

Draft MINUTES
Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission
November 1, 2022

The Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission met in a scheduled session on Tuesday, November 1, 2022, 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 Doolittle called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Doug Doolittle, Stephanie Chen, Timothy Dake, Kevin Joell, Maxwell DiNatale, Nicholas Martin Kearney, Lisa Rode, Alexis Hill

Staff Present: Denise Evans, Colleen Wallace Barnum, Jennifer Roebuck, Celia Walker, Lindsay Liddell, Christina Thayer, Eric Crump, Luke Sorenson

Absent: Omer L Rains, Maxwell DiNatale

Alexis Hill joined the meeting at 3:32p

Nicholas Martin Kearney left the meeting at 4:00pm

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was recited.

3. Public Comment

Public comment from Emma McKay. Mrs. McKay requested the off-leash hours begin at 5:00am for those users that need to get to work before 8am. Mrs. McKay also recommended fencing in the off-leash areas and adding White Creeks Park to the program.

Public comment from Jim McKay. Mr. McKay stated park users are respectful and responsible in picking up dog droppings from their dogs and other people's dogs. Mr. McKay said there is more trash than issues with dog droppings. Mr. McKay also recommended fencing in the areas as the casualties of pets from coyotes is

very high. Mr. McKay requested additional surcharge on dog licenses to be donated to create more dog parks.

Public comment from Lawrence McNutt. Mr. McNutt introduced himself as the owner of the River Inn. Mr. McNutt stated will be going through formal processes with county parks and left a flyer for commissioners.

4. Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of November 1, 2022

Commissioner Joell requested item 9 be moved earlier in the agenda. Commissioner Joell motioned to approve the agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of November 1, 2022, with the change that item 9 be moved to item 5. Second by Commissioner Chen. Motion carried unanimously.

No public comment.

5. Final quarterly update of the off-leash dog pilot program, which allows off-leash dogs during certain hours in areas of North Valleys, Lazy 5, and South Valleys parks by Celia Walker, Park Ranger II. Updates will include status of the program and observations of the public's participation in the program since November 2021 and possible approval moving forward with an off-leash dog program, utilizing various flat fields throughout Washoe County Parks as off-leash areas during non-league use times.

Park Ranger, Celia Walker gave the final quarterly update of the Off Leash Dog Pilot Program. Parks recommends approving the program.

Chair Doolittle thanked Celia and other park rangers for their work on the pilot program.

In response to Commissioner Joell's question about signage for the pilot program, Celia stated signs will still state that the program can be ended but that it is no longer a pilot program. Park staff can end the program if rules are not being followed.

In response to Commissioner Joell's question about an additional dog park, Celia stated there is a dog park in the master plan for South Valleys Park. Chair Doolittle stated the demand is there, funds are not currently available. Animal Services

would have the data and potential to charge fees to fund future dog parks. Celia stated the goal of the program is to eventually add more parks.

In response to Commissioner Chen's question about the parks included on the action item, Celia stated Commissioners are only approving the item for the 3 parks included in the pilot program, White's Creek Park will not be added at this time.

Deputy District Attorney, Lindsay Liddell stated Commission could give parks staff discretion to choose more parks to add to the off-leash program.

Commissioner Doolittle stated staff is recommending the Commission approves original 3 parks and staff has authority to end the program.

Public Comment emailed to Commissioners in advance and posted on WashoeCountyParks.com from the following:

Ben Horgan
Cynthia Reed
Elena Shulman
Jean Held
John Grecu
John Sagebiel
K. Oppenlander
Robin Dohne
Vicki LaRovere
Erica Krysztof
Katriel Van Cleve
Pam Ganger

Public Comment from Cynthia Reed. Ms. Reed stated she is a member of the HOA at Galena Estates and thanked Parks for the pilot program. Ms. Reed supported the idea of opening more areas, including Whites Creek Park, up for off leash hours stating there is nobody in the park during winter hours or early morning and she is being stopped by park rangers for having dogs off leash. There would be a crew of volunteers to clean up after use. Ms. Reed doesn't believe there will be traffic issues.

Public comment from Rod Turner. Mr. Turner stated he was opposed to the idea of using White's Creek as an off-leash area as there are kids in the park and issues with dog waste not being picked up.

Public comment from Jason Klein. Mr. Klein stated there is a dog park in an apartment complex in North Valleys and wanted to mention the scarcity of areas for dogs in the North Valleys.

Public comment from Dave Davis. Mr. Davis thanked staff for the program and hopes it continues. Mr. Davis would be interested to see the wear and tear on the grass at the park. Mr. Davis supported adding White's Creek to the program, residents will have crews cleaning up dog piles. Mr. Davis has not observed any speeding issues.

Public comment from Lynette Davis. Mrs. Davis stated she has been using South Valleys and supports continuing the program and opening Whites Creek as a trial off leash area.

Public comment from Kristy Horgan. Mrs. Horgan stated her husband e-mailed as well and they are in opposition of any off-leash hours at White's Creek Park due to traffic increase and to keep the park clean for children. Mrs. Horgan supports the off-leash hours at South Valleys as well as a need for a dog park in South Valleys as part of the master plan.

Public comment from Richard Foncauh. Mr. Foncauh thanked Parks for the off-leash hours at North Valleys Regional Park but would like longer hours as the soccer field is underutilized.

Public comment from Steve Baker. Mr. Baker stated he was in favor of the pilot program, and he has met and gotten together with other community members due to the program. Mr. Baker hopes the program will continue and has been helping clean the park and keeping logs of how often he picks up dog waste, which is typically zero or one time per month.

Public comment from Julie Diaz. Ms. Diaz was thankful for the pilot program and is willing to help to keep the program going.

Public comment from Rhonda DiGarmo. Ms. DiGarmo stated she is a volunteer to help clean up after dogs and is there almost daily. Ms. DiGarmo stated she picks up more mess from soccer leagues than dogs, the community is respectful and would

like the program to continue. Community members would also like to know what they can do to get the dog park at South Valleys.

Public comment from Jaime Aranda. Mr. Aranda stated he is opposed to the use of White's Creek Park as an off-leash area due to the small size and increase in traffic it would cause. Mr. Aranda is a member of the Whites Creek HOA and stated they should have a say in the matter as they pay for maintenance.

Public comment from Aaron Ghysels. Mr. Ghysels stated he is a resident of Galena Country Estates and supports the use of White's Creek as an off-leash area. Mr. Guisel stated there are limited places for him to take his large dog and doesn't believe there will be an increase in traffic during the morning hours when kids are in school.

Public comment from Erica Anderson via Zoom. Ms. Anderson stated she lived in North Valleys and wanted to express her support for the off-leash program in North Valleys and is appreciative for it.

Public comment from William Gardner via Zoom. Mr. Gardner stated they are lifetime Nevada residents and are in support of the pilot program at South Valleys. Mr. Gardner stated the time restrictions are perfect to coincide with soccer use. Mr. Gardner and his wife also volunteer and help clean up the park. They are appreciative of and encourage approving the program long term.

Public comment from Larry Crapo via Zoom. Mr. Crapo stated he is the president of Galena Country Estates HOA and lives in the cul-de-sac at the edge of White's Creek. All board members are dog owners and voted 4 to 1 against using White's Creek as an off-leash area. Mr. Crapo stated the area is too small and that there would be an increase in traffic. Mr. Crapo stated the HOA pays a considerable amount of money and believes fees would increase if White's Creek was used as an off-leash area.

Public comment from Michelle Sefelli via Zoom. Ms. Sefelli stated she is a Damonte Ranch resident, and currently uses South Valleys during the off-leash hour. Ms. Sefelli stated park rangers said there were users before 8a, so they have spread the word that hours start at 8am. She is thankful for the program and sense of community it has created and is in support of its continuation.

Public comment from Pamela Ganger via Zoom. Ms. Ganger stated she is the Galena HOA Treasurer and had attempted to e-mail Commissioners, but it didn't

go through. Denise Evans let Ms. Ganger know that she can re-send them, and they will be attached to the public record. Ms. Ganger stated the HOA contributes about \$8,000 annually to the maintenance at White's Creek Park and goes to the park with her dogs and children and has been cleaning up dog waste piles from other users. Ms. Ganger is opposed to the off-leash hours at Whites Creek Park due to the small size, potential traffic increase and issues with parking.

Public comment via Zoom from Tina Petti. Mrs. Petti stated her family lives in South Reno and utilize the South Valleys off-leash hours almost daily. Mrs. Petti is grateful for and in support of continuing the program and potentially adding more hours and parks.

Chair Doolittle stated Cyan Park and Link Piazzo are dog parks, the parks included in the pilot program are off leash areas, not dog parks. Chair Doolittle stated Link Piazzo donated the money for the Hidden Valley Dog Park, and anyone interested in donating for a dog park in south Reno can reach out to Parks' staff to discuss.

Commissioner Joell stated he believes parks should be utilized as much as possible, however staff should take the input from HOA and citizens in White's Creek on opening the park for off leash hours. Commissioner Joell would like to continue the program and keep lines of communication open with community and HOA to discuss a potential time to open White's Creek to off-leash for certain hours.

In response to Commissioner Dake's questions about leashed dogs, Celia stated that dogs are welcome leashed in Washoe County parks, but nobody is allowed on the field during league reservations times.

Commissioner Chen thanked the public for the comments and recommended conversations continue between Galena Country Estates HOA and the community to potentially utilize White's creek for off leash areas during certain hours.

Chair Doolittle stated the off-leash area at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park was originally a pilot program and has worked well for Washoe County and the community for several years and believes the current pilot program is a success as well. Chair Doolittle doesn't believe neighborhood parks should be utilized as off-leash areas due to the small size.

Motion by Commissioner Doolittle to approve the off-leash program at North Valleys Regional Park, South Valleys Regional Park & Lazy 5 Regional Park. Second by Commissioner Joell. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Approval of minutes for the Open Space & Regional Parks Commission Meeting of September 6, 2022.

Motion by Commissioner Joell to approve the minutes for the Open Space & Regional Parks Commission Meeting of September 6, 2022. Second by Commissioner Chen.

No public comment.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Acknowledgement and recognition of Park Operations staff for their outstanding service and contributions to Washoe County.

No items.

8. Eagle Scout Presentation

No items.

9. Presentation, discussion, and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve an agreement with Biggest Little Trail Stewardship (BLTS) for the construction and maintenance of trails within the Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks system. (For Possible Action)

Commissioner Joell abstained from this item due to a potential conflict of interest. Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent gave a background on Biggest Little Trail Stewardship (BLTS) and introduced Curtis Johnson, president of BLTS.

Curtis Johnson gave a presentation on BLTS.

In response to Commissioner Dake's question about letting the community know about volunteer opportunities, Curtis stated they use mainly social media and e-mail but are exploring new opportunities and are open to suggestion.

In response to Chair Doolittle's question on liability, Curtis stated BLTS will carry insurance while building the trail, but once complete and accepted by the county, it becomes Washoe County's trail and BLTS is not responsibility. Colleen stated it will be reviewed by Christina Thayer and Risk Management which is lined out in the agreement.

No public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Dake to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to approve an agreement with Biggest Little Trail Stewardship (BLTS) for the construction and maintenance of trails within the Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks system. Second by Commissioner Rode. Motion carried unanimously.

10. Discussion of topics and possible approval of a joint meeting with City of Reno Recreation and Parks Commission, City of Sparks Parks and Recreation Commission and Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission to be held on February 21, 2023, 6:00pm-8:00pm at McKinley Arts and Culture Center Auditorium.

Eric Crump, Community Services Department stated staff is looking for any discussion items to get on the agenda.

In response to Commissioner Doolittle's question on having a quorum at the meeting, Assistant Deputy District Attorney, Lindsay Liddell stated if there was not a quorum at the joint meeting, Washoe County would not be able to be involved in any actions at the meeting.

Commissioner Joell stated he sent an email of possible topics to Mr. Crump. Mr. Crump stated Commissioner Joell's suggestions are potentially having all 3 jurisdictions adopt modern trail standards, discussion on the formation of a regional park district encompassing all three jurisdictions or consolidation of services agreement, and an interest in creating a dedicated funding source for the acquisition preservation of open space parcels.

Chair Doolittle stated will have to narrow the agenda as other agencies will have items as well. Chair Doolittle's suggestions are updates to the major park projects or additions by all agencies as well as discussing any cooperative agreements by agencies for maintenance.

Eric Crump also stated that potential land swaps can also be discussed. In response to Chair Doolittle's question about items from the other agencies, Mr. Crump stated we will be meeting and forming a working group to finalize the agenda.

In response to Commissioner Joell's question about the meeting, Eric stated it could be an additional meeting or replace the March meeting.

Commissioner Joell suggested they could also discuss the need for an additional dog park in South Reno and a conversation among the agencies on the need for recreation in new developments.

No public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Chen to approve a joint meeting with City of Reno Recreation and Parks Commission, City of Sparks Parks and Recreation Commission and Washoe County Open Space and Regional Park Commission to be held on February 21, 2023, 6:00pm-8:00pm at McKinley Arts and Culture Center Auditorium. Second by Commissioner Joell. Motion carried unanimously.

11. Final Report for Dragon Lights Reno 2022.

Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent introduced Luke Sorenson, horticulturist and gave background on Dragon Lights Reno. Luke gave the presentation on Dragon Lights Reno 2022.

Chair Doolittle thanked Luke for his presentation and welcomed him to the staff.

In response to Commissioner Joell's question on loss of revenue, Luke stated reservations are closed to the public during the festival. Dragon Lights did not return in 2019, 2020 or 2021 so revenue for reservations was higher in the picnic areas and buildings.

Colleen stated garden reservations went up after Dragon Lights 2018 as the community recognized the gardens. Colleen stated more revenue was gained by Dragon Lights than was lost to reservations. All damages are paid for separately by Dragon Lights and are not coming out of the revenue.

In response to Chair Doolittle's question on moving the dates, Colleen stated that 2023 will still be July and August but wants to discuss moving to fall for future events for less wear on the garden and to open reservations or summer.

In response to Commissioner Joell's question about other locations, Colleen stated it takes place all over the country.

No public comment.

12. Parks Reports

Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent opened for questions on park reports.

In response to Commissioner Joell's question about placeholder grants, Colleen stated pre-applications were put in for South Valleys which would include a dog park.

13. Director's Report

Eric Crump stated the Board of County Commissioners approved a water rights exchange agreement between Washoe County, City of Sparks and First Tee of Northern Nevada, The Board also accepted a grant of \$407,000 from the Nevada Department of Wildlife for the Regional Archery Facility including restrooms, ADA parking and general improvements.

The Board appointed Commissioner Alexis Hill as the liaison for the Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space Commission.

14. Commissioner Request for future agenda items

Chair Doolittle stated there will be an election of officers for open parks commission in the January meeting.

Commissioner Hill thanked Commissioners for their hard work and vetting items before they come to the Board of County Commissioners. Commissioner Hill requested information to learn more about park escrow accounts at a future meeting.

15. Public Comments

No public comment.

16. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:46pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Roebuck, Office Assistant III.