

Remarks By Senator Harry Reid - September 2004

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 40th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.

From the days of the earliest settlers, wilderness has always been a defining part of our national heritage. Simply put, the American wilderness helped shape the American values of freedom, opportunity and independence.

As it did in 1964, Nevada still contains many of the wildest and least traveled places in the lower 48 States. The remote and untamed areas of Nevada represent a reservoir of challenges and opportunities for hunters, fishermen, birdwatchers, photographers, and other outdoorsmen.

We all play a stewardship role, and I am proud of the job our nation has done and continues to do in upholding these uniquely American values.

In particular, I would like to recognize four individuals from my home State of Nevada who are true wilderness heroes.

Marge Sill has advocated protecting wild places for more than 4 decades. She worked to pass the 1964 Act, as well as every Nevada wilderness bill since then. Marge helped establish the Friends of Nevada Wilderness, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, and has mentored multiple generations of wilderness advocates.

Hermie and John Hiatt have been leaders in Nevada conservation efforts for more than 2 decades. Their tireless advocacy for wilderness and environmental protection particularly in southern and eastern Nevada serves as inspiration for many. Their interest in and knowledge of the science behind conservation serves Nevada well.

Finally I would like to recognize Roger Scholl, who played a key role in the development of the 1989 Nevada Wilderness Protection Act. In a quiet but effective and reasonable manner, Roger has consistently sought to develop consensus wilderness proposals. From Mt. Moriah and the Schell Creek Range in White Pine County to Mr. Rose and High Rock Canyon in Washoe County, Roger's work on wilderness issues has benefited Nevada and our Nation. His counsel has served me well.

Through the work of these Nevadans the number of Nevada wildernesses has grown from one, the Jarbidge Wilderness, to more than 40 in 40 years. I commend them for their work on behalf of Nevada and the Nation.

As President Lyndon Johnson said upon signing the Wilderness Act,

If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning.

With stewards such as these four great Nevadans, I know that our Nation's great wilderness heritage will be secure for generations to come.

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2011 note from Friends of Nevada Wilderness: Nevada now has 68 designated wilderness areas that encompass more than 3.3 million wildland acres across the state. Marge, John, Hermi and Roger are still actively working to protect Nevada's wild places.