location wasn't announced until a week before the event, after Ed had gone to the Pinyon Trail and determined that there were enough wildflowers in bloom.

Ed, who is manager of Comstock Seed Company, shared his wealth of knowledge over the course of several hours, identifying plants, discussing the confounding naming protocols, and helping us make sense of what we were seeing. We learned about the habits of wildflowers, and why they bloom

more in some years, and in some places. Wildflowers thrive in disturbed areas, such as roadside ditches, burned areas, or places where brush has been cleared. And seeds are adapted to different conditions, so while this year's late spring wetness was favorable for the south side of the Pinyon Trail, an earlier, warmer spring might favor the north slopes.

CVTA sends out emails to members, announcing events like the wildflower hike. If you want to keep informed, just go to the website and join. Don't miss out on the next hike!

Become a Citizen Scientist with iNaturalist

iNaturalist is a citizen science project and online social network of naturalists, citizen scientists, and biologists built on the concept of mapping and sharing observations of biodiversity across the globe. iNaturalist may be accessed via its website or from its mobile applications. Observations recorded with iNaturalist provide valuable open data to scientific research projects, conservation agencies, other organizations, and the public. The project has been called "a standard-bearer for natural history mobile applications." Source: Wikipedia

Find out more at: <https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/about>



TRAIL OPERATIONS REPORT

By Jeremy Vican



Bently Heritage Trail

Winter cleanup occurred on the entire trail, clearing fallen willows and brush. The Carson River washed away a section of trail, and a new 60-foot section was rebuilt. New maps were installed at six junctions. A boardwalk was installed on a seasonally wet/muddy section of the Middle Loop with the help of Grace Lutheran Academy students and teachers.

Clear Creek Trail

Drainages were cleaned out on the lower couple of trail miles to prevent erosion from rain and snowmelt. Several water bars were installed on the steep old road above the Upper Jacks Valley trailhead to prevent further rutting where the trail crosses. Six fallen trees were removed, two below Knob Point, two between Cliff Rock and Spooner Summit, and two on the Clear Creek Connector. A blind turn at the rock wall/rock bench was improved by widening and removing brush for a better sightline of trail users; the outer edge was also armored. A blind turn 1/4 mile below Knob Point was widened and brush was removed for a better sightline. The first climbing turn above Upper Jacks Valley trailhead was improved to create an easier and safer turning radius. A short section was realigned below a tree to avoid a large exposed root. The first switchback above Clear Creek Junction was widened to improve turning radius. A wider turn radius was constructed at two ridge locations to improve sight lines and trail flow.



Fay-Luther/Jobs Peak Ranch Trail System

The entire trail system had water bars improved and cleaned out. A new mid-trail system map was installed to replace a damaged map. One fallen tree was removed from the Valley View Loop and one on the Luther Creek Spur.

Genoa Trail System

Five fallen trees were removed from the trail. A drainage crossing above Razor Ridge was re-benched slightly higher to move water flow off the trail. Brushing was done along the trail in lower Genoa Canyon by the creek. An edge rail bumper was installed in Genoa Canyon at

a switchback to improve biker safety and protect the outer trail edge. The inner debris support walls on two switchbacks in Genoa Canyon were cleaned out. The Genoa Loop and Eagle Ridge Loop were cleared of winter rock falls.



Pinyon Trail

A complete trail walk-through and touchup occurred.



GET IN ON THE FUN!

Check the CVTA calendar for trail work days at <https://carsonvalleytrails.org/about/>

Sign up for a work day at <https://carsonvalleytrails.org/contact-cvta/>

FAY-LUTHER/JOBS PEAK RANCH TRAIL

THROUGH THE EYES OF AN EQUESTRIAN

By Deby O'Gorman

Fay-Luther is a popular, equestrian-friendly trail system with 6 miles of loops and connectors that are open to hikers, dogs, mountain bikers, and equestrians - with mountain bikers few and far between, and dogs numerous. This is because the trails are too soft for bikes much of the time. The amenities for equestrians are great - an awesomely large horse trailer parking lot at the Fay-Luther trailhead, and watering holes at Luther Creek for both your equine partner and your canine companion.



The trails in this system are gentle throughout, with a couple of easy water crossings. The first half-mile from the Fay-Luther trailhead on Sandy Trail has limited shade and takes you through thick areas of sagebrush, rabbit brush, and bitterbrush. The rest of the trail is mostly open Jeffrey Pine forest, with a mix of Single-Leaf Pinyon, Curl-Leaf Mountain Mahogany, White Alder, Aspen, Willow, and Black Cottonwood - beautiful! And there are some amazing views of the Carson Range, the Pine Nut Range, and Carson Valley. Sandy Trail and the Interpretive Loop provide interpretive signs to read and enjoy, and the opportunities to meet and interact with locals and visitors (and their doggies!) along all the trails are truly rewarding.

Dogs are allowed everywhere on the Fay-Luther Trail System, and should be leashed year-round on the Sandy Trail, out of respect for the adjacent property owner. Dogs must also be leashed everywhere on the trail system from November 15 to March 30, to reduce stress on our local deer population during the winter season. Also, please be sure to clean up after your dog. There is a station just inside the trailhead, with bags to take along the trail and a container in which to deposit them on your way out. CVTA volunteers service the station on a regular schedule. Please use it!

If you're planning to ride, the Fay-Luther trailhead is on Foothill Road about 4.5 miles south of the Kingsbury Grade intersection. I'm there a lot - this is by far my favorite trail system in Carson Valley. I love being there with my equine partner and my trail dog - it's peaceful. I hope to see you there!

What others are saying about Fay-Luther on Alltrails.com ...

"This was a great hike! I took the Interpretive Loop to the Grand View Loop and then the 2.5 miles past to the trail's end. The climb can be pretty steep at times, but it is clearly marked and in excellent condition. I saw two other hikers on the trail. The views of Carson Valley were amazing. A large portion of the trail is in direct sunlight, so bring lots of water if you are planning on doing the whole trail. Imapmyfitness app on my phone showed 9 total miles with an elevation gain of 2000'. It took me four hours, but my pace wasn't that great. I'll do this hike again!" - Jennifer P.

"My family and friends and of course our well known dog "Ragnar" use this trail an average of 4-5 times a week. It has creeks and streams for the animals and so many beautiful things to see! We see something different every time. Well groomed trail as well." - Chris S.

"Took our 2 year old twins for a walk here and they did fairly well but we probably only walked about 2 miles round trip. We went late in the evening so it wasn't hot and didn't see many people out at that time. Our 6 year old did great and I know she would have been fine to go farther. Nice walk and close if you live in the Carson Valley." - Melissa D.

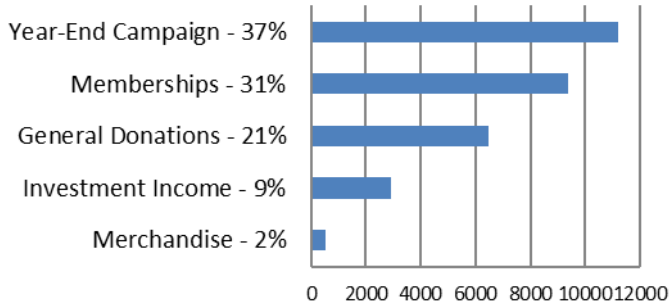
For more information and maps, go to <https://carsonvalleytrails.org/fay-luther-trail/>



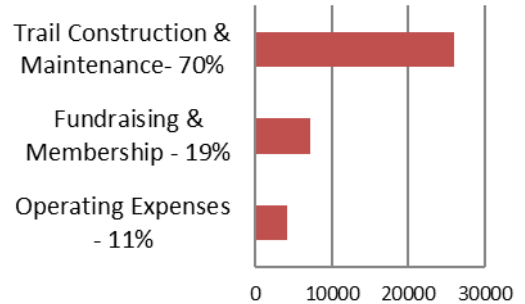
2018 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

By Vicki Kieffer

2018 Income



2018 Expenditures



CVTA reported an annual income of \$30,547 and expenses of \$37,458. With the addition of \$6,911 from reserves, CVTA was able to complete 6.5 miles of trail connecting the Clear Creek trail to Spooner summit, repave a section of the Fay Luther parking area, build boardwalks, and maintain and enhance established trails. CVTA is supported entirely by volunteers and 100% of funding is used to accomplish CVTA's mission and goals.

MEMBERSHIP

By Lee Elson

You can support CVTA by renewing or starting your membership or donation through our web site. In addition, using PayPal or a credit card instead of mailing a check will save us precious volunteer time.

Even if you prefer to send a check, you can enter relevant information at our website. Perhaps most important is your current email.

Visit <http://carsonvalleytrails.org/>

2018 YEAR-END CAMPAIGN

By Tamara Lieberman

Once again, the Year-End Campaign was a great success, with about \$11,700 raised. These funds are used for maintenance of the trails. Special thanks to all who contributed. Carson Valley Trails Association is an all volunteer organization, operated and led by volunteers. All trail work is done by our volunteers. If you wish to volunteer or want to hear about volunteer opportunities, please go to the website at

www.carsonvalleytrails.org.



Carson Valley Trails Association

P.O. Box 222

Minden NV 89423



2019 CVTA Officers

President Norah Gastelum

VP/President Elect Juan Guzman

Secretary Deby O'Gorman

Treasurer Vicki Kieffer

Board

VP Trail Operations Jeremy Vican

VP Fund Development
Tamara Lieberman

VP Membership Lee Elson

VP Chief Information Officer
Michael Hartstein

VP Outreach/Publicity
Judy Laquier

Directors-at-Large
Carlo Luri, Joni Jackson, Linda Kleiner,
Neal Falk, Annette Thomason

Youth Audry Keasling

Newsletter Editor Anne Thomas

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.



PLEASE PRACTICE PROPER TRAIL ETIQUETTE!

CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR DOG

Use the "poop bags" provided by CVTA
and place them in the receptacle before leaving the trail

VOLUNTEERS MAKE TRAILS HAPPEN.

Please consider joining a work day.
You'll make new friends, learn about trails,
AND HAVE FUN!

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

WWW.CARSONVALLEYTRAILS.ORG

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CARSONVALLEYTRAILS/

[HTTPS://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/](https://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/)