

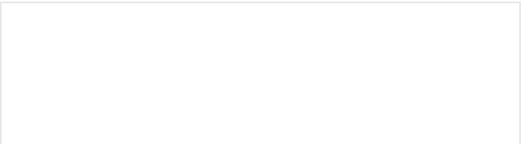
Plan aims to open public trails, make St. Helena more walkable

JESSE DUARTE jduarte@sthelenastar.com
Jan 25, 2023



A view of Bell Canyon Reservoir from one of the city's walking trails. A new report recommends allowing public access to trails at Bell Canyon and the Lower Reservoir.
Submitted photo

A plan to make St. Helena more walkable and expand access to public trails is coming to the Planning Commission and City Council.



“There’s more to do in St. Helena than just drink wine and sit in a restaurant,” said David Knudsen, a former City Council member who serves on the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Walking Routes, Trails, and Publicly Accessible Open Space. “It turns out the city has a lot of property that could be opened up to the public.”



St. Helena Trails and Open Space Plan

The Parks & Recreation Commission formed the committee in 2019, and **the committee's report** is the product of 2 1/2 years of work. (It doesn’t address sidewalks, which the city handles separately.)

The report encourages new development to include a public walking component, with the city assuming liability. It also endorses opening trails on public land – some of which the public already uses without legal sanction.

Proposed sites include the Lower Reservoir along Spring Mountain Road, Wappo Park near College Avenue, and Bell Canyon, where there are two underused trails on city property overlooking the reservoir.

The report also proposes designating walking routes in places that are already accessible – for example, a route exploring St. Helena’s famous churches, and the popular vineyard walk past the library to the Napa River.

The routes in town would be publicized, but the ones at the Lower Reservoir and Bell Canyon would not, Knudsen said. He pointed to Napa County’s trail network at Lake Hennessey as an example of how hikers can use passive trails to enjoy public lands, even near a source of drinking water.

“It would be just like at Hennessey. Open sunrise to sunset, dogs have to be on leash, no smoking, and stay on the trails,” Knudsen said.

The trails on public land would be intended for pedestrians, not cyclists. Knudsen said bike trails typically need to be paved — which the report does not recommend — and dual-use pedestrian/bike trails aren’t amenable to pedestrians who are very young or very old.

The cost of implementing the plan is estimated at \$227,000 over four fiscal years. Volunteers would maintain the trails, similar to Scout Hall.

The report is tentatively scheduled to go before the Planning Commission in April.

Photos: Moore Creek Park

Moore Creek Park

Mar 20, 2015

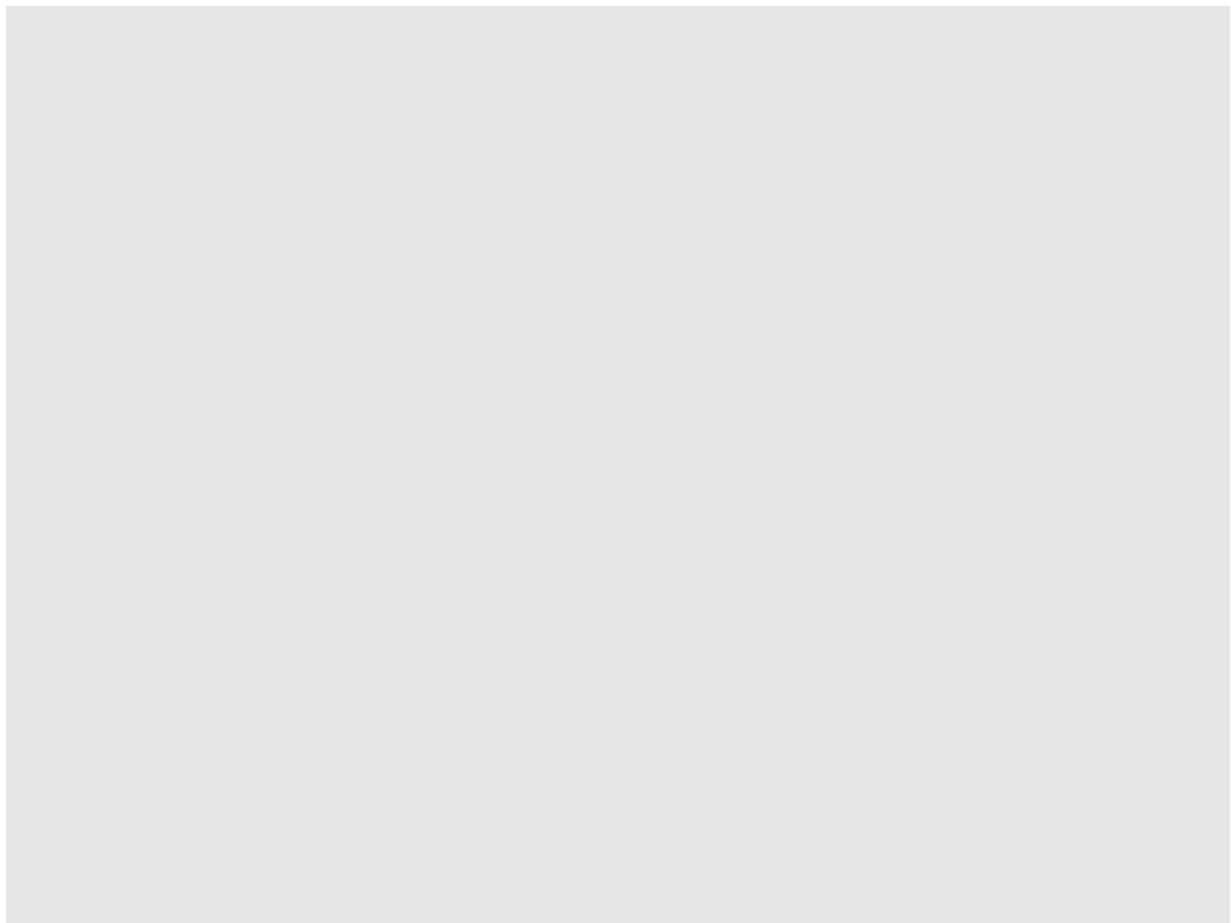


California poppies are seen along a trail in Moore Creek Park in mid-March.

J.L. Sousa/Register

Moore Creek Park

Mar 20, 2015

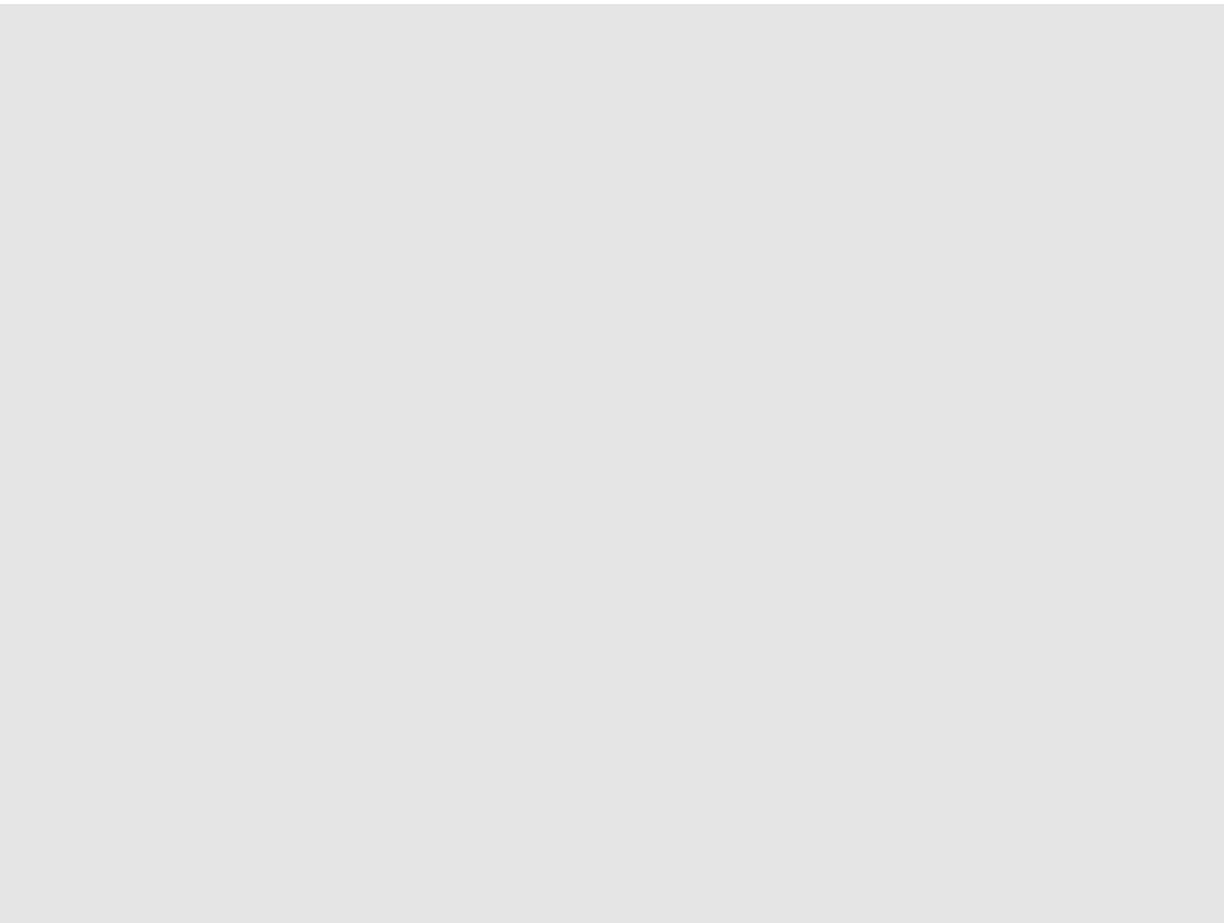


Kayakers are seen from a trail in Moore Creek Park as they enjoy some of the recent springlike weather on Lake Hennessey.

J.L. Sousa/Register

Moore Creek Park

Mar 20, 2015

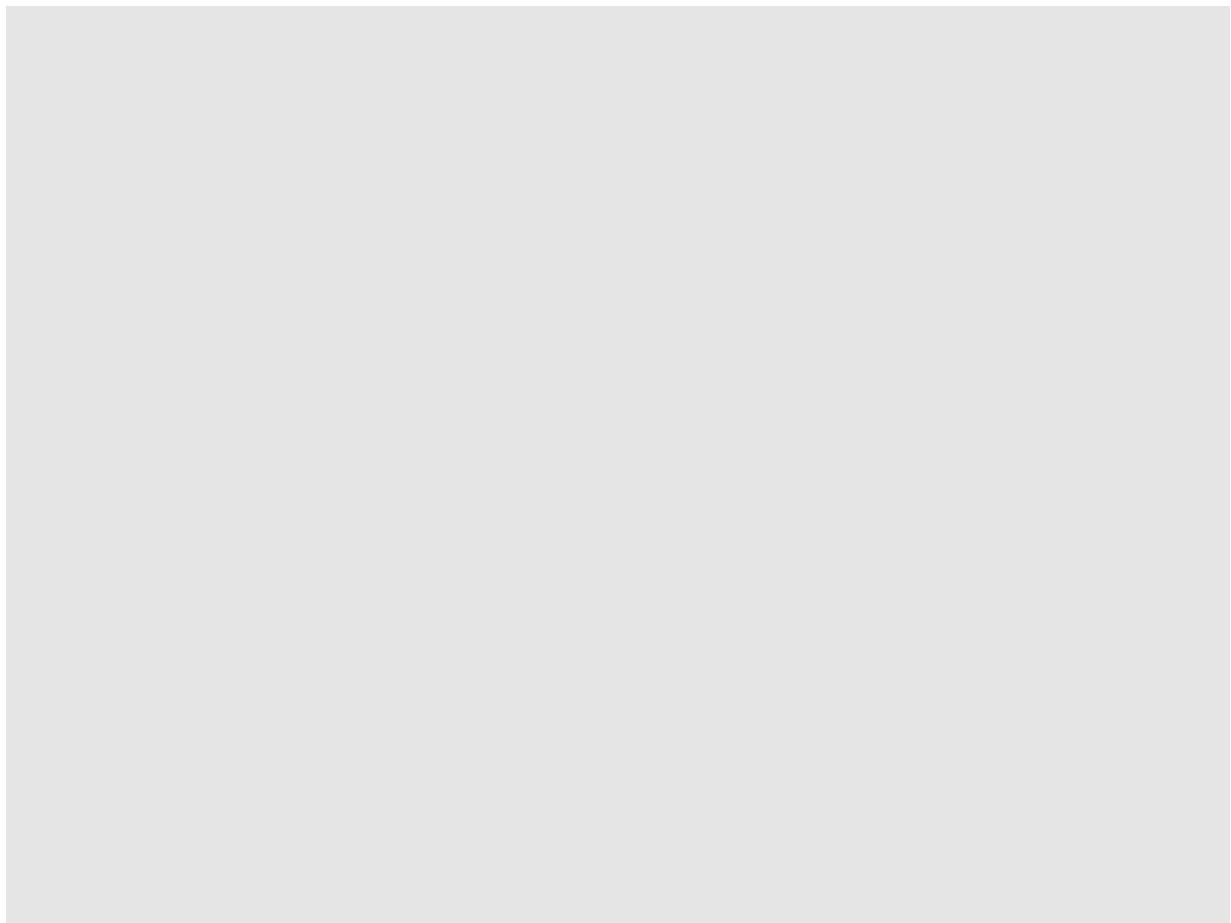


Verdant grass blankets a hillside at Moore Creek Park during a recent hike.

J.L. Sousa/St. Helena Star photos

Moore Creek Park

Mar 20, 2015

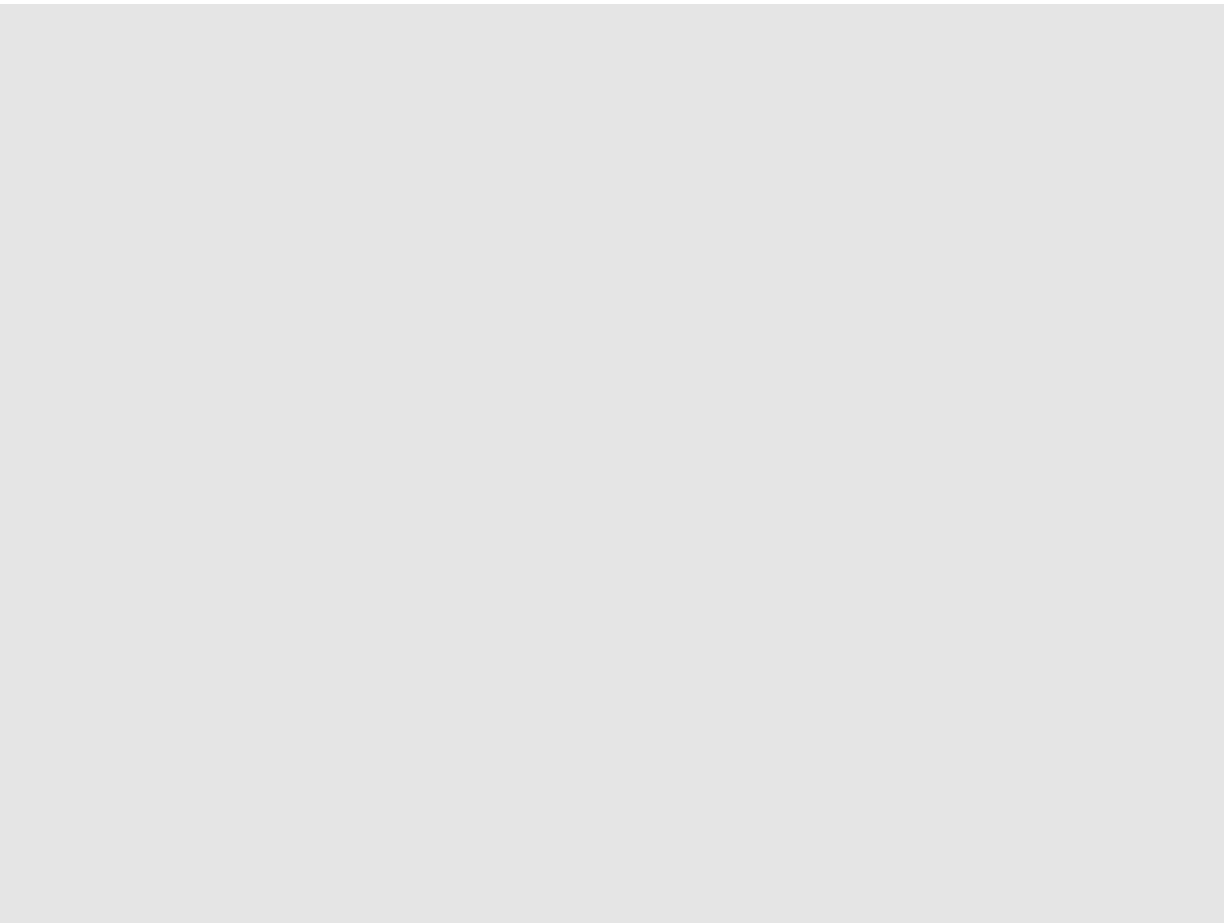


Exposed roots are seen emerging from a hillside bank along a trail at Moore Creek Park during a recent hike.

J.L. Sousa/Register

Moore Creek Park

Mar 20, 2015



A piece of tree bark, riddled with holes drilled by woodpeckers lies on the ground on a trail at Moore Creek Park.

J.L. Sousa/Register

You can reach Jesse Duarte at (707) 967-6803 or jduarte@sthelenastar.com.

MORE INFORMATION



David Garden, responsible for St. Helena’s Stonebridge Apartments, dies at 92

- St. Helena Police Log, Jan. 18-23
- New businesses coming to downtown St. Helena
- UPDATE: Water service restored after water main breaks in St. Helena
- Brush clearing underway outside St. Helena
- City of St. Helena invites grant applications
- St. Helena offers rebates for electric leaf blowers
- City of St. Helena reviews climate goals
- Letter: Make St. Helena a walker's delight
- St. Helena utility rate committee to meet Feb. 9
- St. Helena Public Library closed until Wednesday
- St. Helena roadwork gets underway
- Survey shows St. Helenans enjoy quality of life but share concerns
- St. Helena's Cleo McClain named Eagle Scout
- Commentary: Update on St. Helena trails and open space plan

⊗ By Jesse Duarte

St. Helena Star Editor

