



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: June 7, 2022

DATE: June 3, 2022

TO: Open Space and Regional Parks Commission

FROM: Sophia Kirschenman, Park Planner,
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THROUGH: Eric Crump, Operations Division Director
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SUBJECT: Presentation, discussion, and possible recommendation to adopt the Carcione and Canepa Ranch Recreation Access Plan. (Commission District 1.) (For Possible Action.)

SUMMARY

Washoe County, through its Community Services Department, has been working with Design Workshop and their team to develop a recreation access plan for two County-owned open space properties in Mogul, Carcione and Canepa Ranch. The plan identifies existing conditions, goals, opportunities and constraints, as well as a conceptual vision to guide future development of the open space parcels. The plan includes recommendations related to vegetation and wildlife management, cultural and historical resources, and Truckee River access. The proposed improvements include parking, river access points, picnic areas, trailhead facilities (such as wayfinding signage and restrooms), and a bridge over the river to provide connectivity between the two parcels. The plan also includes a trails component, identifying trail sections to decommission and add, as well as potential ADA-accessible trail options.

Strategic Objective supported by this item: Safe, Secure and Healthy Communities.

PREVIOUS ACTION

September 24, 2019 – The Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (Board) adopted the 2019 Regional Parks and Open Space Master Plan, which identifies a proposed trailhead on the Canepa Ranch property.

March 10, 2015 – The Board authorized the purchase of 21.72 acres (currently identified as Assessor's Parcel Numbers 038-150-18 and 038-150-20) located along the Truckee River [for a purchase price of \$440,000, funded through the WC-1 Parks, Trails and Open Space Bond of 2000 and State Question One Truckee River Bond] from JoAnne Silvia Grasso and Karen Jennifer Loin, trustees under the Carcione Family Revocable Living Trust

July 13, 2010 – The Board adopted the Verdi Area Plan, which identifies a proposed trailhead on the Canepa Ranch parcel and trail access into neighboring Forest Service lands.

AGENDA ITEM # X

August 11, 2009 – The Board executed a resolution authorizing the sale of 111.1 acres (a portion of the Canepa Ranch property) to the United States of America (through their Department of Agriculture, Forest Service) in the amount of \$1,530,000. All water rights appurtenant to those lands were retained.

December 16, 2008 – The Board authorized the purchase of 22.26 acres of land (Assessor's Parcel Number 038-150-19) along the Truckee River near Mogul to maintain as open space and utilize for passive recreation [for a purchase price of \$400,000, funded through the WC-1 and SQ-1 bonds from Mary Kathleen Carcione, Trustee under the Carcione Family Revocable Living Trust.

July 22, 2008 – The Board conducted a public hearing for comments on the proposed sale of 111.1 acres (a portion of the Canepa Ranch property) to the United States of America (through their Department of Agriculture, Forest Service) in the amount of \$1,530,000.

July 8, 2008 – The Board executed a resolution declaring the County's intent to sell 111.1 acres (a portion of the Canepa Ranch property) to the United States of America (through their Department of Agriculture, Forest Service) in the amount of \$1,530,000.

November 25, 2003 – The Board approved the SQ-1 Truckee River project acquisition list, which included the Carcione Family Trust parcels.

October 22, 2002 – The Board approved the purchase of 80.85 acres [part of the Canepa Ranch], including 153.18 acre-feet of water rights from Eva Canepa Trust Et Al and Canepa Realty Ltd for \$1,901,130 utilizing Regional Parks, Open Space and Trails Bond funds.

October 22, 2002 – The Board approved the purchase of 40 acres [part of the former Canepa Ranch], including 14.5 acre-feet of water rights from Evelyn G. Canepa, Louis John Canepa and Gary Thomas Canepa for \$290,750 utilizing Regional Parks, Open Space and Trails Bond funds.

January 15, 2002 – The Board directed Regional Parks and Open Space staff to move forward with the purchase of real property and water rights associated with Canepa Ranch near Mogul, Nevada.

April 25, 2000 – The Board approved the 2000 Regional Parks, Open Space and Trails Bond (WC-1) project list, which included Truckee River land acquisitions.

January 28, 1997 – The Board authorized the purchase of 42 acres of Truckee River property (currently identified as APN 038-790-01) in partnership with the Nevada Division of Wildlife for a total of \$50,000 (\$25,000 from Washoe County and \$25,000 from NDOW) for the purpose of providing Truckee River access, fisherman access, recreational access, winter deer range and open space along the Truckee River.

BACKGROUND

Carcione and Canepa Ranch are two open space properties located along the Truckee River in Mogul. They are separated by Forest Service lands and the Truckee River. The Canepa Ranch parcels were acquired through several land acquisition deals in 1997 and 2002. The land acquisition in 1997 was a joint Washoe County and Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW) project for the purchase of ±42.4 acres with the goal of providing river and recreation access and protecting winter mule deer habitat. NDOW and the County continue to co-own that parcel. In 2002, Washoe County acquired six additional parcels

totaling ±121 acres that were part of the former Canepa Ranch, along with their associated water rights. Then, in 2009, Washoe County sold ±111 of those acres to the United States Forest Service. In total, Washoe County retains ±53 acres of land that were once part of Canepa Ranch and are located on the south side of the Truckee River. Carcione Open Space was acquired through two land acquisition deals, one in 2008 and one in 2015, with the goal of providing public access and preserving wildlife habitat and water quality in the Truckee River. In total, there are three parcels that are part of Carcione Open Space, totaling ±44 acres.

The Canepa Ranch parcel does not have any developed infrastructure, but there are a number of easements that encumber the property, including a staging easement for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority and a prescriptive easement for the Steamboat Canal and Irrigation Company that provides access to the Steamboat Ditch. The Carcione property does contain developed infrastructure, including the Avansino Ranch House and the associated shed and horse stables. Additionally, there is an existing mothballing plan for the ranch house that would allow for preservation of this historic structure. The stables are in a state of disrepair and need to be removed.

The properties were originally acquired with the intent of developing public access to the Truckee River and backcountry trails, as evidenced by the 2010 Verdi Area Plan and the 2019 Regional Parks and Open Space Master Plan, which both identify a proposed trailhead on the Canepa Ranch property. Since their acquisition, these properties have not been actively managed for recreation. However, both properties are used by the public at present, primarily by fishermen and dog walkers.

In April of 2021, Washoe County hired Design Workshop to help facilitate the development of a recreation access plan for Carcione and Canepa Ranch. The plan development process began with an initial site analysis to identify opportunities (such as highlighting historical and cultural resources with interpretive signage, improving natural resource management, connecting the parcels with a pedestrian bridge, and providing connectivity to Forest Service lands) as well as constraints (lack of legal public access across the Union Pacific Railroad, lack of safe parking locations, access to Canepa Ranch through a residential neighborhood, motorized vehicle use and noxious weeds). In the following months, several stakeholder meetings were conducted with partners, including NDOW, the United States Forest Service, the Nevada Division of State Lands, and several members of the Mogul Neighborhood Association. Based on input from these meetings a conceptual plan was developed to present to the public.

Prior to the first public meeting, 254 mailed notifications were sent to neighboring property owners to inform the community about the meeting. Flyers were also posted at both the Carcione and Canepa Ranch properties. The first public meeting took place on September 9th, 2021, and a survey opened following the meeting to garner additional feedback on the conceptual plan. The conceptual plan was then refined based on input from meetings with stakeholder groups, the first public meeting and the survey. The second public meeting took place on December 9th, 2021 with a second survey opened between December 10th, 2021 through January 18th, 2022. Washoe County staff were also invited to and attended the Verdi/West Truckee Meadows Citizen Advisory Board meeting on January 18th, 2021 and the Belli Ranch Estates Homeowner's Association meeting on January 25th, 2022 to hear additional community input and concerns.

The biggest concerns identified through the process were related to traffic and speeding through the Belli Ranch neighborhood, motorized vehicle use on the open space parcels, potential wildlife and vegetation impacts, crime, trash, homeless encampments, wildfire risks and emergency egress. Management strategies were included in the recreation access plan to address several of the identified concerns. For example, the parking areas are proposed to be fenced to preclude motorized vehicle use and dog leash regulations are proposed to protect mule deer during their winter migration. Several of the concerns, such as traffic and speeding, may be re-evaluated during the design phase to determine whether other management strategies should be implemented. Additionally, should the improvements be developed, the parcels would be patrolled by Washoe County staff to monitor illegal activities.

The proposed recreation access plan recommends a variety of improvements while also seeking to maintain undeveloped open space, wildlife habitat and native vegetation. Proposed new infrastructure includes parking and trailhead amenities (such as restrooms, wayfinding signage, and dog waste stations), interpretive signage to highlight the properties' histories, shade structures, and picnic areas. The plan includes a trails component, identifying potential new trails, ADA-accessible trail areas and trail sections to decommission. Improvements proposed on adjacent Forest Service properties include a preferred bridge location over the Truckee River that would connect County property with Forest Service property. Development on Forest Service lands would require additional environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act. The plan is supported by partner organizations, including the Nevada Division of Wildlife, the Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation, and One Truckee River (see the attached letters of support).

Consistency with the 2019 Regional Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

The 2019 Regional Parks and Open Space Master Plan (Parks Master Plan) identifies a proposed trailhead on the Canepa Ranch property. The 2019 Parks Master Plan also includes several objectives and strategies directly related to the current proposal. Strategy 1.C.2 states, "Work with local government agencies to identify areas of collaboration when connecting trails." Objective 1.C states, "Encourage a multi-purpose regional trail system to connect residents to regional parks, neighborhood parks, special use facilities, and open space." Regional Parks and Open Space staff find that not only is the proposed recreation access plan in conformance with the goals and priorities of the 2019 Parks Master Plan, it also helps to implement a trailhead identified within the plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is associated with adoption of the Carcione and Canepa Ranch Recreation Access Plan. The plan will be built out as funding opportunities arise.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Park Commission adopt the Carcione and Canepa Ranch Recreation Access Plan.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Commission agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to adopt the Carcione and Canepa Ranch Recreation Access Plan."