Friends of Nevada Wilderness

White Pine wilderness closer to reality

On August 1, 2006, Nevada Senators John Ensign and Harry Reid introduced the White Pine County Conservation, Recreation and Development Act (S. 3772) to the U.S. Senate. The bill proposes 545,000 acres of wilderness areas (13 new areas, plus expansions to two existing wilderness areas). This legislation would provide permanent protection to many currently unprotected wild places.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness has been working actively in advance of this legislation since 2001 to gain support for the permanent protection of many of White Pine County’s beautiful and fragile wildlands, including the Schell Creek Range, Highland Ridge, Mt. Grafton and many others. Although we are disappointed that areas like Blue Mass and the Anletope Range aren’t included, we hope that improvements can still be made to protect additional citizen-proposed wilderness.

Throughout the process, we have been impressed by how passionately and patiently citizens have participated in endless public meetings over the years, debating and ultimately supporting wilderness designation for many of their cherished areas. We also appreciate the time and effort our Nevada Senators and their staffs have invested in addressing a variety of public lands challenges in White Pine County.

The next step for the bill is consideration in Washington DC by the Senate’s Public Lands and Forests Subcommittee on Thursday, November 16th. See the inset (page 5) on how you can help.

You can read full text of the legislation by logging onto http://thomas.loc.gov and searching for bill number S.3772 or check out the wilderness portion of the bill at our website: www.nevadawilderness.org.

Wilderness for Pam White

Ely resident Pamela Jane White worked as the rural outreach coordinator for Friends of Nevada Wilderness from 2003 until her tragic death in September 2005. In memory of her passionate dedication to wilderness, Senators Ensign and Reid named the Wilderness section of the White Pine County bill the “Pam White Wilderness Act of 2006.”

Pam would have been honored by the Senators naming the wilderness title of the bill after her, but she would have been more deeply touched knowing that the forests, streams and wildlife of her favorite mountains will remain forever wild for the children of the future.
FROM THE FRONTLINES

White Pine public lands bill introduced

This newsletter is about the White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006 (S3772). It will immediately protect significant wild lands in White Pine County managed by both the BLM and the Forest Service. The 545,000 acres to be designated as wilderness by this bill is 10 times the amount recommended as suitable for wilderness by the BLM.

This legislation is the result of an exhaustive and inclusive democratic process that took place over the past five years. Friends of Nevada Wilderness has been working actively toward wilderness protection in White Pine County since 2001. Our staff have lived in the community and attended all of the various meetings with stakeholders, local, state and federal agencies and officials. We have worked closely with federal land managers to recruit volunteers out on the ground to repair damage to our proposed wilderness areas. And we have worked with other organizations in the Nevada Wilderness Coalition to map, photograph, and lead tours of our proposed wilderness areas.

It is important to understand that the White Pine County bill is not a wilderness bill drafted by the wilderness community. Rather it is an omnibus public lands bill crafted by Nevada’s senators to address a variety of issues affecting the management of public land and natural resources in Nevada. It is legislation on needs and requests management of public land and natural resources senators to address a variety of issues affecting the management of public land and natural resources in Nevada. It is legislation on needs and requests management of public land and natural resources.

Wilderness Coalition to map, photograph, and lead tours of our proposed wilderness areas.

You may have read that some groups outside of Nevada feel this and other bills before Congress are not in the public’s interest. In regards to the White Pine County bill, I urge you to find out the facts before making up your mind. In my opinion, much of the opposition to the White Pine County bill is based largely on misunderstanding regarding the land disposal issue and the political process and constraints. (See discussion on Title I in this issue). We at Friends of Nevada Wilderness and the Nevada Wilderness Coalition understand the wildlands, the politics and the process that make up the White Pine County bill. Most of the bill’s critics have not been involved and are not from Nevada.

We at Friends of Nevada Wilderness stand by the democratic process that created the White Pine County bill and particularly the Wilderness Title.

For the Wilds of White Pine County,

Shaaron Netherton

OUR MISSION

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 about the values of wilderness, and improving the management and restoration of public wild lands.

Northern Nevada Office
PO Box 9754
Reno, NV 89507
(775) 324-7667

Shaaron Netherton
Executive Director
shaaron@nevadawilderness.org

Brian Beffort
Conservation Director
brian@nevadawilderness.org

Pat Bruce
Field Project Coordinator
pbruce@nevadawilderness.org

Angie Dykema
Forest Project Coordinator
angie@nevadawilderness.org

Richard Knox
Membership Coordinator
richard@nevadawilderness.org

Southern Nevada Office
P. O. Box 230432
Las Vegas, NV 89105
(702) 650-6542

Susan Potts
So. NV Conservation Director
fnwlv@earthlink.net

Eastern Nevada Office
(775) 289-8898

Pete Dronkers
Eastern Nevada Organizer
pdonkers@sbcglobal.net

Board of Directors
Hermi Hiatt, State Chair
Bart Patterson, Southern Vice-Chair
Roger Scholl, N Vice-Chair/Treasurer
Karen Boeger, Rural Vice-Chair
Sarah Perrault, Secretary
Bob Abbey
Peter Bradley
John Hiatt
Ron Hunter
Marge Sill

fnw@nevadawilderness.org
www.nevadawilderness.org
Title I—Land Disposal

Title I is probably the most misunderstood part of the entire bill – in reality all it does is set up a joint selection process with the county and direct where money from future land sales would go – it does NOT direct BLM to sell anything. Lands to be sold are ONLY identified through the BLM’s Resource Management Plan (RMP) with full public involvement and complete NEPA reviews on parcels proposed to be sold. The Ely BLM’s draft RMP/Environmental Impact Statement identified about 23,000 acres for potential disposal in White Pine County. The bulk of this acreage is near Ely in Steptoe Valley. This acreage is not expected to increase in the final plan scheduled for completion in early 2007. A small portion of this total acreage could be available for sale each year based on need by the county.

This title allows for up to 45,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands to be made available for disposal through a joint selection process between the county and the BLM with proceeds kept within White Pine County. There is no requirement in the legislation, as some believe, for the BLM to sell a certain amount of land. If consistent with their RMP, they could sell even more than 45,000 acres, but sale proceeds would generally go into the national treasury instead of staying in the county.

The bill distributes 5% of land sales proceeds to the state education fund; 10% to White Pine County for law enforcement, fire protection, transportation and natural resource planning; and 85% to fund protection of wilderness areas in White Pine County, to support a three year study for a potential extension of the Silver State OHV trail, to inventory and protect unique archeological resources, and to carry out other provisions of the bill.

Title III—Transfers of Administrative Jurisdiction

Title III transfers:

• 645 acres of BLM land to the Fish and Wildlife Service. This BLM inholding within the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge in the northwestern corner of White Pine County is already managed by the Fish & Wildlife Service under a memorandum of understanding;

• 117,000 acres of Forest Service land surrounding the Great Basin National Park to the BLM. (About 70,000 acres will be designated as BLM managed wilderness and roughly 47,000 acres will be withdrawn from BLM’s land disposal and mineral laws, and vehicles will be limited to designated routes).

Title IV—Public Conveyances

Title IV conveys BLM managed land in the amounts of:

• 650 acres to expand Ward Charcoal Ovens State Park (this BLM land is already being managed by the State Park);

• 6,281 acres to the Nevada Department of Wildlife to enlarge the Steptoe Valley Wildlife Management area just south of Ely;

• Up to 1,500 acres to White Pine County for expansion of the airport located on the north end of Ely near the industrial park;

• Up to 200 acres to White Pine County to expand the Industrial Park (located between Highway 93 and the railroad).

It also conveys Forest Service managed land in the amount of:

• About 1,500 acres to Cave Lake State Park (exact acreage not yet finalized).
**Title II—The Pam White Wilderness Act of 2006**

The Numbers, The Places

This legislation would designate 13 new Wilderness areas plus two significant additions to existing Wilderness areas, totaling 545,000 acres (BLM - 285,000 acres; Forest Service - 260,000 acres.) Designation of these areas is a wonderful step towards significant and lasting protections for important wilderness-quality lands and key wildlife habitat in eastern Nevada.

**Wilderness Areas Proposed in the Pam White Wilderness Act of 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Wilderness Area</th>
<th>Proposed Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forest Service Citizen Areas</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald Mountain</td>
<td>22,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2,947-BLM &amp; 19,405-FS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shellback</td>
<td>36,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Mountain</td>
<td>20,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Schell</td>
<td>122,123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Pine Range</td>
<td>42,562</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additions to Existing Wilderness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Wilderness Area</th>
<th>Proposed Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Moriah additions</td>
<td>11,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8,920-FS &amp; 2,273-BLM Marble Canyon WSA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A boundary adjustment reduces the original Mt. Moriah Wilderness by 356 acres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currant Mountain additions</td>
<td>10,631</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BLM Citizen Areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Wilderness Area</th>
<th>Proposed Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becky Peak</td>
<td>18,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristlecone</td>
<td>14,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Peak</td>
<td>6,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland Ridge*</td>
<td>70,098</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BLM WSAs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Wilderness Area</th>
<th>Proposed Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goshute Canyon</td>
<td>42,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egan Ridgetline</td>
<td>18,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Egan Range</td>
<td>42,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Grafton</td>
<td>66,918</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL ACRES**

544,964

* Highland Ridge is proposed to be transferred from Forest Service management to BLM.
Citizen-proposed areas account for 68% of bill’s wilderness

The BLM recommended only about 54,000 acres as wilderness. The Nevada Wilderness Coalition identified about 700,000 acres of wilderness quality land in White Pine County. Currently, the bill includes about 173,500 BLM Wilderness Study Area acres and the remaining approximately 371,500 acres are citizen proposed areas either managed by the BLM or the Forest Service. Not all of our citizen areas have been included in this bill, and we are very disappointed at not having the Antelope Range and Blue Mass/Kern Mtns. We do feel, however, that this bill protects a significant amount of White Pine County’s wild backcountry. These areas will be protected from wind farms, oil and gas drilling, OHV use and the steady loss of wilderness values that occurs without legislative protection. The wilderness management language in this bill is consistent with law and the Wilderness Act.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wilderness Study Areas</th>
<th>Proposed in Bill</th>
<th>Released in Bill</th>
<th>WSA</th>
<th>BLM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goshute Canyon WSA</td>
<td>42,657</td>
<td>7,879</td>
<td>35,594</td>
<td>22,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marble Canyon WSA</td>
<td>2,273</td>
<td>12,804</td>
<td>12,804</td>
<td>1,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Egan Range WSA</td>
<td>61,636</td>
<td>32,096</td>
<td>96,916</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Grafton WSA</td>
<td>66,918</td>
<td>9,935</td>
<td>76,253</td>
<td>30,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>173,484</strong></td>
<td><strong>62,714</strong></td>
<td><strong>218,530</strong></td>
<td><strong>54,294</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bill proposes to release a total of 67,810 acres of BLM WSAs and instant study areas. About half of that release acreage is from the South Egan Range WSA. With your help we can ensure that most of this deserving area is protected. Some of this release would be offset by the nearly 18,000 acres of citizen additions to the WSAs. About 5,100 acres in instant study areas (see below) that are proposed for release never qualified as wilderness. Their release is just a formality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instant Study Areas</th>
<th>Acres Released</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goshute Canyon Natural Area</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swamp Cedar Natural Area</td>
<td>3,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoshone Ponds Natural Area</td>
<td>1,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoshone Pygmy Sage Natural Area</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,096</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please write Senators Reid and Ensign and ask them to do everything they can to assure that S3772 passes this year to protect the wild lands of White Pine County. Let them know that you support expanding the proposed South Egan wilderness areas to make a single unit and that you want to see the Blue Mass/Kern Mtns and the Antelope Range receive the protection they so richly deserve as wilderness.

You can use these addresses for the senators.

**Mail**

Senator Harry Reid
400 So. Virginia Street, # 902
Reno, NV 89501
Phone: 775-686-5750
Fax: 775-686-5757

Senator John Ensign
600 East William St., # 304
Carson City, NV 89701
Phone: 775-885-9111
Fax: 775-883-5590
White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006

Title V—Silver State Off-highway Vehicle Trail

Title V authorizes a 3-year study for the possible extension of the Silver State Off-highway Vehicle Trail into White Pine County. It authorizes a route designation only if the Secretary determines that such a trail would not significantly impact wildlife habitat, natural or cultural resources.

Title VI—Transfer of Land to be Held in Trust for the Ely Shoshone Tribe

Title VI expands the tiny (111 acres in several parcels) holdings of the Ely Shoshone Tribe. It transfers about 3,500 acres in four separate parcels (Area 1 - 543 acres; Area 2 - 309 acres; Area 3 - 2,023 acres; Area 4 - 661 acres) to be held in trust for the Tribe. The largest parcel and majority of the land is designated for traditional and ceremonial uses only, while the other parcels are for residential and commercial development. No gaming would be allowed on any of the parcels.

Title VII—Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project

Title VII deals with the Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project, which is part of the Great Basin Restoration Initiative. The Bill instructs the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to implement the Initiative to carry out restoration efforts in White Pine and Lincoln counties in order to achieve a more resilient and sustainable regime of native vegetation. Toward that end, the bill authorizes the expenditure of funds derived from the sale of public land in Clark County (SNPLMA funds) to be used for conservation initiatives in White Pine County. It also authorizes the Secretaries to enter into agreements with the Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition and the Great Basin Institute “to provide for the conduct of scientific analyses, hazardous fuels and mechanical treatments, and related matters.” In addition, the Secretaries may conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of an interagency science center, research facility and experimental rangeland in eastern Nevada.

Title VIII—amendments to the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998

Title VIII amends the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) to allow additional entities and programs to compete for funds generated by the public auction of BLM lands within the disposal boundary of the Las Vegas Valley.
- It allows funding for Southern Nevada Water Authority’s “Cash for Grass” program to be extended to public entities such as the Clark County School District and the Parks and Recreation Districts and Agencies of Clark County and the cities of the Las Vegas Valley;
- It replaces the word “may” with “shall” in the language authorizing the Secretary to spend money for “development of a multi-species habitat conservation plan in Clark County” which will make this funding a higher priority;
- It allows the Clean Water Coalition (the wastewater treatment operations of Clark County and the cities of the Las Vegas Valley) to apply for SNPLMA funding to build a pipeline to convey treated wastewater to a location in Lake Mead away from the Las Vegas Wash;
- Allows for the development and implementation of a comprehensive, cost-effective, multi-jurisdictional hazardous fuels reduction and wildfire prevention plan for the Lake Tahoe Basin (including the Carson Range and Carson City) and the Spring Mountains;
- Allows Nevada State Parks in Clark County to apply for SNPLMA funding to develop park amenities;
- Allows Washoe County to apply for funds to purchase land (up to 250 acres) and develop a regional park and natural area. This provision is intended to apply to the Ballardini Ranch purchase and is available for a period of five years.

Continues on page 7
Title VIII—Continues

This title also contains language intended to promote the construction of affordable housing in Clark County. It changes the definition of eligibility for affordable housing to be 120% of median annual income. It also requires that the Secretary promulgate rules for the release of BLM land to local governments at below fair market price for the purpose of constructing affordable housing. The buyer of any parcel of BLM land sold at auction which is 200 acres or larger is required to set aside at least five percent for affordable housing.

A minor provision, allows local governments to be reimbursed more timely for their expenditures to build approved projects using SNPLMA funds without paying up-front the entire cost and being reimbursed later.

The BLM has been holding semi-annual land sales for the past several years. During 2004/2005, the real estate market was booming in the Las Vegas area, and most parcels sold above appraised value, and receipts from each auction were in the billion-dollar range. At the most recent auction in June of 2006, the few parcels that sold garnered only $29 million in receipts. A cooling real estate market means a lot less money available for acquisition and projects in the near future. In Round 7, now in process, about $1.2 billion worth of proposals are competing for about $70 million in available funds. With this title making more agencies and project categories eligible to compete for SNPLMA funding, the competition for existing dollars will intensify. It is unlikely that much SNPLMA money (as a percentage) will be spent on such things as the Clean Water Coalition pipeline to Lake Mead.

Title IX—Great Basin Heritage Route

Title IX establishes the Great Basin National Heritage Route and a partnership to serve as a local coordinating entity among all levels of government, local communities, Tribe, and the private sector. The purpose of the route is to conserve, interpret and develop the archaeological, historical, cultural, natural, scenic and recreational resources related to this portion of the Great Basin in White Pine County and Millard County Utah. The title sets up a process for a management plan.

White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006

White Pine County

White Pine County was founded April 1, 1869, with its original county seat in Hamilton. Ely is now the county seat with smaller communities in McGill, Baker, Lund and Ruth. Ely is situated in Steptoe Valley at an elevation of 6,439 feet. Temperatures average about 65 degrees in summer and about 28 degrees in winter. The county’s namesake white pine is now called limber pine. The County’s 2005 estimated population is 8,994. Located in the heart of nowhere, Ely is 379 miles from Boise, 229 miles from Las Vegas, 317 miles from Reno and 259 miles from Salt Lake City.

White Pine County has spectacular natural resources including the Great Basin National Park with Lehman Caves and the 13,065 foot Mount Wheeler, Mt. Moriah and Currant Mountain Wilderness Areas. It is rich in archaeology as well as historic values including the Nevada Northern Railway, Ward Charcoal Ovens and Pony Express stations.

For more info check out www.elynevada.com.

Table: The Lands of White Pine County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>approx. acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLM</td>
<td>4.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS</td>
<td>900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private land</td>
<td>195,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Basin NP</td>
<td>77,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goshute Ind. Res.</td>
<td>65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F&amp;WS</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NV Dept Wildlife</td>
<td>6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Parks</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>county land area</td>
<td>5.7 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scary thought for the day

In October 2006, Nevada’s state Demographer projected the state’s population to grow by more than 74 percent over the next 20 years. If this occurs, nearly 4.4 million people will live here by 2026. Roughly 2/3 of the growth will occur in Clark and southern Nye counties and the rest will be in the northern urban areas. More people means more pressure on our precious wildlands.
Restoring Nevada’s treasures

Seeing deserving wild lands protected legislatively as wilderness is extremely important, but it is only the beginning. At Friends of Nevada Wilderness, we believe that we also have a stewardship responsibility to keep these wild places wild on the ground. Friends volunteers worked on several restoration projects in White Pine County this summer with both the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. On June 17, 120 volunteer hours went towards healing illegal OHV tracks in the Mount Grafton Wilderness Study Area. Over the September 9th-10th, 2006 weekend, 101 volunteer hours were logged by volunteers restoring an old two-track along the Hendry’s Creek trail (Mt. Moriah Wilderness). For more information, check out http://wildnevada.blogspot.com.

Volunteers on the job - “during”

Job finished: foot path - “after”

Illegal two-track route - “before”

Angie Dykema all photos