



TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Winter 2025

Connecting people to the outdoors through a system of trails

Training Your Dog Before Hitting Local Trails 7 Reasons Why It's Good for You, Your Dog, Everyone and Everything.

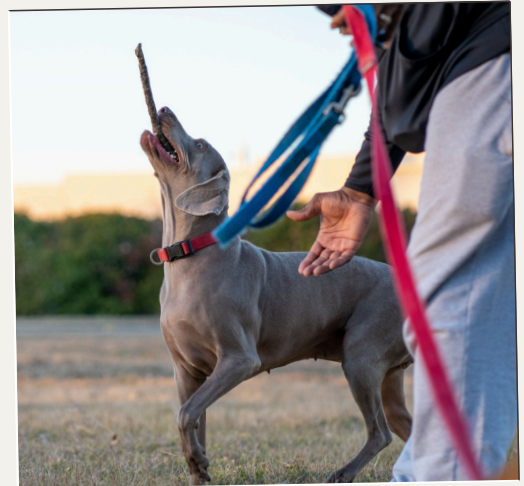
Exploring local trails with your dog can be an incredibly rewarding experience for both you and your furry companion. The fresh air, exercise, and bonding time in nature make for unforgettable memories. However, ensuring your dog is properly trained before embarking on these adventures is essential for their safety, your peace of mind, and the enjoyment of everyone else on the trail.

Most of CVTA's trails are open to dogs. The only area that prohibits pets (and horses) is our River Fork Ranch Trail System which account for less than 3 out of 66 total miles of CVTA-built trails. That's because the area is a wetland preserved and restored by our friends at The Nature Conservancy.

On all of our other trail systems, the rules for pets on trails are established by the landowners (mostly the U.S. Forest Service and BLM). The U.S. Forest Service has a [webpage devoted to pets in the forest: www.fs.usda.gov/detail/htnf/?cid=FSEPRD637042](http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/htnf/?cid=FSEPRD637042). Many people may not be aware that U.S.F.S. Federal Regulation states that pets must be kept on a leash no longer than six feet at trailheads and other developed sites such as campgrounds and picnic areas.

Consider the 7 top benefits of training your dog before taking them out on local trails:

Solid, professional obedience training is ideal because it teaches your dog to want to be with you, their owner. With proper training, dogs quickly learn that their owner is the



best thing ever while simultaneously learning that distractions (such as other dogs, cats, squirrels, people, and wildlife in general) no longer matter. This results in a very nice loose-leash walk. Gone are the days your dog pulls you around, straining to go anywhere, and stays by your side. This also means if you drop your leash by accident, your dog is not running off.

In addition, a professional trainer will work with you to ensure that your dog responds to your commands so your dog is safe in the event of any emergency at home or out on the trail.

1. Promoting positive interactions with other trail users

Our multi-use trail systems are full of bikers, runners, hikers and equestrians. A well-trained dog is less likely to jump on strangers, bark excessively, or disrupt others' experiences. Training your dog to remain calm and walk politely with you ensures they are a welcomed presence on the trail.

2. Avoiding legal action and more

Unfortunately, dog owners often do not realize that many people dislike dogs and may even fear them. Those people have rights equal to you and, at times, have greater rights relating to your dog than you do.

In Nevada and California, you can be held liable for a dog bite even if your dog did not break the victim's skin. There are also laws regarding negligence such as causing an accidental injury to someone who falls because of your dog. In extreme cases where a dog is deemed as dangerous or vicious, it can be impounded or worse, euthanized. You can learn more about the rules in Douglas County here:

https://communityservices.douglascountynv.gov/animal_services

3. Ensuring safety for your dog

Nature is unpredictable, and trails can present many challenges, such as wildlife encounters, steep inclines, or unexpected weather changes.

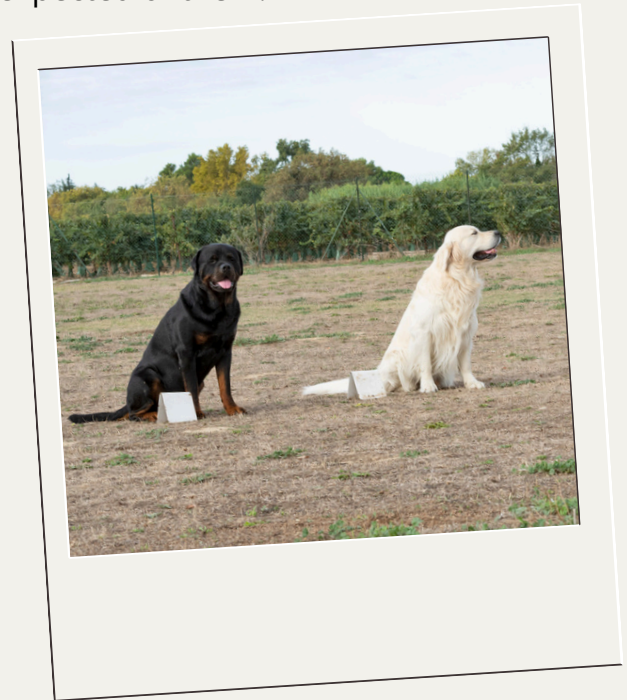
Obedience training can prevent accidents and keep your dog safe, especially in case of any emergency. Obedience commands such as "sit," "stay," "come," "heel", and "leave it"

can prevent accidents and keep them safe. For example:

- A reliable recall command can stop your dog from chasing wildlife, running up to other dogs (especially if the owner warns you their dog is not friendly with other dogs), or wandering too far.
- Teaching "leave it" can prevent your dog from ingesting harmful plants or substances.

4. Reducing stress for you and your dog

An untrained dog can turn a relaxing hike into a stressful ordeal. When your dog has successfully completed obedience training, you can focus on enjoying the experience rather than constantly managing their behavior. Your dog, in turn, will feel more relaxed and confident when they understand what's expected of them.



5. Protecting wildlife and the environment

A trained dog is less likely to disturb wildlife or damage the environment. Commands like "heel" and "stay on trail" can keep your dog from trampling vegetation, digging, or chasing animals. This helps preserve the natural beauty of the trails and ensures a harmonious coexistence with the local ecosystem.

6. Building a stronger bond with your dog

Training sessions are excellent opportunities to strengthen the bond between you and your dog. Through proper training and consistent practice, you'll build trust and mutual

understanding. When you hit the trails, this bond will make the experience even more enjoyable as you navigate the outdoors as a team.

7. Preparing for unexpected situations

Trails can be unpredictable, and trained dogs are better equipped to handle surprises. For instance:

- A sudden encounter with another dog can be uneventful if your dog knows how to stay calm on command.
- If your dog gets loose, a strong recall can bring them back quickly.

Key Facts About Dog Training and Interaction

We spoke with professional dog trainer Beth Koenig of Beth's K9 Training (<https://beths-k9-training.square.site/>) to help with this article and provide the following facts regarding dog training and canine behavior in general. Beth has been working with and training police dogs since October 2005 and pet dogs since 2007, including training in the U.S. and Europe. Her training business is split between the Bay Area and Carson Valley with focus on obedience, protection, sports and police training.

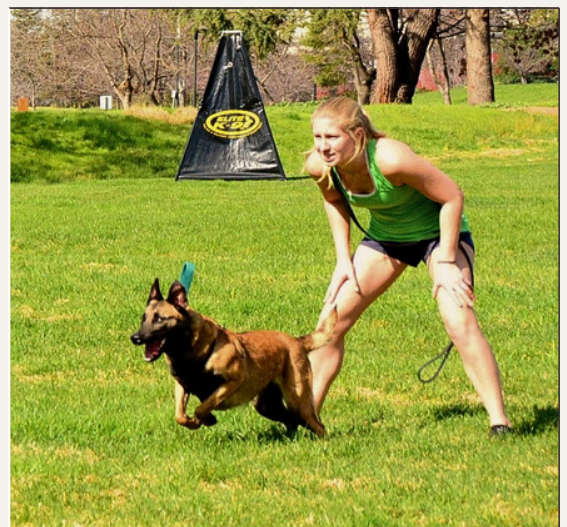
If you're eager to prepare your dog for a good experience out on the trails, consider these important facts.

FACT: Strict obedience training is welcomed by dogs. A mistake owners make is thinking strict obedience is cruel or mean since it could "take away a dog's freedom if they are too controlled". The opposite is true. Dogs crave structure and can become extremely stressed if there is no sense of control and protection from their owner.

FACT: Obedience training starts at home without distractions. Once your dog understands basic obedience without distractions, they can start becoming successful at obedience with real-world distractions. Obedience is when your dog does:

- WHAT you've said
- The MOMENT you said (immediately!)
- The FIRST time you said it
- WITHOUT you needing to repeat the command
- WITHOUT needing to get your dog's attention first (you do not need to say their name, no snapping, no clicking, no clapping, etc.)
- WITHOUT needing to rely on training tools (collars, leashes, toys, treats, etc.)

Finally, your dog needs to do all the above in the most distracting of environments. This is extremely important because it allows you to keep your dog safe even in a split-second emergency. For example, if your dog runs towards a busy street to chase an animal, a single quick recall command can stop your dog in their tracks, possibly saving their life in some situations. Even though solid obedience training teaches your dog to ignore these distractions in general, dogs will always be dogs.



FACT: Socializing your dog does not mean teaching them to engage with distractions. It means teaching your dog to ignore them.

It is great to expose your dog to a wide variety of environments as long as the activity focuses on you playing and engaging with your dog. If you allow your dog to take the lead and engage with other people and dogs, this not only can create serious leash reactivity on walks, it also can teach your dog to be comfortable running up to every person and dog they see on the trail. The most important rule of thumb in dog ownership is to always believe that not every dog is friendly with other dogs. It only takes a split second for a dog fight to break out and the outcome can be absolutely devastating for both the dogs and their owners.

FACT: Positive reinforcement should be used only to reward compliance, never to gain it.

For example, if you are on a walk and your dog gets distracted by another canine and you stop the interaction by gaining your dog's attentions with a treat to stay with you, you are ultimately using that treat to gain compliance. This teaches your dog that being distracted means treats or any type of positive reinforcement from you. Your dog ultimately learns to look for, and react to, distractions because that is when you provide treats. Ideally, your dog should only be focused on you because the environment no longer matters. The environment no longer provides any excitement and you are the only source of positive reinforcement in the form of treats, praise, play, and mindful engagement overall.

FACT: Dogs do not need to play with other dogs to be happy.

In general, puppies usually will play well with other puppies. However, just like with people, dogs can lose interest in playing with others as they age and instead, focus on being in charge of every other dog they see. The most common way this is done is through mounting other dogs. People believe this is "sexual," but that is a very common misconception – females will mount other dogs just as much as males will mount other dogs. This is a form of exerting dominance. If the dog being mounted is also dominant, that can absolutely turn into a fight as they battle for pack leadership. This can be extremely dangerous.

It might come as a surprise to people, but dogs do not need to play with other dogs to be happy. While they are social pack animals, they can be just as happy, if not happier, playing with you (their owner). Teaching your dog that other dogs do not matter, while remembering that you want your dog to know you are the best thing in their life, can lead to a much happier existence between you and your dog. This is because when dogs learn other dogs are really fun, or unfortunately if they learn other dogs might be scary, it will almost always lead to behavioral issues such as bad leash manners, dog reactivity, and overall stress for your dog (and of course, the owner).

Remember, out on the trail or at the dog park, you have no idea if other people's dogs are dominant, aggressive or under control.



Ensuring that your dog is properly trained and ready for the trail is more than a courtesy to others, it's a vital step toward ensuring their safety and well-being. An obedient dog enhances the trail experience for everyone and allows you to enjoy the great outdoors with confidence and joy.

Run the Valley 5K a Huge Success for CVTA

Fall is a popular time for running events. As such, it came as no surprise that after we settled upon a date for our first-ever 5K trail running event, two other local races popped up on the same day. This news came as some concern to our team, but there were too many logistical issues to consider another date.

As it turned out, October 19th couldn't have been a better day for our event in James Lee Park. Although the water station froze the night before, we had plenty of sunshine and more importantly, lots of participants showing up for our big event.

Our trail running event was the brainchild of Erica Roselius. In addition to serving as President of CVTA, she happens to be an endurance athlete who knew what it would take to host a successful 5K.

In addition to scouting out a great course that incorporated trails built by CVTA, we needed to plan for marketing, fundraising, registration, event staff and more. Plus, all of the above had to be accomplished by a small but mighty group of volunteers.

In the end, it all came together. We had 56 people for the 5K trail run and 33 people participate in the 2k fun run for a total of 89 participants. That was just shy of our lofty goal of 100 runners. Among the 5k racers, our youngest was 9 years old and our oldest was an 87-year-old who told us she gets in 10k steps every single day. She was amazing!

It was also a financial success for CVTA. Entry fees for the 5K (2K Fun Run was free) included a race-day shirt and a one-year CVTA membership. This allowed us to introduce 52 new members to our organization and we hope many of them choose to renew with us.



Sponsors were also important for covering our many expenses in setting up the race. In all, we raised \$900 in sponsorships from the Carson Valley Visitors Authority, Minden Lawyers, Team nevadadreamhome.com, and Willoughby Enterprises.

We'd like to thank them along with our hard-working volunteers and eager participants for making our first 5K event a major success. Now, it's time for us to start planning next year's event!



Adults with Developmental Disabilities Enjoy a Day at River Fork Ranch



On November 1, 2024, CVTA, in collaboration with Expand-Able Horizons and The Nature Conservancy, hosted a nature walk at the River Fork Ranch for adults with developmental disabilities. Prior to the walk, everyone enjoyed a tour of the Whit Hall Interpretive Center and a brief interactive presentation on plants and wildlife commonly found in our valley. Lori Leonard, Preserve Manager for the River Fork Ranch, led the presentation and nature walk.



Expand-Able Horizons is a recently formed non-profit which provides programs and activities for adults with developmental disabilities. Like CVTA, they rely heavily on volunteers to grow the program and better serve our community. All programs and activities are free of charge to the participants, no matter which county or state they may live in. For more information on Expand-Able Horizons, please [visit their website expandablehorizons.org](https://expandablehorizons.org).

CVTA was delighted to partner with Expand-Able Horizons and The Nature Conservancy for this special event!

CVTA Awarded by Eastern Sierra Trails Coalition

Erica Roselius represented CVTA at The Eastern Sierra Trails Coalition Summit on November 15. The Coalition is an informal collaboration of agencies, non-profits, community organizations, and trail advocates working together to improve cross-sector coordination, the exchange of information, expansion of training opportunities, and the leveraging of resources.

The event held at Western Nevada College included many familiar organizations such as Muscle Powered, Tahoe Rim Trail Association, TAMBA, and more. All were there to learn more about trail planning efforts, current projects, trail mapping, and addressing gaps in trail standards and inclusivity.

We were excited to attend the summit and pleasantly surprised to be honored with an award for our efforts here in the Carson Valley.



Middle School Students Enjoy an Outing on Our Fay-Luther Trails



On the morning of October 9, Carson Valley Trails Association Board Members Juan Guzman and Judy Larquier led a group of 25 students from Carson Valley Middle School on an outdoor field trip. Students were well prepared for their three-hour outing on CVTA's Fay-Luther trails with observations and questions.

Subjects of discussion included how to recognize what animals may be in the area when you can't actually see them, the history of the Fay-Luther area, and plants and animals in this high desert environment. Fire management, user conflicts and trail building and maintenance were also an important part of our conversation. Having young students out on our trails is a delightful way to expose them to the joys of easy, safe access to the natural treasures that surround us in Carson Valley.



CVTA Has a New President!

This past quarter, the CVTA Board unanimously voted to accept Erica Roselius as President. If you've been to any of our local events this year, there is a solid chance you've met Erica working our booth at the Wine Walk, organizing our Annual Meeting and Social, or running our very first 5K! Clearly, she has been a very active board member and we are excited to have such a passionate, professional and hard-working leader at the helm.

In Erica's words, "I joined the board several years ago because I love our valley's trails and CVTA's mission to connect our communities to the outdoors through those trails. As CVTA president, I am excited to continue to build on our mission by creating more events and

opportunities for our region's residents to experience our extensive trail systems and connect with each other."

Erica is a personal trainer, outdoor enthusiast and an endurance athlete who is originally from Southern California. After her parents moved to Minden in 2015, she soon realized that she wanted to relocate as well! That says a lot since she has visited over 30 countries and chose our valley as her home.

Please say hello to Erica if you see her running a CVTA event, running on our trails, or enjoying the great outdoors with her dog Molly.

CVTA Board Members Assist with Clean-Up Day In the Pine Nuts.

On Saturday, October 12 Carson Valley Trail Members Laura Ammons, Eric Wamback and Judy Larquier partnered with the Pine Nut Mountains Trail Association in a trails clean-up day. A variety of 4-wheel drive and off-road vehicles scattered throughout the Pine Nut Mountains to pick up and clean up many trash piles in the surrounding multi-use areas.

People on horseback, bikers, hikers and motorized vehicles all enjoyed using our public lands. This joint effort made a big impact with the removal of items including old stoves, recliners, car parts, household items and discarded construction materials. A huge trailer was filled with debris, pizza was served and the trails are now much more enjoyable to wander with less trash to look at and step over.

We're looking forward to more collaboration with the Pine Nut Mountains Trail Association. Their president, Eric Wamback, recently attended a CVTA board meeting to reintroduce his organization. Although their members are focused on off-road vehicle fun, the trails they build are multi-use and they deal with the same challenges as us when it comes to planning, permitting, and building trails in our valley.

TRAILS REPORT



As of November 2024, our crews completed the following repairs and maintenance through our trail systems:

Bently Heritage Trail: Routine brush clearing was completed on the entire trail.

Clear Creek Trail System: The entire Clear Creek Trail between Spooner Summit and James Lee Park had routine brushing and trail tread maintenance completed. One fallen tree was removed from the trail and sheep damage along the Jacks Valley Loop and James Lee Loops was repaired.

Willow roots were removed to prevent water blockage and ponding at an ephemeral water crossing on the trail. In addition, all of James Lee Loops and Jacks Valley Loop had routine brushing and trail tread maintenance completed.

Fay-Luther/Jobs Peak Ranch Trail System: The entire trail system was brushed out and waterbars cleaned out for the winter. Thousands of encroaching sagebrush and rabbitbrush were removed from the Valley View Loop.



Sections of slickrock were chiseled out on the Appaloosa Trail to improve and widen the trail tread. The first 1.5 miles of trail above Jobs Peak Ranch Trailhead was brushed out and any rockbergs removed.

Genoa Trail System: Three fallen trees were removed from the Sierra Canyon Trail and Genoa Loop and the entire Sierra Canyon Trail had brushing completed and fallen rocks removed. A short realignment occurred on the Genoa Loop to avoid a large, exposed boulder.

River Fork Ranch Trail System: The East Brockliss Loop was brushed out and some directional arrows freshened up.

Pinyon Trail: Brushing occurred on the entire trail system and one fallen tree removed from the trail. Limbing was also preformed to regain adequate clearing width and provide safer trail sight lines.



UPCOMING EVENT: CVTA Mixer

Minden Mill Distilling, February 23 from 4-6pm



Join CVTA President Erica Roselius and mix with some fellow supporters of our great trail systems.

\$20 per person for 4 wines and great conversation!
Pay at the event.

Limited availability. Book your spot online today:
bit.ly/cvtamixer

2025 CVTA OFFICERS AND BOARD

President: Erica Roselius
Vice President: Bill Rogers
Treasurer: Terri Willoughby
VP/Membership: Lee Elson
VP/Chief Information Officer: Michael Hartstein
VP/Trail Operations: Jeremy Vican
VP/Outreach and Publicity: Judy Larquier

Directors-at-Large:

Neal Falk
Laura Ammons
Juan Guzman
Dianne Jennings
Mary Winette

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.