

Integrating Federal Lands in a Trail System surrounding Antelope Valley, Northern Mono County, CA

Description

Formalize a trail system in the Antelope Valley area encouraging access to Federal Lands.

The local trail network described is located along the western and eastern sides of the Valley and is well buffered from existing residential areas.

- Preparation of a map of the local trails for visitor distribution. Make available a Strenuous Index (length of trail and total height difference).
- Designate trailheads.
- Signage¹ intermittently along trails.
- Create informal parking perimeters at designated trailheads.
- Delineate several new routes to tie existing trails together and divert foot and horse traffic off roads.
- Restore some older overgrown trails.
- Easement creation on willing-sellers private land.

Motivation for the Project

Mono County has seen a big increase in summertime tourism over the past few years. Antelope Valley offers a potential area to extend the spring/summer/fall tourism season. Many areas are snow free for ten months out of the year and fall colors peak 2 to 3 weeks after the higher elevation colors are gone. Fishing is now permissible year-round on the West Walker River.

Easy access to public lands on established trails will provide health benefits for both visitors and local residents.

Help the local tourist-based economy flourish by providing direction to self-guided activities to the area.

TRAILS:

A. West Walker Parkway Trail.

The existing West Walker Parkway lands (centered on Mountain Gate Park) will be improved with a trunk trail parallel with the River extending from the south end of the town of Walker at Eastside Ln. This route has received local community planning approval. The route will run southerly upstream approximately one mile to the northern reaches of the

¹ Signage, both small trail marker signs with decals for providing guidance and larger boards with maps and information (smaller, but patterned on USFS trailheads).

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West Walker River Wildlife Area. Seasonal trail(s) from the Parkway lands will connect with BLM and Toiyabe National Forest lands to the north.

Short, radial trail spurs off the trunk trail for fishing access along the River will be encouraged.

The trunk trail surface will use aggregate rock materials from the nearby Parkway Lands owned by the County, specifically (1997 flood) gravel/sand siltation in a currently isolated dry River oxbow to provide trail base materials.

Part of the project will be for riverbank erosion protection² where the trail approaches the banks of the oxbow.

B. Upland Trails.

Minimal trail construction is necessary on these trails as in most cases there are existing legacy roads or tracks.

The sandy soil, nature of the foliage and dryness of the climate makes for ease of maintenance where the trails have common usage.

Signage, however will need to be implemented.

² Rock and tree trunk river flow diverters and planting trees atop key oxbow banks.