



INSIDE	FROM THE FRONT LINES: The Power of Partnerships 2
	THANK YOU!: Agencies, Businesses and Volunteers 3
	IN THE FIELD: 2011, the Year of the Wild Refuges 4
	WILDERNESS INSPIRATION: The Wisdom of the Wild 7
	CALENDAR OF EVENTS: Friends' upcoming activities 8

Friends of Nevada Wilderness

Spring 2011

Pine Forest Range:

One Step Closer to Permanent Protection



Brian Belfort

The idyllic Pine Forest Range inspired unanimous support for wilderness by the Humboldt County Commission and NV Congressional Delegation.

The Nevada Congressional delegation is working with Humboldt County and local stakeholders to bring permanent protection to the Pine Forest Range, 100 miles northwest of Winnemucca.

Wilderness enjoys strong bipartisan support, and legislation will likely be introduced this spring. This consensus is a testament to the fact that everyone agrees the Pine Forest Range is an important natural treasure that deserves to be protected for the future.

Everyone in the Pine Forest task force—ranchers, hunters, anglers, off-road vehicle enthusiasts and

Friends of Nevada Wilderness—put aside differences and worked together to protect the place they love.

“It was fun working with people who care about the land,” says Shaaron Netherton, Friends’ executive director. “With divisive national politics, it’s heartening to see Nevadans working together to find common-ground solutions. I’m sure the Congressional delegation is thrilled.”

The proposal combined the Alder Creek and Blue Lakes wilderness study areas into a single Pine Forest Range Wilderness Area, and made a common-sense boundary everyone can support.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND

Southern Nevada

By Jose Witt

In 2002, Congress designated new wilderness in Clark County. Since then, managing agencies have gathered little data on wilderness character and trends, until now.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness and the Southern Nevada Agency Partnership—the BLM, Forest Service, National Park Service and Fish & Wildlife Service—are partnering to oversee an eight-person Student Conservation Association crew to collect consistent data on all 18 Clark County wilderness areas.

These eight young, inspired individuals from across the country hike throughout wilderness areas, recording human impacts with GPS points, photos and notes. In the process, they are learning about southern Nevada’s spectacular landscapes while providing the agencies with information to better manage our wilderness resources. Hopefully, they will be able to follow this year’s fabulous wildflower bloom north as they collect data (and good photos). This team will be true wilderness experts by year’s end, and we’re proud to know they’re ensuring the future of America’s wilderness.



FRONTLINES

OUR MISSION

Friends of Nevada Wilderness is dedicated to preserving all qualified Nevada public lands as wilderness, protecting all present and potential wilderness from ongoing threats, educating the public about the values of — and need for — wilderness, and improving the management and restoration of wild lands.

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By Shaaron Netherton

I don't know about you, but while I love the fact we've gotten records amounts of snow this year, I am ready for Spring. While we were covered with snow in the north, this year started out strong in southern Nevada with a wonderful partnership with the land management agencies that allowed Friends of Nevada Wilderness to bring on two new staff, Katie LaCroix and Jose Witt. Southern Nevada wilderness is rocking again!

As part of this partnership, our staff is working with a team of eight Student Conservation Association students who are doing wilderness character monitoring in Clark County. And speaking of youth, I can't thank the UNR and UNLV students enough for spending their spring break doing some heavy lifting for wildlife on the Desert National Wildlife Refuge.

I think 2011 will be a good one for Wilderness in Nevada—both with legal protection and on-the-ground protection.

We will continue to work hard with other stakeholders, finding common ground,

protecting the land we all love. We hope to see wilderness legislation for the Pine Forest Range moving ahead this spring.

The Douglas County bill may move forward this year protecting a small but beautiful wilderness study area, Burbank Canyons, in the Pine Nut Range.

We also hope to see legislation move forward to protect the fragile and incredible cultural resource rich Gold Butte Region. We left last year with strong support for this protection by the Clark County Commission and the city of Mesquite.

We are committed to pulling 50 miles of fence on Sheldon Refuge to help wildlife and wilderness this year. Join us. Experience the beauty of Sheldon and give back at the same time. See the list of Sheldon project dates on Page 8, and find one that works for you.

Make an Earth Day Pledge to do more for Wilderness this year. The difference you make really matters!

For the Wild,

Shaaron

Welcome Katie and Jose!

By Kurt Kuznicki

Every once in a while, as we like to say in southern Nevada, the dice roll in our favor.

I feel extremely fortunate to have two new colleagues here in southern Nevada: Jose Witt and Katie LaCroix.

Jose and Katie were brought on board in January and both make their home in southern Nevada.

Jose is a longtime southern Nevada resident and President of the Las Vegas Mountaineers Club and is planning ascents in the Cascades and wild Nevada this year.

One of Jose's duties is to encourage businesses to invest in our communities by keeping wilderness wild.



Katie comes to southern Nevada by way of New England, but don't let that fool you. Katie spent six months last year patrolling Mt Charleston as a Wilderness Ranger; she knows those hills better than a lot of long-time visitors. With her wonderful smile and big heart for wilderness-lov-

ing folks, she has taken over as our southern membership guru.

When she's not working for wilderness, Katie enjoys spending time with her boyfriend, Andy, brewing homemade beer and herding her two cats, Marley and Brewer.

Welcome, Katie and Jose, to the wild side, and thanks for your help keeping the wild in southern Nevada wilderness.



Thank you!

Volunteers, businesses and agencies

By Kurt Kuznicki

Life is full of emails, tweets, phone calls and Facebook, but these aren't enough to tell how much we appreciate the wonderful folks who work to benefit Nevada's wild heritage.

Friends is very fortunate to have great corporate partners like Zappos.com, REI, Wells Fargo and R&D Events, who have come forward with big-hearted support for wilderness. In a world where some corporations & businesses focus only on the bottom line, it's awesome to see these companies invest in clean water, clean air and a happier future.

Friends would also like to thank the overworked and underfunded folks at the four land management agencies. These agency warriors work tirelessly to keep places wild for generations yet unborn.

Although we do our best to thank our many wilderness volunteers with blue helmets, appreciation picnics and awards, it never seems to make up for people giving up the day off, working



Zappos, making Nevada wilder, one smile at a time. *Kurt Kuznicki*

hard for no pay, and for braving the cold or the heat.

From everyone at Friends of Nevada Wilderness, we thank you for the wild in your hearts. Perhaps the greatest thanks will come when forthcoming generations understand of the true meaning of the wild gift you have given them, and they feel compelled to pay it forward.

What's the Buzz with the BLM Wild Lands Policy?

By Shaaron Netherton

You'd think the sky was falling listening to some people talking about the BLM's recent Wild Lands Policy. It's really much ado about nothing.

As Bob Abbey, Director of the BLM, said in a recent editorial, "The Wild Lands policy doesn't change the management of a single acre of public land. It simply clarifies how the BLM should manage the public lands for all of the values and multiple uses for which it is responsible, from energy development to recreation and backcountry protection.

"It also provides practical and much-needed BLM guidance for identifying and managing lands with wilderness characteristics. BLM has not had this comprehensive guidance since it was revoked in 2003 as a result of a controversial out-of court settlement between then-Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton, the state of Utah, and other parties."

The BLM decides how to manage its lands by writing resource management plans (RMPs), created with extensive public and local government input. RMPs may identify "Wild Lands" for wildlife and backcountry recreation. Other lands may be better for development.



Mike McCurry

The BLM had to assess the wilderness character of its newly acquired parcels in the Granite Range. We think it's a no-brainer.

When the BLM acquires new lands, like on Pilot Peak in Elko County, or in the Granite Range, by the Black Rock Desert, the BLM must assess their wilderness character and decide whether wildlife habitat, cultural resources and solitude are more important to the public than other activities, like mines, roads or wind farms.



2011 YEAR OF THE WILD REFUGES

Protecting big chunks of wildlife habitat is critical in the face of climate change. And some of the biggest, most intact habitat in the Lower 48 is on the Sheldon Refuge (on the Oregon border) and Desert Refuge (just north of Las Vegas).

The Sheldon Refuge is snuggled into the much larger Greater Sheldon-Hart Ecosystem. Encompassing both Sheldon and the Hart refuge to the north in Oregon, as well as many BLM wilderness study areas in Oregon and Nevada, this region provides a haven for pronghorn, greater sage-grouse, California bighorn sheep, American pika, pygmy rabbit, and myriad songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl etc. Studies are on-going by refuge staff, NatureServe and others to determine just how important this region could be as a refugia for species amid global climate change.

Unfortunately, the Ruby natural gas pipeline has sliced its way through precariously undisturbed BLM lands that connected Sheldon to the protected lands in the Black Rock Desert NCA.

Because of the ecological importance of this area, Friends of Nevada Wilderness is investing in major on-the-ground projects to restore habitat with fence removal and spring restoration to help ensure the Sheldon remains a stronghold for wildlife.

Volunteers from many organizations have been pulling obsolete cattle fence from in Sheldon since livestock was removed in the mid-90s. But there is still a lot more out there obstructing wildlife movement.

Friends has leveraged your generous donations to get support



Anna, Toby and Ian made hard work fun and good for bighorn on the Desert Refuge. *Kurt Kuznicki*



Above, Bandia and Saria pulling fence during an alternative spring break on the Desert Refuge. Right, volunteers building the Birdsong Trail, also on the Desert Refuge. *Both by Kurt Kuznicki*



for removing at least 50 miles of fence this summer. During this "Summer of Sheldon," Friends will host a series of volunteer trips throughout the summer, instead of one big Sheldon Rendezvous. See page 8 to find a trip that fits your schedule. Come experience the beauty of the Sheldon first-hand.

Go Rebels! Go Wolf Pack!

Instead of drinking on tropical beaches, students from UNR and UNLV enjoyed an "alternative spring break," tearing down a humongous fence in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, then packing two tons of fence materials miles through

Continued on page 6



What is Wilderness Character?

By Jose Witt and Shaaron Netherton

As the Wilderness Act's 50th Anniversary in 2014 looms closer, we have to ask: Are our wilderness areas being managed well? Are land-managers preserving the wilderness character of these important resources? What are the trends? Are places getting wilder, or less so?

In southern Nevada, our Student Conservation Association interns are hiking through wilderness areas, helping southern Nevada's land management agencies collect the baseline data needed to monitor these trends.

They record all signs of human impact, including fences, vehicle tracks, litter, etc. to get an idea of the wilderness area's "naturalness" and "undeveloped" nature.

Another trend they monitor is the "untrammled" nature of the wilderness, which measures how free the wilderness is from modern human control or manipulation.

Lastly, the level of outstanding "Solitude" or "Primitive and Uncon-

finied Recreation" opportunities are evaluated to measure the experience of wilderness visitors. Similar data collection in the future will reveal trends over time ... hopefully good trends.

Along the way, the interns gain intimate experience with southern Nevada's wild landscapes.

"Being in wilderness is a powerful experience that generally is calming and balancing," says Mike Doyle, an SCA intern from Atlanta, Georgia. "I love being outside and feel like I am making a difference for the places I love."

For Angie Lake, an intern from Iowa, recording wilderness character appears to be building her character.

"This place forces me to push myself to lengths I never imagined possible," she says. "In no other environment have I had to work so hard to relax; to reach the 'top,' or to enjoy a moment's peaceful sunset."

We never said wilderness was easy. Thanks, SCA crew, for your work to keep Nevada wild.

Spring Time in the Black Rock



By Brian Beffort

In the desert, water is life. At least 80% of wildlife species depend on springs or riparian areas sometime during their life. And in the Black Rock Desert, springs are critically important when all else is desolate.

You can help keep Black Rock springs healthy and resilient, so they can continue to support wildlife as we head into an uncertain future of climate change.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness is teaming up with the Bureau of Land Management, the Desert Research Institute, and other partners to train volunteers to measure and monitor the health of springs throughout the Black Rock region.

This project offers great opportunities to hike and explore the remote and beautiful corners of the Black Rock, use cool gadgets like electroconductivity meters, meet charismatic snails, and make a difference to wildlife in the Black Rock region.

If you're interested in visiting the Black Rock a few times this year to monitor springs, and maybe mentor others in applying these skills, please join us. Call (775) 324-7667, or email brian@nevadawilderness.org for info.





YEAR OF THE REFUGES, CONT...

the rugged desert to trucks waiting to recycle the material. Thanks to their hard work, bighorn sheep will have easier passage to water.

On yet another project, more than 30 volunteers donated their time and sweat to help the US Fish & Wildlife Service build the Birdsong Trail at Corn Creek Station, also in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. Corn Creek is a spectacular place to view wildlife, because it's a visible oasis to birds migrating along this eastern edge of the Pacific Flyway. Each spring and fall, hundreds of migrating species stop to rest and feed before taking wing again. And thanks to your great support, and volunteers' great work, we now have a trail that makes it easier to watch them.

A Plan for the Sheldon

The Sheldon Refuge should release their draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan this spring. Friends will publish a special-edition newsletter soon after the draft is released, with more detail about the plan's proposed alternatives and how you can weigh in to protect the wildlife habitat and wilderness values of the refuge.



Volunteer vs. fence on the Desert Refuge. *Kurt Kuz.*



Participants at the first annual NWSA conference in Las Vegas in March.

Chris Hensley

National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance

By Darcy Shepard and Shaaron Netherton

More than 40 boots-on-the-ground wilderness organizations from around the country met in Las Vegas this March for the first annual National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance conference.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness hosted the conference, proud to show off southern Nevada wilderness areas to many first-time visitors to the state, not to mention our nationally recognized Wilderness Stewardship program.

The goal of the Alliance is to build a strong, national community to help build and support wilderness stewardship around the country.

Attendees enjoyed a variety of speakers and panelists covering fundraising, wilderness character monitoring, agency partnerships, and the future of wilderness. Breakout sessions allowed them to brainstorm with other experts from around the country and exchange

ideas on what works, what doesn't, and how to improve practices when it comes to wilderness stewardship.

With representatives from Alaska to Arizona, and the Pacific Crest Trail to the Appalachian Trail, stewards were able to connect and brainstorm with others from across the country.

On the final day of the conference, 50 attendees walked their talk by joining Friends for a stewardship project in the Rainbow Mountain Wilderness, turning a vehicle trespass scar into a single-track trail.

"The National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance is going to be a major voice for wilderness stewards across the country," said Shaaron Netherton, treasurer of the NWSA board and conference chairperson as well as Executive Director for Friends of Nevada Wilderness.

"We're looking forward to being in Wash. DC, for the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act in 2014!"

More information at
www.WildernessAllaince.org

Friends of Nevada Wilderness Trainings

Forest Service Crosscut Saw. May 5. Learn the art and skill of wielding a cross-cut saw.

Nevada archaeological site stewardship. May 14, 9a-3:30p. Learn how to protect Nevada's archaeological sites.

Trail Construction and Crew Leader. May

20-22. Gain skills building trails and leading work crews.

Invasive Weed Class. May 3-4. Free to volunteers who agree to 3 FNW trips in 2011.

Please call (775) 324-7667 or email fnw@nevadawilderness.org to sign up.



The Wisdom of the Wild

By DanSchatz

There is wisdom in wildness. I don't mean misbehavior, but real wildness, elemental wildness, animal wildness. There is wisdom in the wildness of the wolf, whose rhythms are completely attuned to the truth of the earth, who leaves silent paw prints in a world we can only taste, but never truly touch.

There is wisdom in the wildness of the moose, in whose powerful legs can be found surprising grace. There is wisdom in the songbirds, whose lives border our own, yet whose music will never be tamed.

There is wisdom in wildness. We are not wild, whatever pretensions we may have. Human language and society will always be imprinted upon us; we cannot escape them. We can, though, learn from the wildness of others. We can learn balance—in the wild, nature out of balance is nature dying. We can learn stewardship—like the wolf that culls the herd, or the raven who tends her nest. We can learn to listen to our senses—smell, taste, sound, touch, sight, and the indefinable instinct that we have almost, but never quite, forgotten.

There is wisdom in wildness, and

though we are not wild, there will always remain wildness within us. We touch it when we are at peace with nature, when our senses are heightened, when we become one with our surroundings, whatever they be. We taste it when we are in love. And when we have given ourselves to the long and difficult work of tuning our minds, our homes, and our communities to the needs of the greater Earth, then we will have begun to live the wisdom of the wild.

Dan Schatz is a Grammy-nominated musician. Learn more about his music and buy his CDs at www.danschatz.com

Donor profile:

The Hall Family

By Brian Beffort

Some people give money. Some people give time. Other people give both. Scott and Mimari Hall give both. Scott and his kids, Kilala and Shoki, are regular features on Friends' restoration trips.

Scott, why do you do it?

"I like Friends for a couple of reasons," he says. "I like that Friends is helping to protect more Nevada wilderness. I think Nevada is pretty wild as it is, but designated wilderness will keep some of my favorite areas free from road building, encroachment, and mining activities.

"Friends also provides good opportunities to go out to new areas with new people. Having other kids and like-minded people along makes it more fun."

The Hall family donates to Friends of Nevada Wilderness via a monthly gift from Scott's credit card.

"I feel that giving to a group which I believe in is a good idea, because money talks," says Scott. "But annual membership fees can interfere with household budget or emergencies. When the donation is monthly, the financial toll is less, but the overall dollars are greater. I also like that it's more stable for Friends."

We at Friends are truly lucky to have people like the Halls caring for wild Nevada. Thank you Scott, Mimari, Kilala and Shoki. Nevada is better off because of you.



Scott Hall, teaching his son, Shoki, the true meaning of wide-open spaces up on the Sheldon Refuge last summer.
Brian Beffort

GIVE WILDERNESS A GIFT EVERY MONTH

A few dollars each month via your credit card will be easy for you and essential to places and wildlife that need your help.

CALL ROSE TODAY AT (775) 324-7667 TO
PROCESS YOUR SECURE TRANSACTION,
OR SIGN UP TODAY AT
WWW.NEVADAWILDERNESS.ORG

Upcoming events and restoration trips

Southern Nevada volunteer picnic.

April 16, 2p-6p. Red Spring Picnic Area. Celebrate the folks who give back to wild Nevada. RSVP to Katie at (702) 622-0946

Earth Day: Party for the planet. April 22, 10a-4p at Shark Reef, Mandalay Bay.

Wells Fargo restoration trip. April 23, 8:30a-4p. Rainbow Mountain Wilderness. Wells Fargo employees are invited to this restoration project near Mtn. Springs.

Earth Day: Pahrump. April 23, 10a-4p. Ian Deutch Memorial Park.

Desert National Wildlife Refuge. April 30, 9a-1p. Corn Creek Station. Help pull invasive weeds that hurt wildlife.

Earth Day: Reno. May 1, 11a-4p.

Spring cleaning in the Spring Mtns. May 7, 8a-12p. Help the Spring Mountains by removing litter and trash.

Black Rock Rendezvous. May 27-30.

Learn about and give back to this region, with good folk and good food. **Family.**

Summer of Sheldon 1. June 3-5. Help the wildlife and the places they live on the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge.

National Trails Day. June 4. Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. Celebrate National Trails Day by cleaning up trails in the Spring Mountains.

Central Nevada Hiking and Inventory. June 6-10. Help us gather data in the beautiful Monitor and Hot Creek Ranges.

Mt. Rose Invasive Weed Removal. June 11. Help Hunter Ck. native plants thrive.

Zappos.com Spring Mountains cleanup. June 15. Zappos.com cleans up the Mt. Charleston wilderness.

Table Mountain Wilderness. June 24-27.

Help us clear the Barley Creek Trail.

Sheldon Rendezvous. June 23-26. Help wildlife on the Sheldon Refuge. Limit 30.

Santa Rosa Wilderness. July 14-18. Summit Trail Backpack and Trail Inventory.

Summer of Sheldon 3. July 22-24. Another opportunity to give back to the wildlife on the Sheldon.

North Black Rock Range Wilderness. August 19-21. Our final push to remove old fence from the wilderness. **Family.**

Summer of Sheldon 4. August 26-28. Help the wildlife and the places they live on the Sheldon Refuge.

National Public Lands Day. September 16-18. Join us for this annual event on wild lands across Nevada. Sites TBA.

See our list of upcoming volunteer training opportunities on page 6

To RSVP or sign up for alerts, send an email to fnw@nevadawilderness.org, or call (775) 324-7667.
Updated schedules are posted at www.nevadawilderness.org

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