Did you know, Nevada has two of the biggest wildlife refuges outside of Alaska? The Desert National Wildlife Refuge near Las Vegas, and the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge up against the Oregon border. Both have extensive wilderness study areas, recommended by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in the 1970s. While the Desert Refuge has a completed management plan, the Sheldon Refuge plan should hit the streets for review and comment by the end of the year. Friends of Nevada Wilderness staff and volunteers have conducting field reviews and inventories this summer in Sheldon documenting wilderness values as well as restoration needs. Everyone agrees that there is a lot of big beautiful country in the Sheldon Refuge, and we’re working with others to keep it wild.

With support from the federal Recreation Trails Program, Friends hired a six-person trail crew during July and August to help hikers, packers, and hunters better enjoy the Toiyabe Crest National Recreation Trail. The crew cleared 10 miles of trail in Washington Creek and placed signs to help people find the trail. Within Arc Dome Wilderness, the crew cleared trail in the North and South Twin Rivers. Ten new information kiosks have been installed at major trailheads, and we’re working with the Forest Service to create signs that will help all users in Arc Dome.

Friends’ volunteer John Fiske has also been spending his summer hiking wilderness trails in central Nevada to identify trail maintenance needs and keep an eye out for invasive weeds. Data he is gathering will help us and the Forest Service plan future maintenance and work projects.

More about our projects in wilderness, pages 4-5
FROM THE FRONTLINES

By Shaaron Netherton, Executive Director

“Boots on the ground” sums up Friends’ work in Nevada this year. Magic really happens when people work together, focusing on our common love for Nevada’s wild places. I am astonished at what our volunteers, partners and staff have accomplished this summer out in the wilderness.

We have had crews working on the Toiyabe Crest Trail in central Nevada. In June, 60 volunteers helped pull fence and improve pronghorn habitat in the Sheldon Refuge. British Trust for Conservation Volunteers labored for weeks in eastern and northern Nevada pulling weeds, reseeding, and removing old culverts and fences. Volunteers Caleb Burke, Barry Morgan and Susan Juetten have shined while helping wild places.

Of course, this work couldn’t happen without you, whether you work on the ground or support the efforts through your generous gifts. Thank you for making a difference.

But the season isn’t over. More projects are planned into fall. Check out dates in this newsletter, and visit our website for updates.

In Las Vegas, Kurt Kuznicki recently joined our staff in partnership with the Forest Service, where he is caring for the Mt. Charleston, LaMadre and Rainbow Mountain wilderness areas. In fall, we are looking to add another Las Vegas staff person and expand this partnership to include other wild places areas in southern Nevada. A big thanks to REI’s new Boca Park store and the Franklin J. Koch Animal and Wildlife Fund for helping make this possible. Southern Nevada members, be on the lookout for opportunities to get involved.

We’re excited to see Bob Abbey, one of our former board members, as the new BLM director.

Lastly, 2009 marks Friends of Nevada Wilderness’ 25th anniversary. As long as wilderness remains in Nevada, Friends will be caring for it. Looking forward to the next 25 years, I hope you will join me and others in our Legacy Society. Making a legacy gift can be very easy and extremely satisfying. See page 7. Please call me if you have any questions.

Welcome, Kurt!

The recession has created at least one benefit for Nevada’s wild places. Friends’ board member Kurt Kuznicki was laid off from his construction job in July. In August, he resigned from our board of directors to join Friends’ staff as our Wilderness Program Director based in Las Vegas.

“It’s pretty amazing,” said Kurt. “I used to spend my days building sprawl and helping wilderness on the side. Now I get to work full time helping Nevada’s wild places.”

Kurt’s initial tasks will be to work with the US Forest Service and volunteers to complete on-the-ground restoration projects in the Mt. Charleston Wilderness and elsewhere in the Spring Mountains. Once he builds momentum in the Spring Mountains, he will expand his attention to wild places throughout southern Nevada.

We’re lucky and honored to have Kurt join the team, but his success will depend partly on the support and participation from volunteers, groups and businesses in southern Nevada.

If you’d like to hear his infectious laugh and learn more about what opportunities are available, contact him at (702) 839-5569 or kurt@nevadawilderness.org.

Shaaron pulls the final fence staple at the 2009 Sheldon Rendezvous. Photo by Kurt Kuznicki

Kurt, laughing it up in wild Nevada.
I got home last week from my trek in the wild mountains of eastern Nevada. It was a tough trip in many ways, yet so beautiful and inspiring, too. I trekked 515 miles, 33 days on the trail—twenty of those days I never saw a soul.

There was no trail at all for 110 miles (mostly as I walked the ridge tops). My shortest day was 3 miles and the longest 33 miles. I completed 3 new songs, and started two others. No town unless you count the ghost town of Hamilton.

I wish I could send you all the scent of sage, juniper, and mountain mahogany. Sometimes I’d just stop in mid-stride and just soak it in. These are special places. It is big country. Vast country. I’d often feel like an ant crossing a vast universe as I trekked across a big desert valley, or watched the sun set slowly into rosy clouds over a skyline as wide as the world.

Unfortunately, several times I got to springs I was counting on for water and found them bone dry, forcing me to march on. That’s how I got my longest days of the trip. And some of the high routes were pretty challenging for these ol’ legs of mine, but after I did them, I was very proud of myself.

I saw lots of deer and elk, coyotes, mountain goats, wild horses, and many birds of prey. Pikas were conspicuously missing from some of the ranges (their populations are plummeting due to climate change), so I was delighted when I started seeing them the last weeks in the Ruby Mountains.

All in all, it was a great journey. I feel blessed that I’m able to still get out and do it!

More than 60 volunteers, ranging from age 3 to 83, came from big cities and rural ranches to take part in the 1st Annual Sheldon Rendezvous in June. They were sportsmen and Congressional staff, students and retired professionals. Their love for the beauty and wildness of the Sheldon Refuge brought them together. Friends of Nevada Wilderness coordinated the logistics for the event with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Splitting into nine groups, volunteers removed seven miles of barbed-wire fence, making it safer for pronghorn and other wildlife to migrate. They also installed 15 miles of boundary signs and rebuilt the Murdock Spring fence to improve water quality and help the damaged riparian area heal. Kids pulled invasive weeds in the campground and then enjoyed a nature hike into a deep canyon.

After Saturday’s feast, volunteers celebrated Jim Yoakum’s 83rd birthday. A renowned pronghorn biologist, Jim first came to the Sheldon in 1954 and has been a strong voice for pronghorns and the Sheldon ever since.

Captions clockwise from top right:
Liz Bell untangles barbed-wire; Ian Robinson unclips wire from a fence post; kids work together in camp to dig up invasive weeds in the campground; Shaaron helps Jim Yoakum celebrate his birthday; and volunteers Bob Milne and Jim Jeffress pull fence posts near Big Springs Table.

All photos credit Kurt Kuznicki, except the kids, by Brian Beffort.
The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers is England’s largest conservation volunteer charity. For the last four years, Nevada’s wild places have benefitted from BTCV attention.

This year, two separate “Brit” crews worked hand-in-hand with folks from all over Nevada to complete several restoration projects.

In June, they removed 65 cubic yards of invasive Dalmatian toadflax and improved a trailhead in the Parsnip Peak Wilderness.

In July on Mount Grafton, they removed old culverts, reseeded disturbed areas with native plants and improved wildlife habitat.

High above Summit Lake and Mahogany Creek, 15 volunteers spent August 7-9 removing over a mile of unneeded barbed wire fence where they battled rain, wind and sun and enjoyed unparalleled vistas.

Volunteers feasted on a scrumptious post-project dinner of couscous and vegetables, chorizo and sweet potato mole (see recipe below) topped off with Dutch-oven apple crisp and freshly cranked ice cream.

“I love it here,” said Brit volunteer Kate Fox, from West Sussex, England.

“You don’t get this experience any other how, mixing with people who live in an area and work in an area. We get so much more knowledge about places than regular tourists on a holiday.”

“I didn’t expect such a variety of landscapes in Nevada,” said Liz Seacum from London. “I would have been happy with big skies and wide open country, but I’ve seen so much more.”

Above: Brits and Nevadans in the North Black Rock.
Below: Pulling Dalmation toadflax in Parsnip Peak in June.

**Chef Pat’s Dutch Oven Delight**

**Chorizo and Sweet Potato Mole**

The least we can do to thank volunteers for giving their time and sweat to wilderness is feed them well. Here’s one of Pat’s favorites:

- In a Dutch oven or large heavy-bottomed stock pot heat 2 TBLS vegetable oil.
- Cook 1-1.5 lbs chorizo sausage (Basque is best) cutting into pieces until done.
- Add one small diced onion, cook until clear then add 2 cloves minced garlic, 2 tsp fresh chopped oregano cook about a minute and then add one 28oz can undrained diced tomatoes, 1 ½ tsp ground cumin, 1 TBLS ancho chili power, 1 oz chopped bittersweet chocolate.
- Stir to combine until chocolate melts. Then add 1 cup fresh or frozen corn; one 15-oz can drained black beans, 1 small can diced green chiles, 1.5 lbs chopped sweet potatoes/yams and 2/3 cup water.
- Salt and pepper as desired and cover and cook until sweet potato is soft.
- For presentation: Stir in 8-oz shredded cheddar or pepperjack cheese and garnish with sprigs of cilantro, avocado and lime. Serve alone or over rice or noodles.
- Be creative: you can add sliced mushrooms, bell peppers, fresh chilies, etc.

Can be baked in oven, stove top or charcoal (15 hot coals on bottom and about 20 on top of Dutch oven).
Send us your wild haiku

Sometimes, a few words can capture the essence of a place or moment better than many. Haiku is a great tool for zeroing in on this essence of wilderness, and it’s a fun exercise. So imagine your favorite wilderness place or moment (better yet, get out there for real inspiration), then send us your best haikus about wilderness.

You remember the rule: 3 lines; 5 syllables on the 1st, 7 syllables on the 2nd, and 5 on the 3rd.

Here is an example:

Horizon stretches
Forever on the Sheldon.
Pronghorn know freedom.

Send your haiku to haiku@nevadawilderness.org

Keepers of government planning

Ever wonder how many documents the government puts out every month, inviting public input about projects or actions that could harm Nevada’s wild places?

Ask volunteer Susan Juetten. When she’s not out hiking with her dog or tending her organic garden, you can find her in the office sorting through and reading a scary-thick stack of mail, then writing comments that help wilderness.

Susan has helped Friends file official positions on the proposed Ruby natural gas pipeline that would rip through wild places in northwestern Nevada, proposed trails in the Mount Rose and North McCullough wilderness areas, emergency wild horse gathers, poisoning Wall Canyon Creek to save threatened fish, expanded military flights over the Santa Rosa Wilderness, and much more.

Thanks to Susan, wild places have a voice when it comes to decisions like these.

Thank you, Barry!

Friends of Nevada Wilderness volunteers do the most wonderful things for the wild places, wildlife and your opportunities to explore Nevada’s backcountry. These dedicated souls travel far on weekends to work hard under beating sun and pouring rain.

One volunteer in particular, Barry Morgan from Carson City, just can’t seem to get enough. He has been one of our rock-solid participants, joining us on more than 10 trips to wild places, including Mt. Rose, the High Schells, the Black Rock Desert, the East Walker River, the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, and the Pine Forest Range.

Why does Barry do it?

“I enjoy it—being outside, helping mother Earth, getting rid of fire rings and picking up trash...sometimes. I want to leave the world the way I found it, so my kids and your kids and their kids can see it the way we see it. “I have been very impressed with Friends of Nevada Wilderness. You reach out, bring people in, make them feel at home. You don’t order people around. You let folks do what they want to do. Plus you’re good cooks, and you’ve got great passion for the cause.”

Barry, thank you for making Wild Nevada a better place for everybody!
Toiyabe Crest Trail: Nevada’s Scenic Jewel

Following the spine of the impressive Toiyabe Range (at 122 miles it is the state’s longest mountain range) is the Toiyabe Crest National Scenic Trail. It is Nevada’s longest official trail, at 72 miles, beginning at the Kingston Canyon trailhead and finishing its last 30 miles in the Arc Dome Wilderness (Nevada’s 3rd-largest, at 115,000 acres). The Civilian Conservation Corps built the trail during the Great Depression; Congress designated it a National Scenic Trail in 1968.

Partnering with the American Hiking Society, Friends’ volunteers teamed up with the Austin/Tonopah Ranger District and a crew from Nevada Conservation Corps to clean up the Toiyabe Crest Trail at the trailhead.

The team cleared over two miles of trail and installed signposts near the trailhead, while two lucky volunteers hiked up to install more signs at 9,500 feet.

Even with our trail maintenance efforts this summer, be prepared for some bushwhacking in the drainages and orienteering in other places. Getting the entire trail back in shape will be a multi-year project.

Getting there
Four main trailheads access the Toiyabe Crest Trail: Kingston Canyon, North and South Twin Rivers, and Stewart Creek, all of which are about an hour south of Austin. Water is scarce in dry months; the best time to hike is late June to early July.

For more information, contact the Forest Service at (775) 964-2671. Or call Friends at (775) 324-7667.

Join Friends’ Legacy Society

Please leave a wilderness legacy for your children and grandchildren. You can ensure there will be wild places for those who come after. Places where the spirit soars and kids of all ages find peace. To learn how you can leave a wilderness legacy, contact Shaaron at (775) 324-7667 or visit our informative website at:

www.nevadawilderness.org/fnw/bequest.asp
Upcoming events and restoration trips

**Black Rock Desert. Sept. 18-20.** Celebrate National Public Lands Day with Friends and the BLM with a variety of family-friendly projects. 3 hrs from Reno.

**Gold Butte. Sept. 26.** Join Friends of Gold Butte, Friends of Nevada Wilderness and the BLM to protect a sensitive archaeological site. 2 hrs from Las Vegas.

**Mt. Charleston. Weds., Sept. 30.** Join Friends to clean up the Trail Canyon Trail.

**Toiyabe Crest Trail backpack. Oct. 5-11.** Join Friends as we hike Nevada’s premier scenic trail. Call for details. Limit 4.

**Sheldon Wildlife Refuge. Oct. TBA.** Join Friends and the Fish & Wildlife Service as we remove fence near Big Springs Table.


**Mt. Charleston. Oct. 31.** Celebrate Nevada Day with Friends as we clean up the Bonanza Peak Trail in Cold Creek.

And watch for volunteer-appreciation and membership meetings in early December.

For details, or to RSVP, please contact Friends of Nevada Wilderness at (775) 324-7667. For southern Nevada events, call Kurt Kuznicki at (775) 745-3119. View the schedule at www.nevadawilderness.org.

**Don’t miss out!**

Send an email to fnw@nevadawilderness.org to sign up for our invitations and breaking news about wild Nevada!

**Take a Hike:**

Keep Nevada Wild

The Forest Service doesn’t have the manpower to give Nevada’s wild places the attention they deserve. You can help.

By inventorying campsites, trails, trailhead conditions, invasive weeds and visitor use, volunteers can provide the Forest Service with data they need to manage your national forests effectively.

We are always looking for people who can explore wild places and gather information on trails, trailheads and roads. If you’re interested in getting into the wild and giving back at the same time, call Wes Hoskins, Friends’ Forest Project Coordinator, for more information, (775) 324-7667.

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