

Keep Washoe Wild!

Peavine Mountain

An Island Surrounded by Development – in Distress

Peavine Mountain is being loved to death. Peavine Mountain juts out of the Sierra Nevada Mountains like a peninsula into a sea of urbanization. It is the backdrop for almost 400,000 residents who appreciate the mountain's close proximity to their homes for mountain biking, 4-wheeling, hiking, jogging, motorcycling, extreme jeeping, bouldering, rock climbing, bird watching, and botanizing. Mountain bikers host events on the mountain. Bicycle shops, the Gazette Journal, and tourism tout its trails. The mountain's prominence is imbedded in resident culture as in "Don't plant your tomatoes until the snow is off Peavine."

Peavine Mountain ("Peavine" to most) is located in North Reno, northwest of UNR campus and adjoining Ranch San Rafael Regional Park. Peavine Mountain encompasses roughly 48,000 acres. The Forest Service manages only 18,000 acres. The balance of the property is privately owned, but enjoyed as if it were public.

Peavine Peak is 8,260 ft. above sea level, nearly 3,800 ft. above downtown Reno. There are about 200 miles of existing roads and trails.



Photo by Catherine Smith.



Photo by Kurt Kuznicki.

Highlights:

- For most users of Peavine, it is an easily accessible playground and is accessible from every direction. There are entrances at Kings Row, Keystone, Raleigh Heights, Horizon Hills and Poeville Rd. There are about 200 miles of roads and trails and virtually no limit on off-road activity.
- In 1992 the Nevada Native Plant Society published a two-part journal on Peavine's geology, history, plants, birds, mammals, and climate. Peavine hosts a diverse ecosystem of Sierra Nevada and Great Basin biota. For instance, there are islands of Sierran pine trees. Peavine has a wide diversity of plants because of a range of natural communities based on soil and climate and, increasingly, based on disturbance.
- Deer continue to use Peavine though their current distribution and population is somewhat unknown as a result of population growth, recreation, and plant disturbance.

- The limited riparian areas are essential for plants and wildlife and enjoyment of people.

Issues Facing the Future of Peavine

- Development of the approximately 30,000 acres of private lands. For instance, Peavine Pines LLC has been requesting development through the city of Reno for 1,300 acres. Presumably all private lands are potentially developable.
- Fire has burned most of the lower slopes and in some cases higher up. Where fire has occurred, the vegetation is dominated by cheat grass, which has also invaded higher slopes. With drought, and increasing population, more fires are likely, with some of them human-caused.
- A motorized vehicle plan was approved in 2005. The goal was to close 75 miles of roads and trails and keep more than 100 miles of existing roads and trails open. Thirty-six miles of two-track road would be open for off-road vehicles. However, there is little to no enforcement of this provision and an increasing number of slopes are being scarred by continual use. Mountain bikers also continue to create more trails. "Tracks lead everywhere, across sensitive meadows, up and down slopes so steep that a single wheel rut can erode into a gully." RGJ.10/02/2002

Actions Needed:

- Acquire land, conservation easements, trails or parks within and around Peavine.
- Develop and implement a fire management policy including management of motorized vehicles to minimize fire potential; prohibit any outdoor fires; etc.
- Work out a cooperative agreement with Washoe County Parks and Open Space and/or City of Reno to manage urban interface to eradicate weeds and to provide oversight on roads and trails.
- Create an education and management program for all users.

Washoe County District 3, Kitty Jung, Commissioner

Keep Washoe Wild

A Project of Friends of Nevada Wilderness, Scenic Nevada, and the
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