



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Celebrating A Fence-Free Sheldon Wildlife Refuge Volunteers and staff to remove last miles of fence from pronghorn, sage grouse habitat August 17-19, 2012

Please contact Darcy at (775) 324-7667 or Darcy@NevadaWilderness.org for details

Join Friends of Nevada Wilderness and the US Fish and Wildlife Service in celebrating the removal of the last four miles of old range fence from the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge.

Volunteers will clip, roll, and pack out the last four miles of barbed wire fence. After a day of work, volunteers and staff will fill their bellies at a desert luau, complete with Hawaiian shirt contest. A special recognition ceremony will be held during dinner.

Since 2009, volunteers and staff with Friends of Nevada Wilderness have hauled out over 150 miles of barbed wire fencing. The old range fence was deemed unnecessary by the Fish and Wildlife Service, and interferes with pronghorn migratory paths and water access. Pronghorns shimmy under rather than leap over fencing. The refuge is also home to sage grouse, low-flying birds that become entangled in the barbed wire.

“Volunteers with the Sierra Club and other organizations have been pulling this old fence from the Sheldon since the mid-1990s so it’s been a huge team effort,” said Friends Executive Director Shaaron Netherton. “It’s exciting to finally be pulling out the last post and the final wire! Pronghorn and sage grouse can’t do this work themselves, so they rely on volunteers and organizations to keep their home safe.”

Barry Reiswig, former refuge manager and an instrumental figure in removing grazing from the Hart-Sheldon Refuge Complex in 1994, was amazed by the progress.

“I can hardly believe you folks removed so much fence in such a short period of time,” Barry said. “To picture that big refuge without endless cross-fencing is a dream come true! You guys are the best.”

The Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge was founded in 1931 to protect the pronghorn, the fastest land animal in North America, which can reach speeds of 60 miles per hour. The Sheldon Refuge encompasses over half a million acres of sagebrush-steppe ecosystem that provides habitat for bighorn sheep, mule deer, pygmy rabbits, hawks and falcons, and 75 species of butterfly.

Join us for the final fence pull or the desert luau and celebration at the Virgin Valley Campground on Saturday, August 18. For more information and to RSVP, please contact Darcy at Darcy@NevadaWilderness.org.