



# TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Fall 2023

Connecting people to the outdoors through a system of trails

## Sharing the Trail with Horses

By Dr. Catherine Aisner, CVTA member

Why do horses have the right of way on the trail? Is it because they're so cool? Because they're bigger than you? No, the real reason is everyone's safety.

Horses are prey animals. They are hunted by predators, and they survive by being very aware of any potential danger in their environment, and by running away if they feel threatened. It amazes me how they've been able to partner with humans and do some of the crazy things we ask of them. Yet, when we develop a trusting relationship with a horse, it will allow us to sit on its back, explore new places, and even trust us enough to be enclosed in a trailer and driven down the road.

Anything coming suddenly at them, especially from behind, which is exactly what a predator would do, is the worst. An experienced horse can handle most of this, except the last. But every experienced horse started out as an inexperienced horse, and we can't assume anything when we meet a horse on the trail. It also might be the rider who is new to the sport, and inexperienced.



I had the otherwise delightful experience of taking my granddaughter for her first trail ride tarnished by mountain bikers who did all the wrong things, spooking her horse and terrifying her. Everyone sharing a trail needs to know these precautions when approaching a horse:

- If you're coming toward a horse, step aside so we can safely pass you.
- If you're coming up behind a horse, trail running or on a bike, call out as soon as possible so we know you're there before you're right up on us. In this case, we'll step aside to let you carefully pass us.

With these things in mind, everyone stays safe and the basic trail rules make sense. Hikers and bikers step aside for horses, giving

them enough room to pass (they're big!). It's always great when the equestrian and the hiker/biker exchange a friendly greeting. We've met the nicest people on the trail, and we've often given "free horse pets" to delighted children (and adults). One of the funny things we riders have noticed is often hikers will step aside (thank you!), but stand behind a tree or bush, so they aren't visible to the horse until the last second, which can be startling. Step aside, but where we can see you please, and say hi!

If you've had a close connection with a dog, imagine having that kind of connection with a thousand-pound animal of such power and beauty. It's not the same - dogs are predators, for one thing, and my horse doesn't sleep in my bed like my dog does - but similarly powerful and emotional. Sharing time in nature with a beloved horse is the highest form of happiness for those of us that are fortunate enough to be able to do it. Let's all enjoy the natural beauty we are fortunate enough to have here, safely and with mutual respect.

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## CVTA Helps East Fork Fire Equip for Trail Rescues

CVTA has donated \$1,850 to the East Fork Fire Protection District for purchase of a Cascade litter rescue device that will be used on our local trails. In short, this is a wheeled backboard. It will assist emergency personnel to better respond and transport trail users or other patients who have a medical issue or a physical injury on our trails and other remote areas around the Carson Valley.

In 2015, our organization helped with the purchase of a Stokes Basket (pictured). The Cascade Litter is considered a significant upgrade for East Fork rescue operations and important for serving our growing community and trail networks.

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## Muscle Powered grand opening for the Capital to Tahoe Trail

"We had such an incredible turn out at the Grand Opening of the Capital to Tahoe Trail, thanks to you and our project partners Brian Hansen and team from the USFS, Janice Keillor and Steve Micklus from Nevada





State Parks, Gregg Berggren, Lyndsey Boyer and Jen Budge from Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space. We are deeply appreciative of our partnerships. We would not have this fantastic new trail without the efforts of this incredible team.” Chelsea Kincheloe, President of Muscle Powered from Carson City shared her enthusiastic words with me in order to write this brief article on the grand opening that took place last June.

She continued, “Thanks to Mayor Bagwell for attending the opening and for giving Pete Doenges, Muscle Powered Trails Coordinator, a 'Challenge Coin' for pursuing this trail and making it a reality. Challenge Coins are provided to those who take on difficult tasks and Pete rose to this challenge.” Chelsea explained that, Resource Concepts Incorporated (RCI), Great Basin Consulting and Visit Carson City provided for financial assistance in the botanical, wildlife and cultural surveys. “Kevin Joell and crew with Sierra Trails Works built such an incredible trail and continued thanks are extended to our incredible crew leaders and 47 volunteers who poured their heart and soul into this trail with support and finishing touches.”, she commented.

The Western Nevada Safe Routes to School, (including our newest Board Member Erica Roselious, who holds a position with them), Skiing is Believing, Tahoe Mountain Biking Association, Tahoe Rim Trail Association and Tahoe Mountain Milers attended the event and staffed information tables and booths. |

“Gratitude never seems like enough for something this monumental. We are all in awe of the commitment and perseverance of our project partners and volunteers,” Chelsea concluded. We at CVTA congratulate MP for a remarkable achievement and must add that it was a remarkable snow year as well. The participants were hoping to mountain bike the trail down from The Nevada State Park after the event, however there was too much snow on the trail for a safe ride on July 8 2023.



## Volunteer Spotlight

### Peter & Jan Engle



Peter and Jan Engle have been keeping the Fay-Luther Trailhead clean for the past 14 years. Along with a few other dedicated individuals, they help remove more than 25 pounds of dog poop each week at the dog waste station in three, 5-gallon buckets. They also spend their time picking up after those who don't, around the trailhead and along the first section of the Sandy Trail. This is usually another bucket full each week.

Although it's a stinky job, somebody must volunteer to do it. The Engles are a couple of those mythical fairies who have been helping keep the trails clean for all of us. After picking it all up each week, they then haul it all out in their own vehicle and into their own trash can. “We almost always do this cleanup and waste removal the day before our scheduled trash pickup so we can keep our place clean as well.”

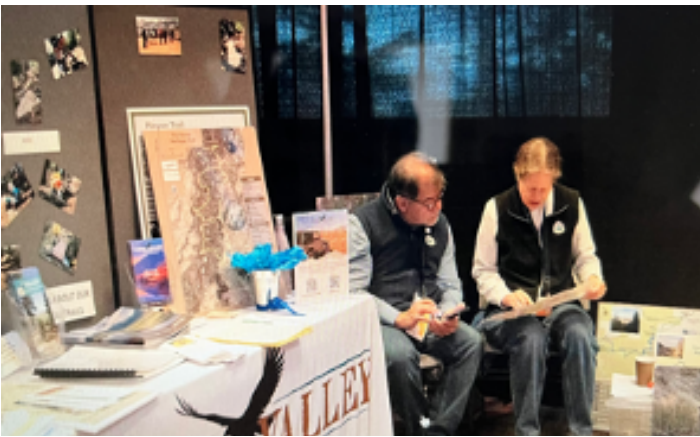
There seems to always be a smile on their faces doing what very few others want to do. "Most people really appreciate what we are doing out there and are thankful for our volunteer service to the community. It is always nice to see the difference we make out there every week." We should all be grateful to have such dedicated individuals who help take care of the local trails. Thank you, Peter and Jan Engle, for your invaluable contribution to CVTA and the public!

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## CVTA Attends the The International Trails Summit

Our organization was able to participate at the International Trails Summit (ITS) held last April at the Nugget Resort in Sparks. Mike Passo American Trails, executive Director stated, "ITS was a huge success, breaking records as the largest summit to date. It brought together over 900 attendees from 20 countries and 47 states."

The Summit featured two full days of concurrent sessions in the classroom and an extended pre- and post-event schedule with hands-on workshops in the field. ITS also included an offsite field day on Thursday featuring demonstrations of heavy machinery, adaptive bicycles, trail auditing using digital platforms, horse and goat-packing demonstrations, and more. In addition, the World Trails Film Festival had its North American premiere as part of the Summit's evening offerings. All the conference proceedings are available for review thru American Trails website.



For this conference Mark Culley, Linda Kleiner, Judy Larquier and Juan Guzman took turns hosting CVTA's exhibitors booth, networking and attending sessions. We were able to show off our trails and discuss maps and photos of our trails in the Carson Valley with scores of people, some from the region but many from all over the States.

At the Conference, Muscle Powered from Carson City, one of our sister organizations, received an award for their collaborative work with private and public partners that resulted in the Lincoln byPass Trail. We were able to celebrate their accomplishment and congratulate them on their success.



# Upstream Opportunities to Be a Watershed Steward

By Kimra McAfee, Alpine Watershed Group, Executive Director

I always say I have the best of both worlds because I live in Carson Valley and I work in Alpine County—I get to divide my time between the Eastern Sierra and the mountainous headwaters. The downside is it takes motivation to drive back into the Sierra Nevada for weekend recreation ... but thanks to CVTA, there is a fantastic network of trails close to my home!

For other CVTA members who also love the Carson River watershed headwaters, I wanted to share a bit about what my nonprofit organization, Alpine Watershed Group (AWG) has been up to since the Tamarack Fire in 2021. AWG works to protect, conserve, and restore the watersheds of Alpine County by promoting sustainable community and science-based collaborative solutions. Since Alpine County's population is so small (~1,200 people), we absolutely depend on volunteers who recreate here, especially Northern Nevadans.



A young volunteer tamps down a newly planted tree seedling near Grover Hot Springs State Park



Volunteers remove trash from the West Fork Carson River on Markleeville Creek Day



By watering newly planted seedlings, we are hoping to increase tree survival rates on burned Forest Service lands

AWG had the privilege of helping coordinate three large volunteer workdays in 2022: two tree planting workdays in the spring and Markleeville Creek Day in September—an annual restoration event since 2000. On the tree planting workdays, a total of 112 volunteers planted over 4,300 trees at three project sites on burned US Forest Service land: Thornburg Canyon, off Pleasant Valley Road, and near Grover Hot Springs State Park meadow. At last year's Creek Day community workday, 52 volunteers worked at eight project sites, removing 72 bags of trash from along the river in Woodfords Canyon and along 14 miles of highway corridor, pulling 25 bags of invasive weeds from Grover Hot Springs meadow, building a beaver dam analog in Faith Valley, and planting 102 willow stakes along the West Fork Carson River in Hope Valley.

We would love your help at our restoration workdays this fall:  
**Markleeville Creek Day 2023 — Saturday, September 23, morning**  
**Tree Planting in burned areas — Saturday, October 21, morning**



We are also always looking for water quality monitoring volunteers. We will train you!

Workday details will be available soon at [www.alpinewatershedgroup.org](http://www.alpinewatershedgroup.org). To get monthly updates via the AWG newsletter, sign up on our website or contact me at [awg.kimra@gmail.com](mailto:awg.kimra@gmail.com) or (530) 694-2327. Thank you, and happy trails!



# Trails Report

Jeremy and his loyal crew of volunteers have been hard at work all spring and summer to keep our trails in top-notch shape.

- The 4.1-mile James Lee Loops was completed in April. As part of the 30-mile Clear Creek Trail System, the James Lee Loops provide multiple, easy loop options that can be combined with the Jacks Valley Loop and Clear Creek Trail.
- New trailhead kiosks were installed at the Jacks Valley School Trailhead, Jacks Valley Road Trailhead and Spooner Summit Trailhead.
- 28 fallen trees have been removed on all trail systems this winter and spring.
- Routine brushing, rock clearing and drainage work maintenance was completed on all trail systems this past spring.
- Several trail realignments have been completed on the Fay-Luther/JPR Trail System adding another mile of trail while keeping most of the former old road routes open for use. These realignments eliminate worsening entrenchment from storms and the need to continuously maintain waterbars. Trail users can now enjoy a trail that is less steep, avoids rocky and slippery slickrock sections, and provides an all-around more enjoyable and scenic route.





# Recent Events

## CVTA Board Welcomes Two New Members

### Erica Roselius

Erica is an outdoor enthusiast and an endurance athlete. Originally from Southern California, she realized after her parents moved to Minden in 2015 that she wanted to relocate as well! Erica moved her boutique personal training business to the Carson Valley in 2020 and she trains clients in person in Gardnerville and on Zoom across the U.S. She has a passion for travel and has visited over 30 countries and counting. When Erica isn't working or jet-setting, you can find her in the great outdoors training for triathlons, hiking, mountain biking or adventuring with her dog Molly. She loves the passion and commitment CVTA has for our natural resources and joined the board to give back to the community that gives her so much happiness on the trails.



### Laura Ammons

Laura hails from 2,500 miles away in North Carolina where she spent her whole life hiking the Appalachian Trail, riding the bike trails around Raleigh, and boating on local lakes. She moved to Nevada in 2022 for a change of pace and to take advantage of the beautiful views and amazing access to nature. She joined the CVTA Board in 2023 to help preserve that access. She holds a degree in Communications from UNC Chapel Hill. She loves cats, hula hooping, visiting state and national parks, and recently decided she doesn't mind snow.



**Spring Bird Walk:** Local birding expert Jim Woods led a limited group of members on a free 2-mile bird walk on our trails at River Fork Ranch. This was the first event to use our new online reservation system for member events to ensure we have just the right amount of attendees.

**Statina's Paydirt aid station:** This was our second year offering assistance to bicyclists participating in this 70-mile gravel and road race. Our volunteers worked at Mormon Station in Genoa providing snacks and hydration for the bike race participants as they pass through on their way to the Clear Creek Trail portion of the course. Local riders wore orange bands in tribute to Carlo Luri.





# Upcoming Events

## Mainstreet Gardnerville's August Wine Walk:

On Thursday September 21st, CVTA will have their information booth at the Third-Thursday wine walk series. We will be set up at Big Daddy's Bike & Brew. This month's wine walk has a fall festival theme of "Leaves are Fallin' Wine is Callin'." Learn about tickets and more at [mainstreetgardnerville.org](http://mainstreetgardnerville.org).

Watch your email for additional upcoming events.

## 2023 CVTA OFFICERS AND BOARD

**President:** Neal Falk

**Secretary:** Vickie Kieffer

**Treasurer:** Dianne Jennings

**VP/Membership:** Lee Elson

**VP/Chief Information Officer:** Michael Hartstein

**VP/Trail Operations:** Jeremy Vican

**VP/Outreach and Publicity:** Judy Larquier

**VP/Marketing:** Bill Rogers

### Directors-at-Large:

Juan Guzman

Laura Parks

Erica Roselius

### Emeriti:

Lori Chitwood

Mary Bennigton

Barbara Slade

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.