



Johnny Cash Trail

The City of Folsom, California pays tribute to Johnny Cash with a trail of art

Lifting a major bridge into place on the Johnny Cash Trail

By Janice Kelley

The Johnny Cash Trail begins in the Historic District of Folsom, California. The trail meanders through gently rolling hillsides of dedicated open space featuring wooded areas of native oaks and wildlife habitat. In the springtime, the hills are dotted with wildflowers. The wind whistles through the oaks in late afternoon as birds hidden deep in the canyon hold a conversation.

As visitors approach the end of the Johnny Cash Trail at its intersecting point with other trails, they pass by creeks and streams, and experience unprecedented scenic views of Lake Natoma, the American River, Folsom Lake and access to the extensive American River Parkway Trail. Cyclists who connect to the American River trail can ride to the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers in downtown Sacramento.

The second phase of the Johnny Cash Trail officially opened in October 2017, the final piece needed to complete a seamless network of 60 miles of scenic trails. The City of Folsom celebrated

the grand opening of Phase I in October 2014.

Both trails offer short, easy hikes. Phase I is 1.5 miles long and Phase II extends for 1.25 miles. This multi-use trail for both cyclists and pedestrians crosses a 190-foot wood bridge spanning a deep section of the American River Canyon called Robber's Ravine.

"In order to complete our trail network, we needed to pass by Folsom State Prison. Getting the easement to allow a bicycle trail to run along a prison was a lengthy process and our biggest challenge," explained Jim Konopka, Senior Park Planner for trails in the Folsom Parks and Recreation Department.

"We also needed to keep the trail far enough away from the facility so the prison officials felt comfortable with cyclists and pedestrian traffic passing by. At the same time, we were navigating around hillsides, so we wanted to be sure the trail alignment was not too steep from an engineering standpoint." About half the trail runs alongside prison property.

The Johnny Cash Trail also accomplished another important goal for the city of Folsom— honoring the legend-

ary singer, his music, and his connection to the city. A passionate advocate for prison reform, his signature song, "Folsom Prison Blues," created worldwide name recognition for Folsom. His January 1968 concert at Folsom Prison transformed both Cash's life and that of his captive audience.

After significant deliberation and public input, the city decided to ask the Cash family if they could name the trail in his honor, while creating a world-class public art installation of seven sculptures along the trail. Roseanne Cash, his eldest daughter, came to the 2014 grand opening dedication and shared her gratitude with participants.

An \$8 million campaign is underway for the design, development, and installation of the art pieces. Sculptures will be installed at smaller parks and rest areas along the trail. A three-acre Legacy Park will be located in the Historic District and will feature a 40-foot sculpture of Johnny Cash, in addition to interpretive and educational elements and a small amphitheater.

For more information or to keep up to date on trail activities and the art installation, visit <https://folsomcasharttrail.com>.