



FRIENDS *of*
NEVADA
WILDERNESS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Students Spend Spring Break Volunteering in Desert Refuge

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

Students from the University of Nevada, Reno got wild in a different way when they spent their spring break volunteering in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge outside of Las Vegas. Led by Friends of Nevada Wilderness, the team worked to restore and re-naturalize the area for wildlife and people alike.

The crew completed 5 road restorations and planted over 120 native trees and shrubs during their week of volunteering, and contributed over \$29,000 of in-kind service while improving wildlife habitat.

The impact their work had on the land excited UNR Journalism student Lucy. “You look at it, and keep going, then you look back and it looks completely different than what you started with!” Lucy said while working on road restoration. “I’m excited to come back some day and see a whole new landscape there.”

“I’d like to plant a little seed in their hearts so they’ll want to make this one of the regular things they do,” said Kurt Kuznicki, Friends’ Southern Nevada Program Director. “And maybe spread the word to other folks and get their friends involved.”

Volunteer even got a chance to use a slingshot to launch the seedballs of native coyote melons along a riparian area in Corn Creek in an experimental re-seeding technique. The team also created songbird habitat out of a decommissioned railroad engine cooling pond.

“This is a really popular spot for people to come out and look at birds,” said Matt Flores from the Great Basin Institute. “We’re trying to get as rich a habitat of native plants to promote bird diversity and density.”

Amy Sprunger, refuge manager, joined the students for lunch and gave an educational program on the refuge. “It takes a special type of person to want to do this instead of laying on a beach somewhere,” Amy told the students. “I really appreciate your assistance.”

The Desert National Wildlife Refuge is approximately 1.5 million acres, according to Amy, and was established in 1936 to protect the bighorn sheep, Nevada’s state animal.

After a week of hard work on the refuge, students explored the Red Rock National Conservation Area, and even ventured into the La Madre Mountain Wilderness.

The Great Basin Institute supplied vehicles to transport students and volunteers to and from Reno and around the refuge, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Southern Nevada Agency Partnership provided food and support for the program. Sponsors include REI, the Southern Nevada Conservancy, GSI Outdoor, and PortaJane.

See the Alternative Spring Break 2012 video on the Friends of Nevada Wilderness YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/NevadaWild.