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**Western Rivers Conservancy Conveys 1,627-Acre Lower Carson Ranch to  
Nevada State Parks**

*Historic ranch along 4.5 miles of the Carson River to become new state park, conserving habitat  
for fish and wildlife and opening riverfront access to the public*



*Lower Carson Ranch is a ribbon of green in the Carson Desert.  
(Credit: Teddy Miller/Western Rivers Conservancy)*

**LYON COUNTY, NV** (July 1, 2026)—A 4.5-mile stretch of the lower Carson River is now permanently protected following Western Rivers Conservancy’s conveyance of the 1,627-acre Lower Carson Ranch to Nevada State Parks. The transfer conserves important riparian habitat for fish and wildlife while creating a new state park at the edge of Dayton and opening the riverfront to the public.

“This new State Park is an investment in Nevada’s future and a commitment to preserving the natural beauty that makes our state unique,” said **Nevada Governor Joe Lombardo**. “By protecting this remarkable landscape and expanding public access, we are ensuring that future generations of Nevadans and visitors alike can experience, explore, and appreciate this special place for years to come.”

“We are overjoyed to work with Nevada State Parks to protect this remarkable reach of the Carson River, which provides clean water and important habitat for native fish and vulnerable wildlife,” said **Susanna Danner, a project manager for Western Rivers Conservancy**. “Opening a

new state park will provide access to water and green space for people in Reno, Carson City and Dayton, and outdoor classroom opportunities for a neighboring elementary school.”

The Carson River originates high in the Sierra Nevada south of Lake Tahoe and flows 236 miles across the Great Basin before reaching the Carson Desert.

Lower Carson Ranch includes extensive riparian habitat, green pastures and upland sagebrush steppe. It is a ribbon of green in an otherwise arid landscape and an oasis for a rich assemblage of fish and wildlife, including mountain whitefish, Lahontan redband shiner, Tahoe sucker, mule deer, waterfowl, bobcat, mountain lion, wild turkey and neotropical songbirds. The property lies approximately six miles upstream from the Carson River Delta Important Bird Area.

The creation of the new state park expands public access to 4.5 miles of the Carson River in an area where such access was highly limited. The park also preserves slices of Nevada history from the late 1800s and early 1900s, encompassing portions of the California and Pony Express national historic trails. During the 1940s, part of the property operated as a divorce ranch, a uniquely Nevada industry made possible by the state's lenient divorce laws, which required only a six-week residency before a divorce could be granted.

“As western Nevada continues to grow, protecting places like this stretch of the Carson River becomes increasingly important,” said **Nelson Mathews, president of Western Rivers Conservancy**. “We are proud to have helped create Nevada’s newest state park, which will help preserve one of the Carson River’s last cottonwood corridors while creating new public access along four-and-a-half miles of river. This will give people a place to reconnect with the outdoors close to home and protect habitat for birds, bats, mule deer and other wildlife that depend on the river.”

This is Western Rivers Conservancy’s second conservation project in the Carson River basin. The organization is also currently working to conserve the 1,688-acre Park Ranch on the East Fork Carson River upstream in California, which will protect 1.6 miles of river and important mountain meadow habitat in the High Sierra.

### **Help Choose a Name**

Nevada State Parks is inviting the public to help name the state’s newest State Park. Beginning July 1, 2026, members of the public will be able to submit name suggestions through an online survey. The naming process is open to all members of the public, and Nevada State Parks encourages participation from individuals, families, community organizations, and visitors who have a connection to Nevada's public lands. [Access an interactive map and guide about the park here.](#)

“State Parks belong to all of us, and we wanted to give the public a meaningful role in shaping the identity of this new park,” said **Nevada State Parks Administrator Jonathan Brunjes**. “This is a unique opportunity for Nevadans to leave a lasting mark on the future of their State Park system.

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### **Assets**

[Newest State Park Website](#) (Going live on July 1, 2026 at 12:00am)

[Interactive Map, Guide, and Naming Survey](#)

[Drone Footage and Photos](#)

### **About Western Rivers Conservancy**

Western Rivers Conservancy's motto is "Sometimes to save a river, you have to buy it." WRC purchases land along the West's finest rivers and streams to conserve habitat for fish and wildlife, protect key sources of cold water and create public access for all to enjoy. WRC has created sanctuaries for fish and wildlife and secured recreational access along more than 260 rivers and streams around the West. Its approach to river conservation is effective, tangible and permanent. More information can be found at [westernrivers.org](http://westernrivers.org).

### **About Nevada State Parks**

The Nevada Division of State Parks plans, develops and maintains a system of parks and recreation areas for the use and enjoyment of more than 4 million visitors a year. The division was established in 1963 by the Nevada Legislature to form a new state park agency within the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The division manages and maintains 28 parks, historic sites and recreation areas in Nevada. Learn more at <https://parks.nv.gov>.