Wood Hills Trail Network Feasibility Study

March 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trails play an important role in the health and wealth of a community. Trails and greenways are often viewed too narrowly when thinking about the benefits of such spaces. According to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, a national nonprofit based in Washington, DC, trails provide the following benefits:

- **Health**—Trails and greenways create healthy recreation and transportation opportunities by providing people of all ages with attractive, safe, accessible, and low- or no-cost places to cycle, walk, hike, jog, or skate.
- **Transportation**—Greenways and trails can often function as viable transportation corridors, connecting different neighborhoods or trail networks.
- **Conservation/Environment**— Linear greenspaces help preserve important natural landscapes, providing links between fragmented habitats while protecting plant and animal species because of their minimal environmental impact.
- **Economy/Revitalization**—Trails improve the local economy's quality of life and provide outdoor recreation (OR) benefits that play a role in companies' decisions about where to expand or relocate. Trails also play a role in connecting disparate parts of the community, encouraging investment in blighted or vacated areas along with improving safety and accessibility.
- **Historic Preservation/Community Identity**—Trails can be used to highlight and provide access to historic and cultural resources. Many community leaders have been surprised at how trails have become sources of community identity and pride.[1]
- **Recreation/Entertainment—**Trails can provide challenging terrain and exciting views in remote, isolated parts of the natural environment.

A trail network in the Wood Hills area will be a critical first step in broadening the City's OR offerings. While some OR offerings currently exist, they are undermarketed or underdeveloped. The City would like to leverage the Woods Hills area to increase its quality of life and recreation opportunities for the City's residents, as well as provide additional opportunities for tourism.

In early 2020, Better City was hired to conduct a trail feasibility study in the Wood Hills area. The coronavirus pandemic and subsequent statewide stay-at-home orders forced the community to pause the study as recovery and resiliency efforts took priority. The study was continued in Fall 2020, with interviews of key stakeholders as well as a virtual roundtable meeting. Better City visited the site in mid-November, gathering additional information and taking site tours of the Wood Hills area to understand project scope and readiness.

This study analyzes the feasibility of developing a trail network in the Wood Hills area, contextualizing the estimated need for OR offerings, the estimated costs of development, as wells as the economic benefits that such a development would provide.

BACKGROUND

Several stakeholders within the community and the region are focused on building OR opportunities in northern Nevada. With

[1] Partially taken from https://www.railstotrails.org/experience-trails/benefits-of-trails/

beautiful geological formations, diverse and interesting landscapes, clean air, unique plant and wildlife, and abundant federal lands, Nevada is well suited for OR.

Despite favorable terrain and proximity to Federal lands, the City of Wells does not currently have any designated trails. The City would like to build out infrastructure for the local population and tourists. If developed correctly, multimodal trails near the community could increase activities in the area and would be a beneficial amenity to attract economic development prospects.

Summary of Recommendations

The City of Wells should pursue implementation of the trail network in Wood Hills. The first step is to take advantage of the broad range of grant activities allowed under various grant programs to pay for studies, planning, design, and construction. This should be done in tandem with the State, BLM, and local clubs so that all grant applications have the greatest chance of success.

Highest priority should be in getting the environmental and phase one studies completed using existing access roads so that events can take place more easily. Currently, a host would require several months of planning work with the BLM to hold an event on the land. Completing a broad study that the agency can point to should reduce the amount of work necessary to host events and should allow for a faster turnaround for events.

The next highest priority should be securing purchase options with landowners and doing design work of the network. A 50-year design should be done, with multiple phases, to best take advantage of surrounding trail networks and assets, as well as to gain the interest and support of the state for funding additional phases and improvements as the network is built out.

As soon as the design and planning has been completed and the land is secured through purchase options, the City can proceed with applying for grant funds to purchase and assemble the private property necessary for implementation of the trail network's phases. This should protect the City from speculatively purchasing property while providing security for grantors that the project will not be hung up by unwilling landowners.

As the trail network is developed, the City should work to identify potential business owners and entrepreneurs who can provide services for users of the trail network. This could include lodging, dining, rental services, repair, and outfitting, to name a few.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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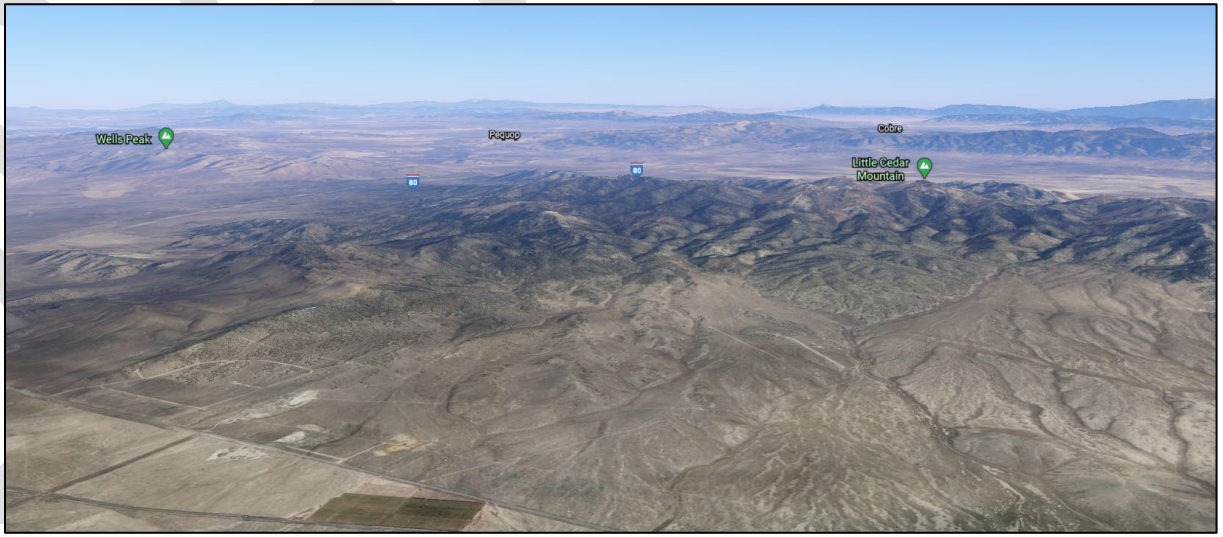
- Kevin Joel (Sierra Trail Works)
- Colin Robertson (Nevada Office of Outdoor Recreation)
- Nikhil Narkhede (Nevada Off-Highway Vehicles Program)
- Denny Stanhope
- Cae Odell (The Go Agency)

SOURCE: Google Earth

Figure 1—Arial view of Wood Hills (north side)



SOURCE: Google Earth

Figure 2—Ariel view of Wood Hills (south side)

STUDY AREA

The Study Area encompasses approximately 135 square miles of land (see Map 1). Known for its abundance of trees for harvesting, the area was once the site of logging operations and was aptly named "Wood Hills." The Study Area begins at the service road starting at the Interstate 80 and US 93 interchange, continuing eastward for 9.4 miles before heading south and encircling the Wood Hills.

The study area is classified as a warm humid continental climate (Dfb).[2] The area receives approximately 10.23 inches of precipitation annually, a majority of which occurs in April and May. In winter, the area receives an average of 27.9 inches of snow.

The average temperature for the area is 66.4 degrees Fahrenheit, with average lows of 10.4 degrees in January and average highs of 85.6 degrees in July.[3]

SOURCE: Google Earth, Better City

Map 1—Wood Hills Study Area

The area's high desert climate is suitable for hiking, mountain biking, equestrian and OHV uses in the summer months, even into the shoulder seasons. It is also suitable for backcountry skiing, snowmobiling, and snowshoeing in winter months depending on the amount of snowfall in a given year. Figures 3 through 8 show the area from a variety of views on both the north and the south sides.

[2] Köppen and Geiger

[3] Source: National Climatic Data Center, NOAA

Figure 3—Eastward view from northern slope

Figure 4—Southward view from northern slope

Figure 5—Eastward view from south side

Figure 6—Northern view from south side

SOURCE: Denny Stanhope

Figure 7—South Basin Overlook

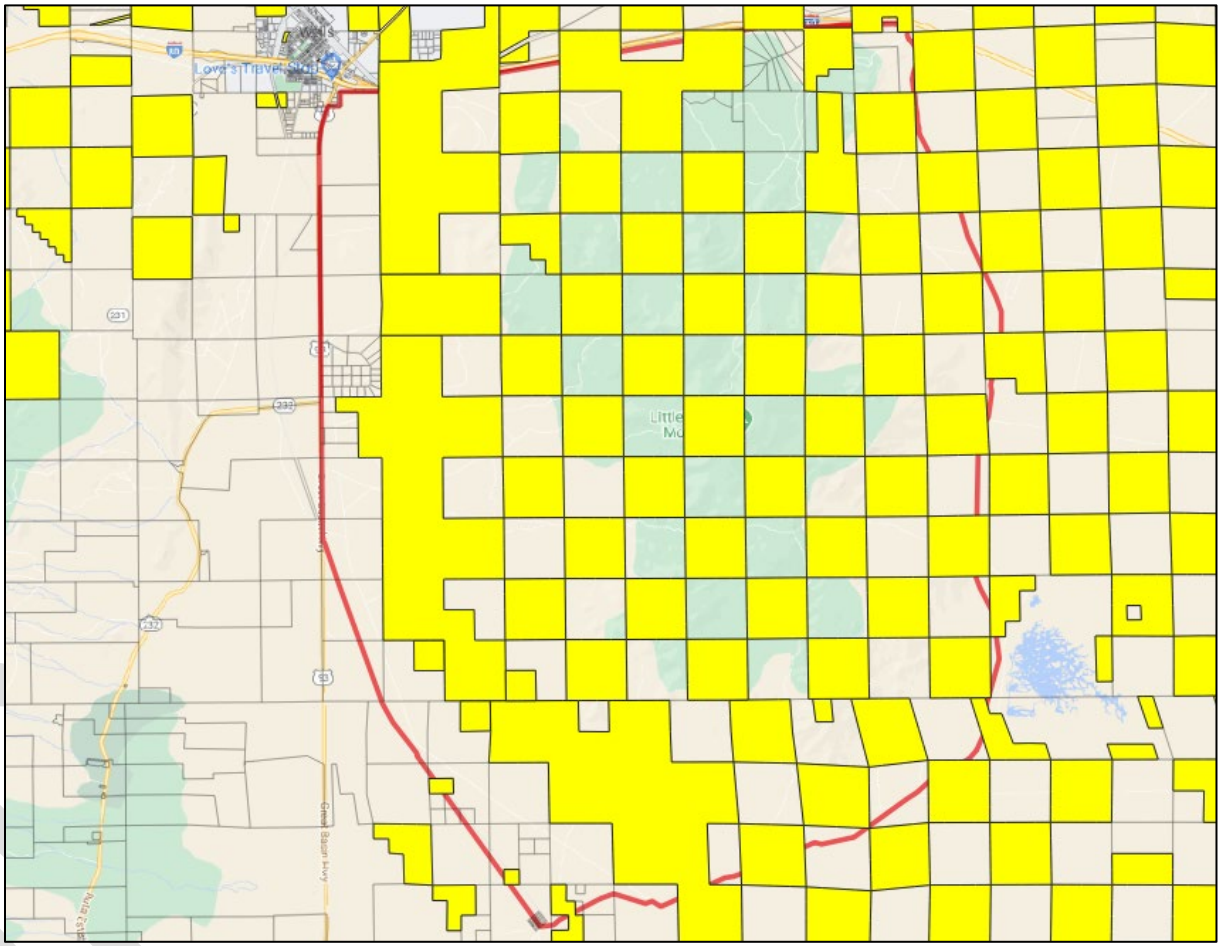
SOURCE: Denny Stanhope

Figure 8—Eyes & Mouth Overlook

OWNERSHIP

The Study Area is made up of many disparate owners, being a byproduct of the "checkerboarding" ownership pattern used to develop the transcontinental railroad (see Map 2, wherein federally-owned parcels are highlighted in yellow).

The checkerboarded ownership pattern results in approximately half of the land owned by the United States, either managed by the Bureau of Land Management or US Forest Service, and the remaining half owned by private parties. The ownership pattern presents a potential problem when considering a trail network because federal land is not available for disposition and requires compliance to federal and state regulations to be used for purposes such as trails.



Map 2—Federal Lands in Study Area

Elevation and Terrain

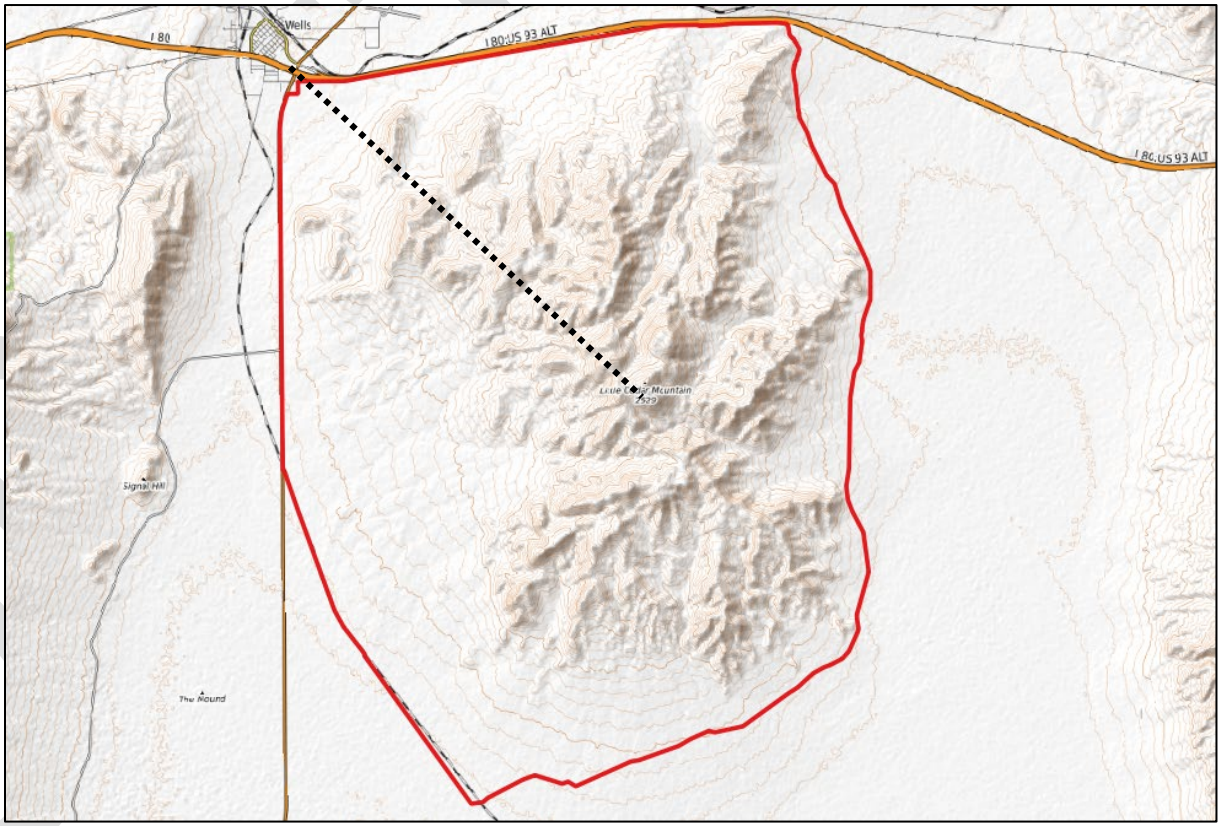
When drawing a straight line from the Intersection of Interstate 80 and US 93 to the Peak of Little Cedar Mountain (featured as a dashed line on Map 3), it is apparent that the land experiences relatively significant elevation change. Starting at a base elevation of 5,647 feet, there is a gain of 4,983 feet over the 9.06 miles to the peak (or 550 ft per mile, on average).

The area has a wide variety of elevation changes that will accommodate a mixture of trails that range from easy to moderate, with some potential for trails that could be considered more difficult. The topographic map (Map 3) shows the relative elevation of the range and shows that the land should be well-suited for trail development.

Due to the steepness of some of the hills and types of soils, it will be necessary to define specific trails for various uses. An ATV will tear into the terrain as it climbs, making it unfavorable for a mountain biker or hiker. Delineating uses will help preserve the use types and the quality of the trails for as long as possible.

In addition to the larger elevation changes, the valleys surrounding the Wood Hills are relatively flat, providing plenty of space for high-speed racing if that is of interest to motorcycle or OHV clubs and the entity maintaining the network.

Figure 9—Elevation Profile Sample, Freeway Interchange to peak of Little Cedar Mountain

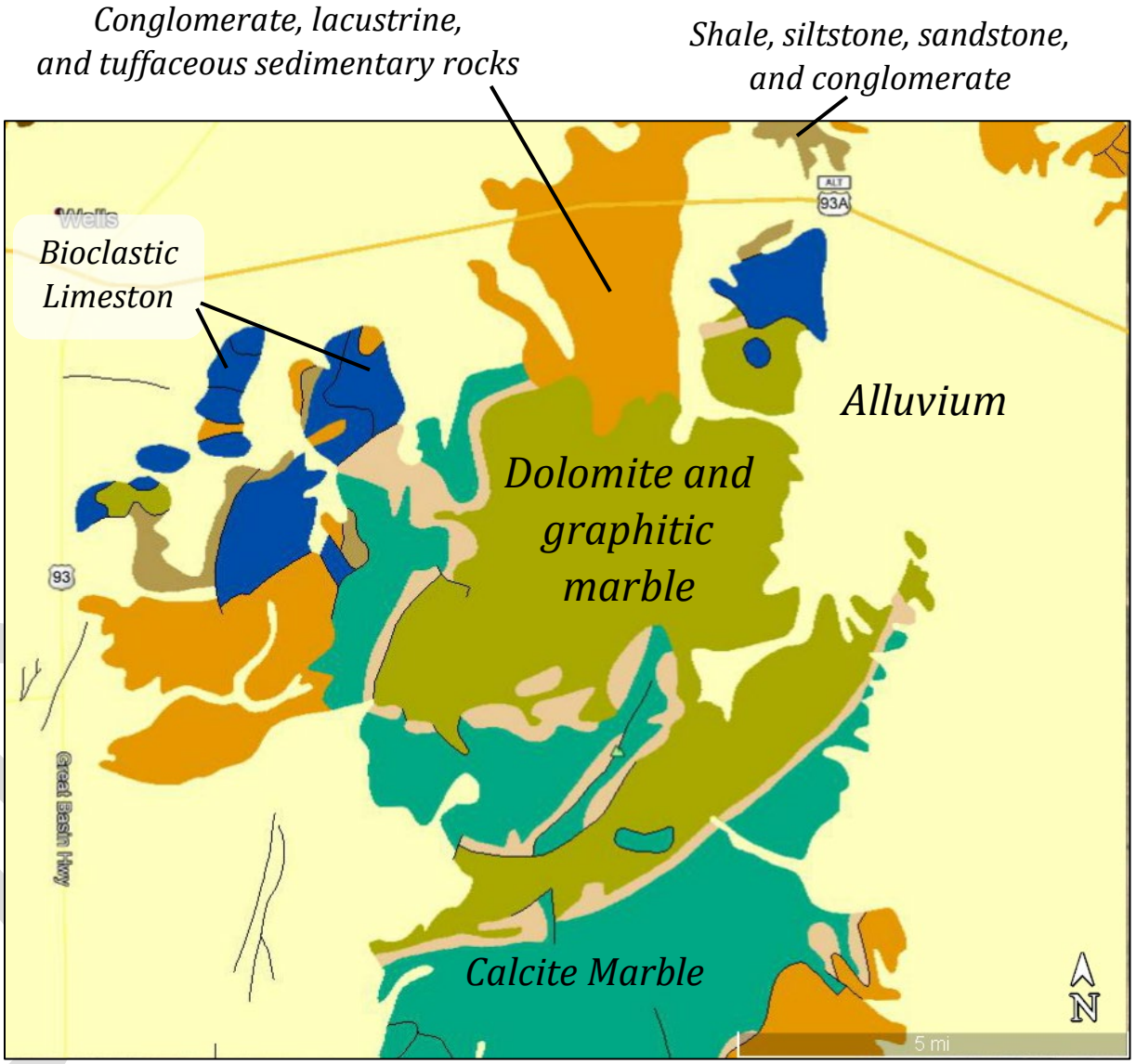


Map 3—Wood Hills Study Area Topographic Map

GEOLOGY

The Study Area consists of several different rock formations, as shown on Map 4. Most of the lowlands consist of alluvium, a deposit of clay, silt, sand, and gravel left by flowing streams in a river valley or delta. The remainder of the range consists of metamorphic and sedimentary rock types, including shale, siltstone, and sandstone (brown), dolomite and graphitic marble (green), calcite marble (teal), limestone (blue), and metaquartzite (tan).

This variation of rock types means that the Study Area will offer diverse rides and will also play a role in trail development costs. The alluvium is great for low-cost trail development but will also mean potentially higher maintenance costs because it will be more easily disturbed by motorized vehicles.



SOURCE: United States Geological Survey

Map 4—Wood Hills Geology

NEED FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

The City is uniquely positioned along two main travel corridors, I-80 and Highway 93, and has several easily accessible OR sites, including the Wells City Park, Chimney Rock Golf Course, Angel Lake, Pequop Conservation Area, and 12-Mile Hot Springs, to name a few.

OR must be recognized as multi-faceted and broad in its implication, encompassing activities and events ranging from taking a quick stroll around the park to large, organized events. Because of its scope, there are several ways to improve the OR experience for residents and tourists alike.

The City needs to improve its OR offerings with new amenities and activities as well as improve the marketing of the assets that already exist. The proposed trail network will be a crucial first step in rebranding the community as a basecamp for OR opportunities and should include a variety of activities and events.

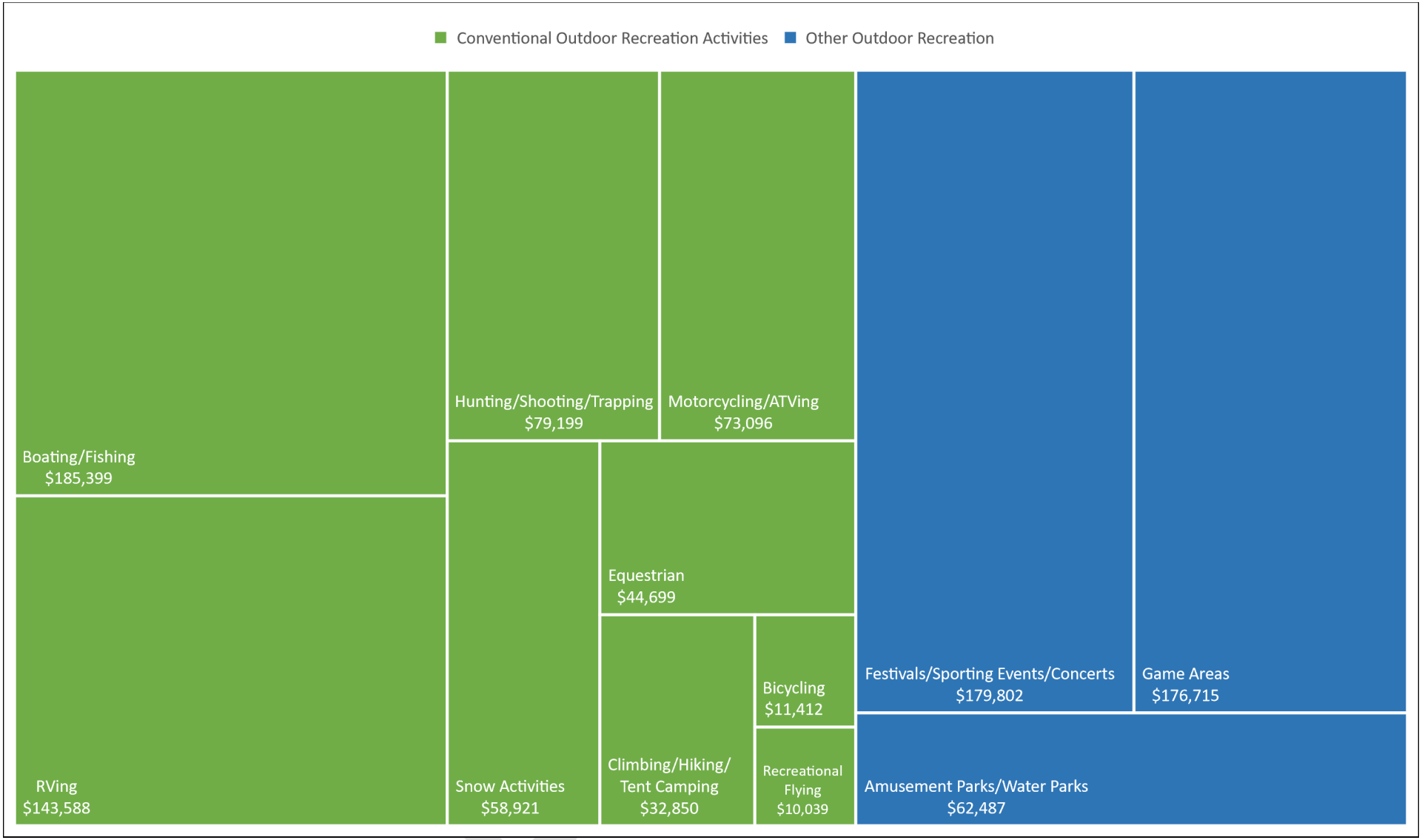
The State of Nevada only recently prioritized OR. The NV Office of Outdoor Recreation, established on June 7, 2019, is still a very new endeavor. Located within the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), this office has an Advisory Board that works with the administrators of the division on any matter concerning OR in the State. While this office is still experiencing growing pains and finding its role in the State's initiatives, it represents an opportunity through which the State can begin investing more heavily in OR in the northeast.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

According to the Outdoor Industry Association's 2017 Nevada Outdoor Recreation Economy Report, 57 percent of Nevada residents participate in outdoor sports and activities. This sector has brought in billions of dollars in taxes to fund schools, roads, and public safety. As shown in Figure 10, Boating/Fishing and RVing make up a significant amount of the value generated in this sector. In 2019, $288 Million was spent on Rving, Motorcycling/ATVing, and Bicycling combined. As the Wood Hills area is developed, its community should consider how it can increase its market share in this industry by adding ATV/OHV/mountain bike rentals, repair shops, and other supportive businesses.

The trail network should be positioned to enhance spending in other sectors of the City's economy, including lodging and hospitality, restaurants, and retail. OR is beneficial because it can be enjoyed across the socioeconomic spectrum and result in repeat spending if people enjoy their experience and choose to return. Much of the spending will come from tourists who contribute to the tax base while not requiring the full utilization of local government services, thereby adding money to the local economy.

The specific value of economic benefits will be difficult to determine and will depend largely on what businesses and services are built around this emerging industry. Some economists have estimated OR multiplier of 0.4, meaning that for every dollar spent on OR locally, approximately 40 cents will be generated in the local economy. This estimate is likely high for Wells, which is highly dependent on imported goods and services and therefore likely has a much lower multiplier since money generated in the City is quickly given to businesses and people outside the community. Assuming that the City's multiplier is closer to 0.2-0.3, a $100,000 event would be expected to generate an estimated $20,000-$30,000 for the local economy as hotel stays, restaurant meals, and revenues and wages.



SOURCE: BEA ORSA, 2019[4]

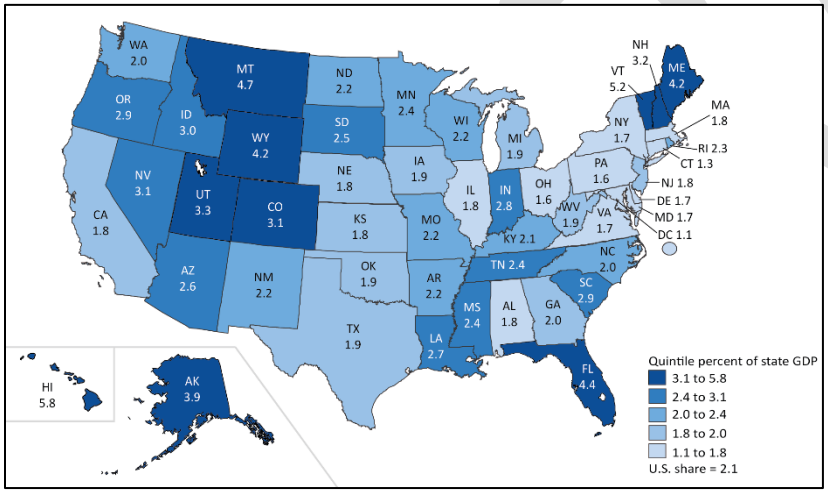
Figure 10—Nevada OR Value Added by Selected Activities, 2019 ($000s)

[4] [4] Data and figures come from BEA's 2019 Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA) Summary Sheet. Available at: https://apps.bea.gov/data/special-topics/orsa/summary-sheets/ORSA%20-%20Nevada.pdf

National Trends

OR represent a significant portion of the national total Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), OR accounted for 2.1 percent (or $459.8 billion) of the nation's GDP in 2019. The sector grew by an estimated 1.3 percent in 2019 and might see larger growth in 2020 and 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic and relative safety of OR.

As shown by Map 5, many of the western states have large shares of their economy based in OR. Nevada's share is slightly lower than Utah's 3.3 percent, but greater than the other surrounding states of Oregon (2.9 percent), Idaho (3.0 percent), Arizona (2.6 percent), and California (1.8 percent). This means that the relative weight of OR is higher in Nevada than all other surrounding states, save for Utah. This value is likely to increase as the State focuses additional spending and investment in this sector of the State's economy.



SOURCE: Bureau of Economic Analysis

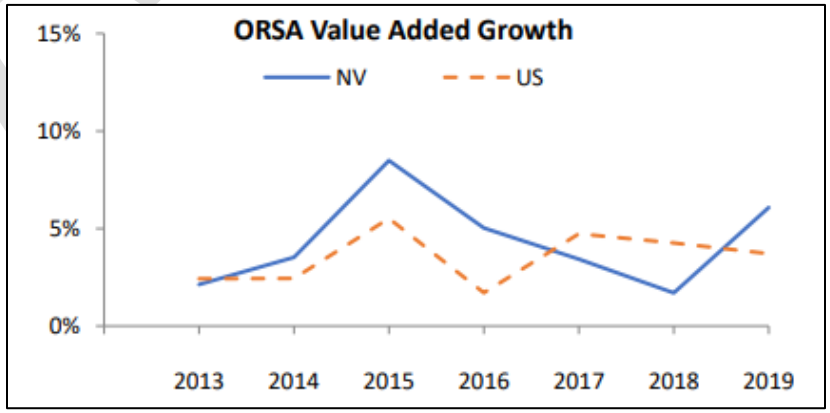
Map 5—Outdoor Recreation Value Added (by percent of State GDP)

State Trends

The State of Nevada produced an estimated $5.47 billion in OR value added in 2019, representing 59,499 workers and $2.62 billion in compensation. This is much lower than the average OR value added of surrounding states (at $16.6 billion per state). Even when California, a very large state with a massive economy, is removed from the analysis (doing so drops the average to $6.4 billion per state) Nevada is still behind. These estimates suggest that Nevada may be "behind the times" regarding investing in OR, especially for a state whose land mass consists of 85 percent public lands.

Value Added

Nevada has consistently been middle-of-the-pack for OR value added, ranking 28th among all states; however, Nevada has also seen significant growth in recent years, ranking third among all states in 2019 in terms of percentage growth.

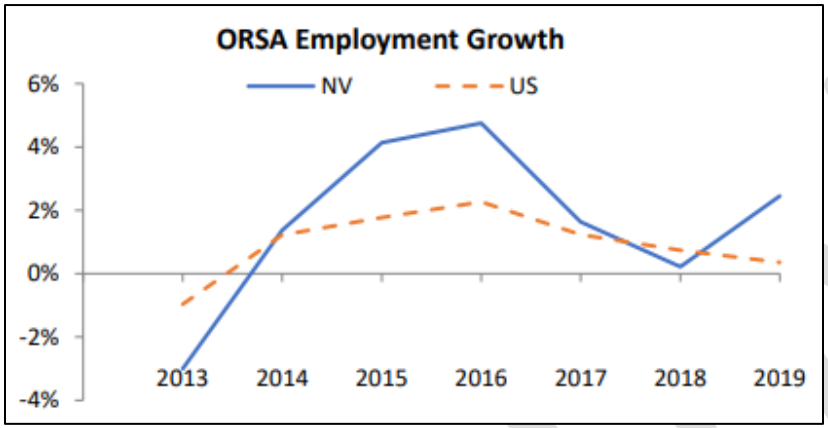


SOURCE: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Figure 11—Outdoor Recreation Value Added Growth, 2013-2019

Employment

When compared to all states, Nevada ranked in the middle in terms of employment in the OR sector but ranked relatively high for employment growth. As the state and federal governments invest more heavily in OR, this sector will continue to see growth into the next decade.



SOURCE: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Figure 12—Outdoor Recreation Employment Growth, 2013-2019

Compensation

Nevada ranked 27th for compensation and was ranked 5th for compensation growth. Average compensation for jobs (both wage and salaried) was $43,955 in Nevada compared to $64,529 for all salaried jobs in the state. This is not surprising because this industry experiences a larger share of lower-skilled jobs when compared to other sectors.

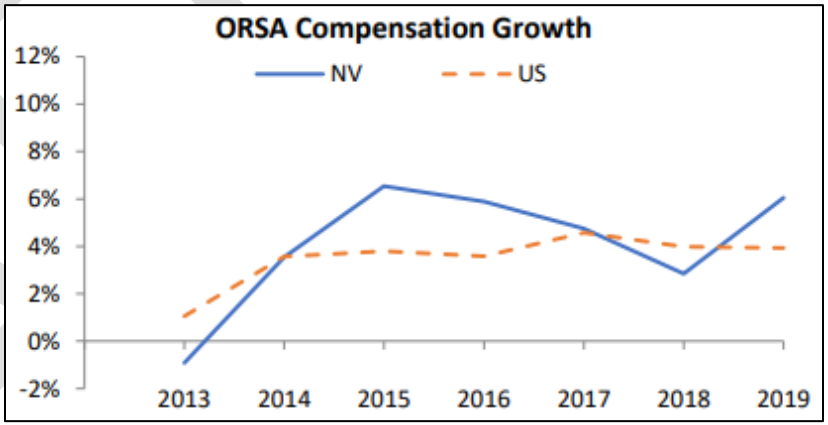


Figure 13—Compensation Growth

The State's current growth in OR—in terms of value added, employment, and wages—are all favorable for Wells and the Study Area. The State's creation of an Office of Outdoor Recreation is also beneficial due to increased funding, technical assistance, and legislative support that can be provided as the office spends resources on OR projects. Early discussions have already been held with the current OR administrator, Colin Robertson, to discuss the Wood Hills project. The Study Area and strategy is currently viewed very favorably by the State, especially because of its proximity to Wells and the I-80 and Highway 93 corridors.

Development and Maintenance Costs

The costs of constructing a trail are very difficult to determine, especially in the abstract. Costs can increase significantly depending on the type of trail, difficulty of the terrain, method of development, and/or need for paid labor. This section will provide a high-level overview of the costs associated with trail development and will provide a range of costs that the City and its partners should be prepared to spend to plan, design, and implement the trail network.

Types of Cost Estimates

There are three types of estimates, each of which is useful at different phases of development:

1) **Planning Phase**—Provides a preliminary/conceptual cost estimate. This is useful when applying for design grants, environmental and cultural studies, and discussing the project at its earliest stages. This phase might not include detailed estimates for the number of trail miles, trail specifications, materials, and terrain challenges. This type of estimate is often provided as a range of numbers and has significant variability due to the number of unknown factors.
2) **Design Phase**—A more detailed estimate of the network based on the trail type(s), terrain, environmental and cultural report findings, labor and materials costs, and other engineering costs. This estimate will be more detailed and more accurate than planning estimates and should provide a robust number for which to apply for implementation grants as well as to go out to bid for trail development services.
3) **Bidding Phase**—A very detailed and in-depth analysis of the actual cost to build the trail network, including the true costs of materials and labor, clearing the terrain, and construction work. This analysis will be performed prior to implementation and should accurately estimate the costs of trail development, often with contingencies built into to account for any remaining unknown factors. Detailed and competitive construction bids should be solicitated from several contractors.

Construction Categories

There are five major construction categories which should be considered early on (likely in the planning and design phases):

1) Labor
2) Equipment
3) Materials
4) Services
5) Overhead

Each category is discussed briefly and should be evaluated by project stakeholders as the project is further defined. Landowners and the entity responsible for maintenance should have the greatest influence on the final costs and design approach.

The total cost of the project is calculated as follows:

$$Cost = Labor + Equipment + Materials + Services + Overhead$$

Labor

Labor is often one of the greatest costs for trail development, especially if being performed by a private contractor. If Federal dollars are incorporated into the project, Davis Bacon and other

prevailing wage requirements will be applied and will increase the labor costs of the project.

The City should also understand from where the labor will be coming. If imported labor is used, costs will likely increase significantly so the workers can be housed, pay for travel and food, and other expenses, as well as personnel transport and support when they are on-site.

If possible, the City should involve low-cost, in-house, and volunteer workers. Table 1 shows the types of labor resources and considerations that should be made for each:

Type	Benefits	Considerations
Volunteers	Low or no cost, increases the buy-in from community members	Tools, training, coordination, management, quality assurance
Youth Services/ AmeriCorps	Longer term, low or no cost	Coordination, management, quality assurance, level of effort vs. job completion requirements
Contractor	Pre-qualification, experience	Needs clear project definition; travel and support costs
In-house personnel	Availability	Experience, tools, skill sets

Table 1—Labor Type Benefits and Considerations

Ideally, a mix of each type can be used to offset costs and still have a project that is of a high quality. Often, putting together in-house personnel with volunteers and youth services for the lower-skilled sections of the trail will free up the resources of a contractor for the more difficult, skill-intensive sections and will lower the costs of completion.

SOURCE: Washington Trails Association

Figure 14—Wooden Bridge Under Construction in Washington

Equipment

For the Wood Hills area, it is likely that a bulldozer will be able to perform significant work, especially in the lowland areas that have easy soil and shallow-rooted plant life. Other equipment may become necessary to construct the trail, especially in the more mountainous terrain with large trees.

The City should understand the costs required to rent or own equipment, as well as the costs to insure, transport, and store the

equipment when work is not being performed. If volunteer work is utilized, the equipment may become a risk if used without the proper training or if vandalized or damaged. Because of the City's access to heavy equipment and qualified operators, using city-owned heavy machinery and other equipment can be used as matching costs to make the community more competitive for grant funds while also lowering the costs of using rented equipment or contractors' equipment.

SOURCE: Fietz Fotos

Figure 15—Heavy Machinery

Materials

Materials largely determine the maintenance requirements of the trail and should be considered using a present value approach. The quality of the trail will rely heavily on the materials used, especially for mountain biking trails which need to be a smooth, fluid trail network and might require bridges and berms to meet this level of quality.

Some materials may need to be sourced and transported from other parts of the country. The transportation and delivery costs should be included as part of the materials, as well as the disposal or storage of excess or removed materials.

It will be important to understand the suppliers of materials as well. If there is only a single supplier, then the City could run into issues if a supplier runs out of materials, no longer offers a material type, or goes out of business. This can become an issue if the network takes several years or decades to complete and could result in a hodgepodge of materials if selected from a single supplier. Alternatively, using multiple suppliers makes consistency of materials and quality more difficult to manage.

SOURCE: Joshua Oyler, thetrekplanner

Figure 16—Shoshone Trail system gateway

Services

The type and availability of services should be discussed during the master planning phase of development. As the trail network becomes more popular and frequented, the need for services will increase. Such services might include the following:

- RV/tent pads for events
- Sanitation and waste disposal including restrooms and dumpsters
- Traffic control during construction and for events
- Special permits, other requirements for access to Federal lands

The City will want to consider what services will be beneficial for locals and tourist and should ensure that the site does not strain the city's coffers.

Overhead Costs

Other costs should be considered for construction, such as:

- Documentation
- Management
- Bonding and insurance
- Payroll and accounting
- Training
- Profit
- Contingency

Maintenance Costs

As with the other categories, maintenance costs will depend largely on the materials, network design, and types of use. To reduce maintenance costs, the network should give users various network options to reduce the use of each section and should be built using best practices to avoid weather/water damage and unneeded tearing from vehicular uses. These costs will change each year depending on the amount of use, weather conditions, vegetation growth, and years in which the trail needs to be redeveloped or repaired.

The rails-to-trails conservancy estimates that it costs between $1,500 and $2,500 per mile per year to maintain off-road trails. This is mostly attributed to labor costs necessary to police, pick up trash, repair and update signage, manage events, and winterize the area.

If the City is going to participate in maintenance, it should consider using tourism and event revenues to pay for

maintenance of the trail system. This will provide funds necessary to maintain the system commensurate to the amount of use the trail system is receiving. As more people use the network, stay in hotels, and attend events, more funds will be available to maintain the system.

Other Cost Considerations

Beyond the categories mentioned above, there are some other considerations that may impact the cost of the project:

- Terrain that is less vegetated often costs much less
- Hand-built trails are more labor intensive, particularly where drainage structures are needed
- Machine-built trails are terrain-limited and operator experience is key

Development Risks

The City will need to work with its partners to understand the inherent risks of construction, owning, or managing a trail network. The main question will be what party or parties should take ownership of the network and how maintenance costs will be shared. Other questions include the following:

- Who will be the service provider?
- Who will be the sponsor for grants and activities?
- How will risks be shared in construction, management, and maintenance of the trail system?

Other development risks that should be considered and included in the budget include the following:

- Unknown bedrock on the designated trail area
- Weather delays
- Archeological sites/findings
- Wildlife nesting issues
- Equipment breakdowns
- Accidents

Estimated Budget (Phase One)

At a very high level, the trail should cost between $5,000 and $30,000 per mile, with the lower bound for trail development on easy, flat terrain. On average, an estimate of $10,000 per mile is a typical cost for trails in desert terrain. Using this estimate, a trail of 50 miles (30 miles of OHV trails and 20 miles of mountain biking trails) should be between $355,000 and $1,655,000; it is likely that the cost will fall on the mid-to-lower end of this range due to the ease of the terrain in the wood hills and that some access roads already exist that could easily be converted to dedicated trails.

Development Schedule

Item	Cost Per Mile	Quantity	Estimated Cost
Design Work	$1,000	50 miles (30 miles of OHV trails and 20 miles of mountain biking trails)	$50,000
Surveying	$1,000 to $2,000	50 miles (30 miles of OHV trails and 20 miles of mountain biking trails)	$50,000-$100,000
Environmental and cultural assessments	$5,000 for phase one	Phase One Trail Area	$5,000
Construction Costs	$5,000 to $30,000	50 miles (30 miles of OHV trails and 20 miles of mountain biking trails)	$250,000 to $1,500,000
		Total Estimated Cost	**$355,000 to $1,655,000**

Maintenance Schedule

Item	Cost Per Mile	Quantity	Estimated Cost
Ongoing Maintenance	$1,000-$2,500	50 miles (30 miles of OHV trails and 20 miles of mountain biking trails)	**$50,000-$125,000 per year**

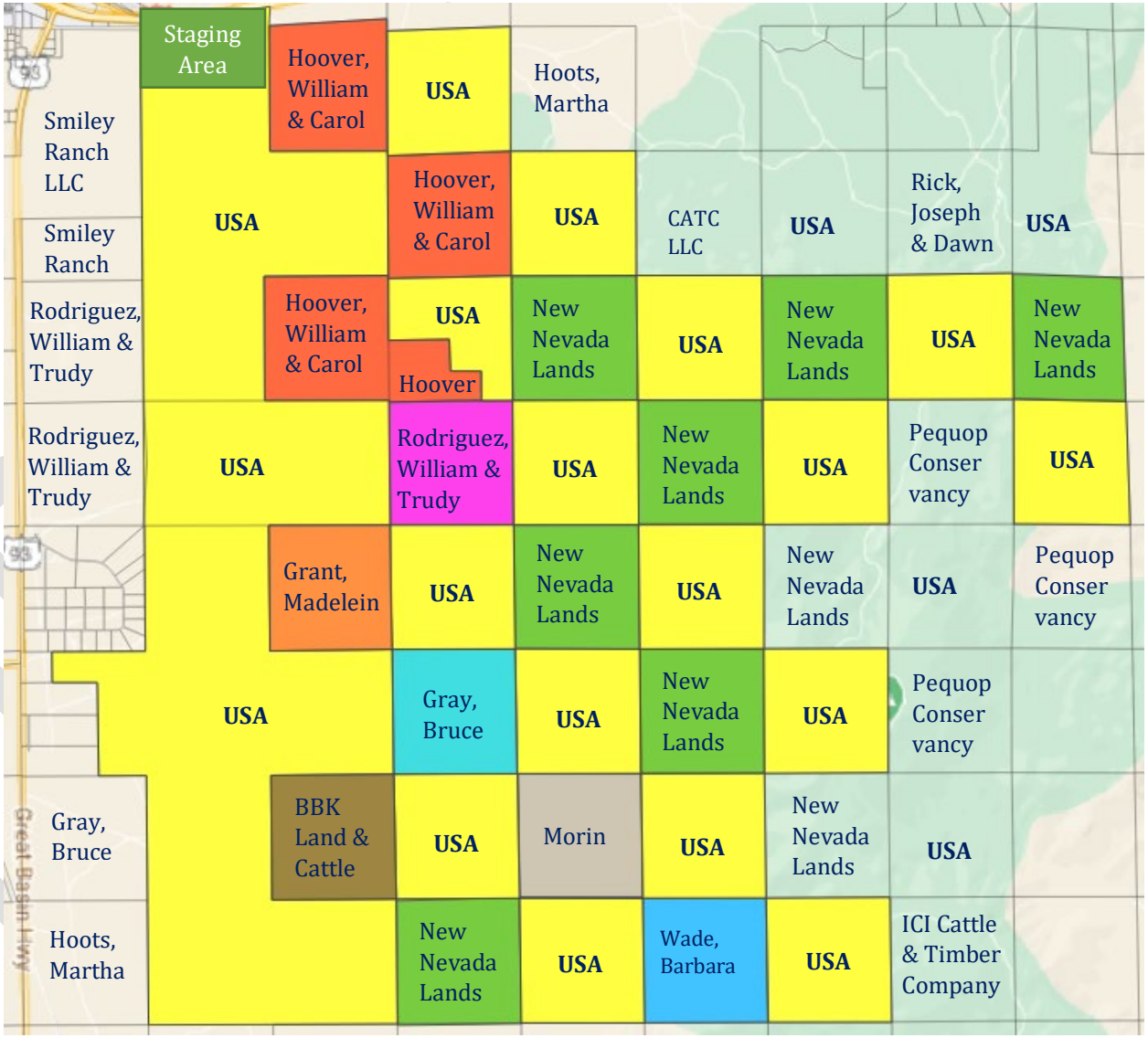
Proposed Trail Area

As previously mentioned, the City is uniquely positioned along two travel corridors: I-80 and US 93. It is an ideal overnight location for OR enthusiasts who are traveling from northern California toward Moab and Colorado, or for those who are travelling between Las Vegas/ southern California and the northwestern states. Initially, because of the ease of accessibility of the Wood Hills area, it can be well positioned as a great stop to test one's machines on the way to larger OR sites or for a "last hurrah" before making the final drive back home.

It is likely that the network will be built out over multiple phases. This approach will be more manageable given the limited resources of the City and BLM field office. Map 6 shows a proposed phase I area. This area consists largely of federal lands and property owned by New Nevada Lands, which has expressed interest in participating in the project.

This section of land is more than enough to house many miles of trails, as well as provide a variety of terrains and features for uses from hiking to motorized vehicles. This area has previously been used for OHV events, as recently as 2017. OHV events on Federal lands require some of the strictest levels of due diligence in terms of environmental review and analysis, meaning that this area represents "low-hanging fruit" in terms of getting this project from planning to implementation.

It is important to note that the land included in this Phase I area is not currently scheduled for purchase and will only contain trails if approved and supported by the owner of each parcel. Existing easements and corner access points will connect parcels if landowners choose not to participate to minimize impacts. Grazing permits and other public lands allowances will also be respected.



Map 6—Phase I Study Area

FUNDING SOURCES

There are several programs in existence that can be used to significantly fund the costs of design work, studies, as well as land development. The following is a list of programs that are currently available and that should be considered when creating a trail network. This list is not intended to be exhaustive; the City, contractors, and other stakeholders should search out new funding sources as they become available or that are not included on this list.

Nevada OHV Grant Program

The Nevada Off-Highway Vehicles program is managed by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The program "promotes projects on the ground, generates partnerships with clubs, organizations, and Federal, State, and Local agencies connected to OHV recreation" (www.OHV.nv.gov). The program is run by a commission consisting of representatives from snowmobile groups, ATVs groups, wildlife interests, NV Association of Counties, OHV dealers, OHV owners, scientific experts, and AG interests.

Each year, the OHV program offers a competitive grant program for OHV projects. Based on past years, the grant program has been allocated $1,000,000 in funding and funds approximately 20 projects per year (for an average grant award of $50,000). However, the OHV Commission is expecting the program to receive additional funding starting in grant cycle 2021 because of the Great American Outdoors Act.

Grant funds can be used for a wide variety of activities, including planning and environmental reviews, land acquisition, mapping, design, construction, maintenance, signage, and employee/youth services. Applicants are not required to have matching funds, but projects that can prove that funds are being leveraged will be more competitive. Applications are due each year in November. More information regarding the program can be found at https://ohv.nv.gov/grant-program.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The LWCF is a fund that invests revenue from oil and gas leasing into "State Side" (State and local government grant program) and "Federal Side" (used to acquire lands, waters, and interests therein to achieve objectives of federal land management agencies. The program was fully funded in August 2020 as part of the Great American Outdoors Act, with funding of $900 million per year.

States are expected to receive approximately one-half of this amount every year, with funds intended to provide matching grants to State and local governments for the acquisition and development of public OR areas and facilities.

In Nevada, LWCF is administered by the Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP). The program allows for land acquisition, trail development, construction of facilities, or a combination of any of the above. Planning is allowed if it is combined with a larger project and do not exceed 40 percent of the total project cost.

The program is a cost-reimbursement program and requires a 50/50 match for all projects. In-kind matching funds are allowable under the program. Projects can cost up to the total apportionment for the State in a given year. For fiscal year 2019, Nevada received approximately $2.3 Million. Applications for FY 2020/2021 were due in May 2020.

More information regarding the LWCF can be found at http://parks.nv.gov/about/grant-programs/land-and-water-conservation-fund.

Recreation Trails Program

The Nevada Division of State Parks administers grant funds from the Federal Highway Administration's Recreation Trails Program (RTP). The program helps states provide and maintain recreation trails for both motorized and non-motorized recreation trail use. RTP is designed to supplement and assist federal, state, local, and volunteer trail efforts. Projects must fit into one of the following categories:

- **Educational**. Trail education programs related to safety, environmental protection, creation of publications, and training.
- **Nonmotorized for single use.** Benefit only one mode of nonmotorized recreation trail use, such as pedestrian only or equestrian only. Projects serving various pedestrian uses (walking, hiking, running, backpacking, etc.) constitute a single use, as do nonmotorized human-powered snow uses (skiing, snowshoeing, etc.).
- **Nonmotorized for diverse use.** Funds are intended to benefit more than one mode of nonmotorized recreational trail use. The proposed bike trail miles could compete in this category of funding.
- **Motorized for single use.** Projects are intended to benefit only one mode of motorized recreational use (snowmobile, OHV, etc.)
- **Motorized for diverse use.** Projects are intended to benefit more than one mode of motorized recreational use, such as motorcycle and ATV use or ATV use in summer and snowmobile use in winter. A project may be classified in this category if the project also benefits some nonmotorized uses, but the primary intent must be for the benefit of motorized use.
- **Diverse use (both motorized and nonmotorized).** Intended to benefit both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail use. This category includes projects where motorized use is permitted but in not the predominant beneficiary. It allows for projects where motorized and nonmotorized uses are separated by season. This is likely to be the best fit for the Wood Hills Recreation area because of the OHV/ATV and bicycle trails.

This program allows for educational programs, trail building tools for non-profit citizen volunteer organizations, urban trail linkages, maintenance, construction, and easements for trails and trail corridors, fee simple title to property from a willing seller (if easements are not possible), landscaping, utilities directly related to the trail project (lighting, drinking fountains, irrigation, etc.), trail planning, and archaeological activities.

Applicants need to provide a 20 percent match for nonmotorized and education projects and a 5 percent match for motorized projects. Federal funds (such as the LWCF) **can** be used toward the matching share but cannot exceed 95 percent of the total project cost). In-kind match is allowed, as well as planning or environmental compliance activities that were completed **before** the application (if completed within 18 months preceding the award agreement).

In 2020, the State required a pre-application to approve all projects prior to receiving full applications. The pre-application was due in August, with the full application due in November. Funding of $1.25 Million was allocated for the 2021 program year.

More information regarding the NV RTP can be found at http://parks.nv.gov/about/grant-programs/recreational-trails-program.

SNPLMA

Twice a year, the Bureau of Land Management holds land sales in a competitive land auction. Parcels nominated for sale are appraised and sold at fair market value. The proceeds from those sales are then split between the General Education Fund (5 percent), Southern Nevada Water Authority (10 percent), and a special account available to the Secretary of the Interior for a variety of projects, including:

- Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas
- Capital Improvements
- Conservation Initiatives
- Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plans
- Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisitions
- Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention
- Easter Nevada Landscape Restoration Projects
- Lake Tahoe Restoration Projects

The City of Wells qualifies to pursue these funds and to use them for land acquisition, trail development, and other activities related to OR. For more information on this fund, contact the BLM Assistant District Manager at 702-515-5116 or visit www.blm.gov/programs/lands-and-realty/nevada/snplma.

Polaris T.R.A.I.L.S. Grant Program

The Trail Development, Responsible Riding, Access, Initiatives, Lobbying, Safety (TRAILS) program was launched in January 2006 for ATV clubs, associations, and grassroots groups. Funds are available to national, state, and local organizations in the United States (must be a 501(c)(X)), government, or other nonprofit).

The grant program promotes safe and responsible riding and seeks to preserve access. Funds can be used for trail development and maintenance, safety, and education, and lobbying. Grants are received by Polaris on March 1 and September 1 and can go up to $10,000 per request. Organizations can apply for up to two grants per year.

More information can be found at https://www.polaris.com/en-us/trails-application/.

Outdoor Access Initiative

The Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative (OAI) is a quarterly grant program that allows for projects in the following:

- Land management and conservation
- Trail development, restoration, maintenance, signage, and maps
- Staging areas and facilities
- Safety and education
- Outdoor recreation

The program amount will vary depending on the quality of the application, benefit to OHV riding and/or other OR, and the need and competition for funds. Organizations can only receive one OAI grant per calendar year but may reapply each quarter until a grant is approved and awarded. Eligible organizations must be based in the United States and have tax exempt or non-profit status. OAI funds can be used as a match for a larger grant, such as the Recreation Trails Program.

For more information, visit https://www.yamahaoai.com/

Right Rider Access Fund

The Right Rider Access Fund is a charitable, community benefit organization created in 2011. The fund promotes the safe and responsible use of OHVs and seeks to preserve their access to appropriate lands. Applications are due on an annual basis (January 15th for the 2021 award cycle).

Land Acquisition Strategy

Securing ownership or access to the land in the project area could become an impediment for this project. The land within the Study Area is owned by several owners and any projects will need title or easements that allow access and trail uses. This section describes strategies for land acquisition so the community can move the project from planning into further stages of development.

Land Purchase

Purchasing non-federal land fee simple will provide the greatest access and flexibility to the trail network. If the trail needs to be adjusted or altered, the City and its partners will have ownership of the property and can easily remedy potential issues. It also reduces risks inherent with not owning the property, such as acts of trespassing or negligence, land disputes, or sunsetting of easements.

Purchase Options

The City should pursue a purchase option with landowners so the trail network can be preplanned several years in advance without threat of third-party sales intervening. The proposed buyer (be it the City, County, or other party) can pay a landowner a small amount for the exclusive right to purchase their property within a specified term. The buyer can offer to pay market value at the time of the sale or can negotiate the price of the land up-front as part of the purchase option.

Securing purchase options will alleviate some risks to the trail network, such as third-party groups who do not want to see the project completed, if any were to arise. It would also prevent speculative buying: if the trail network proves successful, it will assist the buyer by stopping third parties from buying the land in advance and asking for above-market price because they know the land's importance to the project.

For larger landowners, a takedown schedule should be provided to reduce the risk to the seller. If the buyer is unable to move the project forward in a timely manner, the seller will have the right to free up the remaining land and sell it without encumbrances.

Easements

While land purchases are possible, some landowners might wish to maintain ownership of their property and allow trail uses. This might be because they have made improvements to the land such as building a residential unit or because they like to use it for other purposes, such as outdoor recreation or grazing.

The City and its partners can pursue easements for specific uses, such as OHV or ATV trails, mountain bike trails, or hiking uses. Express easements should be pursued with landowners with consideration provided to the owner for any disturbances and/or damages that could result from trail use. For some parts of the network, easements by prescription might already exist if there is an established and known route on specific land and can assist in securing permanent access. These easements are appurtenant to the land and could not inhibit access to other parts of the trail if sold to another owner.

Easements should be pursued with a real estate attorney and should protect the City and its partners from bad actors. Signage should be provided at the trailhead and when accessing a property showing the ownership type, telling users that they are accepting liability for damages if using a part of the trail network that is governed by an easement.

Other Considerations

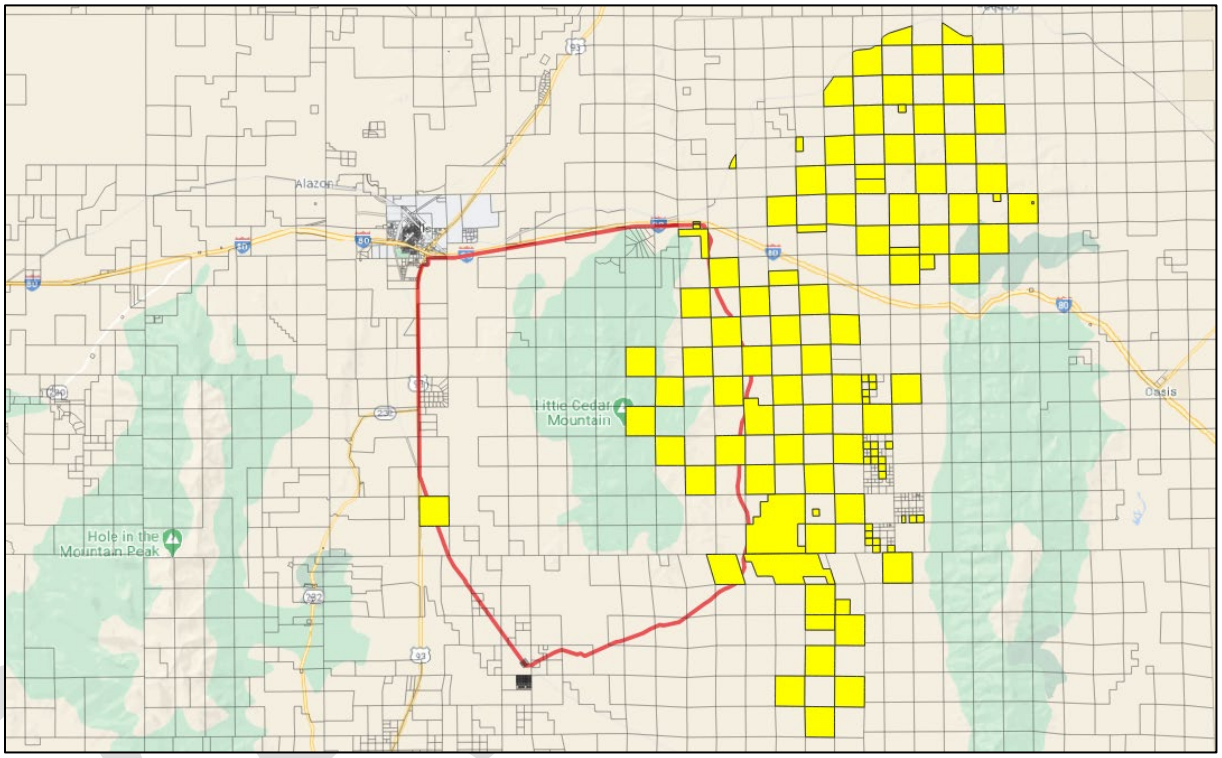
This section describes other considerations that could help the City plan for and leverage the trail network.

Pequop Conservancy

The Pequop Conservancy is a 47,700-acre farm and ranch that is situated on the eastern side of the Study Area (shown as yellow parcels in Map 7).

The Pequop Conservancy is privately owned and does not currently permit motorized uses. Fisherman, photographers, and hikers are welcome to visit the Farm and Ranch but must receive a Trespass Permit (currently free of charge) before visiting the land. As a large landowner, the Conservancy should be updated on the status of the project and brought into discussions if it expands toward the east side. The City should ensure that, if the Conservancy would like to maintain restrictions on visitors and uses, the trail network provides sufficient buffer and signage so that users do not unknowingly and unintentionally access the land.

For future phases, the Pequop Conservancy may be willing to allow nonmotorized users access to the land, as part of the trail network. The water feature on the southeast side of Little Cedar Mountain, where feral horses are a common sight, could become a destination for tourist during summer months.



SOURCE: Better City, Elko County Assessor

Map 7—Pequop Conservancy Land Ownership

BLM Ownership & Participation

The BLM owns a significant portion of the land within the Study Area and should be viewed as a vital partner when moving the project forward. Federal lands are restricted by Federal and State regulations and pose inherent political risks. Due to the BLM ownership, the project's timeline should be adjusted according to the resources, time, and requirements of the local office.

The BLM will pay an ongoing role in developing the trail network and managing the land. This will be especially important for the parcels that are wholly owned by the federal government. Depending on the management plan, the City could also pursue a partnership with the BLM to provide maintenance across the trail network, including the lands which are not currently managed by the BLM. This would be done through a contract agreement so that BLM could have the resources necessary to provide the services needed to manage the land.

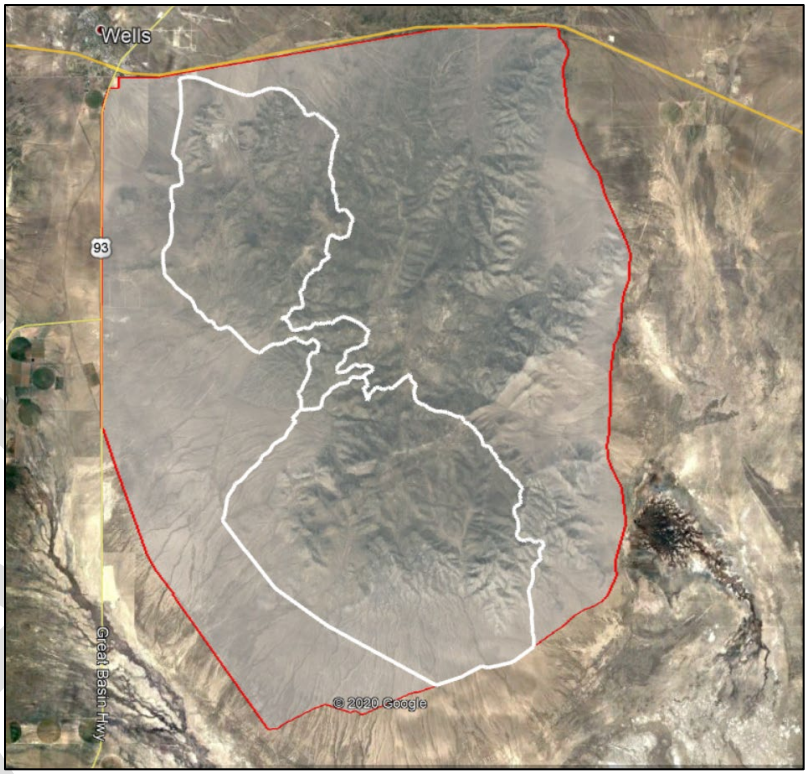
BLM manages other trail networks throughout the State, including the Shoshone Trail System in Lander County, and is a viable option when considering maintenance of the land. The cost of having BLM maintain the land could be offset by tourism revenues, as well as income from events and any other services that are offered in the trail network as it is built out.

Purchasing property from BLM

It would be difficult for the City and its partners to purchase federally owned land, especially in the short term. To purchase, the land must be scheduled as for sale, surveyed and legally described, and offered to the highest bidder. The land scheduled for sale must be added to the office's Resource Management Plan (RMP) and would require approval by the Secretary of the Interior before the process could be started. Currently, only a small section in the northwest corner of the study area is included in the RMP for disposal.

NEVADA GOLD DIGGER'S COURSE (2017)

There have been some previous OHV events in the Wood Hills study area, with the 2017 Gold Diggers event as the most recent. This trail passed the BLM's environmental and cultural requirements, meaning that this network could be a good starting point for trail design work. While some of this network is out of the proposed phase one area, it could easily be added as an extension or brought into phase one efforts, depending on property owners' willingness to sell or provide easements.



SOURCE: Bureau of Land Management, Google Earth

Figure 17—Gold Digger's Course (2017)

Trail Connections

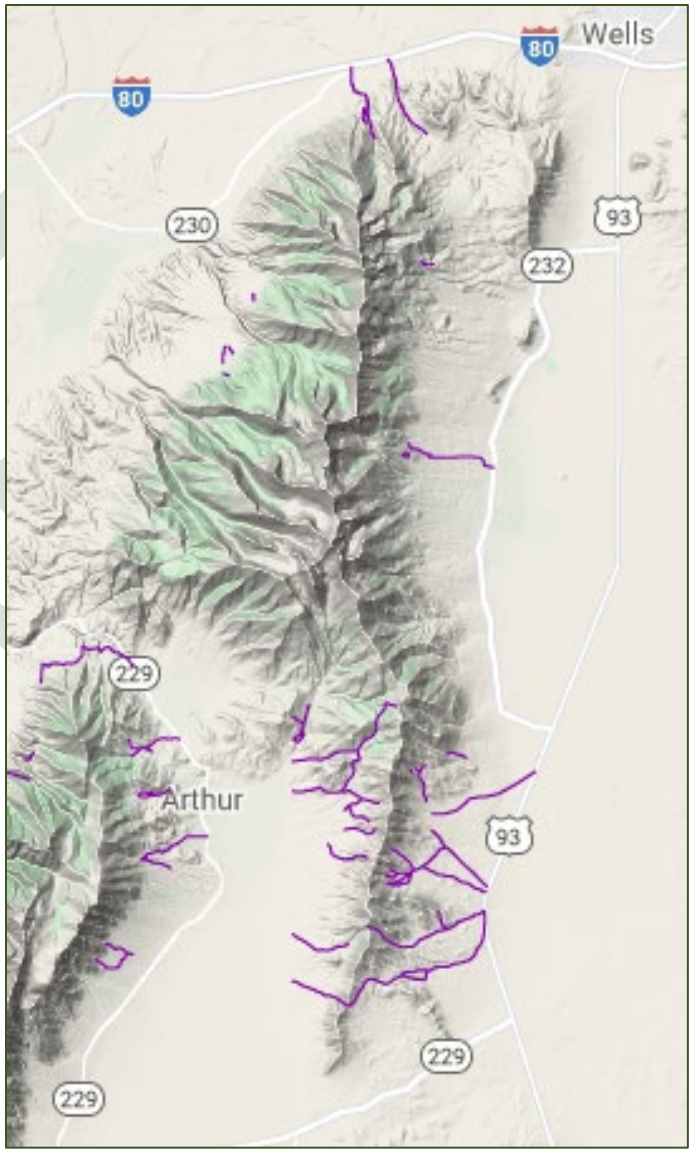
As the trail network is expanded, the City and its partners should seek out local trail connections. Doing so will increase value of the trail network while simultaneously increasing the value of local recreational assets. Two assets are named in this report, but more may become feasible as the networks expands.

Angel Lake

Angel lake is a small lake approximately 10 miles southwest from Wells. The Lake is located on the northern end of the Humboldt Range and is one of several alpine lakes in the area. Angel Lake Campground and its associated trails are just on the other side of Highway 93 and would be an easy and important connection point for hikers. There are also several smaller existing OHV trails (shown in Map 8 as purple lines) on the southern side of the range that could be added to the Wood Hills OHV trail network, activating currently underutilized OHV routes.

Spruce Mountains ATV network

The Spruce Mountain ATV trail network is approximately 30 miles south of Wells. It was funded by a Recreation Trails Program grant that marked and improved the trail system in 2003. The trail system visits several abandoned mining towns and is administered by the BLM.



Source: NV OHV Commission

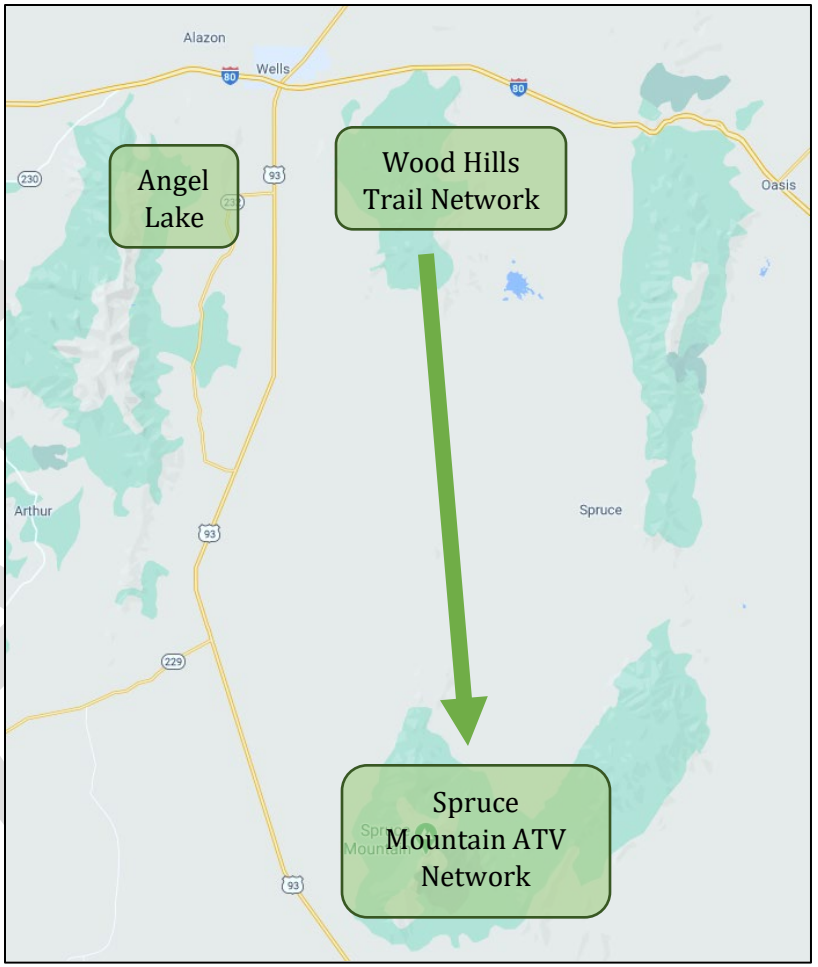
Map 8—OHV Trails located in the Humboldt Range

The trail network has since become unsuitable for ATV uses due to litigation, which has caused the BLM to stop managing the trail system altogether.

The proposed trail network in Wood Hills should move riders away from the Spruce Mountain Trails for a time to allow the fauna to return to more natural levels for mule deer in the winter. It will also allow the BLM to work through the litigation, revisiting how the Spruce Mountain Trail network can again be suitable for motorized uses. As shown in Map 9, the northern tip of the Spruce Mountain network is approximately 12 miles south of the Study Area (or 13.5 miles south of the proposed phase one area).

SOURCE: Ross Anderson, Elko Daily Free Press

Figure 18—Spruce Mountain ATV Trail



SOURCE: Google Maps

Map 9—Nearby OR Assets

SIGNAGE

Signage is important to ensure the safety and sustainability of the trail network. Signs are helpful for pointing out trail features and landmarks and can inform trail users of rules, regulation, and points of interest. Signs should be clear, easy to read, and consistent across the network.

Trailheads

Signs at trailheads are some of the most important features of a trail network. They equip users with the following important information:

- Land ownership
- Allowed uses and trail closings (if restricted to specific days or seasons)
- A trail map with points of interest
- Rules and regulations
- Warnings about poisonous plants, wild animals, or other dangerous features or structures
- Contact information for trail maintenance issues
- Historical or ecological/geological history

On-trail signage

Other signage will be important to the network, such as arrows pointing users where to go to follow a loop or reach a specific landmark, mile markers, and signs indicating when users are entering private or public property and the restrictions that might be attached to recreation on the land.

Virtual signage

The City and its partners should ensure that the trail is virtually mapped out and that the relevant GPS information is included in common GPS tools and applications. The Nevada OHV website includes a map of OHV trails. Common OR websites should also add the network to their databases, such as www.alltrails.com, www.strava.com, www.offroadtrailguide.com, and top applications such as Polaris Ride Command and UTV Trails. Virtual signage is becoming the de facto way users find trail networks, as well as for wayfinding when outdoors. Virtual signage will be vital to ensuring the trail is found by new users and available to the community.

SOURCE: Nicholas A. Tonelli

Figure 19—Sign along the Appalachian Trail in Monroe County, PA

Signage Costs

Signage should not be a major cost and can often be offset by requesting sponsorships from local businesses and clubs. This can simultaneously provide long-term marketing for local businesses. Like the other costs mentioned in the study, the cost of the signage will depend greatly on materials and strategy. The increasing reliance on digital technology for wayfinding should mean that the City and its partners prioritize signage that will be the most important to police and maintain the space, such as trailheads and landowner crossings.

Other Trail Uses

The City and its partners should consider what other uses can be included in the recreation area over time. Such uses might include camping, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, or other recreational activities. Stakeholders should consider what businesses are currently in the space and how new uses and activities will impact those businesses. If possible, the project should incentivize private investment in new businesses and uses to help these businesses start, grow, and expand.

Alternative Lodging and Multi-Day Experiences

Some users seek unique lodging or multi-day experiences. There are currently significant opportunities for alternative lodging options such as yurts, cabins, and tiny homes.

Yurt Camping

A yurt is a round, canvas-covered structure (often made from wood but can utilize various materials) that can be used for an outdoor experience supplemented with heating, air conditioning, and higher-quality bedding. Yurts are often privately owned and managed and are rented out to visitors on a nightly or weekly basis.

Yurts can be broken down and set up, allowing users to carry the structure with them on an ATV or OHV. However, the set-up process is often complex, so it is recommended that the owner set up the yurt for visitors before their stay.

SOURCE: www.HotelsCombined.it

Figure 20—Yurt Interior Example

Tiny Homes

Tiny Homes are small, condensed lodging options (often 500 sq. ft. or less). Tiny Homes are often constructed on a trailer platform with wheels, allowing them to be hauled to any location accessible by truck/trailer. Tiny homes can be built using high-quality, durable materials and can provide additional amenities such as

storage, television use, and built-in restroom and shower, to name a few. Tiny homes have a larger capital cost than yurts but can also command larger margins for owners.

SOURCE: www.tinyhouselistings.com

Figure 21—Yurt Example

Cabins

A cabin is more permanent than yurts and cabins. While cabins can be modular and therefore moved to a different location, it must often be placed on a cement slab and connected to utilities. The benefit of a more permanent structure is that it can be much larger, providing space for families or groups.

SOURCE: www.blueridgelogcabins.com

Figure 22—Modular Cabins

Adventure Trail Concept

Lodging options can be spaced out in 5–15-mile increments and tailored to provide unique, multi-day experiences. Guests hike from lodge to lodge on the trail network to best experience the natural landscape.

There is a possibility to use the Wood Hills as a basecamp and have guests travel up and down the Humboldt Range between lodging options.

CASE STUDIES

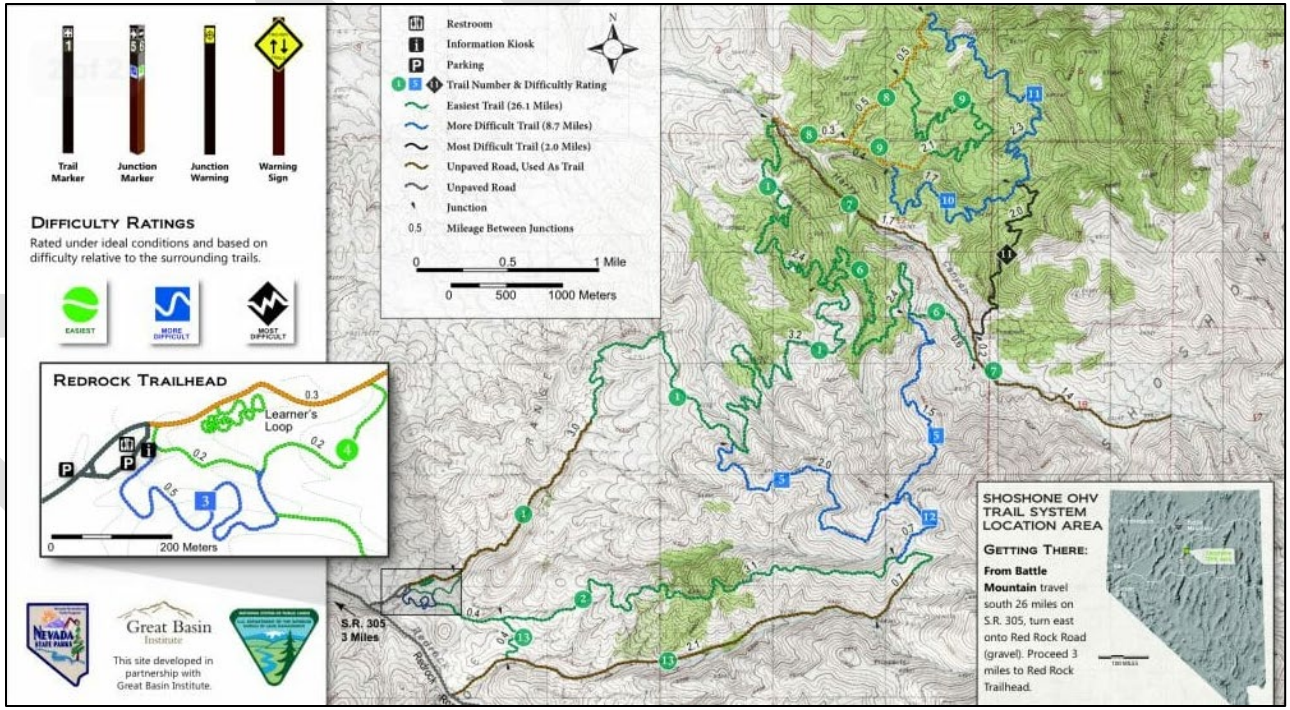
This section provides case studies of two trail networks in northern Nevada.

SHOSHONE TRAIL SYSTEM (BATTLE MOUNTAIN)

The Shoshone trail system, located 26 miles south of Battle Mountain, has approximately 60 miles of maintained OHV routes for vehicles less than 50 inches wide. When fully built out, the network will encompass 184 miles of trails for ATV and UTVS as well as trails for jeeps and larger trucks.

The system has three difficulty levels that are signed throughout, as well as a warmup loop and kids loop just off the staging area. There is a vault toilet and informational kiosk at the entrance, as well as camping allowed across the site.

The Shoshone Trail System is Nevada's first professionally designed off-road vehicle trail system. It was designed by Dick Dufourd (RecConnect) and took seven years of planning and deep collaboration between the BLM, Great Basin Institute, Lander County, Nevada State Parks, and the Northern Nevada ATV Association. The Trail was opened in 2010 with 30 miles of trails. An additional 30 miles were added on a few years later. The trail is managed by the Battle Mountain BLM field office.



Map 10—Shoshone Trail System Map

Shoshone Trail System: Key Takeaways

This trail network was only possible because of deep collaboration between a variety of parties, including the public and the private sectors. Having the trail network professionally designed seems to have been a good decision because the trail network itself is well-reviewed online.

The biggest issue for users is the lack of amenities such as gasoline, food, and water. Users must be careful to plan for a half-day trip to the system along with any food/water needs. It is also

difficult if there is an accident or emergency because the area does not have good phone service. A major difference between this trail network and the proposed network in Wells is that the land is wholly owned by BLM.

SOURCE: Nevada Off-Highway Vehicles Program

Figure 23—ATV Rider on the Shoshone Trail System

SOURCE: Joshua Oyler, www.thetrekplanner.com/shoshone-ohv-trail-system-battle-mountain-nevada/

Figure 24—Shoshone Trail System Entrance

PRISON HILL

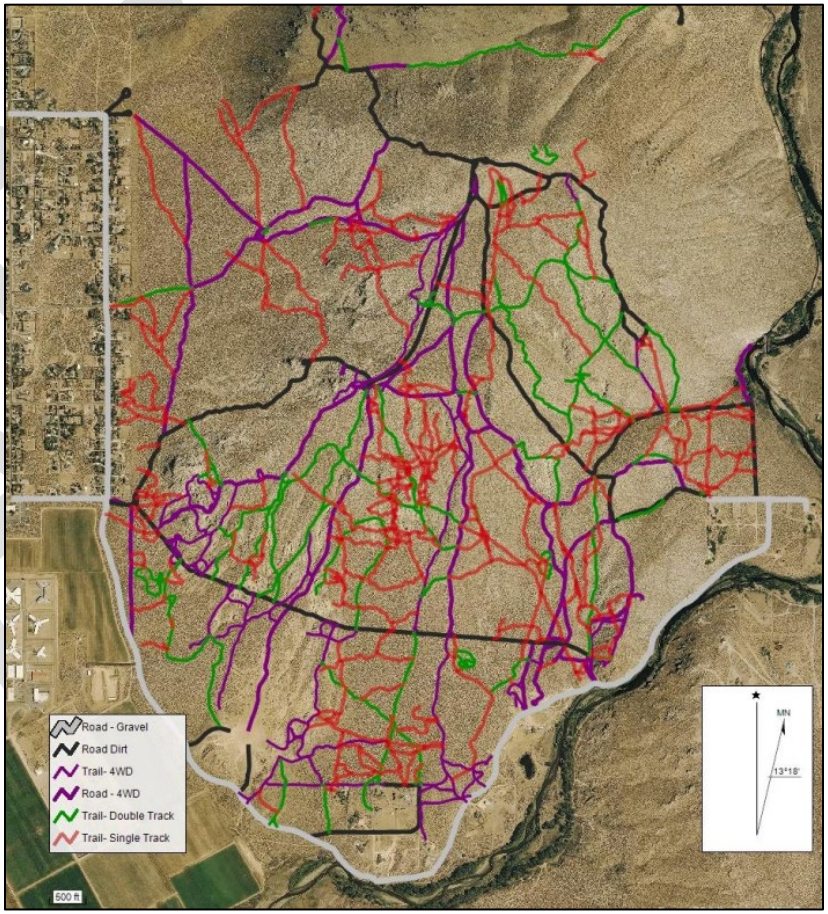
The Prison Hill recreation area, located on the east side of Carson City, was largely unmanaged during its history. Because of this, there was a proliferation of user-created trails, fall-line trails that led to erosion, and widened and braided trails resulting from a lack of maintenance (see Figure 26). There is also a wide variety of uses in the area, ranging from hikers, joggers, and dog-walkers to mountain bikers; paint-ballers to family gathers; ATVs to rock crawlers and larger stock vehicles.

Despite a lack of management, users tended to "self-regulate" uses, and the area was viewed as friendly and respective to all uses. People were also very happy that the area had no use fees.

SOURCE: Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department

Figure 25—Prison Hill OHV Area

Management of the area changed significantly because of the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009, in which the entire Prison Hill Recreation Area was transferred from BLM jurisdiction to the Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department. This allowed the city to leverage local, state, and federal funds to develop the network.



SOURCE: Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department

Figure 26—Prison Hill Maze Trail Map

Since the land was transferred to Carson City, the city has been hard at work planning, designing, and improving the space to

make it better for all users. Significant projects were started in 2018 and have continued into 2020, with activities ranging from the development of the management plan[5] in 2018 to staging area improvements, a new kiosk, a vault toilet, tot lot, and developed summit loop in 2020.

SOURCE: Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department

Figure 27—Entrance Signage for Prison Hill

Funding Sources

The Prison Hill Recreation area was funded in significant part by the Nevada OHV Commission and the Recreation Trails Program.

Prison Hill Key Takeaways

It is too early to know how well the city's investments in the Prison Hill recreation area will pay off; however, the popularity of the area notwithstanding the quality of the trails is a good indicator of what it can be once fully built out.

The City's willingness to leverage a nearby, local outdoor resource for residents and tourists should bring in considerable investment, especially with its use of grant funds to pay for a significant portion of planning, design, and implementation.

The City of Wells and its partners should borrow best practices from the Prison Hill recreation area, including allowing a wide variety of uses, leveraging local funds with grant funds, and creating a management plan to ensure the area will be sustainable into the long term.

SOURCE: Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department

Figure 28—Prison Hill views near the Summit

[5] https://www.carson.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=66612

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis provided in previous sections, the City of Wells should pursue implementation of a trail network in the Wood Hills area. Due to its premier location adjacent to the community, beautiful terrain, and multiple funding sources available through federal, state, and private sources, the City and its partners are well positioned to develop the trail network.

This section outlines strategy and implementation steps to ensure that the project is successful. While written to have the activities follow in succession, the community might need to adjust these steps according to local needs. In all cases, the community should be collaborative with the BLM, Nevada OHV, local clubs and organizations, property owners, and local stakeholders.

TRAIL NETWORK PLANNING AND DESIGN

The first step for the community will be to complete planning and design work for the Wood Hills area. The designs should be very flexible by incorporating multiple phases and alternative routes, including trails for hiking, mountain biking, ATVs, OHVs, and stock vehicles. It should also include all infrastructure improvements including RV pads, campgrounds, water infrastructure, pavilions, any other infrastructure improvements that would be necessary.

The deliverable for this step should include a 50-year plan so that the community can envision what the network could look like when it is fully built out. The State has indicated that, depending on the size and scope of the network, the State might have interest in participating in the project, including by maintaining and/or managing the network.

Maintenance and Management Planning

Regardless of how the State chooses to participate, plans should be made to address how the network will be maintained and managed. Unlike some other networks, this network will cross between public and private property, increasing the likelihood that bad actors could trigger litigation against the City and its partners. Work should be performed up front through a memorandum of understanding so that the entity managing the land is protected from legal liability from users, while at the same time holding the entity accountable for negligence or failure to perform.

Funding

Planning and design work is eligible under several of the grant programs described in the Funding Sources section of the document. To be competitive, the grantee will need explicit permission from property owners and letters of support from key stakeholders.

LAND ACQUISITION AND SURVEYING

As the trail network is getting designed, the City and its partners should work with property owners to secure purchase options or long-term easements, as detailed in the Land Acquisition Strategy section of this document.

After the trail network has been designed, the City and its partners should work with BLM (if local resources permit) or a private engineering firm to conduct environmental and cultural surveying work. It will be important to have alternative routes available in case there are cultural artifacts, raptor nesting grounds, or other impediments to development.

Phase one or desktop analysis should be performed as early as able to free up BLM resources and allow for events in the short term, before the trail network is formally built out. According to an event firm that was looking to host a one-day event in the community, the cost of doing planning and policing by the BLM made it cost-prohibitive, resulting in the firm pulling out of hosting the event. Completing the phase one should reduce or cancel these costs, allowing for events in the area using the existing built environment.

Once the land has been survey and cleared for development, purchase of property can begin. Land acquisition is an allowable expense for many grant programs, meaning that the community should not need to pay for the land outright. Having a purchase option agreement in place will significantly increase a grantor's willingness to provide funds for this activity, as well as ensure that a larger grant project does not get held up by an unwilling property owner.

Trail Construction

Construction of the trail is the most exciting step. The community should try to leverage existing resources and programs to reduce the costs and expedite the project. Construction should be performed in phases so that the network can be built and added to over time and according to local resources and demand. If possible, the network can be connected to other trails and recreation assets, building its reputation as a premier destination for OR.

Infrastructure improvements should be considered so the area becomes a destination for events and activities, using previous success to apply for additional grant funds so local resources can be leveraged and increase local ROI.

Marketing, Signage, and Events

The recreation area should be marketed heavily, especially during its first years while it still has a "WOW!" factor for locals who will be proud of their newest community asset. Word of mouth marketing should be the main driver of new users until it becomes reputable throughout the region as a destination attraction.

Signage and visibility will play a critical role in its success as a recreation area. The Wood Hills should be easy to find on high-traffic websites, as well as from the interstate as people pass by.

The City should try to host some events in the Wood Hills as well as by partnering with event organizers looking for unique amenities. The Wood Hills has a significant competitive advantage of being directly adjacent to the community, which should increase its allure for participants and event organizers alike.

Expansion and Leveraging Assets

In addition to expanding the trail network over time, the City should work to identify potential business owners and entrepreneurs who can provide services for users. This could include lodging (both traditional as well as untraditional, such as the alternative lodging concept discussed previously), dining, rental and repair services, and outfitting, to name a few.

Firms should develop naturally as a demand for services increases; however, the City should be actively promoting the opportunity for businesses, as well as willing to assist entrepreneurs in establishing a business or applying for funds. In some grant opportunities, such as the USDA's Rural Business Development Grant program, the City stands in as the applicant and can use those funds to help a business.

The City should always look for ways to leverage its resources to maximize outcomes. The OR activities themselves should be at low or no cost for users, meaning that economic development should primarily occur indirectly from the increase in support and dependent activities resulting from increased usage of the area. Minimizing upfront costs should assist the community in developing this asset while minimizing the need for local resources.

CONCLUSION

The Wood Hill recreation area is an auspicious project for the community. While some impediments are expected due to landownership concerns, the project has been well received and is supported by critical stakeholders, including the BLM, several local property owners, and the State of Nevada and its agencies.

The City should use this document as a strategy and vision for the Wood Hills area as it works with stakeholder to turn the Wood Hills area into the community's first major trail network and largest OR asset.

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