



TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Summer 2024

Connecting people to the outdoors through a system of trails

Full Moon Scorpion Walk Receives Glowing Reviews

Under a full Strawberry Moon this past June, CVTA held its first every scorpion spotting hike. The sky was surprisingly bright as we met at the Pinyon Trailhead parking lot at 8:30 pm with our ultraviolet flashlights in hand.

Laura Ammons, CVTA board member and event organizer, briefed us on how to look for scorpions before heading out on the trail. We were instructed to look along the edges of the trail or on the bottom of trees where they may be hiding in the detritus.

We were excited to have 15 hikers including some children and teens join us for the hike. Though it was not initially fruitful, the increasing darkness soon revealed some tiny scorpions (an inch from head to stinger max) as we climbed up the trail. As you can see in the photos, they give off quite a glow under black/ultraviolet light. We also discovered some fluorescent minerals in certain rocks, giving off an orange glow possibly due to calcite content.

According to the Nevada Pest Control Association, there are 23 species of scorpion found in Nevada with Bark Scorpions (mainly found in Southern Nevada)



being the only ones that have a venom that can be very toxic. The scorpions found in Northern Nevada can give you a sting equivalent to a bee or less. Of course, there's always danger of an allergic reaction which can be serious. We did not touch the scorpions and if you go hunting for them at night, we recommend you leave them alone as well.

Our trip back to the parking lot treated us to gorgeous moonlit views of the Carson Valley, complete with a twinkling string of lights through Minden and Gardnerville. As I rounded a corner facing the southwest, the rising full moon was at such a low angle, its beams blinded me like an oncoming car. In a way, that was a good thing because it forced me to keep my eyes squarely focused on the trail where they belonged.



5K Trail Run Coming to James Lee Park October 19

We are excited to announce the only organized trail run in Carson Valley. Our Run the Valley 5k is an especially great choice for beginners who want to experience a trail run/race in a friendly, supportive and non-competitive environment. Racers will be hand-timed (no chips) and we will not be giving out any prizes for winning. This is all about challenging yourself, having fun and experiencing a CVTA trail in a new way.

Enjoy a 5k Trail Run or a free 2k Fun Run on two unique courses.

The event takes place at the family-friendly James Lee Memorial Park in Indian Hills. The 5K course will start and end at our James Lee Park trailhead and travel a designated path through the James Lee Loops trails. This is primarily single track through the rolling hills of our high desert ecosystem with views of the Sierras and the Carson Valley along the way.

The free 2K Fun Run is open to families, including friendly dogs on leash. The course follows the Indian Hills exercise equipment course and then travels along the base of the Jacks Valley loop, primarily flat double track. Best of all, kids under age 12 run can run either race for free and receive a finisher medals!

Please note that our 5k/2k distances are approximate due to the off-road nature of course. That's another reason why this is not a sanctioned/competitive 5k.

Register for the 5K now and you'll get a race t-shirt, plus savings as a CVTA member.

Adults and children over 12 who register for the 5K will receive a race logo tech t-shirt at the event. Wear it with pride knowing you took part in the first organized trail run in the valley!

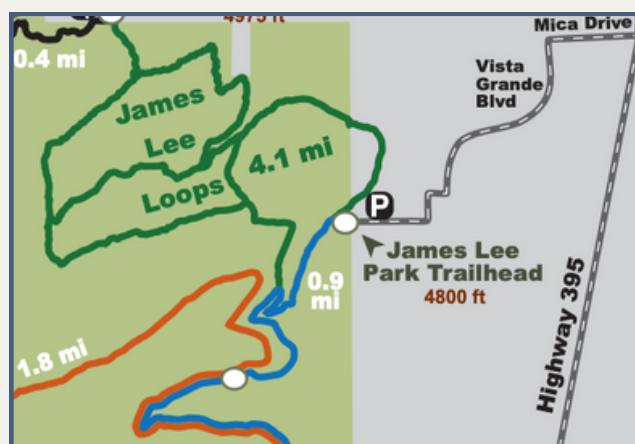
- **CVTA members** enjoy \$10 off with a discount code, bringing the cost of registration down to \$25. Check your email for the discount code or log on to our website.
- **Non-CVTA members** pay \$35 but get a bonus of CVTA membership for one year.

Please share this event with friends and family!



REGISTER ONLINE:
tinyurl.com/mt3k236s

Saturday, October 19, 2024
Trail 5k: 8:30 am start time
Fun Run 2k: 9:00 am start time



James Lee Memorial Park
3394 James Lee Park Rd
Carson City, NV 89705

Special thanks to our sponsors for this event:



Slow and Say Hello!

When Bicyclists Meet Horses on the Trails

Sue Cauhape

The following is an edited version of an article published by Sue on Substack which she penned after attending our Tails and Tires event. You can find her original article here:

<https://suecauhape.substack.com/p/slow-and-say-hello>

While riding my horse, Abby, on a trail in Truckee, CA, a bunch of bicyclists crossed in front of us as we waited to ascend a hill. My daughter was already near the top. Once they had passed, Abby heard the rattling sounds of their bikes and spooked, unseating me from the saddle. She galloped up the hill as I clung to the pommel, one boot still in the stirrup and the other hooked over the cantle.

When Abby finally stopped where my daughter waited, I did an ungraceful dismount. I was lucky, but it illustrates how little bicyclists understand how an interaction with an equestrian can endanger someone's life.

When we moved to Minden, NV and my daughter rode Abby in the desert, she discovered the teenaged dirt bikers respected her space and divert or stop until she rode a safe distance from them. These kids were ripping around on desert jeep trails, but trail etiquette was a definite rule on Nevada trails, unlike the Get Out of My Way attitude of other bicyclists I've encountered.

For years, we hiked the trail systems in Carson Valley without any bicyclist mishaps. In fact, bicycles were only seen upon rare occasions along Foothill Road near Genoa. Only in the past three or four years has the biking population emerged along other thoroughfares, such as East Valley Road.

I was surprised to learn that mountain bikers have used trails developed by the Carson Valley Trails Association <https://carsonvalleytrails.org/> for years.

Bill Rogers, biker and Board member of the CVTA, told me his favorite trails are the Pinyon Trail and Clear Creek. He prefers their hard-packed surface as opposed to the sandy condition at the entrance of Faye-Luther. That's a better trail for equestrians because of that soft footing.

According to Laura Ammons, of CVTA, with more people discovering our multi-trails, there have been more negative encounters because many newcomers have not learned about trail etiquette (despite the notices at every trail head). The Clear Creek Trail, for instance, is used by hikers, bikers, and horses. Some of the trails connect to the Tahoe Rim Trail where encounters between horses and bikers is more common.

To educate the bicycling public, Carson Valley Trails is using a program, developed by the Marin County bike coalition, called Slow and Say Hello!



At the June 5th workshop presented in cooperation with the Douglas County Mounted Posse, members of the CVTA and Posse talked about the different perspective of bicyclists and equestrians, especially how horses perceive the world through their unique vision and hearing capabilities.

Opening with an "impromptu" skit, Mo Parga, President of the Mounted Posse, asked bikers Juan Guzman and Bill Rogers what they got out of mountain biking. Rogers said he liked to get away, to have a Zen moment with nature. Guzman was much more emphatic, "I liked to go fast."

Perched high upon her huge draft horse, Parga immediately countered with, "And I like to go slow." Thus one of the many sources of conflict between trail users.

Another Posse member defined the main element that made this conflict a safety issue. A horse has a brain. A bicycle doesn't. Horses react to external conditions while bikes do not. Horses are prey animals. Anything coming around the corner could be a predator, even someone's galumphing Labradoodle. They see mostly to the sides, but can't see directly in front or rear. When they hear strange sounds coming toward them, they usually stop, ears erect and head up to learn what exactly is coming at them. Is it a friendly human or is it a bear or cougar that will eat them.

Since horses can't see directly forward or backward, even if they identify you as human and harmless, if you move behind them, they will still become nervous about what you are doing back there. Are you attacking them from that direction? This is the thought process a horse goes through when dealing with humans or animals on the trails.

Also, if a human is carrying a big backpack or child seat that extends above their head, or wearing clothing like a poncho that flaps in the wind, it can spook a horse. You don't have the familiar shape of a human being to the horse's perception. If your clothing color blends in with the scenery, such as green, black, or brown jerseys, you're sudden emergence with disorient them as well. The workshop participants suggested wearing yellow or orange vests to differentiate you from the trees and rocks around you.



For demonstration, Juan Guzman breaks a big rule by riding his bike between horses. Mo Parga is on the draft horse. Other riders are members of the Douglas County Sheriff Mounted Posse.

Slow and Say Hello! teaches how important it is for trail users that meet each other need to slow down rather than use the trail as a race track. Lots of bikers love to go fast, but blind curves and narrow single-track trails in mountainous areas can pose dangers to all users. Thus the organization wants their slogan, Slow and Say Hello! to become as ubiquitous as Leave No Trace.

Upon meeting other users, especially equestrians, slow down or stop. Say hello so your voice establishes that you're a human to the horse. Don't hide behind trees or bushes like a predator would do. Instead, ask the rider what they need you to do. Maybe this would be to get off your bike and stand there, perhaps step downhill off the trail. When the horse and rider passes you, give the horse a few meters of space before you continue your course. The sound of your bike and your movements, even though you're moving away from the animal, still has the potential to scare the horse because it can't see what's causing the strange sounds your bike makes.

To illustrate this, I was leading Abby toward an intersection of a trail. A group of bikers approached from the side-long direction and Abby whinnied loudly as they came nearer. Once passed, she continued to neigh and get edgy. Thankfully, I was not on her back this time. Their bikes rattled as they continued down the trail and out of sight, but the sound still made Abby nervous.

Bicycles are weird contraptions to a horse with their strange shapes and odd clicking sounds. Over time, most horses will become accustomed to bikes and other things ... like llamas, etc. But there will always be those days when the horse is in a bad or pissy mood and will go ballistic over something as ridiculous as a plastic bag fluttering in the wind. Their own shadow scares the bejesus out of them.

So, be aware and careful whenever you come upon a horse on the trail. You don't want to become the unwilling participant or spectator of a rodeo.

Visit our trail safety page to learn more about
Slow & Say Hello and download a helpful
brochure: tinyurl.com/uwsyt8n4



Will You Join This CVTA Member's \$1-Per-Mile Pledge?



This past winter, I was copied on a thank-you email to CVTA Kirk Dixon. In 2023, he pledged to give us \$1 for every mile he logged on our trail systems. That amounted to 149 miles — quite a great accomplishment especially considering the late start to our season due the heavy 22/23 snowpack.

Intrigued by Kirk's personal pledge, we reached out for a quick interview to learn more about how he discovered CVTA and came up with such a brilliant way to give back.

How long have you been a member of CVTA?

"I've been a Member since 2017 when my wife Peggy and I moved from Sparks to Sheridan Acres (Gardnerville). It's there that we became friends with our neighbor, Norah Gastelum, then president of CVTA."

What motivated you to pledge \$1 per mile and how many years have you done so?

"The Pledge motivation was sort of a pandemic baby as I recall, so instead of just renewing membership every year, I decided to do a Mileage Pledge instead. That would have been 4 or 5 years ago. Without doing as much travelling during COVID, we ended up hiking an awful lot on the local trails."

How do you track your miles?

"As far as tracking miles, that was an easy one. A Sierra journal keeping mileage dork since 1972, I was already in the habit of recording trail miles. The CVTA maps are very detailed in that way, so it was easy to keep track of them."

What are your favorite trails and why?

"Because of our close proximity to the Jobs Peak Ranch trail, it is the most frequented one. It is mostly a "locals" trail and many of the folks we see are regulars, with an increasing number of 'newbies'. It also has the advantage of being bike free for the 2.5 miles to the Valley View Junction. Another favorite is the Genoa trails system, which I enjoy shuttling, usually South to North."

Kirk envisions a CVTA Pledge Challenge as a fun way for us to drum up extra support, and we couldn't agree more. "The beauty of a CVTA Pledge Challenge is one can donate whatever is in their comfort zone. A dollar/mile seemed like a nice round number so I went with that. One could just as easily pledge fifty cents/mile or whatever. It would be fun to compile a list of folks who would like to be involved with a Pledge Challenge with their individual mileage totals and include it in the newsletter.

This is clearly a superb idea we intend to act upon so keep your eyes open for future details on a Pledge Challenge beginning in '25. In the meantime, if you have an idea that could help CVTA please visit the "Contact CVTA" page at carsonvalleytrails.org or write us at: **Carson Valley Trails Association, P.O. Box 222, Minden NV 89423**

Trails Report



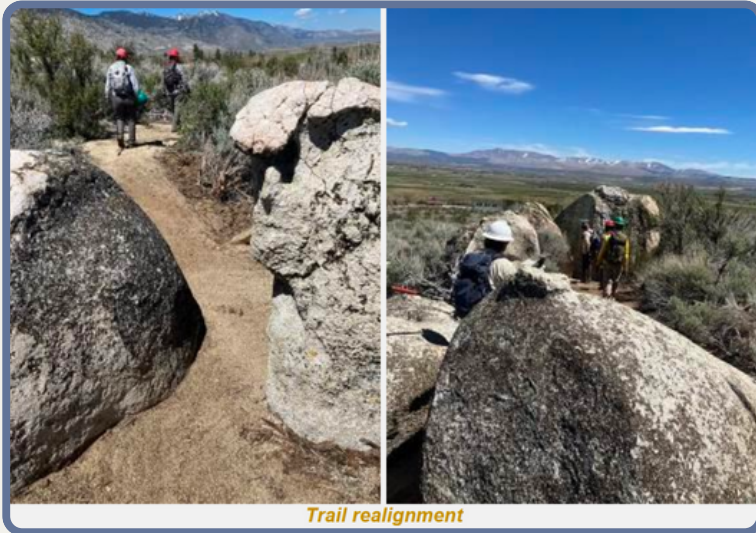
Tree removed

Dipping back into Jeremy's last trail report in June, you'll find there was the typical need for Spring trail maintenance across our trail systems.

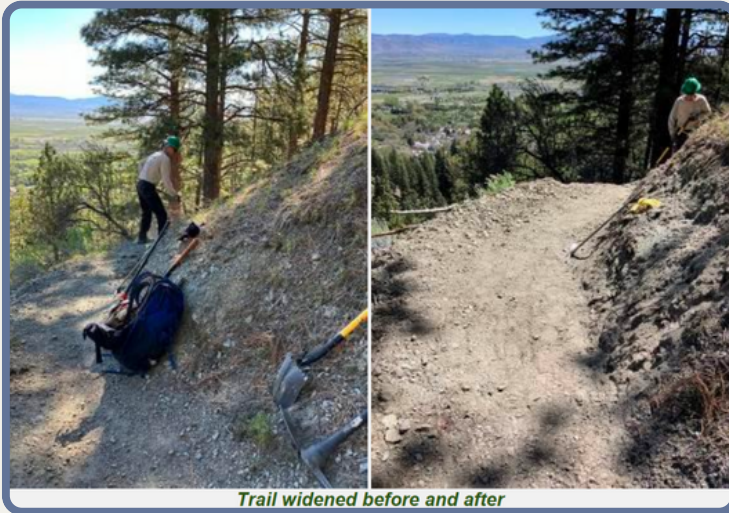
- Bently Heritage Trail: Routine brush clearing was completed on the entire trail.
- Clear Creek Trail System: Routine Maintenance across 30 miles, including trail widening to improve sightlines and flow, removal of eight fallen trees, improved drainage and more.



Tread widening and rock removal



- Fay-Luther/Jobs Peak Ranch System: The first 0.9 mile of trail from the Jobs Peak Ranch Trailhead was realigned to move away from adjacent homes, provide a much more sustainable alignment, and create a more enjoyable trail experience with nice rock features.
- Genoa Trail System: General maintenance, including removal of fallen rocks, branches and cones from the entire Eagle Ridge Loop, Genoa Loop and Sierra Canyon Trail. A large fallen tree was removed from Upper Sierra Canyon and numerous feet of trail were widened in key areas for improved sightlines/safety.



Recent Events



Along with the Tails & Tires event featured earlier in the newsletter, we've been promoting our Slow & Say Hello campaign at the Fay Luther and Clear Creek trailheads.



Attendance at our Annual Meeting and Social back in May came in at a solid 109 people including 30 non-members, some of whom joined the CVTA member list that night. Thank you to all who helped spread the word and make this event a success!

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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.