



## Pine Forest Progress

In March, the Pine Forest Range Recreation Enhancement Act, which would designate the 26,000-acre Pine Forest Range Wilderness, took two important steps closer to designation.

The bill was heard by both the House Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands (March 8) and in the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests (March 22).

On behalf of our members, Friends submitted comments in support to both committees.

After the legislation is "marked-up" out of the committees, it can go before the full House and Senate.

Find the text of the Pine Forest legislation at our website, [www.nevadawilderness.org](http://www.nevadawilderness.org).

### Help Pine Forest Today

Call your Senators and Congressmen in Nevada.

Thank them for working to protect the Pine Forest Range as wilderness, and urge them to see it (and other wilderness bills) through to the President's desk.

- Senator Harry Reid: (866) SEN-REID
- Senator Dean Heller: (202) 224-6244
- Congressman Mark Amodei: (202) 225-6155
- Congressman Joe Heck: (202) 225-3252
- Congresswoman Shelley Berkley: (202) 225-5965

## SAGE GROUSE STRUGGLE



Male sage grouse strut their stuff in a lek. Photo: Kim Toulouse

**Wilderness areas and wilderness study areas across northern Nevada contain "essential and irreplaceable habitat" for sage grouse.**

*By Brian Beffort*

In April, Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval established a sage grouse advisory committee. The nine-person panel is tasked with providing an action plan by July 31 to avoid having the sage grouse listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

In doing so, Sandoval added to the debate over the fate of the sage grouse and the impact its listing would have. What can be done to keep this iconic bird of the West from being listed, and more importantly, from going extinct?

Many fear the bird's listing will severely inhibit economic activities across the West, including mining, grazing and other development.

Listing might also constrain attempts to develop alternative energy. Worse, it could stoke political backlash nationwide against conservation and the ESA.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness does not want to see the bird listed. We'd rather see sage grouse recover, and we believe wilderness has an important role to play.

Sage grouse habitat spans from the Rockies to the Sierra, high into Canada and across the Great Basin.

Over the last century, sage grouse numbers have dropped from 16 million to 200,000, largely due to habitat loss on a large scale, from cities, roads, energy development, overgrazing, wildfire, weeds and other impacts.

*Continued on Page 6*

## 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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# FRONTLINES

By Shaaron Netherton,  
Executive Director

**W**inter, such as it was, has fled and spring is popping out all over.

As days get longer and green returns to the world, I always feel an upwelling of hope. I know anything is possible.

I believe 2012 will be good for Nevada's wildlands. Hopefully we'll see bipartisan efforts in Congress to pass legislation for places like the Pine Forest Range, Burbank Canyons and Gold Butte.

We have exciting wilderness stewardship opportunities across the state this year for all ages and skill levels. Come join us, experience the beauty of Nevada, and make some new friends.

Remember, a day of volunteering can make a lifetime of difference. From our core of wilderness kids, to the University of Nevada, Reno student volunteers to those

grizzled, wilderness veterans, we truly are a multi-generational community.

Some measure prosperity by money, but I feel Friends of Nevada Wilderness is rich in wonderful members and volunteers, not to mention our beautiful lands across the state. Thank you for making Friends of Nevada Wilderness an organization that gets stuff done.

*Shaaron*



Shaaron, wrestling with a fence on the Sheldon Photo: Darcy Shepard

## WELCOME, BRENNA, IN WINNEMUCCA!

**T**hanks to the generous support of our members and foundations like the National Forest Foundation, Friends has been able to add to our arsenal of great staff with the arrival of Brenna Archibald, our new Winnemucca Stewardship Coordinator (we're sharing her half-time with the Nevada Outdoor School). Brenna will help us organize projects with the Forest Service and recruit volunteers from Winnemucca.

"I am thrilled to work with Friends of Nevada Wilderness and Nevada Outdoor School," Brenna said. "Living



in Winnemucca and exploring Northern Nevada is my new adventure, and I embrace it with open arms. I'm looking forward to working with folks to protect beautiful wild places."

Many of the projects Brenna's planning, such as in the Santa Rosas, will be family friendly and will have educational components for kids built into them.

Brenna will lead several projects this spring to restore fire damaged lands in Paradise Valley. To join us, contact brenna.archibald@nevadaoutdoorschool.org or at (775) 623-5656.

# BRINGING LOVE TO SOUTHERN NEVADA LANDS

By Kurt Kuznicki,  
Southern Nevada Director

In southern Nevada, 2011 was the year of the GPS, camera, and the notebook. Friends, and our partner Student Conservation Association crew, collected data on wilderness character in the 18 wilderness areas of Clark County, from Lime Canyon in the north to Bridge Canyon in the south. This baseline of information allows us to measure our successes and identify our challenges in keeping wilderness wild.

Now 2012 is the year for boots on the ground. With shovels, picks and rakes, we will restore some of the precious wilderness character that has been lost over time.

This year so far, our stewardship efforts have focused exclusively on the Desert National Wildlife Refuge—building fences to protect critical wildlife habitat, and taking down others to improve it, as well as erasing vehicle scars and other disturbances.

In the spring, we plan to work in the Muddy Mountains and other wilderness areas before



Team REI pulls together to contain vehicles at Desert National Wildlife Refuge in February.

Photo: Kurt Kuznicki

heading into the high country of Mt Charleston to do good things for the Spring Mountains.

Along with this important work, we are investing time and resources to develop wilderness leaders, with our four-person Student Conservation Association stewardship crew, and on events like Alternative Spring Break

with students from the University of Nevada; these people are the future of wilderness.

Thank you, volunteers and members! Your support is making all this work possible. There is so much to do, but it is so-worth doing. Together, we are making a difference to places, people and critters across Nevada.

## BLM Stops Vehicle Trespass into Mojave Preserve

Nevada is a big place, and there's a lot of open space out there; it's not easy to patrol it all. That's why Friends of Nevada Wilderness appreciates the Bureau of Land Management's efforts to stem vehicle incursions into the wilderness of California's Mojave National Preserve from the Nevada desert southwest of

Searchlight.

In response to volunteer reports of the incursion, the BLM quickly responded by fencing and signing the point of trespass. If this fails to stop the transgressions, a restoration project will be scheduled to "disappear" the trespass route entirely. If restoration is required,

Friends of Nevada Wilderness will be proud to volunteer and support our agency partners in protecting wilderness from reckless vehicle trespass. Although, if the project takes place in the summer, we would prefer to work at night, maybe during a full moon, so we don't get baked in the summer heat. We'll bring our headlamps.

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## Project Updates

### Trail Crew in the Toiyabe Range

Friends received a two-year grant for a six-person backcountry trail crew managed by the Austin/Tonopah Ranger District.

In 2012 crew will working on the Toiyabe Crest National Recreation Trail and other trails in the District. Join us on the four scheduled volunteer events.

### Santa Rosa Ranger District

In 2011, the Tom Basin fire scorched 5,135 acres in Paradise Valley. Join Friends as we help the Forest Service and Nevada Department of Wildlife restore mule deer and sage grouse habitat.

There will also be a project to spruce up the Lye Creek Campground mid-summer.

### Soldier Meadows Cabin



The BLM's Zack Million nailing shingles to your cabin in Soldier Meadows.

Thanks to volunteers, the cabin at Soldier Meadows is spruced up and ready for your visit.

For decades, the cabin has been feeling the weight of time, neglect and vandalism. Thanks to Ron Labella, Mike Ford, Chris Brown, Emmet Rosaschi, Phil Atkins and Seth Barton—not to mention the BLM, which manages the cabin—it has a new stove, windows, door, fresh paint and new shingles.

"There aren't many historic places left in the world that are open year-round and free to stay," said Pat Bruce, Friends' Stewardship Program Director. "Bring some firewood, and leave this place better than you found it, so we can all enjoy it."

# SHELDON REFUGE: FENCE-FREE IN 2012!



"With the fence gone, we'll be able to get up some real speed."

Photo: Diane McAllister

Our 2011 field season in Sheldon was a stunning success. Our field crew and dedicated volunteers removed 75 miles of barbed wire, making the home on the range safer for pronghorn, sage grouse and people.

In 2012, we are committed to make Sheldon fence-free for wildlife! Now, roughly 58 miles remain, although it's scattered

widely across some remote and rugged parts of the refuge.

Thanks to a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Society and donors like you, Friends will have a four-person field crew working from May to September, with several volunteer trips scheduled to get the job done and assist with other projects on the Sheldon.

You are helping make history!



Post by post, strand by strand, we're getting that fence off the land.

Photo: Graham Stafford

# THANK YOU!

Thank you to all of our donors, members, volunteers and agency partners. Without your dedication and support, our successes are not possible. We look forward to working with you to make 2012 a great year for Wild Nevada.



Who needs cocktails on a beach when you can restore desert wilderness? Photo: Kurt Kuznicki

## ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK BRINGS STUDENTS TO THE DESERT REFUGE

By Darcy Shepard

Instead of partying on the beach in Mazatlan during spring break in March, University of Nevada, Reno, students joined other volunteers in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge north of Las Vegas to restore habitat for wildlife and people alike during the second "Alternative Spring Break" with Friends of Nevada Wilderness.

The team restored five vehicle-trespass scars and planted more than 120 native plants during the week.

"You look at it, and keep going, then you look back and it looks completely different than what you started with," said Lucy Hunt, a journalism major at UNR. "I'm excited to come back some day and see a whole new landscape there."

The crew worked in the Corn Creek area to enhance habitat for the hundreds of bird species that visit the area during spring and fall migrations. Corn Creek is an important oasis along the eastern edge of the Pacific Flyway.

"This is a really popular spot for people to come out and wander around to look at birds," said Matt Flores from the Great Basin institute.

"We're trying to get a rich habitat of native plants to promote bird diversity and density."

Desert National Wildlife Refuge Manager Amy Sprunger thanked the students for their work.

"It takes a special type of person to want to do this instead of laying on a beach somewhere," she told them. "I really appreciate your assistance."

## WANTED!

### Volunteers in Wild Nevada

Friends of Nevada Wilderness is looking for volunteers with outdoor skills to help with the projects below.

**Requirements:** Spare time, an interest in desert life, data-collecting discipline and a yearn for the solitude, beauty and adventure of Wild Nevada.

#### Toquima Range Surveys

Friends needs dedicated volunteers to survey grazing allotments in and around the Alta Toquima Wilderness. This data will help the Forest Service better manage livestock to protect native habitats and natural waterways. Camping stipends and travel reimbursements are available.

#### Citizen Spring Inventories

Friends is helping the BLM inventory the health of springs in the remote Black Rock Desert region. Join a group trip with Friends, or go out on your own. This citizen-science activity is perfect for families looking to spend time together camping and learning useful job skills for the future. Attend our training in Reno, April 21.

#### Fence Hikers

The Black Rock-High Rock National Conservation Area is split between the Winnemucca and Surprise BLM Districts. The dividing line is a fence stretching 42 miles north-south through the East Fork High Rock Wilderness. We need fit, experienced backpackers to hike the length, check it for breaks, and record the health of springs along the way.

**RSVP for these and more projects; see Page 8.**

# GENERATIONS OF WILDERNESS



Jennifer and Quentin, living it up in the wild. Photo: Brian Beffort

By Brian Beffort, Associate Director

**W**e're camping in Wild Nevada again, and there's my son, Logan, digging in the dirt, filthy from head to toe. I can't think of a better place for him to be.

I know Logan's immersion in nature is healthy. Twenty years of epidemiological studies support the "hygiene hypothesis" — that early life exposure to germs strengthens a body's resistance to allergies, asthma and other diseases later.

His mom, Laura, likes him being in the wild for other reasons.

"I love it when we're in the wilderness,

because I don't have to say no," she said. "He's always busy playing, climbing, exploring, and he never asks about TV or computer games. Nature provides something for him our stuff at home doesn't."

Research across the globe confirms what many people already know intuitively: that people connected with nature feel better physically and emotionally; we do better at school and are more productive at work. It inspires us, brings us back to center,

and makes us feel whole. Gary Snyder explained it best: nature is not a place to visit, it is home.

Las Vegas volunteer Jonathan watches his kids change when they get out into the wild. "I get to show them first-hand what miracles await for those who chose to explore the great world that lies outside our 9-to-5 drive," he said. "Then I get to watch as the true spirit of adventure and curiosity arises like a spring at its source. Eyes light up. The switch turns on."

And of course, the benefits aren't just for kids "Being out in nature renews and revitalizes us," said Gail and Mike Matyas,

two volunteers closer to retirement than grade school. "It provides inner peace and harmony, enhances physical strength, balances our lives."

One thing is certain: Friends of Nevada Wilderness is a diverse community of young and old, united by our love of wild places. Working together, we can make a better future for the land, the plants and animals who live there, and for people of every age.

**If you live in Southern Nevada and would like to help bring wilderness education to kids, call Katie LaCroix at (702) 839-5568.**

*See "Education" on Page 7*

## Sage Grouse

*Continued from Page 1*

The Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) must decide whether to list the bird under the ESA by 2015. For the subspecies on the NV-CA border in Douglas and Lyon counties, the deadline is 2013.

"The impact of the listing will affect almost everyone in the West economically, socially and culturally," said Kim Toulouse, Volunteer Coordinator for the Nevada Department of Wildlife, who monitors sage grouse in Nevada.

"Because it's a sagebrush obligate [it needs sagebrush to survive], it's a big-time indicator of the health of the sagebrush ecosystem," said Toulouse. "Its decline tells us something of the health of the entire sagebrush habitat," which directly affects other species, like pronghorn, sage sparrows, hawks, meadowlarks and pygmy rabbits.

Many wildernesses and wilderness study areas in northern Nevada contain "essential and irreplaceable habitat" for the sage grouse. And one thing wilderness does well is protect habitat on a large scale — something the sage grouse needs dearly.

Thanks to your support, Friends is working across northern Nevada to protect sage grouse habitat and help the BLM, FWS and NDOW save it from extinction. If we lose the bird, in the words of Friends' board member and wildlife biologist Pete Bradley, "the universe will mourn."

And we can't have that.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE  
JENNIFER CALLAHAN



Jen, raising the bar higher for wilderness restoration. Photo: Brian Beffort

Friends' restoration trips are not just about healing places; our goal is also to help people fall in love with Nevada's wild beauty and to help them discover the joys of caring for the land.

Jen Callahan joined us on a trip in 2009 and helped removed downed barbed-wire fence from high in the North Black Rock Range Wilderness. We lent her a tent, because she didn't have many supplies.

"Since then I've done two seasons of conservation work," she wrote, "my first with Nevada Conservation Corps and my second with SAGA, an Alaskan conservation crew. I am currently looking at chasing a degree in Resource Ecology and Conservation. It's safe to say I was pretty inspired by that trip.

"The act of conserving wilderness is when the

best parts of my character meet up with the best parts of nature," she wrote.

"Conservation is a selfish act, really, because of the huge benefits and answers I receive from it. The secret and beautiful places I find, along with the intelligent and wild people I meet, expand my existence. And the fact that rugged and

**"The act of conserving wilderness is when the best parts of my character meet up with the best parts of nature."**

simple actions (removing a barbwire fence, smashing a double-jack against granite) positively affect

the world on a major scale is pretty cool, too."

Jen's photo is now on the cover of our new volunteer brochure for the Black Rock region. "I hope that it helps you guys get more people out into the wilderness and conserving," she wrote.

Best of luck, Jen! The world is a better place with you spreading the seeds of conservation.

# A Wild Education

By Brian Beffort

If you can't bring kids into the wilderness, then bring wilderness to kids. And if it's possible, do both.

That's Katie LaCroix's strategy, and it's working for urban kids in southern Nevada, as she brings wilderness to classrooms and summer camps in southern Nevada.

"We'll be visiting 4th and 5th graders in Clark County public schools, as well as a Girl Scouts Wilderness Camp," Katie said. "With hands-on activities and stories, we can introduce kids to what wilderness is and why it's important. Hopefully, we'll foster stewardship in younger generations."

"If we can get them

excited, hopefully they'll get their families excited. Maybe they will get out and explore these places together."

Katie will also be working with Canyon High School's conservation club.

"With high-school students, we get to talk about why conservation is important and the difference each citizen can make in the world," Katie said. "A lot of high schoolers are trying to figure out what direction they want to take with their lives. I hope we can light the spark of passion for the outdoors, so they can pursue career opportunities in conservation, and maybe make a difference in the future."



In wilderness, kids young and old can explore who they are without the constraints of civilization. Photo: Brian Beffort

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday, April 21. Idlewild Park, Reno.**  
9am, Spring training. 2 pm public BBQ. FF

**Saturday, April 21. Pahrump Earth Day.**  
Ian Deutch Park. 10am to 4 pm. FF

**April 21-22. Mt. Charleston.** Earth Day in the Wild. Heal the wilderness from vehicle-trespass scars.

**Sunday, April 22, Idlewild Park, Reno.**  
Earth Day Celebration. 10am to 4pm. FF

**April 27-29. Santa Rosa Range.** Restore mule deer and sage grouse habitat with Friends and the Nevada Outdoor School in Paradise Valley, north of Winnemucca. FF

**May 4-6. Santa Rosa Range.** More habitat restoration with Friends and the NOS in Paradise Valley, north of Winnemucca. FF

**May 4-6. Calico Mtns. Black Rock Desert.**  
Mustang Springs dam repair and spring monitoring \*\*

**May 11-13. Santa Rosa Range.** More

post-fire habitat restoration with Friends and the NOS in Paradise Valley, north of Winnemucca. FF

**May 25-28. Black Rock Rendezvous.** A popular event on the Black Rock NCA. Educational programs, tours, conservation projects, and Dutch-oven cook-off. FF.

**June 15-17. Black Rock Range.** Mahogany Creek Riparian Exclosure and spring monitoring. FF

**June 22-24. Santa Rosa Range.** Join Friends, NOS and the Forest Service to improve the Summit Trail.

**July 5-8. Pahute Peak Backpack** and spring monitoring \*\* Limit 8.

**July 6-7. Arc Dome Wilderness.** South/North Twin Connector trail work.

**July 13-15. Santa Rosa Range.** Lye Creek Campground clean up. Nevada Outdoor School will host a Kids' Camp FF.

**July 20-22. Little High Rock Canyon.**  
Culvert repair and habitat restoration.

**August 3-5, Hike to Arc Dome.**

**August 10-12. North Black Rock Range.**  
Summit Twin Springs fence removal. \*\*

**August 17-19. Arc Dome Roadless Area.**  
Trail work.

**July 13-15. Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge.** Spring restoration. Details TBA

**August 24-26. Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge.** Details TBA

**September 21-23. Black Rock Desert.**  
National Public Lands Day. A landmark event. Do some good. Have some fun. FF

**All events and projects are free.**  
High-clearance, 4WD vehicles may be necessary. Rides may be available.

\*\* = a strenuous project.  
FF = a family-friendly event.

To RSVP or sign up for alerts, send an email to [fnw@nevadawilderness.org](mailto:fnw@nevadawilderness.org), or call (775) 324-7667.  
Trip details and up-to-date schedules are posted at [www.nevadawilderness.org](http://www.nevadawilderness.org)

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