

MINUTES
Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission
May 28, 2025

The Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission met in a scheduled session on Wednesday, May 28, 2025, in the Washoe County Commission Chambers, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada.

The meeting was televised live and replayed on Washoe Channel at:

<https://www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff/Communications/wctv-live.php> also on YouTube at:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/WashoeCountyTV>

Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Kevin Joell (via Zoom), Timothy Dake (via Zoom), Neal Jones, Lisa Rode (via Zoom), Sean Hill

Absent: Miles Gurtler, Mark Neumann, Tracy Kuczenski

Staff Present: Brandon Roman, Stephanie D'Arcy, Aaron Smith, Lindsay Liddell, Eric Crump

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge was led by Commissioner Hill.

3. Reading of Zoom Instructions

Recording Secretary Brandon Roman recited the Zoom instructions.

4. Public Comment

Ms. Cynthia Reed said open space is very important for Nevadans' health. She discussed residents using Whites Creek Park to play fetch with their dogs on weekends because the South Valleys shared use area was not available at those times. She spoke about a volunteer effort to clean up dog waste and a shared-use park in Carson City in the middle of a subdivision.

5. Approval of the Draft Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of April 23, 2025

Commissioner Dake suggested the following changes:

- Brandon Roman's name was mentioned twice in the staff list.
- He felt more clarification was needed in the sentence containing, "a need for more is considered" at the end of page 2.
- He thought the sentence following that was unclear.

- The final sentence of that same paragraph should explain what the County Commissioners will decide.
- He wanted more context for the final sentence of page 4, paragraph 4.

Motion by Commissioner Hill to approve the minutes as amended by Commissioner Dake. Seconded by Commissioner Dake.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

Motion carried with a vote of five for, zero against, with Commissioners Gurtler, Neumann, and Kuczenski absent.

6. Acknowledgement and recognition of Gabe Barbato, Park Ranger, for 5 years of dedicated service and exceptional commitment to Washoe County.

North Region District Park Manager Andy Brown praised Mr. Barbato for his service at Lazy 5 Regional Park. He lauded his effort to provide exceptional parks and open space opportunities while preserving natural, historical, and cultural resources. He presented Mr. Barbato with a certificate.

7. Eagle Scout Presentation – Rebuilt firewood shed at Davis Creek Regional Park completed by Morgan del la Torre.

Park Ranger Nick Steuer introduced Eagle Scout candidate Morgan del la Torre, who thanked the Parks Department for the opportunity to do her Eagle project. She conducted a slideshow presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles or descriptions: "Eagle Project; Photos of the site...; Lumber delivery from Ridgeline Framing, LLC; Preparing materials; photos (3 slides); Quick Facts; completed shed photos; and Thank You.

Ms. del la Torre noted the original shed was constructed by another Eagle Scout, and she was able to incorporate the original chalk box into the new shed's design. She described the materials of the chalkboard that would allow it to withstand exposed conditions and said the roof was sloped to allow snow and rain to run off as well as to protect the chalkboard. A lending library was also constructed with space for children's and young adult books. She hoped the shed would help kids and new campers feel more connected to the campground. Metal grates, a latch for the lending library, and rubber piping will be added to the construction shortly.

Commissioner Dake commended Ms. De La Torre for the project, which he felt was needed.

Chair Jones praised her for her presentation.

8. Presentation on the One Truckee River nonprofit organization by Iris Jehle-Peppard, Executive Director of One Truckee River

Ms. Jehle-Peppard conducted a slideshow presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles or descriptions: One Truckee River; Steering Committee and Technical Working Group;

Typical Truckee River Federal and Nevada Jurisdictional Cross-Section; Stakeholders Interviewed and/or Participating...; Project Area; Framework Vegetation Management and Restoration Plan; Jurisdictional Constraints and Guidance; Compatible Techniques and Cost; Conditions Assessment; Project Prioritization; Initial Priority Project Locations...; Priority Project Locations...; maps (2 slides); City of Reno Priority Project Locations...; maps (3 slides); City of Sparks Priority Project Locations...; maps (4 slides); Washoe County Priority Project Locations...; map; photo; survey results (3 slides): Finding the Balance; Vegetation Management Methods; Possible Next Steps; The Truckee River Vision Plan; Collaboratively Steward The River; and One Truckee River Funders.

Ms. Jehle-Peppard said an initiative was started in 2017, one year after adoption of the Truckee River Management Plan, to protect and improve the native habitat along the Corridor. She commented that the Framework Vegetation Management and Restoration Plan clarified regulatory constraints, identified compatible vegetation management techniques, and developed an implementation planning guide. She discussed the elements of the conditions assessment and how results from it were used to assist with prioritization.

Ms. Jehle-Peppard indicated one common reason given by people who did not recreate along the Truckee River was that they used other parks in the region for recreation. She advocated for the County's support of the service plan that will be presented to the Reno City Council as a way of addressing homelessness issues along the Truckee Corridor.

Responding to Commissioner Dake's query, Ms. Jehle-Peppard said the properties reviewed were all publicly owned.

Commissioner Dake agreed there are rough areas along the river, but funding will be a challenge.

Chair Jones recognized the challenges associated with funding, though he felt many things could be done without incurring a large expense.

Ms. Jehle-Peppard referenced a link on onetruckeeriver.org that will take viewers to information on the Agency's website.

9. Presentation, discussion and possible approval of a Special Event Agreement with The Altruistic American for The Best in the West Beard and Music Festival to be held at Lazy 5 Regional Park on September 5-7, 2025, at a cost of \$15,540 paid to Washoe County. (For Possible Action)

Chris Battenberg, Executive Director of The Altruistic American, conducted a slideshow presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Hello, I'm Chris Battenberg; Agenda; Who is The Altruistic American; TAA's Impact On and In Our Communities; Best in the West Beard and Music Festival (2 slides); Big Beards and Big Hearts; Community Impact; Dynamics and Logistics; and Impact to Lazy-5's neighbors.

Mr. Battenberg indicated recipients of E&L Scholarships do not just go to psychiatrists and therapists, but first responders and those studying nutrition as well. He explained that the crisis

cards contain information for the Suicide Hotline as well as for local County resources. Lifeline cards can be given by people in the midst of mental health crises if they are unsure how to handle their situations or are having trouble speaking. He emphasized the importance of first responders, who he described as often the first contact for people experiencing mental health crises.

Mr. Battenberg said tickets are sold only for the mainstage musical acts, and that is how the event generates revenue. The Rednex and Green Jelly are among this year's acts. He reviewed the exhibitions that will take place during the event, noting the Reno Fire Department is expected to compete in the water ball exhibition. He sought suggestions for a security company, though local first responders may perform that service. His major concern was ensuring fire safety.

Responding to the Chair's question, Mr. Battenberg said he will request that park rangers lock all existing sanitation facilities, and the event organizers will supply restrooms, ADA restrooms, and handwashing stations. United Rentals will sponsor the event by providing restrooms, fencing, lighting, and power.

Regarding attendance, Mr. Battenberg replied that prior events at Wingfield Park were held in conjunction with RiverFest, but he estimated 1,000 people visited his event specifically. The highest attendance his event experienced was around 3,500 visitors, but he was unsure how many might attend at Lazy 5 Park because advertising and ticket sales will not begin until the event is approved. He is planning to provide facilities for 5,000 attendees.

Parks Operations Superintendent Stephanie D'Arcy did not believe an event of this size has ever been hosted at Lazy 5, so this will be a pilot program. She added that Ms. Battenberg has been flexible in working around the County's regular events schedule, and the County is supportive of the event.

Responding to Commissioner Dake's concern about potential noise complaints, Mr. Battenberg stated JMF Entertainment is the company putting on the mainstage show, and he expected decibel levels to equal cheering at a soccer game. Sound will be angled southward, away from homes. He said the entertainment company monitors sound during events, and he never received any noise complaints during past events.

Chair Jones pointed out that, per the agreement, the maximum decibel level allowed at park entrances is 100 decibels.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Dake to approve a Special Event Agreement with The Altruistic American for The Best in the West Beard and Music Festival to be held at Lazy 5 Regional Park on September 5-7, 2025. Seconded by Commissioner Rode.

Motion carried with a vote of five for, zero against, with Commissioners Gurtler, Neumann, and Kuczenski absent.

10. Presentation on the 20th Anniversary of the Lazy 5 Summer Music Series.

Park Rangers Gabriel Barbato and Brandon Faber conducted a slideshow presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles or descriptions: 20 years ago...; The Lazy 5 Summer Music Series; Live Music – Local Bands; Local Food and Drink Vendors; Event Promotion; Who Helps us?; Troop #443; promo video; Additional Partnerships; A special event...; It's FREE! – Thanks to Our Donors; and Follow Lazy 5 Regional Park.

Ranger Faber said that while local bands are usually featured, bands from the Bay Area and Utah have also played in the series. The 20th Anniversary event is being put together in response to public demand, and three bands will play four sets throughout the day. He believed Pack N Post, StateFarm, and Red Hawk Golf and Resort have supported the music series through its entire 20-year history.

In response to Commissioner Hill's questions, Mr. Battenberg explained the bands who play are paid through funds received from donors, though typically bands do not ask for much to participate. Raffle prize money goes to the County's donor fund, he confirmed.

Responding to Commissioner Rode's queries, Ranger Faber said vendors do not pay a fee to participate; they can either give a percentage of their earnings back to the parks or provide meal vouchers for Parks' staff. Ranger Barbato added that the Parks Department has an agreement with the alcohol vendor to provide 20 percent of their sales.

2:50 p.m. **The Commission recessed.**

3:00 p.m. **The Commission reconvened with Commissioners Gurtler, Neumann, and Kuczenski absent.**

11. Presentation on programming at Rancho San Rafael's Nevada Farms and Families Area, including the Farm Day, Junior Ranger Adventure Day Program and updates on the community garden.

Park Rangers Celia Walker, Lauren Hay, and Todd Harmon conducted a slideshow presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Background; Farm Day; Community Garden; Discovery Room; Upcoming Events; and Programming and events are not possible without... Ranger Walker noted Farm Day used to be called Ag Day.

Ranger Hay explained that Kids Kottage is an emergency shelter for children who have been removed from their home due to abuse or neglect. She described how the Parks Department partners with the Wilbur D. May Arboretum to start plants for the community garden. Applications are available for members of the public who wish to use available garden boxes and help keep weeds down. She announced the next Master Gardener talk will be on June 19, and the topics will be square foot gardening, straw bale gardening, and microgreens.

Ranger Harmon reviewed some of the attractions found in the Discovery Room and the upcoming events at the facility. The Parks Department is partnering with Comstock Gold

Prospectors for geology week. He mentioned that Discovery Room volunteers donated more than \$6,000 in 2024 for upcoming programming.

Responding to the Chair's question, the rangers were unable to put a dollar amount on the produce donation they made to the Reno Sparks Gospel Mission, but Ranger Walker indicated the Master Gardeners have begun tailoring their gardens to meet the needs expressed by the Gospel Mission, especially herbs and tomatoes.

12. Parks Reports

Parks Operations Superintendent Stephanie D'Arcy reviewed several sections of the Parks District Report included in the agenda packet, such as the Career Day event, a Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful cleanup event, a Master Gardener talk, a landscape project at Lazy 5 Regional Park, and trail repair work at Hidden Valley Park. She stated the Riverbend Trailhead and Access project was completed on May 27, with the trailhead expected to open on June 7. She provided updates on the Rancho All Inclusive Playground project, the bike park project in Sun Valley Regional Park, and renovation of the Bowers Mansion water tank. She added that the splash park at North Valleys Regional Park is open on weekends and will be open seven days a week once school ends.

With respect to Commissioner Hill's questions, District Park Manager Andy Brown described the location of the new Galena connector trail. A multi-use trail is being constructed in the area, he added.

Ms. D'Arcy informed Commissioner Dake that Community Services Director Eric Crump provide an update on the Lower Whites Creek Trail in his Director's Report.

13. Director's Report

Community Services Director Eric Crump reviewed the following actions taken by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC):

- It accepted nearly \$57,000 in cash donations for various park programs, as well as nearly \$50,000 in in-kind donations from the May Arboretum Society and other donors.
- It acknowledged receipt of the Truckee Meadows Regional Trails Plan on May 13.
- On May 27 it approved an Employee Residence Agreement with Andy Brown, who had been living in the Davis Creek residence when it burned down.
- It approved reappointments of Commissioners Jones and Joell.

Mr. Crump announced the BCC will consider a resolution on June 10 to initiate the process to develop a Park Service District Plan in collaboration with the City of Reno. He thanked Commissioner Mariluz Garcia for her donation of \$20,000 of her discretionary funds towards this project. Regarding Whites Creek Park, he indicated the County owns two parcels divided by a developer parcel, and that developer is working on their property. The trail will likely be closed for six to eight months. The County is trying to be good partners in this process, and the trail will reopen when it is safe to do so.

Responding to Commissioner questions, Mr. Crump said staff is working with the Whites Creek property developer to install more permanent trail closure signage and reroute information. He encouraged trail users to explore new trails.

14. Commissioner Request for Future Agenda Items

In response to Commissioner Dake's request for clarification about an off-leash dog park at Whites Creek Park, Community Services Director Eric Crump noted that item is not agendaized. He will put the topic on a future Commission agenda.

Deputy District Attorney Lindsay Liddell agreed that the item would need to be placed on a future agenda, and she could discuss with the Chair how the item might be framed.

Commissioner Dake felt the item could also contain an update on how all off-leash dog parks are doing.

Commissioner Mariluz Garcia announced a cleanup event on May 31 at the Sun Valley School's where residents can drop off up to 15 tires, as well as electronics.

Commissioner Hill requested a future discussion on illegal dumping if that is something within the purview of this commission.

15. Public Comment

There was no response to the call for public comment.

16. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Derek Sonderfan, Independent Contractor

Neal Scott Jones, L.S.

Chair Neal Jones