



NVLC News

The mission of The Nevada Land Conservancy is to preserve and protect the special places and open spaces of Nevada for future generations

Volume X Issue 2

Summer 2009

Ophir Creek Project Adds 69-Acres to Protected Lands in Washoe Valley



Nevada Land Conservancy is pleased to announce the most recent Washoe Valley parcel acquired for the public through the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA). The 69-acre Ophir Creek parcel is part of an ongoing effort to preserve the historic Winter's Ranch in Washoe Valley.

More than ten years in the making, the 2000-acre Winter's Ranch project has been a cooperative effort to keep various parcels of this historic property open to the public and wildlife through BLM and Forest Service ownership. Working with the landowners and public agencies to nominate and then secure funding for acquisition has been a lengthy process, but the end is in sight! With the 69 forested acres at the base of Ophir Creek now slated for acquisition this summer, the remaining 320-acre Winter's Ranch parcel is all that's left of the original project.

The Ophir Creek parcels provide the missing link needed to create the trail connection between Davis Creek and Bowers Mansion Regional Parks and provide trailhead facilities to an ever-growing number of hikers and equestrians. These parcels provide an unobstructed view across the valley and into the Virginia Range, and are home to two specially designated species identified by the Nevada Department of Wildlife, Washoe County and the Nevada Natural Heritage Program -- the Carson Silverspot butterfly and the Mountain Yellow-Legged frog. The property also provides critical mule deer winter habitat and add an additional habitat buffer zone to the 3,000 acre Scripps Wildlife Management Area marshland and Washoe Lake system.

NVLC Nominates Properties in Fallon, North Valleys, and South Reno for SQ1 Funds

-- Projects Include Land Acquisition for Washoe County Parks and Two Conservation Easements --

Nevada Land Conservancy submitted three State Question One (SQ1) nominations for funding this spring to protect valuable wetlands, wildlife habitat, farmland and viewsheds. The three nominations include acquisition of 215 acres of Silver Lake in Stead for Washoe County, a conservation easement on a 530-acre ranch owned by the Six-Man Hunt Club in Fallon, and a conservation easement protecting 270-acres along Old Toll Road (Geiger Grade).

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Message from the President

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I remember a particularly interesting conversation around the time a group of us were starting the Nevada Land Conservancy, the first independent land trust in Nevada. I was chatting with someone who took no care to mask his disdain for what we were setting out to accomplish. He was certain we were going to be “in the way” of progress. We talked further about what makes this area unique. I listened for the essence of his attachment to this area. It didn’t take long to find. As a child, some sixty-odd years ago, he spent every possible minute on, along, and in the Truckee River. He spoke of “his” swimming hole and where he learned to fish. He reflected on the stunning seasons along the river, when the cottonwoods turn from green to brilliant yellow in the fall. I said “That’s exactly what we’re going to do. We are going to protect those kinds of places, and those kinds of experiences, for future generations.”

It’s been eleven years since I had that conversation, and much has changed. Nevada Land Conservancy has helped protect over 35,000 acres of Truckee River corridor, private parcels within wilderness study areas, trailheads, scenic valleys, and the tops of mountain ranges. We’ve helped Nevada ranching families stay on their land, and we have built coalitions of people to find conservation solutions together. We’ve done it for wildlife, recreation, and water. We’ve done it today for Nevada’s future generations.

I didn’t have any “future generations” of my own until 2002; now the objective is more personal. I want my children, and yours, to know: how cold water feels right where it springs from the earth and how massive lenticular clouds form in a clear blue sky. I want them to know infinite distance – the vast gold, brown, purple, and blue horizon of the Great Basin – and the magical Black Rock under a full moon. I want them to know the fresh smell of sagebrush after rainfall and the changes in light and sound after snowfall. I want them to see the tops of distant peaks where the mule deer, bighorn sheep, and the pika play. I want them to climb to the top of the hills where young children stood a thousand years ago. I want them to know where birds stop to rest as they journey through in spring and fall. I want them to have “their” swimming holes and know where trout hide in the Truckee River.

I want our children’s hearts to be full of “belonging” to this place, their home – Nevada.



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NVLC 2009 Restoration Projects Focus on Fire Safety, Water Quality, and Habitat Improvement

Spring brings the promise of renewal, but in Nevada, it also means thinking about wildfire and weeds, from prevention, to control, and finally, recovery. While Nevada Land Conservancy isn't out on the front lines putting out fires, we do work behind the scenes to prevent fire by helping to eliminate the weeds that provide abundant fuel for wildfires. And we work with a variety of partners to mitigate the effects of



Native Great Basin Wild Rye seen returning on hillsides this spring after the Hawken Fire.

wildfire through aerial seeding efforts, replanting shrubs and trees, and coordinating weed treatments.

Thanks to your support, Nevada Land Conservancy has been able to help local landscapes recover from the Peavine Fire of 2006 and the Hawken Fire of 2007. We have also

coordinated weed removal at beautiful Swan Lake Nature Study Area, battling perennial pepperweed (tall white top) and bull thistle with goats, herbicides, and good old-fashioned muscle power. Noxious, non-native weeds and grasses threaten our waterways and water quality too, which is why NVLC is working with Washoe County with help from the Truckee



A crew from Great Basin Institute prepares spray packs for a day of weed treatments.

River Fund to fight weeds along the lower Truckee River and its tributaries this summer. Because to us, conservation means more than just setting aside land for future generations; it means protecting the special places we love by ensuring their health!

'09 Restoration Projects

Hawken Fire

Weed mapping, treatment, & reseeding

Truckee River

Treatment of tall white top & thistle removal

Swan Lake

Tall white top treatment

Nominations -- continued from page 1

NVLC Projects Director, Becky Stock, noted the momentum created by previous projects, stating, "All three projects build on previous successes, adding 1,017 adjacent acres to 960 acres already protected." These projects are slated for review by the Nevada Division of State Lands State Question One Technical Advisory Committee in September with final decisions expected in late 2009. Details on the nominations and how to submit letters of support will be available at www.nvlc.org in August.

NVLC Celebrates Swan Lake Nature Study Area 10th Anniversary

It's hard to believe that a decade has passed since Swan Lake officially was designated a Nature Study Area! The past ten years have seen quite a few changes -- a floating boardwalk, interpretive signs, viewing blinds, an outdoor classroom, thousands of hours of volunteer labor removing debris and invasive thistle, and even the employment of a herd of hungry goats to assist with weed removal.

In celebration of this milestone, NVLC joined our partners in celebrating the 10th Anniversary on Saturday, May 2 by hosting a clean-up and thistle dig, tour of both Swan Lake and Silver Lake



(thanks to funding from REI), and by honoring Bob Goodman, Bill Gardner, and Dan Jacquet, three of the visionaries who got the ball rolling more than ten years ago. Members of the Swan Lake Advisory Board, include Washoe County, BLM, Nevada Office of the Military, the Lahontan Chapter of the National Audubon Society, Nevada Division of Wildlife, Washoe County School District, City of Reno, Lemmon Valley Homeowners Association and the Stead Neighborhood Council.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Wednesday, August 19, 5:30 - 7:30 pm: 2nd Annual Limerick Contest. Join NVLC at Great Basin Brewing Company in Sparks for an evening of fine beer and limericks! A distinguished panel of judges will critique the beer and/or environment themed limericks. NVLC will request a \$5 entry fee per limerick, which enters participants in a rewarding raffle drawing. Please call 851-5180 for more information on this event.

Saturday, September 26, 8:30 am: 10th Annual Mt. Rose Hike with Silver Peak. Experience “pints on the peak”-- brews and views! Follow the Mt. Rose hiking trail from the parking facilities and new Mt. Rose trailhead at the summit of State Route 431. It’s roughly a 5 mile hike to the Peak with a 2,000 foot elevation gain. Please remember to drink lots of water when hiking. Estimate three hours up and two hours down for this challenging but doable day on the mountain. Details: Nevada Land Conservancy 851-5180 or Silver Peak Restaurant & Brewery 324-1864.

Mark your calendars!

Saturday, August 22: Washoe Valley Hike. Join NVLC for a morning hike along Ophir Creek into the foothills. Learn more about NVLC projects as we survey the view of the the roughly 2,000 acres protected in Washoe Valley. Details TBA at nvlc.org, members receive postcard invitation.

Saturday, September 19: Tour of the Hawken Burn Restoration Project. Check the progress of seedlings and new growth after the 2007 Hawken Fire during this morning hike along Alum Creek and into the hills. Great views of Reno! Details TBA at nvlc.org, members receive postcard invitation.

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