



## STATE OF NEVADA: ASH CANYON GATEWAY

Nevada's first Forest Legacy project, the Ash Canyon Gateway project, sits between Carson City and Lake Tahoe. A cooperative project between the USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy Program, Carson City, and the Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF), the project secures Carson City's only public motorized access from the east into Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park backcountry. Threatened by conversion to non-forest use by population growth, the Ash Canyon Gateway project supports local strategic initiatives and complements adjacent protected lands. The benefits of the project range from watershed and threatened and endangered species protection to economic, historic, and cultural benefits.



The project lands are critical habitat for **goshawk, spotted owl, bald eagle,** and a variety of **squirrel** species.

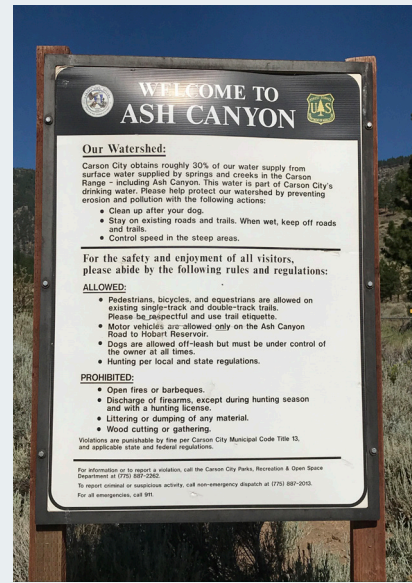

The 111 acres of the Ash Canyon Gateway project are among the most visible in the Carson Range from the valley floor. This viewshed is considered critical by the city, but more than the view was threatened by residential development. In addition, the private sale of this parcel would have limited public access to the backcountry of Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park. Furthermore, the project lands have a Wildland Urban Interface Hazard Rating of 'extreme' under the local Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and fire history along the Carson front makes clear the importance of proper management. Without the conservation plan in place from NDF, the project lands were at greater risk from the threat of wildfire.

Ash Canyon Gateway is a textbook example of successful and strategic collaboration. Since 1996, Carson City has managed an Open Space program aimed at preserving the scenic landscape of the city as well as access to recreation. Open space lands

also provide environmental benefits, including watershed protection, reforestation, flood attenuation, and wildlife habitat. The Ash Canyon Gateway lands were designated priority by the Carson City Open Space plan, and Carson City Open Space provided the 25% match necessary to acquire the property. Surrounding land owners, Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park and the USDA Forest Service Carson Ranger District, supported the acquisition as increased public access through Ash Canyon leverages the recreation benefits of the adjacent lands to the public.



The project is located at the headwaters of one of the domestic water sources for Carson City. As such, watershed protection is one key environmental benefit. Public access to recreation, secured in perpetuity, is another key benefit. It also preserves a high elevation mixed conifer forest that is only found in Nevada along a short length of the Carson Range. The Carson Range harbors the greatest

The area is key winter range for mule deer and provides a temporary home to black bears, mountain lions, bobcats, and numerous game birds.

species diversity of any mountain range in Nevada. The project lands also have cultural value as the site of numerous Basque arborglyphs, dating to the early twentieth century and carved by sheepherders into aspen nearly two-hundred years old.

Partnerships between the landowners and key agencies, from nonprofits

to local government, were critical to the success of the Ash Canyon Gateway project. Protecting, in perpetuity, expanded public access to Nevada's Lake Tahoe backcountry is a tremendous success for the Forest Legacy Program in the State of Nevada.



### AT-A-GLANCE

-  Tract size **111 acres**.
-  Protects expanded **public access** to the backcountry of Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park.
-  Nevada's first **Forest Legacy project**, sits between Carson City and Lake Tahoe.
-  Located at the headwaters of one of the domestic water sources for Carson City, **watershed protection** is a key environmental benefit.
-  Without the conservation plan in place, the project lands were at greater risk from the threat of **wildfire**.
-  **Muscle Powered**, a local nonprofit focused on pedestrian and bike advocacy, provided support to the project.

**Top L:** The eastern side of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range is typically dry as exemplified in this photo. The Ash Canyon Project helps conserve Nevada's watershed and riparian ecosystem in a highly developed corridor. (Photo: Michelle Roberts); **Middle L:** A hiker enjoys the trail that has a riparian ecosystem on one side and the sagebrush step ecosystem on the other side. (Photo: Michelle Roberts); **Top R:** Sign welcomes recreationists as they approach the Canyon on a dirt road leading West out of Carson City. (Photo: Michelle Roberts); **Middle R:** Sagebrush, tobacco brush, willows, and Jeffrey's pine are some of the vegetation that greets visitors. (Photo: Michelle Roberts)

For more information, visit  
<http://forestry.nv.gov/forestry-resources/forest-legacy/>.