

MINUTES
Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission
September 24, 2025

The Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission met in a scheduled session on Wednesday, September 24, 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.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was led by Commissioner Dake.

Chair Jones introduced new Commissioner Jennifer Uvira.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Kevin Joell (via Zoom), Timothy Dake, Neal Jones, Chris Baker, Tracy Kuczenski, Sean Hill, Jennifer Uvira, Lisa Rode (Zoom), Miles Gurtler

Absent: Mariluz Garcia (excused)

Staff Present: Brandon Roman, Stephanie D'Arcy, Aaron Smith, Chaz Lehman, Eric Crump, Joanne Lowden, and Nick Steuer

3. Reading of Zoom Instructions

Recording Secretary Brandon Roman read the Zoom instructions.

4. Public Comment

There was no response to the call for public comment.

5. Approval of the Draft Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of July 23, 2025, and June 26, 2025, Joint Parks Commission meeting.

Commissioner Kuczenski noted her name was misspelled on page 2 of the June 26, 2025, Joint Parks Commission meeting. Commissioner Baker pointed out that he was listed as absent on page two of that meeting, but he was present for it.

Motion by Commissioner Dake that the July 23, 2025, meeting minutes be approved as written, and that the June 26, 2025, joint meeting minutes be approved as amended, seconded by Commissioner Baker.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

The motion carried with a vote of nine for, zero against, with Commissioners Garcia absent.

6. Update on PROS Consulting's work to develop a Service Plan for the possible creation of a Park District.

Community Services Director Eric Crump indicated this item will be a standard item on all agendas moving forward. He noted the City of Reno approved a professional services agreement with PROS Consulting on May 21, 2025, for development of a surface plan for a potential park district, and the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approved an interlocal funding agreement to contribute \$100,000 towards that agreement. He added that representatives from PROS are in attendance at this meeting. He encouraged Commissioners to sign up to attend one of two stakeholder meetings on Friday with PROS, as up to four Commissioners are able to attend each meeting without the risk of quorum issues.

Commissioner Kuczenski pointed out that the June 26, 2025, Joint Parks Commission meeting minutes show that the County has had no contribution, and if the funding agreement was signed prior to that meeting, she wondered whether the minutes should reflect that. Mr. Crump confirmed the BCC approved the funding agreement on June 21, prior to the Joint Parks Commission meeting. Chair Jones directed Recording Secretary Brandon Roman to correct the meeting minutes to reflect that.

Commissioner Gurtler stated he would coordinate with Mr. Crump as he would be unavailable to attend stakeholder meetings on Friday. In response to Commissioner Hill's query, Mr. Crump said that correspondence about those meetings was sent to the Commissioners' County-issued email addresses. Mr. Roman offered to disseminate any future correspondence he receives to the Commissioners.

7. Presentation, discussion and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve an agreement between Washoe County and the ArrowCreek Homeowner's Association to allow construction and designation of non-motorized access points for its residents on adjacent County Open Space and authorize the Director of the Community Services Department (Eric Crump) to execute the agreement and any temporary construction easements associated with improvements under the agreement. The ArrowCreek HOA will be responsible for all maintenance and constructions expenses associated with this agreement.

Joanne Lowden, Natural Resource Planning Coordinator, conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Location; Location of Proposed Open Space Access Points; ArrowCreek HOA Responsibilities; Washoe County Responsibilities; Plan Consistency; and Benefits. She noted the County will ask ArrowCreek to discourage motorized vehicle access and parking through signage and barriers such as boulders or fencing.

In response to Commissioner Gurtler's queries, Ms. Lowden stated the ArrowCreek HOA does not allow street parking, and cyclists or pedestrians wishing to use the trails would gain access through the gates. Ms. Julie Conway, chair of a volunteer landscape committee within

Arrowcreek, remarked that trail users only need to check in at the front gates when entering the trail system, not when exiting it.

Chair Jones wondered how e-bikes would be addressed. Ms. Lowden said the policy regarding e-bikes will follow County rules and regulations. Mr. Crump clarified that the County Code section regarding parks was updated a few years ago to mirror state law, and now Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes are allowed on multi-use paths while Class 3 e-bikes are not.

Commissioner Baker asked whether trailheads were required at the time of dedication. Ms. Lowden believed the intent at that time was to have trails connecting into ArrowCreek open space, but it was never incorporated into the development. Though trail users currently access the County's open space through these locations, formalizing that access will allow additional infrastructure to be put in place and usage to be regulated. She expected the first round of infrastructure to include signage, bike racks, and dog waste stations.

Replying to additional Commissioner queries, Ms. Lowden said she believed approval of this item will result in additional monitoring, though the County already monitors these areas as there are a number of social trails. She saw no downside to approval. She remarked that the signs have not yet been designed, and the access points currently have no signage. She anticipated the signage to include maps of the trail system and the HOA's rules and regulations.

Commissioner Kuczenski asked about future plans for the trails. Ms. Lowden pointed out there are a number of system trails already in place, and staff will consider which social trails might be converted to system trails through minor improvements, as well as contemplating future trail connections. She reiterated that street parking is not allowed in ArrowCreek, but other trailheads, such as the Thomas Creek Trailhead and the White's Creek Trailhead, have plenty of parking.

Commissioner Joell indicated he will abstain from voting on this item.

Discussion ensued about the motion recommended in the staff report, with Commissioner Gurtler pointing out that it currently mentions non-motorized access points only for ArrowCreek residents.

Motion by Commissioner Hill to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners approve an agreement between Washoe County and the ArrowCreek Homeowner's Association to allow construction and designation of non-motorized access points for its residents and for non-residents on adjacent County Open Space, and that the Director of the Community Services Department, Eric Crump, be directed to execute the agreement and any temporary construction easements associated with improvements under the agreement, seconded by Commissioner Gurtler.

On the call for public comment, Ms. Conway thanked the Commission for its insightful questions. She emphasized that access to the trail system was supposed to be completed in the mid-1990s, and this will further the County's goal of connecting the various trail systems. County residents are interested in further developing this area by connecting it to areas outside the ArrowCreek community.

The motion carried with a vote of eight for, zero against, with Commissioner Garcia absent and Commissioner Joell abstaining.

- 8. Presentation and discussion on the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant award for the Swan Lake Nature Study Area Acquisition and Development project. The LWCF grant funding will be used to purchase a 13.325-acre property located at 0 Lear Blvd., Reno, Nevada [APN 568-100-12]. The project total is \$2,212,000.00. The grant award is \$1,106,000.00 and the County match is \$1,106,000.00. The purchase price of the property is \$500,000 and the appraised value of the land is \$3,830,000.00. The difference between the appraised value (\$3,830,000.00) and the purchase price (\$500,000.00) of the property will be donated to Washoe County (\$3,330,000.00). A portion (\$1,100,000.00) of the total in-kind value of the property donation (\$3,330,000.00) will be used to meet match requirements (Grant ID Number KLWCF 32-00413).**

Joanne Lowden, Natural Resource Planning Coordinator, conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Project Location; Swan Lake Nature Study Area; Swan Lake Nature Study Area – Partners; Swan Lake Nature Study Area – Master Plan; Project Scope of Work (3 slides); and Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant.

Ms. Lowden stated the Nevada National Guard is one of the largest landowners in the subject area, and they use their property for training purposes. She said staff follows a five-year maintenance schedule for cleaning out the ditches around Swan Lake. Acquiring the property, she continued, will allow staff to complete the restoration along Horse Creek, divert water to other parts of the property, treat noxious weeds, and create additional wetland and riparian habitats. She indicated the Nevada Land Trust helped the County negotiate a bargain sale, allowing it to purchase the property for less than the appraised value. She explained why the donated value of the land is listed as \$1.1 million even though the actual value is \$3.33 million.

Responding to Commissioner questions, Ms. Lowden said she believed \$600,000 will be sufficient for design and construction of the boardwalk, interpretive sign replacement, and design and permitting for the Horse Creek restoration. She noted most of the land directly adjacent to the County's property is public land, and the Nevada National Guard wants to keep their property as open space with fitness amenities. She confirmed that the \$500,000 purchase price was known at the time of the grant application and in fact was required to be part of the application.

Community Services Director Eric Crump indicated the Reno-Stead Water Reclamation Facility discharges some effluent water into Swan Lake through Horse Creek. Washoe County's sewer treatment facility utilizes evaporative ponds, generating very little discharge. Commissioner Hill emphasized the benefits of recycled water.

Commissioner Uvira inquired about noxious weeds mitigation. Ms. Lowden responded that goat grazing was used extensively in the past to help prevent white top from seeding, and there are plans for herbicide treatments and reseeding. It would be helpful to complete the property purchase first, though, so adjacent properties can be treated as well.

Commissioner Gurtler wondered whether this purchase might be part of the solution to the legal concerns over releasing effluent into Swan Lake. Ms. Lowden thought this would address effluent coming down Horse Creek, though it would not have an impact on residential areas around the lake. It will help preserve the infrastructure around the nature study area. Mr. Crump clarified that

Swan Lake is a closed basin, and no water goes from there to the Truckee River. He discussed the positive impacts of wetlands on water quality, noting that, during dry years, the City of Reno discharged a small amount of effluent to Swan Lake for wildlife preservation.

On the call for public comment, Ms. Marisa Ernst remarked that the Lahontan Audubon Society, of which she is a member, is changing its name to the Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance. She spoke about the group's advocacy for Swan Lake as a nature area, adding that the group is looking forward to being involved with the planning process should the land purchase be approved.

9. Presentation and discussion on Davis Creek Fire restoration and reopening efforts at Davis Creek Regional Park.

Park Ranger Nick Steuer conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles or descriptions: Davis Fire; Fire Facts; photos (2 slides); Fire Losses; photos; Up from the ashes, hope will rise; 'Leg of Lamb, Side of Beef...; Native Shrub Planting; Venturing Scout Clark Burns; Native Seeding; Hazard Tree Mitigation; Aerial Seeding with NDF; Eagle Scout Morgan de la Torre; Native Tree Planting; Local Artist Mike Burke; Local Artist Tim Torell; Future Projects; Outreach: Carson High School Biology Research; Wild Nevada Episode; Other Media Outreach; Fire Ecology and Management Class Field Trips; Junior Ranger Activity Day; Reno Public Market Artown Event; and What Can You Do?

Ranger Steuer spoke about the resilience of nature and the outpouring of community support to get the park reopened. He noted six to ten species of seedlings were planted by volunteers, who were so plentiful that a waitlist was started less than 24 hours after the call was announced. Those plants are experiencing a 50 to 60 percent success rate. The bulk of hazard tree mitigation, he continued, has been borne by the Nevada Division of Forestry. He conveyed that the reconstruction of the electrical infrastructure and the ranger residence projects are in the design phase. He said the deeper fire rings that will be installed were donated by Truckee Meadows Community College.

Ranger Steuer noted the day-use portion of the park was reopened several weeks ago, allowing access to the pond, the picnic area, and some trails. The campground area and the equestrian lot will not reopen until the infrastructure is in place for campers. He pointed out that well-managed fire is actually good for the health of the forest.

Chair Jones expressed gratitude for the public's support of the Davis Creek Campground. Commissioner Kuczenski provided her perspective on the profound difference between the burned and surrounding areas.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

10. Parks Reports

Park Operations Superintendent Stephanie D'Arcy reviewed the materials included in the agenda packet for this item, highlighting a collaboration with the Fleischmann Planetarium to conduct dome presentations for field trips in the spring. She spoke about a September 13 cleanup effort with Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful, three Skate Jam! events, and a Peavine District Park Rangers' presentation at Glenn Duncan Elementary School.

Ms. D'Arcy remarked that seven proposals were received for the Lazy 5 Regional Park Master Plan update project, and a consultant contract is expected to be awarded in October. The last master plan was done in 1998, with one amendment in 2001. She discussed a breakfast held for Arboretum volunteers, the retirement of Park Maintenance Supervisor Jennifer Conlan-Thomson, who was succeeded by Cal Arseneau, and the launch of an online portal for donations. Contributions can be made to specific parks and projects, she noted.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

11. Director's Report

Community Services Director Eric Crump stated approximately \$6,500 in quarterly donations were received, coming primarily from the Lazy 5 Summer Concert Series. He welcomed Commissioner Uvira to the Commission. He mentioned the State of the County address, which was held on September 2, and he encouraged everyone to watch the recording on the County's website. He noted the acceptance the Land and Water Conservation grant, which was discussed earlier in the meeting.

In response to the Chair's request, Division Director of Operations Aaron Smith said staff reopened negotiations with NV Energy with respect to the Lockwood open space easement application, but NV Energy is not preparing to move forward with the application at this time.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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Chair Jones announced that the November meeting of the Open Space and Regional Planning Commission has been moved to November 19 so as not to conflict with Thanksgiving. Recording Secretary Brandon Roman said the meeting will take place at 1:30 p.m., and he will send out a reminder to the Commissioners towards the end of October.

12. Commissioner Request for future agenda items.

There were none.

13. Public Comment

There was no response to the call for public comment.

14. Adjournment

Commissioner Dake moved to adjourn the Open Space and Regional Planning Commission meeting, seconded by Commissioner Gurtler. The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Derek Sonderfan

Neal Scott Jones, L.S.

Chair Neal Jones