



# TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Winter/Spring 2022

Connecting people to the outdoors through a system of trails

## Outdoor Sciences Class Helps 7th Grade Students With Hiking and Outdoor Activities

Members of the CVTA Board recently visited Amanda Laca's Outdoor Sciences class at Carson Valley Middle School. During the visit, Judy Larquier, CVTA VP Outreach and Juan Guzman, CVTA Director-at-Large shared with the class our organization's historical roots, which began with local citizens who organized to gain access to open space which was boxed in by private property.



Judy and Juan also instructed the class on the "checkered box" pattern of lands owned by federal, state, county, and private entities, along with the challenges associated with obtaining easements, permits, and authorizations to build trails. A virtual

tour of the CVTA trails system was presented along with an explanation of the concepts of multi-use trails, single track trails, control points, switchbacks, slopes, drainages and trailheads. Juan shared with the class the variety of tools needed to build trails and how to safely use them. During Juan's presentation, the students were able to handle various trail building tools including McLeods, adze hoes, picks, shovels, Pulaskis and of course gloves!

Amanda's Outdoor Sciences class is a wonderful elective course. The class consists of three 55-minute class periods. Additionally, Amanda and her class meet once weekly for an hour and forty minutes. The class is designed to provide basic skills and information to help students be safe while enjoying outdoor activities. Amanda explains: "Topics include 10-piece survival kits to carry at all times, appropriate outdoor clothing, animal hazards, winter travel safety, map reading, and minimizing the impact on the wilderness with the concept of Leave No Trace."

The class also includes field trips, some of which are on CVTA trails. When asked if she has a favorite CVTA trail, Amanda's pick is the Sierra Canyon Trail, which is part of CVTA's Genoa Trail System. Amanda's adventurous spirit does not stop there: "My husband and I have hiked all the way from the valley floor to the summit of Genoa Peak.

We're so lucky to live in a place with such beautiful outdoors, and if I don't take advantage of it, then I've wasted the opportunity."



Amanda Laca, Outdoor Sciences Teacher Extraordinaire

Amanda often invites guest speakers to her class to encourage lifetime fitness skills and exploration of the Carson Valley. Guest speakers have included representatives from Nevada Division of Wildlife, Tahoe Rim Trail, and Search and

Rescue. Amanda noted: "Nevada Division of Wildlife came in with their dogs and made a presentation with some of the dogs that help in the search for bears so that they can be moved to a safer place."

In the classroom, the students work in small groups of 3's, 4's, and 5's and develop topographic map reading skills. In one exercise, Amanda's students build mountains identified on a map. Using clay, they follow the contour lines on the map. This exercise helps the students read maps and understand which trails might have the right elevation for them. In another exercise, her students participate in a national park project where they create a brochure for the park. During a "what if" exercise, Amanda's students learn to look at a mountainside and ask themselves if there is a real possibility of an avalanche, thereby making it unsafe for hiking or other outdoor activities.

Students also learn about activities that Amanda enjoys such as geocaching, hiking, mountain biking, snowboarding, rock climbing and even scavenger hunts. She explains: "While we don't actually do all of those things, we research them to provide other ways to get outside if hiking is not really a primary interest."

With regards to hiking, Amanda adds: "I've found that once you get many of the students outside, especially on the CVTA Fay Luther Trail, they

discover that they really love it. Also, when we have a trail hike we have a number of chaperones, so if some of the students want to walk slower, they can always feel comfortable and perhaps take a bit more time to enjoy the views. That is the wonderful thing about trail hiking, there is always something for everyone at any skill level."

CVTA is proud to support Amanda and her Outdoor Sciences class and looks forward to working with her again in the future. Thank you, Amanda for all you do!



## CWSD Launches Bag It Public Service Announcement

By Brenda Hunt, CWSD Watershed Program Manager

Whether you already have a furry critter as a family member or are planning to add one, we hope you'll take a minute to watch [Bag It](#), our inaugural Public Service Announcement (PSA) which was formally launched in January. Bag It focuses on the importance of picking up your pet waste to help keep

the Carson River Watershed clean and healthy. The video is available with Spanish captions [here](#).

***The Carson River Watershed hosts approximately 16,000 dogs and that calculates to an estimated 12,000 pounds of dog poop***

The Carson River is on the USEPA Clean Water Act's list of impaired waters in Nevada. The river is impaired due to polluted runoff. Pet waste can be a source of this type of pollution...yuck! The Carson River Watershed hosts approximately 16,000 dogs and that calculates to an estimated 12,000 pounds of dog poop daily. Pet waste contains pathogens and bacteria that can seep into our groundwater and



pollute our rivers, lakes, and streams. You can help keep our waters clean by bagging and properly disposing of your pet's waste, whether in your backyard, neighborhood, or out on the trail.



BAG IT PSA, YouTube

Bag It is the first in a series of Watershed Moments being released as a part of our 'I Am Carson River Watershed' campaign. This Watershed Moment series follows two earlier campaign video releases, [Water Connects Us All](#) and [A Walk Through the Watershed](#) (available in [Spanish](#)). CWSD will be releasing a new Watershed Moment each month during 2022.

These upcoming PSAs will feature local people discussing actions people can take to improve the health of the watershed, including the importance of using a car wash instead of washing cars at home, absorbing stormwater on your property, curbing chemical use (fertilizers, insecticides, and herbicides), and more.

Your Actions Matter! Please consider these your Watershed Resolutions and take our [Watershed Pledge](#) to confirm your commitment to adopting these personal actions to improve the health of our watershed and quality of our waters. Moreover, we hope these films inspire you to incorporate these actions into your everyday mindset. Look for the new videos each month and participate with us on social media.

Locals will have the opportunity to win various prizes that align with each month's PSA. Upcoming prizes will include free car washes, Carson Hot Springs passes, Nevada State Parks annual passes, and more! participating community members should look for these promotional prizes and giveaways with each month's Watershed Moment PSA release.

To be eligible for prizes, participants must:

1. Watch the PSAs on social media, YouTube, or the I Am Carson River Watershed website.
2. Complete the [online pledge](#) and/or add a photo or video of their own personal "watershed moment" in the comments section of [Carson River Watershed Facebook Page](#). Participants can comment and tag these "watershed moments" on Instagram using the #mywatershedmoment hashtag. Comments should highlight actions citizens take personally to help maintain a healthy Carson River.

Thank you to Felicia Patterson, Sierra Canine Academy, and Neon Agency for helping create the Bag It PSA. This campaign is coordinated and jointly funded by CWSD and a Clean Water Act Section 319(h) grant administered by Nevada Division of Environmental Protection. To learn more, visit [iamcarsonriver.org](http://iamcarsonriver.org) and follow Carson River Watershed on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and/or [YouTube](#).

Questions? Contact Brenda Hunt at [brenda@cwsd.org](mailto:brenda@cwsd.org) or 775.887.9005.



## Eagles and AG + CVTA, Perfect Together

On January 30, 2022, Carson Valley Trails Association (CVTA) in collaboration with the Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce led a hike along the

West Fork of the Carson River to celebrate the Annual Eagles & Agriculture event. CVTA trails along Carson River offer event participants excellent viewing points and photography opportunities for wildlife and waterfowl.

Eagles and AG is one of the most unique events on any state's calendar. It attracts hundreds of visitors to the Valley each winter for a unique opportunity to photograph the birds, tour the ranches, and gape in wonder as the bald eagles congregate in the meadows. The beautiful raptors are here because it is the birthing season for the cattle, and like the scavengers they are, they eagerly devour the resulting placentas and the occasional stillborn calf. But instead of being merely gruesome, it is a pageant of life in the natural world up close.



The program has been designed to encourage the conservation and prosperity of ranching in western Nevada as well as promoting the benefits that agriculture provides local wildlife and the community. The tours, workshops and speakers are designed to teach participants about eagle habits, habitat, life cycles, and the history of agriculture in the Carson Valley. It will also demonstrate an example of agritourism that will potentially enhance profitability for local agricultural operations and businesses.

The Eagles and AG weekend offers ranch tours in which participants enjoyed a private "behind the scenes" look at area ranches, learn about Carson Valley ranching conservation and have an opportunity to view/photograph eagles, hawks, owls and other birds of prey. This year, the Raptor and Byway tour took place on a Sunday to take advantage of better lighting for photography, more raptor opportunities and less traffic congestion.

It was a special drive around the Carson Valley with great photography and local lore. It was also an opportunity to view falcons and other birds which commonly winter in the Carson Valley.

Sunday afternoon was filled with the beautiful 4-mile hike along the Carson River starting at River Fork Ranch. The West Fork Trail is 2 miles long with trailheads on Genoa Lane next to the Conservancy house (with plenty of parking), and a trailhead on Muller Lane (about halfway between Route 395 and Foothill Road) with parking along Muller Lane.

It was a great opportunity to view the habitats of deer, beaver (including a beaver dam), ducks, geese, fish, pond turtles and a vast array of birds. It was also an opportunity to learn of the efforts of the Nature Conservancy to preserve and protect this incredibly valuable natural resource in our valley.



More than a dozen guests walked the length of the trail out and back, stopping every now and then to enjoy the views and photograph the river and wildlife. Eagles and AG is sponsored by the Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce, and is held each year in late January or early February.

For details on the event to be held in 2023, please visit their web site later in the year at: [www.carsonvalleynv.org](http://www.carsonvalleynv.org) or call them at (775) 782-8144.

CVTA also provides guides for the Carson River tour each year, so if you would like to share your knowledge of the wetlands and the importance of conservation, please let CVTA know!



# TRAIL REPORT

Jeremy Vican

## We're Building Trail!

Three new miles of the Clear Creek Trail and Jacks Valley Loop are now open with additional segments opening as they become finished. A total of about eight miles of new trail will be added, including the 6-mile Jacks Valley Loop with connections to Jacks Valley Road and James

Lee Park. This lower portion of the Clear Creek Trail will overlap much of the loop. Access is from the existing parking area along Jacks Valley Road and from the James Lee Park Trailhead. To help with this project and/or ongoing trail maintenance with other trail systems in the Carson Valley, visit [www.carsonvalleytrails.org](http://www.carsonvalleytrails.org) to sign up and volunteer.

## 2022 CVTA Officers and Board

**President:** Neal Falk

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**Visiting Contributing Editor:**  
Ron James

### NEW: Emeritus Program

The recently established CVTA Emeritus Program provides a means to honor exceptional board members, keep them engaged after board service ends, and encourage their continuing support. Our first three Emeriti are:

- Lori Chitwood
- Mary Bennigton
- Barbara Slade

During their tenure as board members, these 3 exceptional people raised membership and funds, purchased Fay Luther, donated Fay Luther to BLM and worked subsequently with the County to establish the present foundation for our trail network through the Trails Plan. CVTA, as known presently is due to the work of Lori, Mary and Barbara. We appreciate their acceptance of Emeritus status and the opportunity to engage with them as the need for their knowledge and skills arises.

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.