

Call of the WILD

FRIENDS OF NEVADA WILDERNESS

WINTER 2003

BLM's wild areas under attack



By Shaaron Netherton

It appears that the extractive industries may be pushing the Bureau of Land Management to drop protection for millions and millions of acres of Wilderness Study Areas. In a move that is blatantly against the intent of Congress, the Administration is looking to drop all of the Wilderness Study Ar-

Wilderness fire fighting

By Brian Beffort

When BLM notifies Friends of Nevada Wilderness of illegal activities and proposed actions in Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas, we have 30 days to respond with our comments.

This fall, we learned of two wildfires in WSAs in 2002 that resulted in unnecessary impacts. Last summer, crews fighting fires in the Desatoya Mountains WSA (Carson City district) and the Parsnip Peak WSA (Ely district) used bulldozers to cut fire lines. Similar fire mismanagement occurred this last year in the Elko and Battle Mountain BLM districts.

Although it's legal to use bulldozers to fight fires, we believe they should be used when loss of property, life or other emergencies could result without their use. In both of these situations, the BLM admitted the bulldozers were not necessary, stating that out-of-state fire crews, who were less familiar with the areas, used them accidentally.

While we understand that in the heat of a fire, these things can happen, these two events and other similar violations show that we need to work harder with the BLM's fire program to prevent violations. We are working with state director Bob Abbey and the field offices to implement sure-fire (yes, pun intended) Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics that will allow crews to fight fires without unnecessarily damaging Wilderness values.

as the BLM recommended as non-suitable for Wilderness. The BLM's reasons for why areas shouldn't be Wilderness included: the areas are too flat, too steep, not enough vegetation, vegetation too thick, it might have mineral values, and so the excuses went. These recommendations were developed over two decades ago when the face of the west was much different.

When the final Wilderness suitability recommendations were made in Nevada, of the 110 Wilderness study areas totalling over 5.1 million acres, the Nevada BLM recommended less than 2 million acres as suitable for designation. Under the Administration's plan, over 2 million acres of Nevada's Wilderness Study Areas could lose protection and their chances for designation be lost forever.

Congress has shown time and time again that BLM recommendations were outdated and no longer valid. In 2000, Congress designated wilderness areas in the Black Rock Desert region that the BLM said were not suitable; areas like the Calico Mountains, the Jackson Mountains, Pahute Peak and the North Black Rock Range. Only a few months ago, Congress designated areas like the North McCullough Mountains, Arrow Canyon, Jumbo Springs, El Dorado and Ireteba Peaks, which the BLM found were not suitable for Wilderness designation. Friends of Nevada Wilderness will be closely monitoring the situation and will keep our members updated.

Success!

Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002 designates 452,000 acres of Wilderness see story on page 3

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From the front lines

by Shaaron Netherton, Executive Director

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Get on the list

To get Wilderness news and action alerts, subscribe to the Friends of Nevada Wilderness email list: Send post to fnw@nevadawilderness.org with *subscribe* as subject

Happy New Year to all!

I'd like to welcome all the new members who joined Friends of Nevada Wilderness last year. We appreciate your dedication to Nevada's wildlands.

We celebrated another Wilderness success in southern Nevada with the passage of the Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of

2002 that designated 452,000 acres of threatened Wilderness. A special thanks to the leadership skills of Senator Reid and his staff. While this was a bipartisan bill, it would not have succeeded without Senator Reid's extreme ability and influence in the Senate. It also would not have happened without you, our dedicated members. Thanks to each and every one of you!

Without breaking stride, Friends of Nevada Wilderness is jumping into our Eastern Nevada Wilderness Campaign with both feet. Our next issue will focus in more detail on the incredible Wilderness values found in Lincoln, White Pine and Nye Counties. With your continued help, we hope to see significant Wilderness protection for some of these fabulous wild places. We're adding a rural Wilderness organizer in Ely to help make this protection a reality.

Our new year, 2003, is shaping up to be a very busy one—in addition to eastern Nevada, we'll be working for sound management of our newly designated Wilderness areas in the Las Vegas area as well as for the Black Rock/High Rock Wilderness areas designated in 2000. We'll be continuing

our watchdog efforts over all Wilderness quality lands within the state and fighting to keep WSAs protected. We'll also be working for expanded protection of our Forest Service roadless areas as part of

the upcoming Forest Plan revision in Nevada.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness will be working to protect Fish and Wildlife Service managed Wilderness-quality areas in both the Desert National Game Range and the Sheldon Antelope Range.

We want to help the Fish and Wildlife Service celebrate their 100-year anniversary in 2003 with a legacy gift of Wilderness protection. Lastly, we're looking forward to working with the state legislature on Wilderness issues during the 2003 session.

Think big and act wild,

Foreman speaks out for wild places

Friends of Nevada Wilderness hosted an evening fundraiser with Dave Foreman, leading Wilderness activist and author on October 7th. Dave shared his passion and vision for wild landscapes with over 100 supporters at Patagonia in Reno. Over \$1,000 was raised to help publish the Nevada Wilderness Testimony Book, scheduled to be out this spring. A huge thanks to Dave for coming back to Nevada to help raise awareness about our stunning wild places. Many thanks to Roberta Moore for putting the Nevada Wilderness Testimony book together. A howling great time was had by all.



Keeping it Wild:

Citizens work creates Wilderness

By Dino Fulgencio

Barely two months ago, two years of extensive field work, public meetings, grassroots organizing and education efforts to obtain Wilderness protection for some of Southern Nevada's spectacular wild lands finally reached fruition. The Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002 was signed into law on November 6, 2002. *Area list on page 4.*

From the heights of the Ireteba Peaks to the depths of Arrow Canyon, from the Joshua trees of Wee Thump to the ponderosa pines of the LaMadre Mountains, some 452,000 acres of southern Nevada Wilderness are now permanently protected as Wilderness.

The new law balances the needs for infrastructure development, recreational opportunities, and conservation of our precious natural resources in southern Nevada. In a nutshell, this landmark piece of legislation tempers development with conservation measures that will protect our pristine vistas and promote responsible growth in what is becoming a highly-urbanized segment of Southern Nevada.

Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002

The legislation, introduced by Nevada's Senators Harry Reid (D) and John Ensign (R) and Rep. Jim Gibbons (R), designated 452,000 acres of new Wilderness in Clark County and created the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area.

The bill was introduced as a comprehensive conservation and growth plan for public lands in Clark County. Nevada's Congressional delegation has been working with local governments and interest groups for more than a year to develop the proposal, which will accommodate growth while protecting natural resources for current and future generations of Nevadans.

Activists mapped potential protected areas. They wrote letters, published brochures and gave slide show presentations to the public to introduce their fellow citizens to the wild beauty in their own backyards. And they met with other stakeholders to ensure that conservation was represented in the public lands bill, which also addressed recreation and development concerns in the nation's fastest-growing county, Las Vegas' own Clark County.

Conservationists, although not entirely in favor of every aspect of the legislation, welcomed the wilderness component of the public lands bill because it is a positive first step towards wilderness protection in Southern Nevada.

As such, we at Friends of Nevada Wilderness extend our warmest gratitude to our congressional delegation and their staff for all their hard work and leadership in providing a lasting legacy of Wilderness to present and future Nevadans.

We thank and acknowledge the invaluable support of all our business supporters and individuals who voiced their desire to keep Nevada wild to our newspapers, senators and congressmen.

Their passionate and even-keeled advocacy for the protection and preservation of our natural and cultural resources are the guiding lights that serve as an inspiration not only for the Nevada Wilderness Coalition but for all Americans who deeply believe that our beautiful wild places are worth preserving.

Southern Nevada Happenings

Volunteer Night every Thursday 4-8 pm at Moose McGillicuddy's Happy Hour

Northern Nevada Happenings

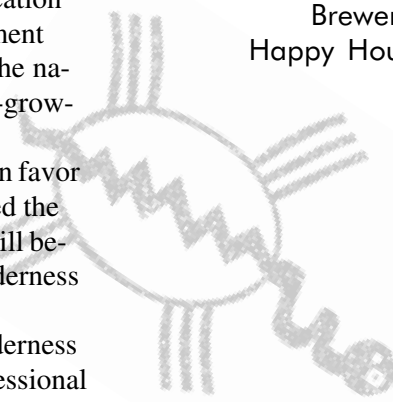
Volunteer Night first Wednesday, 5:30 - 7:00 at Silver Peak Brewery Happy Hour

Black Rock plan to be unveiled

BLM's Resource Management Plan/EIS for the Black Rock-High Rock Region will be available for public comment starting in late January.

Dave Cooper, the National Conservation Area Manager, says there will be a 90-day comment period with public meetings tentatively March 3-7.

You will be able to review the plan online at www.blackrockhighrock.org or call Jamie Thompson at (775) 623-1500 to be placed on the mailing list. This plan will guide how the new National Conservation Area and Wilderness areas will be managed. Friends of Nevada Wilderness will send our members more detailed information on the plan once it's available for public review.



Declare your wilderness support with a colorful T-shirt Printed on 100% organic cotton, these bright white T-shirts feature the colorful FNW logo on the front. Please specify size: S, M, L, XL Cost: \$10 + \$2 shipping.



New 2003 campaign in eastern Nevada

By *Brian Beffort*

As we enter 2003, Friends of Nevada Wilderness is taking advantage of our momentum from recent Wilderness designations in the Black Rock Desert and Clark County to launch efforts to protect Wilderness in eastern Nevada.

From the Mormon, the Meadow Valley and the Delamar mountains in southern Lincoln County to the Goshute Canyon WSA in northern White Pine County, eastern Nevada boasts some of the wildest and most spectacular country in the state. Despite their relative isolation from major population centers, many of these areas are feeling the brunt of unrestricted off-road vehicle use and other human impacts.

While the public and politicians have been focused on the Clark County bill for the last two years, members of the Nevada Wilderness Coalition have been meeting with interested public and

local officials in White Pine and Lincoln counties to discuss issues concerning eastern Nevada Wilderness. This groundwork has helped us become familiar with specific on-the-ground issues affecting Wilderness designation in the region, which will help us ensure that our eastern Nevada Wilderness Proposal is reasonable and manageable.

We are looking forward to working with our Friends of Nevada Wilderness members, other members of the Nevada Wilderness Coalition, Senators Reid and Ensign and Congressman Jim Gibbons, the staffs from the federal, state and local agencies and local residents in eastern Nevada over the next year. With our broad base of public participation, support and concern for our public lands, we are confident that we will be able to help ensure the ability of present and future generations to enjoy wild and free landscapes across the Silver State.



Mission Statement

Friends of Nevada Wilderness is dedicated to preserving all qualified Nevada public lands as Wilderness, protecting all potential Wilderness from ongoing threats including mining, over-grazing, road construction, and off-road vehicle use, educating the public on the values of – and need for – Wilderness, and improving the management and restoration of these public lands.

Nevada wilderness designated in new bill

Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002

North McCullough Wilderness	14,763 acres	BLM
South McCullough Wilderness	44,245 acres	BLM
Wee Thump-Joshua Tree Wilderness	6,050 acres	BLM
El Dorado Wilderness	31,950 acres	NPS/BLM
Ireteba Peaks Wilderness	32,745 acres	NPS/BLM
Jimbilnan Wilderness	18,879 acres	NPS
Nellis Wash Wilderness	16,423 acres	NPS
Spirit Mountain Wilderness	33,518 acres	NPS/BLM
Arrow Canyon Wilderness	27,530 acres	BLM
Bridge Canyon Wilderness	7,761 acres	NPS
Black Canyon Wilderness	17,220 acres	NPS/BLM
Pinto Valley Wilderness	39,173 acres	NPS
Muddy Mountains Wilderness	48,019 acres	BLM/NPS
Rainbow Mountain Wilderness	24,997 acres	USFS/BLM
Lime Canyon Wilderness	23,233 acres	BLM
Jumbo Springs Wilderness	4,631 acres	BLM
Mt. Charleston Additions	13,598 acres	USFS/BLM
La Madre Mountain Wilderness	47,180 acres	USFS/BLM



Take a trek to the Mormon Mtns

By Brian Beffort

Simply put, the Mormon Mountains are spectacular. Flanked by the jagged and impressive Moapa Peak, these mountains rise majestically northeast of the Las Vegas Valley. The easiest access to the riches here is at Hackberry Spring. This area will give you a sense of the many wonderful experiences the Mormon Mountains offer.

From the parking area, hike up the wash, through the narrow stone gate and another mile or so to Hackberry Spring.

Wherever you hike in the Mormons, you will find stunning geology—massive cliffs striped with purple-brown and gray bands, peaks and outcrops in brownish orange and red, and a fairyland of spires, fins and egg-shaped formations. There are numerous caves. You will also find yucca, agave, Joshua trees, several species of cacti and pinyon pines. High on the mountain lives a relic stand of ponderosa pines.

Archaeological resources abound in these mountains. In fact, look diligently as you hike to Hackberry Spring, and you just might find an agave roasting pit, petroglyphs and post-contact pictographs. Please be very careful with these fragile and irreplaceable resources. Please leave what you find, do not touch petroglyphs and please report any vandalism to the BLM's Ely office by phone at (775) 289-1800.

Speaking of impacts, as you get closer to Hackberry Spring, you will notice the garbage and vehicle tracks left behind by less-than-thoughtful past visitors.

Climb higher, however, and you will be rewarded with beautiful views in every direction—over the Las Vegas Valley to the south; the Tule Desert and the Clover Mountains WSA to the northeast; the Meadow Valley Mountains WSA and the Delamar Mountains WSA to the west and north.

To the west, beyond the newly-designated Arrow Canyon Wilderness, you will see the Sheep Range in the Desert National Wildlife Range. You will be hearing more about these areas as we move into our eastern Nevada Wilderness Campaign.

Now is a great time to visit the Mormons and

find out why we love them so. Make sure to bring food, water, sturdy shoes and extra layers in case of changeable weather.

The Mormon Mountains are a great place to spot bighorn sheep and many species of raptors.



Just the facts:

Location: North of I-15 and east of Meadow Valley Wash, about 75 miles northeast of Las Vegas.

Directions: Take I-15 northeast from Las Vegas. Exit at the Carp Elgin Interchange, then follow the frontage road on the north side of I-15 northeast for four miles, where it turns sharply left. Follow this dirt road as it winds north, under the power lines, for 7.5 miles. Turn left (northwest) onto a faint jeep track (you should see a WSA sign here, unless someone took it), which climbs 3.5 miles to the parking area on a shelf, before the track drops into the wash. A high-clearance vehicle is necessary.

WSA size: 162,867 acres

Services: None

Details: BLM Ely District at (775) 289-1800

The Mormons are home to Bear poppies, agave cactus, rock climbers, tilted strata.





Action alert! calls and letters needen

Preserve access, habitat and recreation in Northern Nevada

By Brian Beffort

Last May, the Executive Committee of the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) approved 33 proposals to acquire environmentally-sensitive land around Nevada, then forwarded their recommendation to the Secretary of the Interior. Seven months later, all but a few of the northern Nevada proposals in this round are in danger of being eliminated. Your calls and letters are needed to keep these key areas from being developed.

Despite the public process of SNPLMA, Senator John Ensign (ironically a coauthor of SNPLMA) convinced Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton to remove Northern Nevada proposals from the list, saying (in a Nov. 10 *Reno Gazette-Journal* article) that the original intent of SNPLMA was to fund acquisitions in southern Nevada and Lake Tahoe, and that too much money is going toward projects elsewhere in Nevada. At least \$31 million is available. Two proposals considered for elimination affect Wilderness:

Weimar Parcel. SNPLMA funding would have allowed the public acquisition of property at Hunter Creek, currently the closest trailhead for the Mount Rose Wilderness from Reno. Traditional access has been cut off by development. If this property is not acquired, hikers may have to drive to Galena Creek County Park, 30 minutes away, for easy access to this Wilderness.

Home Camp. Senator Ensign has opposed the acquisition of 17,500 acres in and around the Wall Canyon WSA in northwest Nevada, arguing that there's too much federal land in Nevada as it is. While a reasonable opinion in general, we feel the specifics of this situation show overwhelmingly that the acquisition would be best for the owners, the public and the wildlife.

On December 16, John Ensign said live on KUNR that the process is still open. If there are projects that people care about, he said, please contact him immediately. Please write or call his office and Senator Reid's as well. Urge Ensign to reconsider the elimination of northern Nevada proposals, especially Weimar and Home Camp.

If you need more background, please call Brian Beffort at (775) 324-7667. If you can forward us a copy of your letter, we will have a better idea of what and how many comments they're receiving.

Honorable John Ensign
400 S. Virginia St. #738
Reno, NV 89501
(775) 686-5770
333 Las Vegas Blvd. S.
Suite 58203
Las Vegas, NV 89101
(702) 388-6605

Honorable Harry Reid
400 S. Virginia St. #702
Reno, NV 89501
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333 Las Vegas Blvd. S.
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Solid research builds strong base for Wilderness campaign

By Richard Knox

Getting Wilderness designated is a complex process, part of which involves education of our members, elected officials and the public. Friends of Nevada Wilderness works to provide site-specific, factual information to all interested parties.

Our staff and board work hard to acquire from agencies, companies, private citizens and other sources the most complete and accurate information possible. To communicate from a solid foundation of science-based fact, we educate ourselves about the reality both on the ground and in the political arena. In this way we hope to best serve our members and our state's wild lands.

Nevada is a big place, and the regional issues vary significantly. With the Clark County bill now

law, the campaign is moving into other, mainly rural, areas. Friends of Nevada Wilderness is now gathering data in preparation for the next "Wilderness process." Research topics include: mining and mineral resources, cultural resources, grazing, oil and gas, outdoor recreation of all descriptions, wildlife, "urban" development, access, economic trends, type and intensity of human intrusion and others. Good data helps us get the best deal for Wilderness.

Through appropriate education, Friends of Nevada Wilderness attracts allies who are deeply committed to the preservation of wild lands. We believe that only when everyone takes "pride in good Wilderness stewardship" will the wild become both truly free and fully protected.



A heartfelt
Thank You
to all the
Friends of
Nevada
Wilderness
new members,
renewing members,
Life Members
and Patrons.

Special thanks
to
The Pew Charitable
Trusts
Wilburforce
Foundation
Wyss Foundation
Patagonia
Tortuga Foundation



Helping hands heal old wounds

By Brian Beffort, Conservation Director

I will never forget the feeling of watching time move backward, and I will never forget the people who made it happen.

On September 28, about 20 members of the Nevada Conservations Corps (NCC) came to the Black Rock Desert to help Friends of Nevada Wilderness, Friends of the Black Rock and other organization volunteers work to make our public lands prettier and healthier.

Using picks, shovels, rakes, a little ingenuity and some muscle, the crews rehabilitated four unnecessary vehicle routes in the Calico Mountains Wilderness. Some raked dirt and scattered rocks over the scars. Others transplanted sagebrush in the tracks. Brian Murdock, Wilderness Specialist for the Winnemucca Field Office, topped off the project by scattering wild grass and shrub seeds, donated kindly by Comstock Seed in Carson City.

A few hours later, the scars were gone, blending beautifully into the backdrop of sage-covered hills.

It was as though the tracks had never been created. Admiring our work was easily my most rewarding moment during the year of 2002.

Several of the Corps members were fresh to Nevada from places like Tennessee, New York and the upper Midwest. Watching them look out over the Black Rock playa, I was surprised that they weren't more taken aback by the vast, arid desert. "It's different," was the biggest reaction I could get.

But that night, reactions were much more enthusiastic. Maybe it was the beer, but more likely it was a carpet of brilliant desert stars sweeping overhead. "Oh my God! This is sooo amazing!" was a common refrain.

I want to thank all of the volunteers who helped make National Public Lands Day a success, especially the NCC crew members. You have helped me realize that a committed group of people can help nature heal from human impacts. I wish you all many more rewarding days and nights under the wide, blue or star-studded Nevada sky.



Before and after photos of two routes restored to natural landscape by the NCC crew.

Bequeath a future of Wilderness

A wonderful way to honor a friend or family member who has loved the wild places of Nevada is to make a contribution in her/his name to the Friends of Nevada Wilderness Endowment Fund. This fund will grow as the years pass.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness has a long-range mission: to help Nevada's wild places remain wild forever. Since you share this commitment, you may wish to make a legacy gift to Friends of Nevada Wilderness a part of your estate planning. For further information, call Shaaron Netherton (775) 324-7667.

Memorial gifts and bequests

We hope you will consider the Friends of Nevada Wilderness in your estate planning. Memorial gifts and bequests can permanently support conservation in Nevada. We welcome inquiries about bequests at (775) 324-7667.

If you wish to make a provision in your will, the following general form is suggested:

"I give, devise and bequeath to the Friends of Nevada Wilderness, a Nevada not-for-profit corporation, located on the date hereof at One Booth Street, Reno, NV 89509, the sum of \$_____ (or specifically described property)".