



TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Summer 2025

Connecting people to the outdoors through a system of trails

Two Worlds: One Valley

Exploring the differences between the East and West sides of the Carson Valley

Nestled between two mountain ranges, the Carson Valley offers us the opportunity to enjoy a wide array of outdoor recreation options in uniquely different surroundings. In addition to the changes we see as we climb from the valley floor to higher elevations, CVTA trails allow us to experience two distinct environments separated by differences in topography, climate, plant life and wildlife.

On the east side of the valley, explore CVTA's Pinyon Trail, located on the edge of the Pine Nut Mountains. Compare the parched landscape that surrounds you here to the green forests of the Genoa and Fay-Luther/JPR Trails system on the western half of the valley. Whether you're drawn to the desert stillness of the east or the alpine energy of the west, CVTA-built trails place both at your feet.

Topography & Climate

On our Pinyon Trail, you enjoy rolling hills and open skies that allow for stunning valley views. Located near foothills of the Pine Nut Mountains, trail surfaces here usually contain clay-like sediment and soil with patches of bedrock. That's why it gets muddy and slippery after winter storms and during the spring thaw on Northern-facing slopes.



The best times to hike here are generally March, April, May, late October, November, and early December since this area can become quite hot and dry during the summer. If you're headed over there in the summer, start early knowing that temperatures exceeding 90 degrees Fahrenheit are not uncommon in July and August.

The topography of the Pine Nuts ranges from rolling hills (approximately 5,000 feet) to 9,000 feet at the tops of the tallest peaks. Our Pinyon Trail sticks to the hills with an elevation that ranges from 5,700 feet at the trailhead to about 6,060 feet and has a gentle grade of about 5%.

CVTA trails on the western side of our valley contain a much denser forest canopy, providing hikers with shade during the summertime. Trails often gain elevation quickly, climbing past creeks, granite boulders and cliffs. The landscape of this area is characterized by fault-block topography, where blocks of Earth have been tilted along faults by tectonic movements, creating a dramatic and rugged landscape with towering peaks and deep valleys. These trails are mostly a mix of decomposed granite, packed soil and sand (they also tend to get rockier the higher and steeper the trail) and also feature more water sources and creeks.

Plant Life

Hiking near the Pine Nut Mountains, you'll find a plethora of Nevada's state trees, the single-leaf Pinyon Pine as well as Utah Juniper trees. This side of the valley is home to a variety of wildflowers including delicate Buckwheats and long, purple Milkvetches. Along the Pinyon Trail, keep an eye out for Pine Nut Mountains Mousetails, a 5-petaled white wildflower that is unique to this region. The plant life here is classic Great Basin flora: tough, drought-resistant chaparral with patches of sagebrush and bitterbrush which serve as a vital food source for the wildlife in this area. You'll find various grasses including Indian ricegrass and pine bluegrass.



Pine Nut Mountains Mousetail

On the Western side, you'll find a mixture of desert chaparral and a wooded landscape of mostly Jeffrey pine, white fir, and to a lesser extent, incense cedar, sugar pine, aspen and willow trees, creating a vibrantly green environment. At higher elevations, alpine plants and low growing flowers like pink sierra primrose and alpine phlox prevail, especially during the summer months. Wildflowers, such as elephant's head and monkeyflower bloom in alpine meadows, peaking in July and August.

Animal Life

Trails near the Pine Nut mountains are home to wildlife that thrives in dry, arid environments. Keep an eye out for mule deer, wild horses, and possibly elusive mountain lions. Hikers are also likely to spot either prairie falcons or golden eagles along their route, as well as jackrabbits and various species of lizards who enjoy the sunny desert terrain.

The Sierra side of the Carson Valley supports a richer variety of wildlife and biodiversity. While the eastern valley is too dry to support amphibians, the western side is home to the pacific treefrog and western toad. Our trails on the west side of the valley may be especially of interest to birders, as home to many fascinating bird species – mountain bluebirds, yellow warblers, western tanagers, mountain quails, bald eagles, white-headed woodpeckers, and winter wrens, which are rarely found in the rest of Nevada. In addition to diverse bird species, you can also spot various mammals, including black bears, elusive mountain lions and bobcats roaming the western Carson Valley.

As for all of our trails, keep watch for rattlesnakes as they are also native to both sides of the valley. Both regions offer distinct and beautiful hiking, biking and equestrian experiences — the Pine Nuts provide solitude, expansive valley views, and a stark beauty, while the Sierra Nevada deliver dramatic landscapes, dense forests, and rich wildlife. Choose your own adventure!



Long Nose Leopard Lizard

CVTA is now connected to Trail Care, a new way to support trails with every mile you log.



In a recent newsletter, we highlighted CVTA member Kirk Dixon who logged every mile he hiked on our trail systems while pledging to donate a dollar-per-mile. It was a great way for Kirk to quantify just how much he used our trails (over 100 miles per year) and equate that with how much support he provided to CVTA — brilliant! Now, Kirk's good deed has inspired us to partner with Trail Care enabling more people to give by the mile.

What is Trail Care and how does it work?

Trail Care was started by a software engineer after his local trail system in Santa Barbara was devastated by a massive wildfire. In the process of rebuilding, the idea of digital donations replacing physical donation boxes was born.

Trail Care connects with the popular fitness tracking app Strava. Each time you log miles in the Strava app, Trail Care checks to see if your miles match the jurisdiction of any participating trail organizations (such as CVTA and TRTA). If it does, they'll send you an email asking if you'd like to complete your donation.

You choose the amount to donate based on your cents-per-mile setting. You can change it anytime, or opt out of donation emails altogether. It's up to you.

Trail Care never makes donations on your behalf without your explicit permission.

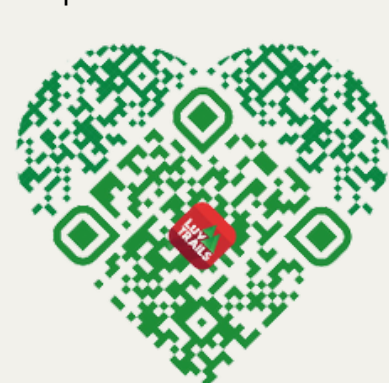
Although you provide a credit card number and a cents-per-mile pledge when you sign up, there's no commitment to make any donations. You are always in charge and must approve every donation that Trail Care suggests based on your miles.

While Trail Care charges nothing for their service, standard credit card processing fees apply. Stripe (the credit card processor) charges the industry standard \$0.30 + 2.9% (same as PayPal). To avoid excessive payment processing fees, your payment method will not be charged until you accrue at least \$5 worth of donations for a single trail organization.

I've tested Trail Care and it's simple and satisfying to use.

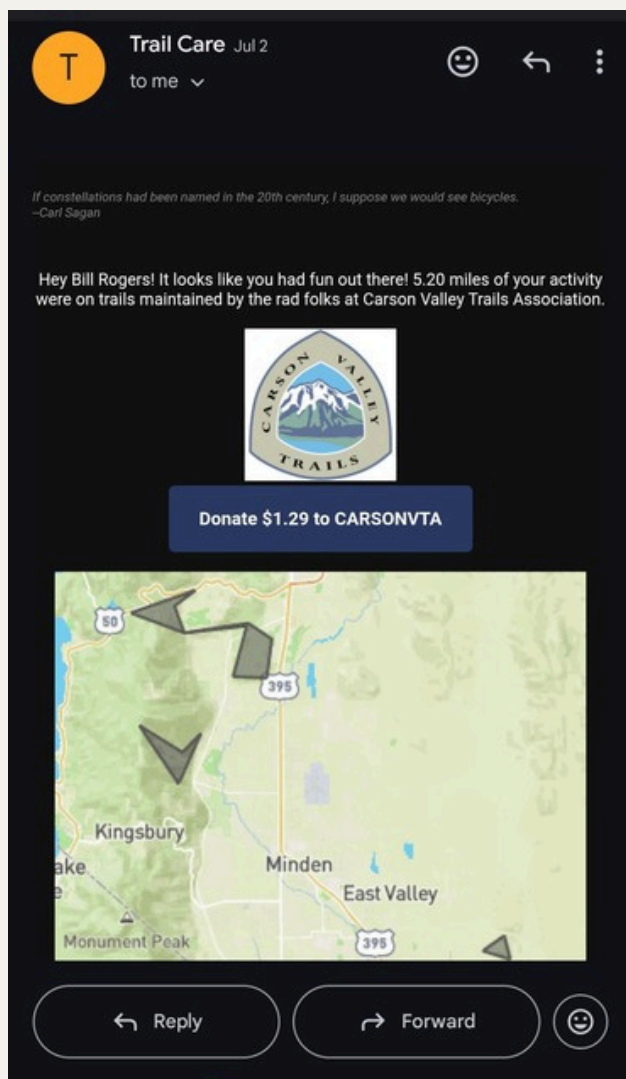
As a runner and cyclist, I already had a Strava account (free version) and the connection to Trail Care was simple. To simplify my method of tracking miles, I connected my fitness watch app to Strava, so I never have to mess with my phone or remember to track my workout in the Strava app itself. Each time I logged miles on one of our trails, I received an email, like the example pictured to the right. As you can see, the donations aren't automatic and must be approved via email. Since March, I've donated about \$12 to CVTA through microdonations.

All I do is track miles using my fitness watch and click on emails from Trail Care. It really is that simple.



**Put Trail Care
to work for you &
CVTA at
www.trail.care**

Their website provides very clear steps including a "Getting Started" video. If you sign up, you'll discover how easy it can be to track your miles on our trails while supporting the organization that builds and maintains them.



CVTA Volunteer Spotlight

Lance Crowley

If you're a regular at the Fay-Luther/Jobs Peak Ranch trail system, you may have met Lance without knowing his role in keeping the area clean. He's part of a small and loyal group of volunteers who clean up the dog waste throughout the trails.

As I discovered in our short interview, Lance was involved in the early days of advocating for access to public lands from the west side of Carson Valley. Here's how he described his move to Carson Valley and eventual involvement with CVTA.

"I moved here to Carson Valley in 1991 and I was hired to run the Douglas County juvenile probation wilderness program. One of the first things I did was climb Jobs Peak that first summer with a bunch of teenage boys. We came up from the Horse Meadow side and we slept on the top and then we hiked down the front. We slipped down in garbage bags on the steep slope between Bobcat Ridge bridge and Jobs and [when we made our way to] Foothill Road, it was all barbed wire. That's when I realized that there was no legal access to Foothill Road from any of the Forest Service lands on the West side of the valley...so I got involved in the process with many other people just advocating for some trail access.

[There was so much support that] about two or three hundred people showed up at a commissioners meeting and advocated to developer folks to paint a red line on the edge of their map for the subdivision they were trying to get approved. We all got to clap when the commissioners made them go in the backroom and literally paint the line which became the Jobs Peak Ranch trail.

Although I was never involved on CVTA's board, I did write letters to the editor supporting it when a homeowner on Foothill Road, sold a piece of land to the Forest Service that became the Fay-Luther Trailhead parking lot. I wrote a letter in support of the homeowner being kind enough to allow trail access.

[Years later] my friend Nora Gastelum, who was the president of CVTA, put out a call for someone to volunteer to pick up the poop at Fay-Luther and Jobs Peak Ranch Trailheads. Since I had that earlier involvement in advocating for them to be established, I felt like the least I could do is to pick up after my own dog and other people's as well...I figured it was a job well-suited for me [since] I'm still busy in my private practice as a counselor and could do clean-up as needed. [It's a team effort] with Juan Guzman and also Jan and Peter Engle.



If I could just say one final thing: everybody knows that the trails are great for our physical health **but they are equally important to mental health.** As a drug and alcohol counselor, I really appreciate that trails provide a spiritual kind of mental renewal whenever we go up there. Hiking gets us some peace after our stressful days and weeks. [CVTA has] made the valley a better place."

After our conversation, Lance was able to dig up some early newspaper articles and a letter which speak to his efforts along with others to help bring access to public lands:

Residents owe thanks for access to

by Lance Crowley

The residents of the Carson Valley owe a debt of thanks to Chuck and Karen Paya for making access to Faye Luther Canyon and Job's Peak available to the public, and to the American Land Conservancy and the Carson Valley Access Community for mobilizing to make it happen. The Eastern Sierra front, and Job's Peak in particular, is the defining geological feature of Valley — it is rare to see an article on the local area or a promotion of our real estate and standard of living without an accompanying picture of Job's and Bobcat Ridge in the background. A visit to any local art gallery is likely to reveal numerous painted and photographed likenesses of these snowcapped peaks rising over 5,000 feet above the Valley floor.

It has been, therefore, the greatest irony to me since moving here in 1991 that when it comes to these

great mountains it has been OK for the vast majority of residents to look, but not to touch. It appeared that this opportunity was available only to those privileged few lucky and wealthy enough to own the foothill frontage of these public lands. In the summer of 1992 I led a group of local youth to the top of Job's Peak from Horse Meadows on the California side, with the goals of giving them an overview of the place they live and showing them what fun, free and legal types of activity were available to them in "their own back yard." I was dismayed to find, however, after a strenuous descent down Jobs' Canyon, that the whole of Foothill Road, from Kingsbury south to Faye's Canyon, was barbed-wired off and that it would be necessary to trespass to get home! Luckily, a charitable homeowner allowed us to cross and offered us a cold drink as well.

Now another charitable home-

GUEST

owner has returned legal access to the kids of the Valley and their families, but unfortunately, Mr. Paya's generosity has not been welcomed by many of his neighbors, one of whom informed him that he hoped Paya's house "would be the first to burn in a forest fire." (Reno Gazette, April 1, "Job's Peak access move draws ire of neighbors"). This person should be reminded that the last two foothill fires were started by 1) a foothill homeowner burning brush on a windy day in Woodfords, and 2) another homeowner's child playing with matches and gasoline near his own house in Autumn Hills. If anyone knows of any fires in this area started by hikers or equestrian, please correct me.

The above remark, however, should serve as a challenge to those of us who intend to venture into Faye Canyon on foot or on horse-

to Faye Luther Canyon, Job's Peak

OPINION

back to be wise, safe, responsible visitors. Limited access over the years has left us with a rare treasure in the over-used Sierra, a pristine wilderness area truly in our own back yard. There are deer, bear and mountain lions, used to being left alone in their canyon. In 10 years of leading backpacking trips across the U.S., it is the only place where I have seen three bald eagles in one place. There are year-round streams, old growth trees, and of course, the mountains crying out to be climbed by anyone who looks to the west from the Valley. With access to this amazing landscape comes an incredible responsibility to keep it as pristine as it is right now.

No one likes to be regulated and told what to do, especially in the wilderness. To avoid over-regulation by those charged with maintaining these public lands (Forest Service

rules have yet to be posted at the trailhead), I have the following suggestions for users of Faye Canyon and the surrounding area, which I hope will be adhered to voluntarily for the continued and safe enjoyment of all:

- Notify someone as to where you are going and when you expect to return, and be aware of weather conditions and forecasts. The fewer rescues that have to be performed, the more likely other access will become available.

- Dayhike. This puts less impact on the land and allows you to enjoy the sights without the weight of a large pack. If you choose to camp, find a spot well off the trail and leave it looking as untouched as possible when you leave. Carry out all trash, and bury human waste at least 100 feet from trails and streams.

- Use a campstove. Not using campfires (and using care with cigarettes) is the single easiest thing that

we can do to ensure that Faye Canyon will look the same for our grandchildren as it does for us. Existing fire rings should be dismantled and returned to a natural state to discourage use.

- Stay on trails (where there are trails) as much as possible to limit impact and erosion. Hopefully, a trail to the summit of Job's will eventually be constructed, concentrating foot traffic and reducing the likelihood of lost hikers.

- In general, leave it as you found it, and teach your children to do the same. There is nothing any of us can do to much improve this place; however, there is much that we can damage even without meaning to. Happy hiking!

Editor's note: Lance Crowley is a juvenile probation officer and program director of the Douglas County Intervention Program. Opinions are his and do not reflect the policy of his agency.

Access no longer denied

Job's Peak: Now can be reached from Valley

by **Andy Bourelle**
Staff Writer

Finally.

Residents of Carson Valley have permanent public access to the forests and trails of the Job's Peak area.

With the help from residents, the American Land Conservancy and the United States Forest Service have purchased a 2-1/2-acre trailhead which accesses Faye Luther Canyon and Job's Peak. It marks the first legal access to the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada from Carson City to the California state line.

"There are a lot of different people that will use this trail: aggressive hikers, retired folks, young children," said Ame Hellman, vice president of the ALC. "It's just beautiful up there. It's so spectacular."

The 2-1/2 acres became available, but the Forest Service — which is allowed to pay only the assessed value for land — was not able make the purchase.

That's where the community came in — by raising \$57,000.

"They kicked in a major portion," said Bill Van Bruggen of the Carson Ranger District. "I think it's great. It's a fantastic example of a community-supported project."

The forest service secured the remaining \$40,000 for the project and worked with the ALC to complete the purchase.

The trailhead is not yet complete, but the public still is welcome to use the access. It is located on Foothill Road, across from the



Lori Chitwood, left, and Ame Hellman at the trailhead. R-C photo by Belinda Grant

Faye Luther Canyon historical marker.

The \$57,000 was raised in about one year, and Hellman estimated 50 people contributed time, energy and money to raise the funds.

Hellman said resident Lori Chitwood stood out in regards to energy contributed to raising the money.

"I tried to go trailriding on some trails I'd been riding on my entire life, and I was told I wasn't allowed to. That's why I got involved," Chitwood said. "I hike, and I want my children to be able to hike up there. I think it's going to be an asset to the community. I feel it's a step in the right direction for preserving the quality of life here."

Thousands of acres of public land are now available to residents,

Hellman said, which before could only be accessed by driving out of the Valley. Although it is the first legal access to the Sierra from Carson City to California, everyone involved hopes it is not the last.

When county commissioners approved the Job's Peak Ranch development a few years ago, they made it a condition of the approval that access be made to the public lands.

The Forest Service, from that time, was given 10 years to complete the trailhead and provide the access.

"I would like to see that go through," Chitwood said. "That would provide a very large loop. It would be a great hike. Hopefully, that will happen."

Two CVTA events coming to our James Lee Park trailhead

We have an exciting few months ahead of us at CVTA, with numerous upcoming events as we transition from summer to fall!



Calling all mountain bikers for our first ever "Joker's Wild" Spoker Ride at 10 a.m. on August 23rd! During this event, mountain bikers will follow a 10-mile route along CVTA trails while drawing cards from stations along the way.

The top three winning poker hands, as judged by local card shark "Ace," will collect prize packages of cash, merchandise, and gift certificates from local business sponsors including Battle Born Wine and Whiskey, Above the Bar Tattoo, Win's Wheels and more.

After the ride, we'll enjoy food and beverages from Bubbly's Kitchen and Double Barrel Draft Wagon. Bring your mountain bike, helmet, water bottle, and some sturdy shoes and join us at James Lee Park in Carson City! All ages and abilities are welcome and you can register now for \$40 per rider. Don't forget to use the discount code we previously sent in an email as a perk for being a CVTA member.

CVTA would like to thank our Spoker Ride sponsors NVORA, Win's Wheels, The Chop Shop Hair Garage, Big Daddy's Bike and Brew, Above the Bar Tattoo, Battle Born Wine and Whiskey, True Bliss Skincare and Wellness, Truckee Flannel Company, and Bike Habitat for helping to make this event possible.

EVENT DETAILS

- Registration: tinyurl.com/SpokerRide
- Date: Saturday, August 23
- Time: 9am-2pm (Ride starts at 10am)
- Location: James Lee Memorial Park, 3394 James Lee Park Road, Carson City, Nevada



Now's the time to start training for our annual Run the Valley event on October 4th

at James Lee Park starting at 7am. In addition to our usual 5k route and 2k family fun run, we are introducing a 10k route this year! The 5k and 10k routes will go through several CVTA trails making up Jacks Valley and James Lee Loops with gorgeous views of the Sierras and rolling hills of the Carson Valley.

For the 2k family run, walk or run through the crushed granite path that follows the Indian Hills fitness course. You can register for the 5k or 10k for just \$25, or come along with your family, including friendly leashed dogs, during the 2k for free. Kids under 12 will receive finisher medals for participating in the race. Dress warm, choose your distance and join us for a beautiful autumn morning at the base of our breathtaking mountains for the only trail run in the Carson Valley.

EVENT DETAILS

- Registration: tinyurl.com/SpokerRide
- Date: Saturday, August 23
- Time: 9am-2pm (Ride starts at 10am)
- Location: James Lee Memorial Park, 3394 James Lee Park Road, Carson City, Nevada



CVTA would like to thank our Run the Valley sponsors Carson Valley Visitors Authority, Carson Valley Health, Driven Fitness, REMAX - Carson Valley, Vander Laan Law Firm LLC, and Willoughby Enterprises for helping to make this event possible.

Recent Events

Full Moon Hike Review from April: Carson Valley Trails Association Board member Judy Larquier led an energetic group of 12 individuals on a 3-mile full moon hike on Saturday, April 12. The group anxiously began hiking along the Jacks Valley Road Trailhead through a short burned area from the June 2021 Jacks Valley Fire. They viewed recent regrowth of desert peach and gooseberry



plants. The remainder of the gradual hike included sage, bitterbrush, desert lilies, rabbit brush and a variety of other early desert spring plants.

Unfortunately, clouds moved in and subdued any view of the full moon for the evening. Cookies and hot tea refreshed the group for the flashlight lit walk back. Dry lightning lit the sky as a few drops of rain waited until the return destination was reached.

The hike included information about CVTA's mission and an introduction to a new safety program called "Slow and Say Hello" which promotes safe actions to incorporate when using multi-use trails.



Annual Meeting Recap from May:

We'd like to thank everyone who joined us at Douglas County Community Center. Although our taco bar caterer was nowhere to be found, a quick replacement and a patient group of attendees made for a successful event. In addition to meeting our community of supporters, we especially enjoy taking time to thank our humble yet invaluable volunteers. This year, we recognized XX volunteers at our Annual Meeting, including (names TBD).

As part of a post-meeting survey, we learned that everyone appreciates the event with the most notable comment being that there could be more time to socialize.



Scorpion Spotting Hike Review from July:

Just recently, our second annual night hike took place across the first couple of miles of the Pinyon trail. Organized and led by board member Laura Ammons, the event took place on a perfectly warm evening just as the sun was setting over the Sierras to our west. A total of 10 attendees of all ages met us at the trailhead and all were equipped with black lights under which scorpions glow bright green. As we headed up the Pinyon



trail with Eric Wamback of the PNMTA hiking as sweep, we noticed a strange glow just over the horizon to our South including what appeared to be a round shockwave. Was it a UFO or an exploding meteor, aka fireball? No, in fact it turned out to be just another Starlink satellite launch from Vandenburg Airforce Base but the angle from which we witnessed it was other worldly.



But our real mission was hunt down some elusive little scorpions, and as you can see in our photos, they were tiny, and we had much success. Along with optimal conditions for scorpion spotting, the moonless night provided everyone with a truly unique perspective of the trail with lights of Carson Valley below and the glow of our home galaxy, the Milky Way, and visible local stars shining from above.



Trails Report



Much of the ongoing trail maintenance happens without us ever noticing. That's because Jeremy Vlcan and his team are quick to clear fallen trees and rocks, repair erosion and trail wear, remove overgrowth, etc. Those repairs are constant and so is the improvement of existing trails and infrastructure. Hopefully many of our readers have noticed the improvements we're focusing on for this report.

Four New Dog Waste Stations

New dog waste stations were installed at both the Fay-Luther and Jobs Peak Ranch Trailheads as well as the Genoa Canyon and Eagle Ridge Trailheads. These are easier to open, close, fill with bags and easier to grab one at a time.

A new Fay-Luther kiosk

Weather takes its toll on our exposed signs kiosks and the one at Fay-Luther had become rotted.



Three Trail Realignments

Now and then, you'll find that a favorite trail has moved slightly but it's not always apparent why. These realignments are part of our constant monitoring and improvement of the trails we build.

On the **Sierra Canyon Trail**, we recently completed a 120-foot realignment to reduce grade. This makes the trail safer and less susceptible to erosion.



Another 50-foot realignment was completed on the Sierra Canyon Trail to reduce grade and provide better flow into a climbing turn. The climbing turn was also widened and improved.



On the **Fay-Luther/Jobs Peak Ranch Trail** a half-mile realignment was completed to reduce grade and eliminate ongoing waterbar maintenance. The old section was left open to further disperse use and provide options.



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 Vlcan

VP/Outreach and Publicity: Judy Larquier

Directors-at-Large:

Neal Falk

Laura Ammons

Juan Guzman

Dianne Jennings

Mary Winnette

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.