

Call of the WILD



After a sixteen-year wait White Pine Co. wilderness campaign begins

By Brian Beffort

In 1989, the Nevada Wilderness Protection Act designated 14 Forest Service wilderness areas across the state, including Mt. Moriah and Currant Mountain in White Pine County. However, the bill did not designate certain other wild gems – namely the Schell Creek Range and Highland Ridge in the southern Snake Range. Friends of Nevada Wilderness has been waiting for Congress to return to the region and give these beautiful mountain ranges the protection they deserve.

Sixteen years later, the opportunity is here.

On February 7, 2005, the White Pine County Commission sent a letter to Nevada’s Congressional delegation, expressing their interest and desire for a White Pine County public lands bill. In their letter, the commission specifically mentions wilderness as one of the opportunities they wish to address with legislation.

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Photo by Scott Smith

Bristlecone pine in Mt. Grafton WSA

**Celebrate
Earth Day
with Friends of
Nevada
Wilderness
in
Reno
and
Las Vegas.
Details on
page 2.**

Union Pacific Dynamites Wilderness

Severe floods in January washed away roads, bridges and railroad tracks and bridges in Lincoln County near several new Wilderness areas. While repairing the railroad, Union Pacific ignored the Clover Mountain Wilderness boundary and blasted away 5 acres of beautiful cliff in the Wilderness to get rock. Had they bothered to contact the BLM, a rock source outside the Wilderness could have been found easily. Ely BLM personnel discovered the damage on March 14 and ordered the Railroad’s contractor, Las Vegas Paving Corp., to stop work immediately.

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From the front lines
White Pine and Lyon County bills expected, stewardship opportunities & Earth Day

As Spring comes to Nevada, wilderness is blooming all over. White Pine and Lyon counties show the potential for public lands bills this year (more on Lyon next issue). I chose to feature some of the wonderful wild places in White Pine County for this Earth Day Newsletter. Please take the time to write your Congressional delegation about protecting some of these special places as wilderness.

I hope you are as outraged as I am with the blatant destruction in our new Clover Mountain Wilderness by the Union Pacific Railroad Company. Friends of Nevada Wilderness will make restoration of this wilderness a high priority.

Several wilderness stewardship trips are scheduled this spring and early summer, and I hope to see some of you out there giving back to the land. For those of you who don't want to get down and dirty doing restoration, we will need wilderness supporters to attend several meetings. There will be EIS

scoping meetings for the Sempra Coal Plant, water pipelines in eastern Nevada, Sloan Canyon NCA and others. See page 6 for a partial schedule.

Earth Day events will be held all over Nevada. Please visit us at one of the Earth Day events listed below, and please commit to doing something positive for

our wild places. This is a great season to write letters, visit areas on the ground and work for a healthy environment.

I bid a fond farewell to Pete Dronkers who brought energy and enthusiasm to his

work with Friends. He will be missed here. I wish him well in his expeditions around the world.

Be Wild,

Shaaron Netherton
 Executive Director



Shaaron Netherton

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Newsletter published quarterly

Earth Day 2005 Events Schedule

Earth Day, Idlewild Park — Reno. Sunday, April 24 — 10 AM to 5 PM
 Come out to Idlewild Park for a great day celebrating Mother Earth and stop by to talk wilderness with us in the big tent.

UNLV Earth Day Friday, April 22 — Times arranged too late for this newsletter.

Summerlin Earthfaire – Summerlin Centre Community Park
 Saturday, April 23 — 10 AM to 3 PM.

Earth Day Weekend — Spring Mountain Ranch State Park
 Sunday, April 24 — 8 AM to dusk.

Volunteers needed for all Earth Day events — Please call Friends' Las Vegas or Reno office to sign up. It's fun, and you get to meet a lot of folk who want to learn more about saving Nevada's wild places.

Hike the South Egan Range WSA

By Peter Druschke

With its sheer limestone cliffs towering over the town of Lund and the stately pine forests in the higher elevations, the South Egan Range is an obvious contender for wilderness designation. You can help by visiting the area, getting to know it, then sharing your love of the area with senators and the public as the White Pine County public lands bill moves forward in 2005.

This hike up Ninemile Canyon will give you a sampling of what the South Egan Range has to offer: soaring limestone cliffs riddled with caves, springs with thickets of chokecherry and cottonwood, and lots of wildlife.

Getting to the South Egan Range WSA

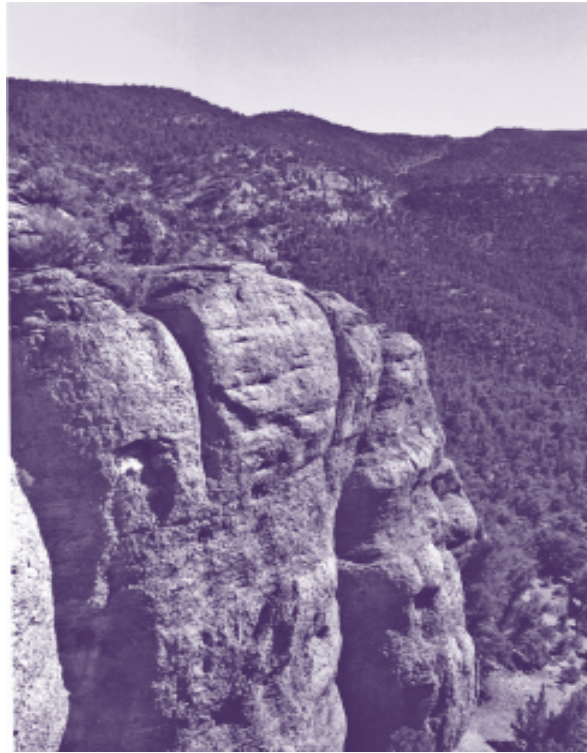
From Las Vegas take I-15 east to 93 north. A few miles north of Ash Springs, turn left onto highway 318 toward Lund. From Ely drive south on Hwy 6, then south on 318 to Lund. Access to the WSA is via an unsigned two-track on the east side of the highway. It begins at a gate and corral about 23 miles north Kirch Wildlife Management Area near Sunnyside, or 9 miles south of Lund. Please close the gate! A tank and windmill (Sheep Pass well) are visible in the distance.

Take the two-track to the range front. A rough portion of the track climbs the slope (4WD recommended). Park at the first junction to the right. Hike the trail (pack-trail on the USGS map) south up Ninemile Canyon. You will be treated to views of lower Ninemile Canyon, lush with cottonwood and wild rose, thanks to perennial water. Where the trail crosses the wash, the adventurous can continue hiking up the canyon, take the first large right-fork and climb to the ridge. Bushwhacking is involved, but the pay-off is the open, windswept crest of the South Egan Range, with peaks over 9,000 feet cloaked with fir and limber pine. From Ninemile Mt. views stretch across a huge swath of east-central Nevada. Precipitous cliffs and canyons are visible to the south.

Agency: BLM Ely at (775) 289-1800; www.nv.blm.gov/ely

Facilities: None on hike; nearest in Lund, 9 miles north.

Maps: DeLorme's Gazetteer, page 56, grid B4; USGS Sheep Pass Canyon 7.5" quad.



The South Egan WSA is richly endowed with stunning scenery, impressive cliffs, lush riparian vegetation, diverse wildlife and opportunities for solitude. Photo by Peter Druschke.

Action you can take

Please invest a few moments to contact our Congressional delegation and voice your support for protecting the South Egan Range as wilderness.

Delegation addresses and phone numbers are shown on page 5.

Union Pacific Dynamites wilderness

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Union Pacific has a history of disregarding wilderness protection, and this latest violation is outrageous. Union Pacific needs to be held accountable for their illegal actions. Friends of Nevada Wilderness is working with the BLM to see that Union Pacific rehabilitates the damage done to the Clover Mountain Wilderness.

You can help

Please write Union Pacific and tell them to restore the damage they did to the Clover Mountains Wilderness.

Richard Davidson, CEO
Union Pacific Railroad Company
1400 Douglas Street
Omaha, NE 68179
(402) 271-3298 - fax

BLM's original process was rushed

Nevada's wildlands deserve a fresh look

By Shaaron Netherton and Brian Beffort

In the late 1970s, the Bureau of Land Management inventoried its lands in Nevada to see which qualified as wilderness, then recommended to Congress those the agency felt were most suitable for wilderness designation.

Although the BLM did a fair job at the time, 25 years of hindsight show that the BLM's original inventories missed numerous wildland gems, and their recommendations do not meet the demands and values of the 21st Century. Since that time, Friends of Nevada Wilderness and the wider Nevada Wilderness Coalition have worked to give Nevada's wild landscapes the greater protection they deserve.

A rushed process

Mandated by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) in 1976, Nevada BLM spent eight months evaluating its 49 million acres for wilderness values by using "existing information." The agency immediately eliminated 33 million acres from further wilderness consideration. The BLM then spent six months on "intensive" on-the-ground surveys of the remaining 16.1 million acres. Assuming they worked seven days a week, BLM personnel had to inventory about 88,000 acres per day. About 11 million more acres were dropped from further wilderness consideration after this "intensive" inventory.

In 1980, the BLM in Nevada designated about 100 Wilderness Study Areas, totaling 5.1 million acres. These areas all had high wilderness potential. Over the next few years, the BLM "studied" these areas, gathered public input, the recommended to Congress a pathetic 1.9 million acres as wilderness.

BLM's bias

Before FLPMA, the BLM's mission was to manage grazing and coordinate land surveys and pioneer settlement. Wilderness

management was a foreign concept for many in the BLM.

The BLM's wilderness inventories and recommendations reflect the attitudes and knowledge of the times, but Nevada has changed a lot since then. For nearly 20 years, Nevada has been the fastest-growing state in the Union, and side effects have included increasing pressures on Nevada's lands. Americans have also come to appreciate the recreational and biological values of our unique desert ecosystems.

More thorough proposals

Friends of Nevada Wilderness has worked with the Nevada Wilderness Project and others to inventory Nevada's wildlands more thoroughly and to generate wilderness proposals that reflect modern science and values. We've advocated our citizens' proposals to local officials, agency personnel and Congressional representatives. Congress has responded by designating numerous arid-land wilderness areas in the Black Rock Desert, Clark County and Lincoln County, often ignoring the BLM's outdated suitability recommendations. Congress has also designated a few citizen-proposed wilderness areas (places that original BLM inventories missed), such as Wee Thump, Mt. Irish and the Big Rocks wilderness areas.

Ultimately, wilderness is not about the past but the future.

Ultimately, wilderness is not about the past but the future. It's about ensuring that we pass on to future generations wildland resources and experiences that we've enjoyed. As Nevada moves forward with public lands legislation to address wilderness, it's important to give our unique wildlands the fresh look they deserve and not rely on inventories and recommendations from 25 years ago.

"There are some who can live without wild things and some who cannot. Like winds and sunsets, wild things were taken for granted until progress began to do away with them. Now we face the question of whether a still higher 'standard of living' is worth its cost in things natural, wild and free."

—Aldo Leopold
A Sand County Almanac, 1949

White Pine County wilderness campaign begins

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"I love White Pine County," said Marge Sill, founding board member of Friends of Nevada Wilderness and Nevada's unofficial Mother of Wilderness. "It's the first rural county I encountered when I came to Nevada in 1953, and it's one of the most beautiful. To me, White Pine County is the epitome of what is magnificent in Nevada."

Located in the heart of the Great Basin, White Pine County is a place where rugged limestone cliffs are dotted with mysterious caves and ancient fossils, where crystal-clear streams cascade through twisting canyons, where deer and elk browse among evergreens and aspen, and where 5,000-year-old bristlecone pine trees stand sentinel high on windswept peaks.

In June, 2003, Friends of Nevada Wilderness and the Nevada Wilderness Coalition published the Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for White Pine County. This proposal is a work in progress, and here are just a few of the reasons why we're so excited about White Pine County wilderness:

▶ **Schell Creek Range.** Peaks nearly 12,000 feet tall, stately aspen, perennial streams, elk, deer, and soaring views.

▶ **Highland Ridge.** Just south of Great Basin National Park, towering limestone cliffs, aspen forests, and amazing opportunities for solitude.

▶ **South Egan Range WSA.** A 10,000-foot ridgeline with towering cliffs, ponderosa pine forests and wonderful wildlife.

▶ **Mount Grafton WSA.** The tallest BLM peak in Nevada (10,990 feet), home to deer, elk, bighorn, cougar and bobcat, as well cascading streams, quaking aspen and sweeping views.

▶ **Goshute Canyon WSA.** Home to Goshute Cave, 10,000-foot peaks, deep canyons, towering cliffs and 4,000-year-old bristlecone pines.

▶ **Mount Moriah additions.** Forested canyons, slopes, and streams with endangered Bonneville Cutthroat Trout.

▶ **Currant Mountain additions.** Diverse and forested rolling hills along the base of this gorgeous wilderness area.

By conserving these and other wild and beautiful landscapes in White Pine County, we will be able to ensure that wildlife will have the habitat it needs to thrive, that outdoor recreational opportunities will not diminish under the onslaught of motor vehicles and development, that the rural way of life that makes Nevada special will continue, and that clear, clean

water will remain to nourish the land and the people of the region.

Protecting the region's natural water supply is one of the reasons Baker resident Roberta Moore supports wilderness in White Pine County. "Water sustains the delicate balance of natural resources in an arid climate," Moore said. "And wilderness preserves these natural resources and gives us refuge, inspiration, rest and hope in a world gone haywire with modern contraptions."

Friends of Nevada Wilderness looks forward to working with the residents of White Pine County and Nevada Congressional delegation to preserve White Pine County's resources, habitat and way of life for generations to come.

Help Protect White Pine Co. wilderness

▶ Write Congressional representatives and urge them to support wilderness designation in White Pine County. Please mention your favorite areas, or those mentioned here, in your letter.

▶ Please contact the White Pine County Commission and express your support of wilderness.

White Pine County Commission
801 Clark St.
Ely, NV 89301

▶ Attend one of the restoration or Leave No Trace trips scheduled in the area (back cover).

Learn more about these places by calling (775) 324-7667 or logging onto www.nevadawilderness.org

Nevada's Congressional Leaders

Mail to DC may face serious delays. Use Nevada addresses or fax instead.

Senator Harry Reid *Las Vegas*

Lloyd D. George Building
333 Las Vegas Boulevard 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

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

Representative Jim Gibbons *Reno*

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



Mission Statement

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.

Keeping the Mormon Mountains Wild

By Susan Potts

Projects to protect and restore wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas comprise an important aspect of our work. We recently completed two such stewardship projects in southern Nevada.

The ‘Search for the Missing Springs’ project was undertaken to help the Las Vegas BLM develop a management plan for the South McCullough Wilderness area. On several outings, volunteers hiked this lovely area south of Las Vegas, and we located and verified the presence of many springs. This project is continuing and if you would like to help, call Susan Potts at (702) 650-6542.

Easter weekend, volunteers teamed up with the Ely BLM to close a road in the newly established Mormon Mountains Wilderness. We built a hiker-accessible fence across the route and converted the two-track into a hiking trail by planting vegetation, raking gravel, and placing rocks to make it look natural. Finally, we installed boundary signs that inform visitors of the important cultural sites being protected.



Susan Potts and Nancy Hall placing signs on the Mormon Mountains Wilderness boundary. Photo by Vicky Hoover.

These outings are a fun way to help protect our beautiful wild places. Please join us for the next one!

See the back page for a trip schedule.

BLM planning updates

The squeaky wheel theory of politics says that Democracy belongs to those who show up at the meetings and submit comments to planning efforts. Please help direct the BLM as it develops the following plans. To discuss specific issues involved, please call us at (775) 324-7667 or (702) 650-6542, and visit our website www.nevadawilderness.org for details.

Sloan Canyon NCA/North McCullough Wilderness

The draft management plan / EIS is available at <http://www.sloancanyon.org>. Mail comments to the BLM at Las Vegas address below. Deadline: June 23, 2005. Public hearings will be at these locations:

May 10, 2005 6:00-8:00 PM
BLM Las Vegas Field Office
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89130

May 11, 2005 6:00-8:00 PM
Paseo Verde Library
280 S. Green Valley Parkway
Henderson, Nevada

Ely BLM water pipeline EIS

Scoping meetings April 26 to May 11 at various locations in Nevada and Utah The complete schedule with dates, times and locations can be found on our website: www.nevadawilderness.org. Click on “issues ” then “Attend meetings.”

Comment deadline: June 15.
Mail your comments to:

Ely BLM
HC 33, Box 33500
Ely, Nevada 89301

Drink beer, save wilderness

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

Moose McGillicuddy’s, Las Vegas
4770 S. Maryland Parkway
First Thursday each month, 5 to 7 PM
(In May, will be first Weds., 05/04)

Threats to wildlands in White Pine County

By Pam White

The threats to our wild public lands nationally and in White Pine County keep mounting.

Oil and gas exploration and development may threaten potential wilderness lands in the White Pine Range and other nearby ranges. Wilderness designation is the only sure way to protect some of these wild lands from the road building and pads associated with oil development.

The creation of new roads is at an all time high in White Pine County and mule deer populations are at all time lows. Wildlife needs large areas of land free from roads in order to thrive and maintain acceptable population levels. Irresponsible off road vehicle use is mostly to blame for the huge number of pioneered roads throughout White Pine County. Wilderness designation allows for vehicle access on boundary roads and at key access points while keeping vehicles from driving all over the backcountry.

Lastly and maybe most importantly, White Pine County's wild mountains provide key watersheds for residents — human and wildlife alike. Wilderness designation will help keep these watersheds in good shape. We all count on clean water to survive.



Hiker enjoying the beauty of the South Schell Creek Range proposed wilderness just outside of Ely, Nevada.

Minimizing new roads, providing wildlife habitat and protecting our watersheds are essential to the future. Wilderness is the best answer for a healthy future which will maintain the current rural quality of life in eastern Nevada.

Without enough wilderness America will change. Democracy, with its myriad personalities and increasing sophistication, must be fibred and vitalized by the regular contact with outdoor growths — animals, trees, sun warmth, and free skies — or it will dwindle and pale.

—Walt Whitman

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

Leave a legacy of wilderness

By bequeathing a memorial gift to Friends of Nevada Wilderness, you will help ensure that Friends can protect wild places in Nevada into the future.

Your bequest, whether large or small, helps Friends weather economic ups and downs and is one of the best gifts you can leave to future generations, an enduring legacy of wilderness.

Please consider making a bequest or memorial gift to Friends of Nevada Wilderness. For information, call Shaaron Netherton at (775) 324-7667.



Thank you, Jackson!

Jackson Hume spent his childhood roaming White Pine County's spectacular mountain ranges and now volunteers with Friends of Nevada Wilderness to protect these treasured areas as wilderness. He is a Nevada native who moved from Elko to Ely before he was a year old. "Ely is my first home," Jackson says, "and as I travel and live outside of Nevada, I

realize how important it is to protect this area."

Jackson spent a year in Germany and attended college in Maine. His time away helped him appreciate the wide open spaces and majestic mountains of the Great Basin. Making fresh ski tracks in the Schell Creek Range is just one of the many benefits of living out here. As an Ely local, he understands and respects rural ways of life, and he knows how important it is to protect watersheds and public lands in order to maintain the current quality of life in White Pine County.

"Water is vital," he said, "and protecting our peaks and watersheds will assure healthy water for the future, which benefits everyone."

Jackson will participate in letter writing campaigns and wilderness stewardships events. He asks that everyone do their part to protect White Pine County wilderness by writing our Congressional delegation and getting out on the ground to visit these beautiful wild places.

Nevada Stewardship 2005

Leave No Trace

June 11-12: Parsnip Peak**

July 23-24: Goshute Canyon**

October 15-16: Little High Rock Canyon*

Restoration

April 30-May 1: Black Rock Rendezvous
Volunteer Orientation/Campout*

May 14-15: Mormon Mountains Wilderness**

May 14-15: Soldier Meadows*

June 4: National Trails Day, Spring Mountains#

June 11: Mt. Rose Wilderness***

June 25-26: So. Jackson Mtns Wilderness*

August 13-14: Pahute Peak Wilderness*

September 24-25: National Public Lands Day,
Soldier Meadows*

September 24-25: Parsnip Peak Wilderness**

For more information about these trips call:

* Brian Murdock at Winnemucca BLM,
(775) 623-1761.

**Stephen Leslie at Ely BLM, (775) 289-1867.

***Brian Beffort at Friends of Nevada Wilderness,
(775) 324-7667.

Susan Potts at Friends of Nevada Wilderness,
(702) 650-6542.

Schedule of events on page 2.

**Wilderness ...
where every day is
Earth Day!**



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Friends of Nevada Wilderness

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