

# Call of the Wild

Keeping Nevada Wild Since 1984

Masthead photo by Steve Wolfe

## Public-lands process moves forward across Nevada Locals speak for wilderness

Wildlands in White Pine County have been getting a lot of attention over the last few months. Volunteers around the state have been visiting potential wilderness areas in White Pine County and speaking out to protect them. White Pine County's Public Land Users Advisory Council and County Commission have spent time considering the Nevada Wilderness Coalition's 700,000-acre Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for White Pine County. Local residents have packed meeting rooms to talk about why their county's wildlands are important to them.

All of this leads to Nevada's Congressional Delegation, led by senators Harry Reid and John Ensign, who are currently drafting public-lands legislation for White Pine County, which could be introduced this spring.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness staff and volunteers have been working with land management officials, interested individuals, and *see Local, page 4*



Photo by Scott Smith

South Goshute WSA, White Pine County.

Locals  
pack  
meeting  
rooms  
for  
wilderness

### Shrinking coal plant

Endless pressure ceaselessly applied can move mountains or coal plants. Sempra Energy's plans to defile the Smoke Creek Desert near Gerlach with a huge coal fired power plant is running into some major snags. Last November, Sempra downsized the plant from 1,450 megawatts to 1,200 megawatts due to water issues.

Now, the power plant's future is increasingly in doubt. In early March, Sempra put the project on hold and halted the permitting process prior to going back to the drawing board — again. Recently, Sempra sold its only operating coal-fired plant. In addition, the State of California has filed lawsuits against Sempra for energy price fixing.

*see Shrinking, back page*

is  
Sempra's  
coal-fired  
plant  
Doomed?

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## Our Mission is to

# Keep Nevada Wild!

*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 on the values of – and need for – Wilderness, and improving the management and restoration of these public wild lands.

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Newsletter published quarterly

## From the front lines

# Hello everyone, and happy 2006

These past few months have been a roller coaster of activity and emotions. We are all still reeling from the tragic death of Pam White, Friends' rural outreach coordinator in Ely, Nevada. She died in a car accident the day after she returned from Washington DC to lobby our Congressional leaders about the need to protect White Pine County wildlands with wilderness designation.

While Pam is no longer with us, her commitment to rural communities has encouraged local residents to turn out in force at various public meetings in Ely to show their support for protecting White Pine County's rich wildland heritage. We are determined to pursue the best protection possible for wildlands in White Pine County, as a tribute to her enduring passion for wildness.

We were fortunate to be able to bring Pete Dronkers back on staff in Ely to carry on Pam's exceptional work. Pete worked with us for a year, focusing on the Roadless Rule and other US Forest Service issues. He's back now, fresh from climbing adventures up Argentina's 22,841-foot Aconcagua summit and an extensive

expedition to Baffin Island in the Canadian Artic. Welcome back, Pete!

Our wilderness restoration and monitoring programs got a big boost thanks to a special grant allowing us to hire a full-time Field Project Coordinator, Pat Bruce, to make even a bigger difference on the ground.

Pat joined our staff this February. I hope you will all get to know him by joining one of our many restoration trips or by adopting a wilderness.

Check your mailbox in April for Friends' pre-Earth Day newsletter. It

will be dedicated to stewardship, restoration and how you can get involved and make a real difference on the ground. Your wild places will appreciate your dedication.

For the Wild,



Shaaron Netherton  
Executive Director



Shaaron Netherton

## But is it enough?

# Forest Service recommends Wilderness

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Service is releasing its draft list of what they are recommending for wilderness in their upcoming Forest Plan revision. These recommendations will decide the fate of millions of acres of beautiful high quality wildlands. Friends will be asking each of you to submit comments to the Forest Service in the coming weeks, but we need your on-the-ground experience about these areas to make the Forest Service recommendations stronger. **The comment period ends in May.**

Please take a look at the complete list of the Forest Service Wilderness

recommendations on one of the following websites:

The Forest Service website – [www.fs.fed.us/r4/htnf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/htnf) — follow link to **Forest Plan Revision.**

Or go to Friends' website – [www.nevadawilderness.org](http://www.nevadawilderness.org)

To request a CD with all proposed wilderness maps and evaluations email the Forest at [r4\\_h-t\\_comment@fs.fed.us](mailto:r4_h-t_comment@fs.fed.us) or call Michael Hampton, the Forest Planner at (775) 355-5314.

Friends will develop detailed comments and post them on our website soon. More details will appear in our Earth Day Edition newsletter coming out in early April.

# Remembering a wilderness hero

By Shaaron Netherton

Tears still stream down as I write. It's been more than four months since my friend and fellow staff member, Pam White, died in a tragic auto accident on September 30, 2005. Pam was our rural outreach coordinator in Ely, White Pine County, Nevada. She was energy, inspiration and passion incarnate, working ceaselessly to share her passion for eastern Nevada's wild places with everyone from local school kids to U.S. Senators.

Pam was only 34 when she died, but she did so much with that time. She believed that children were our future and was active as a foster mom, with 4H, with little league, and as a teacher, providing wilderness education to all the schools kids in White Pine County.

As public land legislation for White Pine County moves forward, all of us want to honor Pam by gaining the best possible protection for White Pine's wild places. In my heart, these new wilderness areas will be dedicated to her spirit. Pam's passing left



*Pam White camping.*

a hole for many in Nevada, as well as for her son, Conner; her wonderful parents, Randy and Beverly; and her brothers, Doug and Dale. Pam, wherever you are, please know we love you.

Memorials in her name can be made to:  
The Conner White Memorial Education Fund  
c/o Campco Federal Credit Union  
902 E. Third Street, Gillette, WY 82716

Bart Koehler, a former Ely resident and life-long wilderness activist and songwriter, wrote this song about Pam.

The creeks in the High Schells are dancing downhill;  
I hope they keep flowing, always they will.

Standing here gazing, at north and south peaks;  
It's so hard to find the right words for to speak.

In summer these mountains, are a wild bluebird range  
Pam's spirit is here, and shall always remain.

Working and striving and urging for sure;  
Protect these fine mountains, so they'll truly endure.

Such a blue sky person, so willing to give;  
Let's really remember how fully she lived.

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## Walkin' Jim Stoltz - Forever Wild 2006 Tour

*The road less traveled is not a road*

An evening of stunning photography, live music  
and gripping stories from 26,000 miles  
of wilderness walking.

**Friends of Nevada Wilderness proudly brings  
Walkin' Jim to Las Vegas on his 2006 tour.**

**All Friends members are invited to this FREE,  
PUBLIC EVENT.**

**Time: Sunday, April 9  
6:00pm reception, displays and exhibits  
7:00pm performance**

**Place: West Las Vegas Library Theatre  
951 W. Lake Mead Blvd  
Las Vegas, NV 89106**

For more information call Susan Potts at (702) 650-6542.



"Walkin' Jim evokes joy in the human heart  
as we experience anew the beauty and the  
hope of our wild heritage."

-- Richard Knox,  
Friends' Membership Coordinator

Forever Wild 2006 is a production of Musicians United to Sustain the Environment.  
For more information, visit [www.foreverwild.info](http://www.foreverwild.info).

# Welcome Pat Bruce

Please welcome Pat Bruce as Friends of Nevada Wilderness' Field Project Coordinator. Pat joined us in February of this year to organize volunteer restoration projects in wildlands across the state. He will also coordinate our Adopt-a-Wilderness program. Pat brings a wealth of experience to this job, including years of managing volunteers and programs from Boy Scouts to archaeological field schools at University of Nevada, Reno.

Pat was born in Scotland and has lived in Nevada for nearly 25 years. He and his dog Skye try to spend 100 nights a year out in Nevada's backcountry. Pat loves Nevada's wild open places and likes to see himself as an "early man"—seeing the land through the eyes of those who came before. With a BA in Anthropology, Pat focused on early man sites in the northern Great Basin. Pat is anxious to make our wilderness volunteer program a huge success this year.



Pat on one of his 100 nights out.

spending  
100 nights  
per year  
in Nevada's wild  
backcountry

## Celebrating success

Friends of Nevada Wilderness members came together to celebrate wilderness in Reno and Las Vegas recently. Marge Sill, mother of Nevada's wilderness (although she prefers grandmother), allowed us to celebrate her birthday in style on December 2 with a fundraising party. Members brought great food to share, enjoyed a silent auction, won great raffle prizes and listened to toe tapping music by the Nevada Bluegrass Project. According to Marge, one of the highlights was a personally prepared video birthday message from Senator Reid, who happens to share the same birthday.

Las Vegas members celebrated on January 20<sup>th</sup> by sharing delicious food, learning about White Pine County's beautiful wild places and how to help protect them, as well as cool raffle prizes. Steve Leslie, an Ely Bureau of Land Management official, presented Friends of Nevada Wilderness with an award for wilderness restoration work done by volunteers like you.



Shaaron Netherton holds award presented by Steve Leslie as Susan Potts looks on.

## Locals speak for wilderness

*continued from page 1*

elected officials at all levels in Pershing, Lyon, Nye, and Washoe Counties. By being involved, we hope to provide accurate information about our remaining wildlands, the benefits of wilderness designation, and assuage the fears some people have about wilderness.

One thing is sure: there is no better time to get involved to protect Nevada's wildlands. With your help, we can continue our

successes at securing lasting protection for beautiful and threatened landscapes across the state.

### Call to action

**Now** is the time before a draft bill is introduced to write or call Nevada's senators and congressmen and urge them to designate wilderness for all areas in our White Pine County's citizen wilderness proposal.

## Nevada's Congressional Leaders

Here are our Congressional leaders' Nevada addresses and DC fax numbers.

### Representative Jim Gibbons Reno

400 South Virginia Street, # 502  
Reno, Nevada 89501  
Phone: 775-686-5760  
DC fax: 202-225-5679

### Senator John Ensign Carson City

600 East William St., # 304  
Carson City, Nevada 89701

### Las Vegas

333 Las Vegas Blvd. South, # 8203  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101  
Phone: 702-388-6605  
DC fax: 202-228-2193

### Senator Harry Reid Las Vegas

Lloyd D. George Building  
333 Las Vegas Blvd South, # 8016  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101  
Phone: 702-388-5020

### Reno

400 So. Virginia Street, # 902  
Reno, Nevada 89501  
Phone: 775-686-5750  
Fax: 775-686-5757

### Rural Nevada Mobile Office

Phone: 775-772-3905  
DC fax: 202-224-7327

## Wildlands healthier thanks to volunteers

# Friends' restoration and monitoring programs keep growing

By Pat Bruce

Designating wilderness is just the first step in keeping landscapes wild. These areas need monitoring over the long term, as well as on-the-ground work to help them heal from impacts. To ensure a wilderness legacy in Nevada, Friends of Nevada offers the following programs:

**WILDERNESS RESTORATION:** Join other volunteers in wild places across the state to restore wildlife habitat, remove invasive plant species, and eradicate human impacts. There is work for all levels of fitness and interest.

**ADOPT A WILDERNESS:** Volunteers visit wildlands, get to know their beauty and the threats they face, then report back to Friends of Nevada Wilderness.

**LEAVE NO TRACE:** During backpacking and car-camping trips, participants learn how to minimize their impacts while camping and traveling in wild lands. LNT courses take place in beautiful wilderness locations, and all participants become certified to train others in LNT principles.

These programs offer opportunities to explore the wilder corners of Nevada, give back to your public lands, and spend time with other people who love the land. There is no charge for these trips. We ask only your time, muscles, and love for the wild. Here is a list of a few upcoming trips. For a full list, or for more information, go to [www.nevadawilderness.org](http://www.nevadawilderness.org), or call Pat Bruce at (775) 324-7667 or email him at [pbruce@nevadawilderness.org](mailto:pbruce@nevadawilderness.org).

**March 25. Mormon Mountains Wilderness, Small Site Restoration Project.** This project will restore vehicle impact areas. The area includes peaks rising to 5,300, large colorful cliffs and canyons. The vegetative community includes yuccas, agaves, Joshua trees, and pinyon. Contact Steve Leslie at the Ely Dist. BLM (775) 289-1867 for more details.

**April 14-16. Leave No Trace Trainer Course.** Backpacking In the **South Pahroc Range**. This training will involve about 5 miles of cross-country hiking in an area of deep canyons, high ridges and cliffs of multi-colored welded tuff that are weathered into unusual formations. Contact Steve Leslie at the Ely Dist. BLM (775) 289-1867 for more details.

**May 5- 6. Leave No Trace Trainer Course.** Car Camping at **Weepah Spring**. The Weepah Spring area sits in the shadow of the Seaman Mountain Range and contains the largest stand of ponderosa pines in eastern Nevada. Contact Steve Leslie at the Ely Dist. BLM (775) 289-1867 for more details.

**May 6- 7. Black Rock Rendezvous.** Training on Sat. and a restoration project on Sun. Details TBA. Contact Stephanie LeFevre, volunteer coordinator for the Winnemucca Dist. BLM for more information, (775) 623-1500.

**May 15-19. Wilderness Restoration** with Nevada Civilian Conservation Corps and Nevada Outdoor School crews in a Black Rock region wilderness area. Details TBA. Contact Stephanie LeFevre, volunteer coordinator for the Winnemucca Dist. BLM for more information, (775) 623-1500.

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## Volunteers doing great things in southern Nevada

By Susan Potts

How do you remove a wrecked van with no wheels from a wilderness area? Some might be daunted by such a challenge, but not our southern Nevada volunteers. Torch in hand, wilderness hero Bill James cut the van into pieces, while others cleaned up trash in the area and restored native vegetation to two areas damaged by off-road vehicles. Later that day, volunteers and the Nevada Conservation Corps carted out the pieces.

Over Presidents Day weekend, folks from Friends of Nevada Wilderness, the Sierra Club, and the Ely BLM did their part to keep America beautiful. They cleaned up trash and scattered seeds where the Meadow Valley Mountains Wilderness had burned last year. Then they gathered a trailer full of tires and trash, and rehabilitated illegal vehicle tracks in the Delamar Mountains Wilderness. Work done, they finished the day with a hike that included ancient petroglyphs and splendid views of the area. Back at camp, after a wonderful meal fixed by Vicki Hoover of the Sierra Club, they sat around the campfire, enjoyed friendly conversation, and wrote letters in support of wilderness. It was a

fantastic way to enjoy our new wilderness areas and do good work at the same time. I hope you'll join us for our next outing!



Photo: Susan Potts

*Bill James and work crew dismantling abandoned van at Wee Thump Wilderness.*

# Why I love wilderness

By Brian Beffort

wilderness  
keeps  
nature  
complete

I love wilderness because it gives me hope. I believe everything anyone could ever need or want is right here on Earth — clean water, fresh air, nutrient-rich soil, sufficient resources to meet our material needs, and wild beauty where we can find solace, challenge and spiritual renewal.

As our ever-growing population pushes against the confines of a small planet, we must learn to live within our means. I believe nature can help. As writer Rick Bass put it, “in nature

lies all patterns of sustainability.” All we need to do is watch nature closely, so we can learn to live with the natural world, not from it.

But we cannot learn from nature if it is incomplete. Wilderness helps us keep it complete by preserving natural processes on a grand scale. Wilderness gives me hope that we can figure things out before the really important pieces are lost. As Aldo Leopold said, “to keep every cog and wheel is the first rule of successful tinkering.”

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## ‘Why I love wilderness’ - Your Story

We are looking for members’ Nevada wilderness stories. Here’s your chance to inspire others with your experiences in the wild — and to send a message about how important these lands are to Nevada. If we use your story, you will get a great prize from Friends.

Send your stories to:

Why I Love Wilderness

Friends of Nevada Wilderness

P. O. Box 9754, Reno, Nevada 89507 or email to [richard@nevadawilderness.org](mailto:richard@nevadawilderness.org).

Include your phone, mail and email info.

be  
expressive!

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do we have  
your  
email  
address?

In this modern age, email has become an essential tool for communicating with you, our members; it’s quick, free and more environmentally friendly than paper. Although we will continue to update you through our quarterly newsletters, our most important messages come into your email inbox. Through email updates, we send updated schedules for our volunteer restoration trips, important and timely updates on political developments, and action alerts asking you to

use your democratic voice by writing or calling key decision makers when it’s important they hear from you. We rarely send more than one or two email alerts each month.

If you’re not receiving emails from Friends of Nevada Wilderness, please send us an email to [fnw@nevadawilderness.org](mailto:fnw@nevadawilderness.org), asking us to add you to our list, or call us at (775) 324-7667. It’s the best way you can help protect wilderness from your home or office.

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## Great special events coming up

**April 9 - Walkin’ Jim Stoltz concert.** Reception: 6pm, Concert: 7pm. West Las Vegas Library Theatre, 951 W. Lake Mead Blvd, Las Vegas. **Free!** See page 3 or call Susan at (702) 650-6542. Walkin’ Jim on the web: <http://www.walkinjim.com/wild1.html>

**April 22 - Summerlin Earth Faire** - 10 - 4, Summerlin Centre Community Park. Volunteers needed to help table at this fun annual event. Call Susan at (702) 650-6542 to sign up and help for an hour or two and then enjoy all the festivities.

**April 23 - Northern Nevada Earth Day** - 10 - 5, Idlewild Park, Reno. Volunteers needed to help table at this fun annual event. Call Richard at (775) 324-7667 to sign up and help for an hour or two and then enjoy all the festivities.

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## Drink beer, save wilderness

Join Friends of Nevada Wilderness for our Wilderness Happy Hour. Look for the “KEEP IT WILD” sign.

Moose’s Beach House, Las Vegas  
4770 S. Maryland Parkway

**First Thursday each month, 5 to 7 PM**

# Hiking Heusser Mountain

## A special mountain overlooking Ely

Story and photo by Pete Dronkers

Looking at Heusser Mountain from the valley floor north of Ely, one is struck by its perfect, triangular geometry and massive scale. In a single, unbroken sweep, Heusser's east slope rises 3,000 feet above Steptoe Valley at a steady pitch of 35 degrees. But from the valley floor, one can't see the things that make this proposed Bristlecone Wilderness Area most attractive and unique.

Hidden to the west of the main summit (9,411 feet) is an elevated plateau with perennial streams, aspen, stands of tall conifers, and native bunch grasses. Clean spring water emerges here and travels through the tight confines of Rattlesnake Canyon, feeding a variety of lush plant species and quenching the thirst of elk, deer, mountain lion and bighorn sheep. This plateau is a resource rich with life and deserving of permanent protection.

To the northwest, high on the crest, stands of ancient bristlecone pine are abundant. In 1965, the BLM recognized this area's "unique botanical characteristics of irreplaceable scientific and recreational values." With the public lands bill in White Pine County, you can help to assure designation for the Bristlecone



Proposed Wilderness through letters of support to our Congressional representatives. With your help, this special place can be protected forever. In the meantime, you can hike it and see for yourself.

### Getting to Heusser Mountain

The best way to access Heusser Mountain is from the north. From Ely, drive north on Highway 93 for about 13 miles. Look for the wide, graded, dirt road that leads north along the east slope of Heusser toward the towns of Steptoe and Cherry Creek. At Basset Lake, the road veers west, and several narrow dirt roads lead south toward the Cove, a large natural amphitheater at the northern foot of Heusser. Follow one of these and park where the forest begins. You'll hike due south for a few miles and then climb slopes in the direction of Heusser's main summit, which is clearly visible from the cove. Plan on a full day to hike up and back. There is no trail, and there are no services beyond Ely. Bring everything you'll need for the

trip: a gazetteer to direct your driving, food, water, and a camera!

**Map:** BLM 1:100,000 Ely

**Details:** Ely BLM at (775) 289-1800.

### Take action for Bristlecone

Help designate the Bristlecone Wilderness. Please write Rep. Gibbons and senators Ensign and Reid to tell them of your support for permanently protecting this beautiful and wild place. See page 4 for their addresses.

### I want to join Friends of Nevada Wilderness

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (eve) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

\$500 or more Benefactor       \$50 - \$99 Friend

\$250 - \$499 Patron       \$25 - \$49 Supporter

\$100 - \$249 Superfriend       \$15 - \$24 Starter

Payment by:     check     charge    *Visa or Mastercard only*

Card no. \_\_\_\_\_ exp.date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*I want to help! Please contact me, I am interested in:*

*Letter Writing*     *Tabling*     *Outings*     *Other*

Mail to: Friends of Nevada Wilderness, PO Box 9754, Reno, NV 89507

### A memorial gift of wilderness

Perhaps the best way to honor the memory of someone who loved Nevada's wild places and beautiful vistas is to make a memorial donation to Friends of Nevada Wilderness. This donation will be used to protect wilderness lands and will support work to designate new wilderness areas. Your gift helps create a legacy that will live on forever.

A note of gratitude will be sent to the donor and to the family of the deceased.

# Thank you Bill and Billie Jean James!

By Susan Potts

Write a letter, lead a hike, help with restoration – whatever needs to be done, we know we can count on Bill and Billie Jean James to support Nevada’s wild places.

Bill and Billie moved to Nevada over 30 years ago and fell in love with the wide-open spaces and beautiful landscapes. Bill was captivated by the ability to park his truck anywhere and explore. He’s working to protect that freedom by commenting on management plans, leading hikes, and participating in stewardship and restoration programs (See him hard at work on page 5).

Billie Jean writes letters to our Congressional delegation and helps with restoration trips. Her ability to get others excited about wilderness is amazing. She recently got more than 100 people to sign letters in support of White Pine County wilderness. And her delicious hummus is always appreciated at our events.

Both Bill and Billie say it is isn’t enough to enjoy wild places; we must all get involved in some way to protect them. Bill and Billie Jean James, thank you for everything that you do for our wild places!



Bill and Billie Jean at home with Liebling. Photo by Susan Potts.

## Shrinking coal plant

*continued from page 1*

Water availability continues to plague Sempra. Residents and local governments want a thorough assessment of the amount of water available in the entire basin – this process through the State Water

Engineer’s office could take 5-10 years. Things are looking up for our wild lands. For more up-to-date information and how you can help, log on to: [www.NevadaCleanEnergyCoalition.org](http://www.NevadaCleanEnergyCoalition.org).

See page 3.

**Remembering a true wilderness hero.**



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