



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: July 8, 2025

DATE: June 6, 2025

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Joanne Lowden, Natural Resource Planning Coordinator,
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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, Recreational Trails Program RTP 2025-11 "Sierra Front Trail Construction" grant [in the amount of \$275,048.62 with a Washoe County cash/in-kind match in the amount of \$68,762.16, equaling 20% of the \$343,810.78 project total]; and 2) approve the Project Agreement with a grant period from execution through September 30, 2027; and 3) authorize the Assistant County Manager [Dave Solaro] to sign the Project Agreement and any subsequent documents related to the grant on behalf of the County; and 4) direct the Department of Finance to make the necessary budget amendments. This section of the Sierra Front Trail will connect from the Michael D. Thompson Trailhead to Hunter Lake Road and includes approximately 7.7 miles of new non-motorized singletrack trail. (Commission District 1.)

SUMMARY

This item recommends acceptance of a Recreational Trails Program grant from the State of Nevada, Division of State Parks in the amount of \$275,048.62, with a 20% of project total Washoe County match of \$68,762.16. The total project cost is \$343,810.78. The funding will be used to implement Phase 1 of the Sierra Front Trail Construction project which includes approximately 7.7 miles of new non-motorized singletrack trail. This section of the trail will connect from the Michael D. Thompson Trailhead to Hunter Lake Road along the Sierra Front. Future phases of the project will complete the connection of the trail from the Michael D. Thompson Trailhead to the Ballardini Ranch Trailhead for a total of 13.1 miles.

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

PREVIOUS ACTION

May 13, 2025 - The Board of County Commissioners (Board) acknowledged the receipt of the Truckee Meadows Regional Trails Plan, developed by Truckee Meadows Trails Initiative, which included the Sierra Front Trail as a Regionally Significant Trail.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

November 19, 2024 – The Board approved a Public Trail Easement Deed and Maintenance Agreement between Washoe County and Hunter Creek – Reno Owner, LLC to allow Washoe County to construct and maintain a portion of the Sierra Front Trail and allow public use of the trail through Parcel 2-A of the Ridges at Hunter Creek Phase 2 – Unit 1 Subdivision Tract Map No. 5495, Assessor’s Parcel Number 041-671-04. The easement area consists of 13,134 square feet and is relocatable to the as-built location of the trail after construction is complete. Approximately 0.17-miles of trail will be constructed in the easement area [for an estimated cost of \$8,000.00].

September 25, 2024 - The Open Space and Regional Park Commission recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to approve and adopt the Truckee Meadows Regional Trails Plan.

August 27, 2024 – The Board approved a Public Trail Easement Deed and Maintenance Agreement between Washoe County and Caughlin Ranch Homeowner’s Association to allow Washoe County to construct and maintain a portion of the Sierra Front Trail and allow public use of the trail through two undeveloped common areas in the Juniper Trails subdivision, Assessor’s Parcel Numbers 220-011-03 and 220-011-11. The easement area consists of 2.445 acres and is relocatable to the as-built location of the trail after construction is complete. Approximately 0.68-miles of trail will be constructed in the easement area for an estimated cost of \$32,000.00.

July 16, 2024 – The Board approved a Non-Funded Cost Share Agreement between Washoe County and the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest with an estimated Washoe County non-cash contribution of [\$215,510.00; \$209,310.00 in personnel costs and \$6,200.00 in light maintenance costs] over a 5-year period to allow Washoe County to maintain existing and future trails that cross both jurisdictions along the Sierra Front and to continue maintaining the Whites Creek, Thomas Creek Canyon, and Michael D. Thompson Trailheads. Open Space and Regional Parks Commission recommended this item for approval.

July 20, 2021 – The Board accepted a State of Nevada, Division of State Parks Recreational Trails Program 2021-10 “Sierra Front Trail Planning” grant [in the amount of \$74,300 with cash match in the amount of \$18,575].

December 8, 2020 – The Board accepted a State of Nevada, Division of State Parks Recreational Trails Program 2020-14 “Thomas Creek to Ballardini Ranch Connector Trail” grant [in the amount of \$40,000 with a Washoe County cash match in the amount of \$10,000].

May 28, 2013 – The Board adopted and recorded a resolution accepting real property for use as a public trailhead and trail corridor within the Ridges at Hunter Creek Subdivision (currently identified as APN 041-661-13, totaling 0.57 acres) for use as a non-motorized public trailhead and trail corridor.

July 26, 2005 – The Board approved an agreement between Washoe County and David J. and Claudia Ann Thompson Family Trust and Ridges Investment, LLC, to grant an easement to Washoe County to develop the Michael D. Thompson Trailhead and Trail on a portion of the parcel currently identified as 041-650-08; and authorized the Chair to execute the associated documents.

BACKGROUND

Washoe County Parks is partnering with the Carson Ranger District of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest to construct a portion of the Sierra Front Trail which provides connections between the Thomas Creek, Ballardini Ranch, and Michael D. Thompson Trailheads. The Sierra Front Trail crosses a combination of County owned open space, public use trail easements, and Forest Service lands. The County owns and maintains the Ballardini Ranch Trailhead and maintains the Thomas Creek and Michael D. Thompson Trailheads which are owned by the Forest Service. The Board approved a Non-Funded Cost Share Agreement with the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest on July 16, 2024, that allows Washoe County to maintain both current and future sections of the Sierra Front Trail and to continue maintaining the Thomas Creek and Michael D. Thompson Trailheads.

The Board accepted a State of Nevada, Division of State Parks Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant on December 8th, 2020, to assist with completing the Sierra Front Trail connection between the Thomas Creek and Ballardini Ranch Trailheads. Construction of the 6.5-mile section connecting the Thomas Creek and Ballardini Ranch Trailheads was completed and opened to the public in June 2022. The Board approved an additional RTP grant on July 20th, 2021, to complete planning for the next section of the Sierra Front Trail connecting the Ballardini Ranch Trailhead to the Michael D. Thompson Trailhead.

The proposed trail alignment crosses several privately owned parcels where public trail easements were obtained. Washoe County Parks submitted a request to the Caughlin Ranch Homeowner's Association for a public trail easement through two undeveloped common area parcels in the Juniper Trails subdivision (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 220-011-03 and 220-011-11). The Public Trail Easement Deed and Maintenance Agreement was approved by the Caughlin Ranch Homeowner's Association Board on July 24, 2024, and subsequently approved by the Board of County Commissioners on August 27, 2024.

Washoe County Parks provided conditions of approval for Amendment of Conditions Case Number WAC22-001 and Special Use Permit Case Number WSUP22-0007 (Ridges at Hunter Creek Phases 1 & 2) which were approved by the planning commission on June 7, 2022. The conditions of approval required the applicant to dedicate a 15' wide, non-motorized, multi-use, public trail easement through Assessor's Parcel Number 041-671-04 to Washoe County for construction of the Sierra Front Trail. The Public Trail Easement Deed and Maintenance Agreement was approved by the Board of County Commissioners on November 19, 2024.

The Carson Ranger District of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest signed the Decision Memo approving this section of the Sierra Front Trail on May 29, 2025. The final trail alignment includes 13.1-miles of multi-use singletrack trail and 4 proposed bridge crossings connecting the Michael D. Thompson Trailhead to the Ballardini Ranch Trailhead.

The Recreational Trails Program grant funding will be used to implement Phase 1 of the Sierra Front Trail Construction project which includes approximately 7.7 miles of new

non-motorized singletrack trail. This section of the trail will connect from the Michael D. Thompson Trailhead to Hunter Lake Road along the Sierra Front. Future phases of the project will complete the connection of the trail from the Michael D. Thompson Trailhead to the Ballardini Ranch Trailhead for a total of 13.1 miles.

GRANT AWARD SUMMARY

Project/Program Name: Sierra Front Trail Construction

Scope of the Project: The project scope includes construction of approximately 7.7 miles of new non-motorized singletrack trail connecting from the Michael D. Thompson Trailhead to Hunter Lake Road.

Benefit to Washoe County Residents: Construction of this section of the Sierra Front Trail is the next phase in completing a regionally significant trail connection along the Sierra Front. The new trail will provide additional non-motorized recreation opportunities for the public and contribute to economic development in the region.

On-Going Program Support: The grant award will be used to construct a section of the Sierra Front Trail. Washoe County Parks will manage and maintain the Sierra Front Trail system using volunteers, infrastructure preservation funds, trails program funds, and dedicated parks staff including the Trails Program Coordinator and Natural Resource Field Technician.

Award Amount: \$275,048.62

Grant Period: Date of fully executed agreement through September 30, 2027

Funding Source: Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

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

CFDA Number: 20.219

Grant ID Number: RTP 2025-11

Match Amount and Type: Matching funds include \$6,000.00 in-kind staff time for project management and implementation, and \$62,762.16 cash match. The Recreational Trails Program grant requires a match of 20% of the project total (\$343,810.78).

Sub-Awards and Contracts: A construction contract will be awarded to complete 7.7 miles of new singletrack trail. 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 \$275,048.62 in both revenues and expenditures in the following accounts:

| Cost Object & Description | G/L Account & Description | Amount |
|--|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| IO-12548 – Sierra Front Trail Construction | 431100 – Federal Grant Revenue | \$275,048.62 |
| IO-12548 – Sierra Front Trail Construction | 818000 - Intrafund Transfer | \$275,048.62 |
| PK906058 – Sierra Front Trail Construction | 818000 - Intrafund Transfer | (\$275,048.62) |
| PK906058 – Sierra Front Trail Construction | 781080 - Construction Contracts | \$275,048.62 |

The FY26 budget supports the total match amount of \$68,762.16. Match includes \$6,000.00 in staff time from Open Space and Natural Resources (140405) and Trails Program (140410). Match will also include \$62,762.16 from the Ballardini Loop Trails WC-1 (PK052111), Construction Contracts (781080).

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners 1) accept the State of Nevada, Division of State Parks, Recreational Trails Program RTP 2025-11 “Sierra Front Trail Construction” grant [in the amount of \$275,048.62 with a Washoe County cash/in-kind match in the amount of \$68,762.16, equaling 20% of the \$343,810.78 project total]; and 2) approve the Project Agreement with a grant period from execution through September 30, 2027; and 3) authorize the Assistant County Manager [Dave Solaro] to sign the Project Agreement and any subsequent documents related to the grant on behalf of the County; and 4) direct the Department of Finance to make the necessary budget amendments. This section of the Sierra Front Trail will connect from the Michael D. Thompson Trailhead to Hunter Lake Road and includes approximately 7.7 miles of new non-motorized singletrack trail.

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, Recreational Trails Program RTP 2025-11 “Sierra Front Trail Construction” grant [in the amount of \$275,048.62 with a Washoe County cash/in-kind match in the amount of \$68,762.16, equaling 20% of the \$343,810.78 project total]; and 2) approve the Project Agreement with a grant period from execution through September 30, 2027; and 3) authorize the Assistant County Manager [Dave Solaro] to sign the Project Agreement and any subsequent documents related to the grant on behalf of the County; and 4) direct the Department of Finance to make the necessary budget amendments. This section of the Sierra Front Trail will connect from the Michael D. Thompson Trailhead to Hunter Lake Road and includes approximately 7.7 miles of new non-motorized singletrack trail.”