



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: September 16, 2025

DATE: August 22, 2025

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Joanne Lowden, Natural Resource Planning Coordinator,
Community Services Department, 328-2039, jlowden@washoecounty.gov

THROUGH: Aaron Smith, Operations Division Director
Community Services Department, 328-2172, aasmith@washoecounty.gov

SUBJECT: Recommendation to: 1) accept the State of Nevada, Division of State Parks, Land and Water Conservation Fund LWCF 32-00413 "Swan Lake Acquisition & Development" grant [in the amount of \$1,106,000.00 with a Washoe County cash/in-kind match in the amount of \$1,106,000.00, equaling 50% of the \$2,212,000.00 project total]; 2) approve the Project Agreement with a grant period from execution through August 4, 2028; 3) authorize the Director of the Community Services Department [Eric Crump] to sign the Project Agreement and any subsequent documents related to the grant on behalf of the County; and 4) direct Finance to make the necessary budget amendments. The LWCF grant funding will be used to purchase a 13.325-acre property located at 0 Lear Boulevard, Reno, Nevada (Assessor Parcel Number 568-100-12) for inclusion into the Swan Lake Nature Study Area. Grant funds will also be used for construction of a raised boardwalk, interpretive sign replacement, and design work for drainage improvements and restoring Horse Creek where it crosses County property. (Commission District 5.) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

SUMMARY

Washoe County has received a grant of \$1,106,000 from the State of Nevada's Land and Water Conservation Fund to expand and improve the Swan Lake Nature Study Area in Lemmon Valley subject to acceptance by the Board of County Commission (Board). With these funds the County will purchase a 13.325-acre parcel at 0 Lear Boulevard (APN 568-100-12), from Lennar Reno, LLC, for \$500,000. The Purchase and Sale Agreement is being finalized and will be placed on a future County Commission agenda. Lennar Reno, LLC has agreed to sell the land for below appraised value, effectively donating \$2,800,000 to Washoe County. This equity donation will serve as the grant's matching funds, which replaces the need for additional Washoe County capital funds. The "out-of-pocket" cost to the County will be \$6,000 in staff time. This parcel was identified as a priority for acquisition in the Swan Lake Nature Study Area Master Plan 2012 Update because it is the primary access to the park and management of the access area impacts park users.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

The grant will also fund several key improvements at Swan Lake, including building a new raised boardwalk, replacing interpretive signs, and designing plans to restore Horse Creek, which has caused repeated flooding in the area. These upgrades will expand public access, improve safety, protect wildlife habitat, and reduce long-term maintenance costs. Once complete, the improvements will ensure that Swan Lake remains a safe, accessible, and ecologically healthy space for birdwatching, recreation, education, and community enjoyment for years to come.

This item recommends the Board of County Commissioners:

- 1) accept the State of Nevada, Division of State Parks, Land and Water Conservation Fund LWCF 32-00413 “Swan Lake Acquisition & Development” grant;
- 2) approve the Project Agreement with a grant period from execution through August 4, 2028;
- 3) authorize the Director of the Community Services Department [Eric Crump] to sign the Project Agreement and any subsequent documents related to the grant on behalf of the County; and
- 4) direct Finance to make the necessary budget amendments.

Strategic Objective supported by this item: Fiscal Sustainability – Long Term Sustainability.

PREVIOUS ACTION

September 25, 2012 – The Board of County Commissioners adopted the Swan Lake Nature Study Area Master Plan 2012 Update.

BACKGROUND

The Swan Lake Nature Study Area (SLNSA), located in Lemmon Valley, provides public access to Swan Lake for wildlife and bird viewing in addition to providing recreational facilities. The SLNSA includes a parking area, portable restroom, trails, outdoor classroom, interpretive signage, and a floating boardwalk. The Swan Lake Nature Study Area Master Plan was adopted in 1997 with subsequent updates in 2000 and 2012. The Board of County Commissioners adopted the Swan Lake Nature Study Area Master Plan Update on September 25, 2012. Goals identified in the master plan include enhancing wildlife habitat, protecting water quality, continuing collaborative partnerships, long-term protection of open space, providing passive recreation opportunities, fostering community support, and providing community education. The Master Plan identifies the adjacent 13.325-acre privately owned parcel (APN: 568-100-12) as a priority for acquisition to include as part of the SLNSA. The main access road and parking area for the SLNSA cross through this private parcel under an existing temporary access easement. The access road runs parallel to Horse Creek which is experiencing historically high flows due to stormwater runoff and other inputs which are expected to increase with continuing development in the area. For the last 5-10 years, flooding from the Horse Creek channel has damaged infrastructure in the SLNSA.

Washoe County Parks partnered with the Nevada Land Trust (NLT) to negotiate the purchase of the adjacent parcel owned by Lennar Reno, LLC. A standard appraisal was

completed in July 2023 by certified appraiser, Anthony Wren, that valued the property at \$3,918,000.00. Lennar Reno, LLC indicated that they were willing to sell the property for \$500,000.00 and donate the remaining property value to Washoe County Parks. Washoe County Parks pursued a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant to support the purchase of the property and other site improvements. The LWCF grant application required an appraisal that meets the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition, commonly known as “Yellow Book” standards and a review of the Yellow Book appraisal by a certified third party. Valbridge Property Advisors completed the Yellow Book appraisal in February 2025 and valued the property at \$3,830,000.00. The appraisal was reviewed by Washoe County qualified and federally certified appraiser, Mark Warren, who found the appraisal report was credible and met the applicable standards.

The LWCF grant funding will be used to purchase the 13.325-acre parcel, to complete design and construction of a raised boardwalk to access the outdoor classroom from the parking lot, to update and replace existing interpretive signage, and to design and permit flood mitigation and restoration of Horse Creek. Goals for the Horse Creek restoration include ensuring ecological health, improving habitat diversity, and long-term sustainability of the creek and park infrastructure. Mitigating annual flooding from Horse Creek will help preserve existing recreational infrastructure such as the access road, parking lot, outdoor classroom, and trails. Additional funding will be sought to implement the Horse Creek restoration project after design and permitting are complete.

The LWCF grant requires a match of 50% (\$1,106,000.00) of the project total (\$2,212,000.00). Matching funds include \$6,000.00 in staff time for project management and implementation, and \$1,100,000.00 in-kind match through a property value donation. Lennar Reno, LLC is selling the property to Washoe County Parks at less than the appraised value. The difference between the Yellow Book appraised value (\$3,830,000.00) and the purchase price (\$500,000.00) of the property will be donated to Washoe County Parks (\$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. LWCF grant rules specify that the donated property value counted as match for the grant cannot exceed the total amount of grant funds requested.

GRANT AWARD SUMMARY

Project/Program Name: Swan Lake Acquisition & Development

Scope of the Project: The project scope includes acquisition of a 13.325-acre property (Assessor’s Parcel Number 568-100-12) for inclusion into the Swan Lake Nature Study Area, construction of a raised boardwalk, interpretive sign replacement, and design work for drainage improvements and restoring Horse Creek where it crosses the property.

Benefit to Washoe County Residents: Expansion of the Swan Lake Nature Study Area and improvements to infrastructure will benefit the public by increasing accessibility and safety, providing year-round access to the site, and decreasing long-term maintenance needs. The Swan Lake Nature Study Area provides ecosystem benefits, educational and recreational opportunities, and contributes to economic development in the region.

On-Going Program Support: The grant award will be used to expand and improve infrastructure at the Swan Lake Nature Study Area. Washoe County Parks will continue to manage and maintain the Swan Lake Nature Study Area using volunteers, Park Ranger and Maintenance staff, and Parks general fund budget.

Award Amount: \$1,106,000.00

Grant Period: Date of fully executed agreement through August 4, 2028

Funding Source: Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Pass Through Entity: State of Nevada, Division of State Parks

CFDA Number: 15.916

Grant ID Number: LWCF 32-00413

Match Amount and Type: The LWCF grant requires a match of 50% (\$1,106,000.00) of the project total (\$2,212,000.00). Matching funds include \$6,000.00 in staff time for project management and implementation, and \$1,100,000.00 in-kind match through a property value donation. Lennar Reno, LLC is selling a property to Washoe County at less than the appraised value. 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. LWCF grant rules specify that the donated property value counted as match for the grant cannot exceed the total amount of grant funds requested.

Sub-Awards and Contracts: Contracts will be awarded for design of the raised boardwalk, construction of the raised boardwalk, design for drainage improvements and restoration of Horse Creek, and design and fabrication of interpretive sign panels. All contract purchases will follow Washoe County procurement guidelines and grant procurement regulations.

FISCAL IMPACT

Should the board accept this grant award and approve these amendments, the FY26 Parks Capital Fund (404) budget will be increased by \$1,106,000.00 in both revenues and expenditure in the following accounts:

Cost Object & Description	G/L Account & Description	Amount
IO-12579 – Swan Lake Acquisition & Development	431100 – Federal Grant Revenue	\$1,106,000.00
IO-12579 – Swan Lake Acquisition & Development	818000 - Intrafund Transfer	\$1,106,000.00
PK906059 – Swan Lake Acquisition & Development	818000 - Intrafund Transfer	(\$1,106,000.00)
PK906059 – Swan Lake Acquisition & Development	781080 - Construction Contracts	\$250,000.00
PK906059– Swan Lake Acquisition & Development	710325 – Signs & Markers	\$32,000.00
PK906059– Swan Lake Acquisition & Development	710100 – Consultant Services	\$324,000.00
PK906059– Swan Lake Acquisition & Development	781000 – Land Acquisition	\$500,000.00

The FY26 budget supports a match amount of \$6,000.00 in staff time from Open Space and Natural Resources (140405), Trails Program (140410), and Engineering & Ops Support (105501). Lennar Reno, LLC is selling a property to Washoe County at less than the appraised value. 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 by Lennar Reno, LLC. The in-kind value of the property donation [\$3,330,000.00] will be used to meet the remaining match requirement of \$1,100,000.00 for a total match of \$1,106,000.00.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners: 1) accept the State of Nevada, Division of State Parks, Land and Water Conservation Fund LWCF 32-00413 “Swan Lake Acquisition & Development” grant [in the amount of \$1,106,000.00 with a Washoe County cash/in-kind match in the amount of \$1,106,000.00, equaling 50% of the \$2,212,000.00 project total]; 2) approve the Project Agreement with a grant period from execution through August 4, 2028; 3) authorize the Director of the Community Services Department [Eric Crump] to sign the Project Agreement and any subsequent documents related to the grant on behalf of the County; and 4) direct Finance to make the necessary budget amendments. The LWCF grant funding will be used to purchase a 13.325-acre property located at 0 Lear Boulevard, Reno, Nevada (Assessor Parcel Number 568-100-12) for inclusion into the Swan Lake Nature Study Area. Grant funds will also be used for construction of a raised boardwalk, interpretive sign replacement, and design work for drainage improvements and restoring Horse Creek where it crosses County property.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff’s recommendation, a possible motion would be: “Move to: 1) accept the State of Nevada, Division of State Parks, Land and Water Conservation Fund LWCF 32-00413 “Swan Lake Acquisition & Development” grant [in the amount of \$1,106,000.00 with a Washoe County cash/in-kind match in the amount of \$1,106,000.00, equaling 50% of the \$2,212,000.00 project total]; 2) approve the Project Agreement with a grant period from execution through August 4, 2028; 3) authorize the Director of the Community Services Department [Eric Crump] to sign the Project Agreement and any subsequent documents related to the grant on behalf of the County; and 4) direct Finance to make the necessary budget amendments. The LWCF grant funding will be used to purchase a 13.325-acre property located at 0 Lear Boulevard, Reno, Nevada (Assessor Parcel Number 568-100-12) for inclusion into the Swan Lake Nature Study Area. Grant funds will also be used for construction of a raised boardwalk, interpretive sign replacement, and design work for drainage improvements and restoring Horse Creek where it crosses County property.”