Wilderness for Lyon, Mineral counties?

A new public land bill process begins

In June, Senators Harry Reid and John Ensign, and Congressman Dean Heller announced the beginning of a public process that could result in new wilderness areas in Lyon and Mineral counties.

Some of the outstanding places Friends is committed to getting designated include the Gabbs Valley Range and Burbank Canyon wilderness study areas and the Excelsior and Huntoon Springs roadless areas in Mineral County. In Lyon County, candidate wilderness areas include the northern tip of the Sweetwater Mountains (called the Sisters Proposed Wilderness) and the South Pine Grove Roadless Area (called the Wovoka Proposed Wilderness, after the Native American spiritual leader and father of the Ghost Dance, who was born near, and spent much of his time in, the area in the 1800s). Friends is working with the Nevada Wilderness Coalition to identify additional deserving wilderness candidates in both counties.

Like the Clark County, Lincoln County and White Pine County public-lands bills that passed in 2002, 2004 and 2006 respectively, legislation for Lyon and Mineral would address a variety of public-lands issues in Lyon and Mineral counties. As Nevada’s Congressional

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Meghan Sural: Confessions of a wilderness volunteer

Aaaaahhh. The second week in June. Two weeks before the season’s solstice—making days not yet their longest, but long enough. Warmer weather has set in, but before the heat hits hardest. It’s Friday, and I’ve signed up to go on a wilderness restoration trip with Pat Bruce from Friends and a few other lucky volunteers. We hit the road for Mt. Grafton Wilderness, and a wave of excitement pulses through me—my first trip across Nevada on Highway 50.

Having grown up in the east, I feel a whole new form of wilderness in Nevada. There I knew lush rhododendrons and the smell of Appalachian dirt always in the air. Now I smell scrubby sweet-scented sagebrush. There thick, green vegetation surrounded me. Now waves of smooth velvet milk chocolate peaks roll into long ranges that meander to the horizon. Dipping and climbing through basin and range, I feel a rush of emotion, a vibrant and positive sensation, rushing the self-erected walls of everyday life. Cocooned by house, workplace, relationship, and comfortable lifestyle, my body and spirit are thirsty for some wild relief.

We arrive at Mt. Grafton in the dark, set up camp quickly, keeping the tops of our

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**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 — and need for — wilderness, and improving the management and restoration of wild lands.

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**From the Frontlines**

Help Friends stay strong for the future

In early September, I hiked up to a ridge in the middle of the Mt. Rose Wilderness to gain some perspective. The hot summer air was dry and smelled of vanilla from the ponderosa pines; the view expansive. I gave thanks to all the folks whose steady vision protected this place from development. I am amazed at the variety of people I see up there—young families with kids in backpacks, as well as scouts, couples and lots of seniors. Some hike alone; others in groups; some are veteran hikers; some escaping from the city for the first time, but all delighting in this special place.

We are fortunate to be kicking off another wilderness protection campaign, this time in western Nevada (Lyon and Mineral counties). Collectively, we have the opportunity to set aside places like the Gabbs Valley Range, the Sweetwater Mountains and Bald Mountain (Wovoka) south of Yerington. In order to ensure there will always be wilderness warriors and guardians, Friends of Nevada Wilderness has taken a generous legacy gift to step toward a more secure future by opening endowed accounts with the Community Foundation of Western Nevada in Reno, and the Nevada Community Foundation in Las Vegas. If you are interested in making a gift to either account, I would be happy to talk with you. As long as there is wilderness, there will be Friends of Nevada Wilderness.

I am excited to introduce you to the newest member of Friends of Nevada Wilderness, Adriane Zacmanidis. Adriane joined us in August as our Southern Nevada Director. She will soon be contacting our members in southern Nevada to get to know you better and gain from your wisdom.

In these last days of warmer weather, join us for one of our wilderness hikes. We are also scheduling a whole new season of restoration trips and hikes for this coming spring and summer for southern and northern Nevada. Check out the schedule and I’m sure you will find great opportunities to join us in wild Nevada.

Adriane Zacmanidis joined Friends in August as our Southern Nevada Director in Las Vegas. She brings a wealth of experience that greatly enhances our efforts to conserve wilderness in southern Nevada.

“For me, the desert is home” she says. “I love the vast open spaces, the mountains, desert lakes, the flora, the fauna, the colors, and the unique smells. I am an extremely active outdoors person and I am so connected to this land that I couldn’t fathom calling anywhere else in this world home.”

Adriane spent the last 15 years working in museums, building community partnerships, outreach programs and curricula for teachers and museum staff. She also worked with volunteers and designed interactive websites. She holds degrees in Public History, Archaeology and Museum Sciences and Education. “Protecting and acting as a steward for this land and its cultural resources has been my personal passion and life’s work thus far, and I really couldn’t imagine a more fulfilling journey.”

Adriane, we’re glad to have you on the team.
Luke and Sparky the burros get bored with domestic life on 70 acres in the Pah Rah Mountains. In mid-July, they put their hooves down and demanded their geezer guardians, Dan and Karen, get them out into Big Wild Nevada. The solution: the Sweetwater Mountains, which stretch between Wellington and Bridgeport, Calif.

The burros petitioned to camp at the spring water and lush grass at the cow camp oasis trailhead. Dan’s signature diamond hitch lashed packs on them instead. Several sweaty, puffing hours followed, up a rocky, steep canyon. If the burros hadn’t been so hot and grumpy, they would have noticed the starkly beautiful rock formations, numerous birds and wildflowers, and been thankful for the shade along the way by fragrant stands of mountain mahogany.

All was forgiven when the gang reached high rolling alpine meadows, obviously quite wet in Spring, just below towering East Sister (10,404’), signaling an end to the climb. Even better was the spectacular view from the pass: Middle Sister looming to the South (10,854’), the distant craggy ranges of the Sierra to the west and, more alluring to Luke and Sparky, the lush expansive meadows of Little Smith Valley just below them.

No sooner did Karen and Dan set up camp among the willows, than a healthy black bear, tawny fur golden in the late afternoon light, sprinted up the hillside and out of sight, apparently unwilling to share his meadow with these strange creatures. After a colorful Sierra, we all slept under dazzling stars in the clear night sky.

The next day led us up aspen-dotted meadows to another pass on Middle Sister. Below were more meadows and Coyote Creek dropping away to the a magnificent view of the Sierra on the western horizon. Camp that night was at a perfect burro-pleasing meadow by a creek. Luke decided that night to “help” with the cooking. A burro nose in one’s lap, let alone in a pot burning on the stove was not to be encouraged. “Discussions” resulted in a shortened tether rope on the offending party.

Sadly, the next day required a return to civilization, but we decided to explore a new route on the way out to maximize new scenery. Back down Coyote Creek, past lovely aspen stands along the ever-gurgling stream, to a juncture with a faint horse trail that led over a pass with outstanding views, then down through Little Smith Valley to the cow camp and the burro trailer.

After we loaded up the burros and started the truck, another black bear charged startled right across our path. A Nevada wilderness with bears, now that’s a primo adventure!

Karen is a founding member of Friends’ Board of Directors

GETTING THERE. To explore Nevada’s Sweetwater Mountains, Drive south from Carson City on US 395. North of Topaz Lake, turn left/east on Highway 208. At Wellington, veer right and head south on Hwy 338. After about 15 miles, turn right/west onto Forest Road 050. Drive until the exploring looks good. The road is passable in good weather, but storms might make the road impassable.

TAKE A HIKE

Luke and Sparky’s excellent Sweetwater adventure

By Karen Boeger

www.nevadawilderness.org

VOLUNTEER heroes

Giving back is a way of life for Howard and Ursula Booth. They helped found Friends of Nevada Wilderness 23 years ago, and they’re still volunteering for Nevada’s wild places today. In February, Ursula and Howard joined the Friends’ volunteer projects in the Rainbow Mountain and Black Canyon wilderness areas.

“I like to be outside,” said Ursula. “I like to be active, I like to see things looking nice and in a natural state, and it’s nice to work with friends and get to know people I haven’t met.”

“Nevada has given a lot to us,” Howard said. “We try to give a little bit back. Without volunteers, things in this country would really fall apart. I think that when you have enough volunteers, it reaches a critical mass. It catches on to a wider group, and everyone says ‘I need to get in on this, too.’ That’s when things start getting better.”

Ursula turned 70 in February, and Howard turned 80 in March. They have attended numerous Friends restoration projects, and Howard’s beautiful photos have graced our calendars, brochures and websites for years. In 2005, Howard won the John Muir Award from the Sierra Club, the club’s highest honor.

Thank you very much, Ursula and Howard, for everything you have given to Nevada’s wild places!
Summer stewardship successes

During this busy summer, Friends has worked hard to connect volunteers with their public lands to help land management agencies keep Nevada wild.

Each year on the last weekend in September, more than 100,000 volunteers work across the country come together to give back to their public lands. Here in Nevada, Friends helped organize two projects: in High Rock Canyon country north of the Black Rock Desert, and in the Boundary Peak Wilderness.

Clockwise from top left: Fixing a trailhead sign at Boundary Peak (photo by Kevin Johnson), Pat Bruce swinging Dutch ovens like no one else can (Kurt Kuznicki), enjoying a well-deserved break at Boundary Peak (Kevin Johnson), and Finley and Logan surveying the work (Brian Beffort).
Friends of Nevada Wilderness helped make landscape restoration a part of the 2007 Burning Man festival. In honor of the “Green Man” theme, our volunteers worked to protect the sensitive Coyote Springs Dunes on the Black Rock Playa. This unique dune complex is home to a rare spring, sensitive plants and kit fox dens. Volunteers raked away the off-road vehicle tracks that have destroyed much of the natural vegetation in the area, transplanted native vegetation to help the natural recovery process, and erected a rustic fence to protect the area from further damage by off-road vehicles.

Clockwise from far left: Volunteer David Von Seggern heading into the Boundary Peak Wilderness to clear the trail (Kevin Johnson photo), the team celebrating a great day above High Rock Canyon (Kurt Kuznicki), Black Rock NCA ranger Justin Robbins happy to have the help (Kurt Kuznicki).
We’ll miss you, Alanah!

By Brian Beffort

Alanah Woody, Executive Director of the Nevada Rock Art Foundation, died on July 19. She was 51.

“I am a rock art evangelist,” Woody told Smithsonian magazine in 2005. “Give me people who think rock art is nothing more than a bunch of old graffiti on a boulder or cave wall. Let me take them out into the desert to see 10,000-year-old petroglyphs, and I guarantee they’ll begin to feel a connection with the people who lived here long before we came along.”

Woody also supported Friends’ work for wilderness. She viewed rock art as part of the landscape, and in order to protect the resource, we needed to work on behalf of the land.

Nevada has lost a great defender of Nevada’s heritage, whose work will continue in those she inspired.

Volunteering

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Making a difference: The power of one

Imagine hiking along in the wilderness with your canine companion when he begins howling in pain, caught in a leg trap meant for bobcats. After several of these incidents near the Mt. Rose Wilderness in Reno, Carol Tresner and Trish Swain decided it was time to do something.

When trapping in public areas became a hot-button issue in the local paper, Trish and Carol sprang to action, designing a TrailSafe website, gathering letters of support, speaking out at various meetings and gathering 700 signatures on a citizens’ petition requesting changes in trapping regulations.

The next steps were a formal petition before the Nevada Wildlife Commission, then a meeting with the Nevada Trappers Association. Dialogue had begun; trapping was a hazard to the public, and the trappers knew this. Many people reacted emotionally to recreational trapping, but what could be realistically achieved now? After more negotiation and compromise, Carol and the trappers presented a joint petition to the Nevada Wildlife Commissioners that prohibited snares and leg-hold traps on trails from the Tahoe Rim east, and from Mt. Rose to Interstate 80. It was unanimously approved. “Tenacity, media exposure, organization, flexibility, wise counsel, compromise and technology all factored in,” said Carol, reflecting on her success. “Yes, luck and timing, too.”

This small but significant victory started when two hikers gave voice to what many others endorsed—all in six months. This is proof that the person who greets you each day in the mirror might be a world-changing force waiting to manifest. WHAT’S YOUR ISSUE?

Lyon, Mineral campaign

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Delegation stated in a June 26 press release, a main goal of this process would be to resolve litigation over water rights in the Walker River basin.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness is looking forward to working with interested citizens and elected officials at all levels to conserve some of this region’s last beautiful and wild open spaces.

If you are familiar with some of these areas, know Lyon or Mineral county residents who would like to keep some of their backcountry wild, or if you would like to help protect these special places, please contact Brian Beffort at (775) 324-7667.

For maps and more information about proposed wilderness areas in Lyon and Mineral counties, and a copy of the press release issued by Reid, Ensign and Heller, visit our website at www.nevadawilderness.org

Mail call

Help designate wilderness in Lyon and Mineral counties.

Write Nevada’s Congressional delegation. Urge them to support wilderness for the Gabbs Valley Range, Burbank Canyon, Excelsiors, Huntoon Springs, Wovoka and the Sisters.

Senator Harry Reid
528 Hart Senate Bldg.
Washington D.C. 20510

Senator John Ensign
119 Russel Senate Bldg.
Washington D.C. 20510

Congressman Dean Heller
1023 Longworth Office Bldg.
Washington D.C. 20515
**Wild fall hikes and restoration trips**

Join Friends of Nevada Wilderness staff and board on a dayhike to a wild gem near you. Space is limited, so call now for more information or to RSVP at (775) 324-7667.

**Wovoka Proposed Wilderness Area (1 hour south of Carson City), Nov. 3**
Join Kurt Kuznicki to explore the Pine Grove Hills south of Wellington in Lyon County. These were the home turf of Wovoka, the Paiute mystic who started the historic Ghost Dance of the 1800s. Open cross-country hiking. 10+ miles. Moderate.

**Mount Charleston Wilderness (NW of Las Vegas), Oct. 27**
Spend the day with Friends’ board members Hermi and John Hiatt as we enjoy the changing aspen, rare plants and tremendous beauty on the slopes of southern Nevada’s highest peak. 5 miles. Moderate.

**Wine and Cheese in the Wee Thump Widerness (south of Las Vegas), Nov. 14**
The quiet beauty of this Joshua tree forest west of Searchlight will be a perfect locale to enjoy the finer things in life: good friends, good food, good wine and natural beauty. Join Friends’ Associate Director (and author of *Afoot & Afield Las Vegas*) Brian Beffort adn Friends’ Southern Nevada Director Adriane Zacmanidis. Easy: less than one mile. Transportation available. Limit 12.

**LEAVE A LEGACY OF WILDERNESS ... FOREVER!**

Support the Friends of Nevada Wilderness endowment.

Contact the Community Foundation of Western Nevada (Reno) at (775) 333-5499, or the Nevada Community Foundation (Las Vegas) at (702) 892-2326.

I want to keep Nevada wild by joining Friends of Nevada Wilderness!

Name: ________________________________________________________
Address:_______________________________________________________
City: ___________________________ State: _______ ZIP: ______________
Phone (day): _________________ Email: _____________________________

_____ $25 Supporter  _____ $50 Friend  _____ $100 Superfriend
_____ $500 Benefactor  _____ Other  _____ Monthly, charge my credit card

Payment by: ______ check   ______ charge (Visa & Mastercard only)
Card No.: _________________________________ Exp. Date: ___________
Signature: _____________________________________________________

Make checks and mail to: Friends of Nevada Wilderness, PO Box 9754, Reno, NV  89507

Thank you!  

I would like to learn more about:

_____ Volunteering  
_____ A presentation at my company or club
_____ Leaving a legacy with a bequest
Save the date!

Friday, November 30, 2007

So many reasons to celebrate...

Join us to honor the birthday of Marge Sill, Nevada’s Mother of Wilderness, to thank all of our volunteers who have helped heal wild places this year, and to toast the wonderful holiday season.

Hosted by the following merchants at Arlington Towers, 1st and Arlington Streets, Reno:

Se7en tea house and bar
The Far East Corner boutique
Aquarius eco-salon
La Terre Verte eco-friendly boutique

Look for your invitation in the mail, or check out www.nevadawilderness.org for more information.

Get your WILD calendar

Our latest and greatest wall calendar is available, featuring handsome photos of Nevada’s beauty from across the state. The cost is (still) only $12 for a single calendar (less if you order in quantity).

Look for your order form in the mail soon, or order yours today by calling (775) 324-7667 or securely on our website, www.nevadawilderness.org.