



# TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Fall/Winter 2021

Connecting people to the outdoors through a system of trails

## Stargazing in the Carson Valley and what you can do to preserve our dark skies.

On any moonless summer night, you can look up from our valley floor and clearly see the Milky Way's pillows of light stretching from horizon to horizon. What you're seeing is a view of our galaxy from the inside out with the light of 100 billion stars forming luminous clouds across the sky — pretty cool eh? It's even more special when you realize that the Milky Way is hardly visible to 80% of our county's population because of urban light pollution (note that all the stars in our sky are part of our Milky Way galaxy).

**Without a telescope, you can see many interesting celestial objects from your backyard.**



Milky Way from a Carson Valley backyard.

The Milky Way is proof that you do not need to invest in a telescope and costly lenses to appreciate the night sky. If your neighborhood is free from streetlights, chances are you can simply turn off your porch lights and find a dark corner of your yard to observe the wonders of the night sky.

(continued)

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Start by loading up your favorite mobile device with a star-gazing app:

[Sky Map \(Android\)](#): My favorite no-nonsense app for finding what's in the sky — it's ad-free, you can search for objects by name, and it has a night mode that won't ruin your night vision.

[Night Sky \(Apple iOS\)](#): A great alternative to Sky Map that I use on my iPad.

Depending on what's visible on any given night, you can view a wide range of objects with basic binoculars or even your naked eye. Choose a night when there's a crescent moon or less and give your eyes five minutes to adapt to the dark. You'll be amazed by how much you can see.

**Planets:** Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn are all visible naked-eye and even better with binoculars.

**Galaxies:** Milk Way (notice the dark dust lanes and the bright center of our galaxy around the constellation Sagittarius) and our sister galaxy Andromeda which requires binoculars.

**Nebulae** (clouds of gas and dust requiring binoculars): Orion nebulae and Lagoon Nebula.

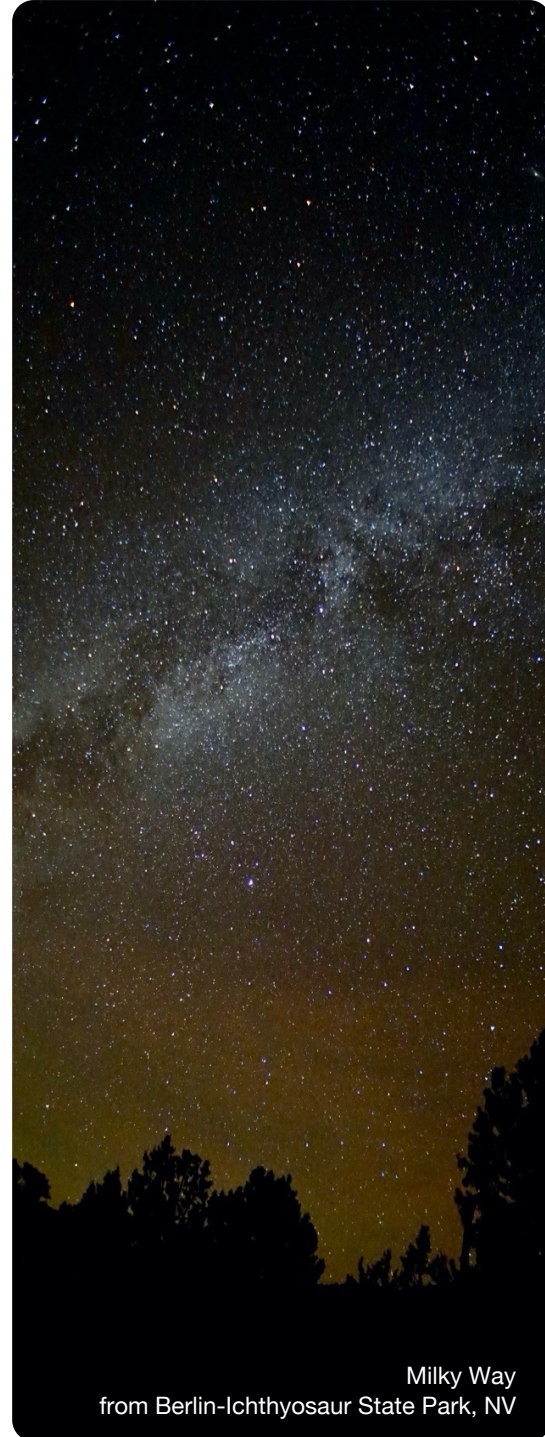
**Star clusters** (require binoculars): The double cluster, the Pleiades and M35 in the constellation Gemini.

**Satellites and the International Space Station (ISS):** Best seen at dusk or dawn as the sun reflects off their shiny metal surfaces and solar arrays. Check out [Heavens-Above.com](https://Heavens-Above.com) for viewing times based on your location or get the [ISS Detector app](#) for Android and Apple iOS.

This is just a starting point. There's literally a massive universe out there to discover on your own. If you want to peer through some telescopes, visit Western Nevada College's Jack C. Davis Observatory on one of their [Saturday-night Public Star Parties](#). I recommend choosing a night when there's a crescent moon or less so you can see some hard-to-find deep-sky objects.

### What we can do to preserve our dark sky viewing.

As our population grows so does light pollution. This direct correlation is striking when looking at a [light pollution map of the world](#). This map clearly shows that even smaller towns such as Minden and Gardnerville are blanketed in artificial light. While a great deal of our valley is rural, the 395





corridor (especially into Carson City) emits a glow that you'll clearly notice on a cloudy or hazy night.

One of the things we can do as concerned citizens is to be cautious of our own outdoor lighting. [DarkSky.org](https://www.darksky.org/) provides a vast array of information on what types of lighting are discouraged/acceptable for reducing light pollution. I also recommend motion-detecting lights as opposed to leaving outdoor lighting on all the time.

If you really enjoy the night sky, living in Nevada makes it easy to take a trip away from the light pollution of civilization and into some wonderfully dark areas.

[NevadaWilderness.org](https://www.nevadawilderness.org/) recommends a number of sites in our state including Massacre Rim which became a certified Dark Sky Sanctuary in 2019.

- Bill Rogers (article and photos)  
Backyard astronomy and dark sky enthusiast



## FEET DON'T FAIL ME

Tips for Hikers from  
Sierra Foot & Ankle  
Dr. Victoria L Melhuish



As members of the Carson Valley Trails Association, you clearly have a love and appreciation for the outdoors. It is remarkable that CVTA has helped to create and maintain more than 50 miles of public

trails, with an estimated 87,000 hikers annually. Thank you for your stewardship! I've lived in the Carson River Watershed for almost 30 years and truly appreciate and value our beautiful surroundings.

As a board-certified podiatrist, I understand that when you want to hike all day, get to the back country, or experience some really great views on the more difficult trails, you want to be sure your feet are protected and up for the task. Nothing spoils an amazing hike like a foot or ankle injury, particularly if you have a 6-mile walk to get back to your car.

**Proper footwear.** Choose a hiking shoe that matches your intended activity level. If you are planning to walk a few hours on flat and smooth terrain and prefer a lower-cut hiking shoe, that's fine. But if you plan on carrying more gear or embarking on more challenging and difficult trails, a high-cut hiking boot will provide better ankle support and may be more appropriate. Proper footwear that offers good arch support is critical.

Be cognizant of the outsole of your footwear. Depending on the material and geometric design, the outsole acts as a defensive layer from small rocks and debris on the trail. Outsoles are designed for traction and cushioning. The harder rubbers used for most hiking boot outsoles are obviously more durable and often grip better on wet and muddy surfaces. Lastly, full-grain leather uppers or Gore-Tex are an added benefit for foot protection, plus durability and weather resistance.

Make sure your boots fit! Nothing feels worse after a few hours of hiking than an ill-fitting hiking boot. Your shoes/boots should not feel tight but provide good wiggle room for the toes.

NOTE: Don't neglect to manage your toenails before and after hikes. Our feet tend to swell after we've been hiking for a while, so when

you're shopping for footwear, do so later in the day or after exercise. It is recommended to add ½ size to accommodate your feet swelling. It's better to be ½ size too big than too small. I also suggest trying on shoes/boots while wearing the same type of socks you'll be hiking in. Try before you buy!



**Don't forget socks!** Socks are one of the most important yet overlooked pieces of equipment. The right socks are critical in keeping your feet comfortable and blister-free. Breathable, moisture-wicking hiking socks are designed to provide additional cushion to the toes and the heel of the foot. The amount of cushioning affects comfort and warmth and will help prevent your feet from "throbbing" towards the end of a long hike. Merino wool socks offer antibacterial properties, are a natural fiber, and cause minimal or no skin irritation. You can find quality hiking socks available in tall, mid-cut and low-cut options.

**Hiking Compression Socks.** Hiking compression socks can help keep you going longer - and to be less tired when you get there. They're particularly good for trekkers with varicose veins or other circulation issues. Wearing compression socks while you're hiking will help increase circulation in the legs, which boosts oxygen and recovery time for muscles and tissue. However, if you're unsure about using hiking compression socks, talk to your primary care provider or your local podiatrist. Incorrect use of compression socks can injure your skin and create unwanted conditions. If you have serious concerns about the blood flow in your legs, Sierra Foot & Ankle does offer services and treatment for a condition known as [neuropathy](#), a loss of feeling in the feet and legs.



**Pre-tape.** If you know you have a few "hot spots" where you tend to get blisters, use medical tape on these spots before you begin to hike. This will often help stop "hot spots" from occurring in the first place.

**Powder in your shoes/boots!** Foot powders typically have talc and a good amount of Salicylic Acid to absorb moisture, odor, and help with redness, swelling and prevent skin irritations. A sprinkle of medicated foot powder in your shoes helps keep them dry and inhibit fungal growth. It's also a good habit to continue as a routine for proper foot hygiene.

**Trekking poles.** The first time I used trekking poles was on an excursion to summit Mt. Whitney and I've been using them since. Trekking poles can help improve your step, gait, body alignment, even your breathing by simply being

more erect. They can help to maintain balance when you're in a precarious situation like crossing a stream. Albeit, there are proper ways for using hiking poles and other ways that may be a hindrance. A web search will offer pros and cons of trekking poles to help decide if a pair is right for you.

**Custom Orthotics.** As a hiker and a backpacker, hiking is the ultimate experience to nurture both body and soul. Unfortunately, there is some rugged terrain out there and adding additional pack weight can throw off your gait. A good pair of custom orthotics will last for years and can protect your feet, knees and lower back from undue pain. For optimal results, orthotics need to fit the needs of your feet and ankles perfectly. Sierra Foot & Ankle offers [Go 4-D orthotics](#) that captures real-time data as you walk and move and uses this data to produce a 3D-printed custom orthotic.

## Foot and Ankle Care for Carson Valley's Hikers

I am passionate about helping outdoor enthusiasts protect their feet and recover quickly and completely from injuries that keep them from doing what they love.

If you're dealing with a hiking-related injury, or having problems with foot and ankle pain, Sierra Foot & Ankle specializes in many advanced, non-surgical treatments that can help hikers and trekkers of all kinds shorten their recovery time and get back on the trail sooner, including:

- [MLS laser therapy](#)
- Shockwave therapy

Don't let painful feet stand in the way of fully enjoying all the gorgeous hikes and trails that the Carson Valley and northern Nevada has to offer! Not that I am hoping to sell our goods and services, but I'm a local podiatrist. I've been taking care of your grandmother's feet, your neighbors' feet, maybe even your feet for well over 20 years. Please follow the tips above, take care of your feet, and give us a call if you need help. Stay active and enjoy your hikes!



This article was thoughtfully provided to CVTA by:

[Victoria L Melhuish DPM, FACFAS](#)

[Sierra Foot & Ankle 775-783-8037](#)

## Volunteer Spotlight

Lee Griffith

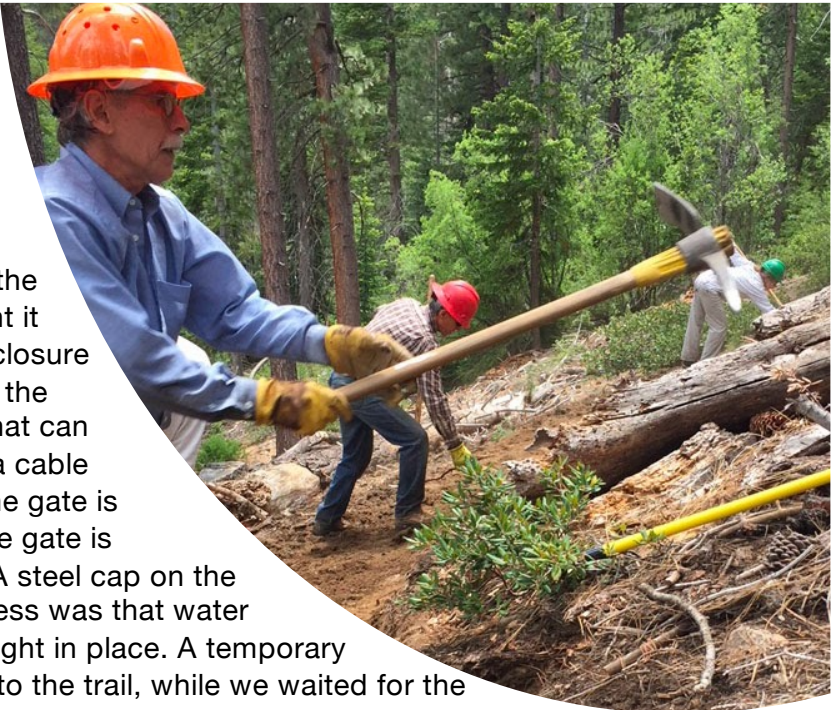
CVTA Volunteer, **Lee Griffith**, highlights the support that quietly goes on behind the scenes. Giving us the gift of his **time and** understanding of engineering, he handily repaired a stuck trail gate. Here is his story.

I retired in 2012, and **although** I thoroughly enjoy the time to pursue long standing and new hobbies, I did miss **having** a sense of purpose and accomplishment. It wasn't until 2018 that I got involved with CVTA to help build the upper three miles of the Clear Creek Trail. I was very impressed with the dedication and level of cooperation of the people who kept coming out week



after week to cut through brush and roots, move trees, and dig out rocks. It was great to work with people who so generously gave of their time and muscle power for a project that would benefit the community for generations to come.

This spring when I was asked to check on the Muller Lane trailhead gate closure, I thought it would surely be an easy fix. However, the closure not only didn't work well but was locked in the closed position. The closure uses weight that can move up and down inside a tall pipe, with a cable connecting the weight to the gate. When the gate is opened the weight moves up, and when the gate is released the weight pulls the gate closed. A steel cap on the pipe prevented close inspection, so my guess was that water had gotten into the pipe and frozen the weight in place. A temporary closure was improvised to provide access to the trail, while we waited for the ground to thaw. A month passed and the weight remained immovable, so the welds holding the metal cap in place were cut and a tightly focused light was used to reveal that a stack of large washers appeared to have fallen on top of the weight and may have gotten jammed between it and the pipe. Most of the washers were removed using a magnet on the end of a ten foot long probe, and with some effort the weight was pulled past the last jam. A new pulley was installed and the gate closure worked well enough to give us time to order new components that would be serviceable for generations. As an engineer at a national laboratory I enjoyed great resources for the design and manufacturing of equipment that had to work every time, but it's also enjoyable to improvise with the resources we have as a trail association.



### Bently Heritage Trail

- A directional arrow post had been removed and a new one was reinstalled.
- All loops and spurs were brushed out and boardwalk maintenance performed.
- Major brush removal of willows, roses and sagebrush.



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2021  
TRAIL  
REPORT

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Jeremy Vlcán



## Clear Creek Trail System

- Routine brush and tread maintenance was completed on the entire 17 miles of trail.
- Twenty-two fallen trees have been removed from the trail and multiple sections of the trail widened



## Fay-Luther/Jobs Peak Ranch Trail System

- Multiple boulders were removed and a short 25-foot realignment built along the Fay-Luther/JPR Trail to improve equestrian access and safety.
- Sharp protruding rocks were removed on the north moraine section of the Interpretive Loop to prevent tripping hazards and protect horse's soles.

## Genoa Trail System

- A signpost had fallen and was reinstalled on the Sierra Canyon Trail.
- One fallen tree was removed on the Genoa Loop in lower Genoa Canyon.
- The Muller Lane gate cable system was replaced with new hardware.
- Routine brush and tread maintenance was performed on the lower 8 miles of the Sierra Canyon Trail and Genoa Loop.
- Five fallen trees were removed on the Sierra Canyon Trail and the trail was heavily brushed out.
- One fallen tree was removed on the Eagle Ridge Loop.



## Pinyon Trail

- One fallen tree was removed from the trail.
- Routine tread maintenance was performed throughout.
- Significant brushing of desert snowberry was done throughout the entire trail.





# *President's Message:* THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

## **2021 CVTA Officers and Board**

**President** Neal Falk

**Secretary** Linda Kleiner

**Treasurer** Vickie Kieffer

**VP/Membership** Lee Elson

**VP/Chief Information Officer**  
Michael Hartstein

**VP/Trail Operations** Jeremy Vican

**VP/Outreach and Publicity**  
Judy Larquier

### **Directors-at-Large**

Juan Guzman  
Joni Jackson  
Diane Jennings  
Carlo Luri  
Bill Rogers  
Robert Schilling

*Year-End  
Fundraising  
Campaign*



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.

[www.carsonvalleytrails.org](http://www.carsonvalleytrails.org)

As we turn our calendars to 2022, CVTA would like to express its gratitude to everyone who supports the trails. Our non-profit organization relies 100% on volunteers, memberships, donations and local business partners to continue its mission. Your generous monetary donations and volunteer hours are critical to maintaining and expanding our valley's trail system for the public to enjoy.

This past year CVTA benefitted from numerous collaborations with area businesses which included a raffle by Pure Glow Salon and its loyal customers and a trails bingo challenge sponsored by Anytime Fitness, Blind Dog Coffee Roasters, Coffee on Main, Comstock Seed, Main Street Gardnerville, Douglas County Parks & Recreation, and Douglas County Historical Society. CVTA is also thankful for all of the help the Carson Valley Visitors Authority offered in relation to improving and expanding our social media, website (update to come) and general community outreach. We look forward to further collaboration together!

Neal Falk  
President, Carson Valley Trails Association

The 2021 Annual Year-End Fundraising Campaign is just around the corner and supporting CVTA could not be easier. Simply visit [www.carsonvalleytrails.org](http://www.carsonvalleytrails.org) for secure, online giving or clip and mail the form below. We could not continue our mission without you!

### **Year-End 2021 Campaign**

Make your check payable to: Carson Valley Trails Association, P.O. Box 222, Minden, NV 89423

☐ \$25   ☐ \$50   ☐ \$100   ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_