

Stewardship Dispatch

Friends of Nevada Wilderness

AN UNTRADITIONAL SPRING BREAK HELPING WILD NEVADA

There were no margaritas or sandy beaches for nine college students this spring break. Instead, volunteers from UNR and UNLV showed their love for wild Nevada in the heat, wind, and rain during spring break with Friends of Nevada Wilderness.

They removed 2,920 feet of fence in the rugged mountains of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. "Friends staff and volunteers really came together on this one despite the rugged area, huge fence, and wet and windy weather," said project leader Wes Hoskins, Forest Project Coordinator for Friends of Nevada Wilderness.

Matt Flores, Restoration Biologist for the Desert

National Wildlife Refuge, stated the simple facts of the project: "We're gonna rip this fence down so the sheep can get to water, and that's good for them."

One team trekked back and forth, a four-mile roundtrip with an elevation gain of 700 feet, hauling out 3 tons of sheepwire, barbed wire, and metal fence posts – which were recycled or stored for re-use. The other group dismantled the ten-foot high fence, clipping wire and excavating posts.

Although the hike through the desert wasn't the highlight of the trip for Bandana Paija, the achievement was worth it. "My favorite part was to get on the hill and enjoy the view after



all the trouble of walking and hiking! I felt accomplished when I got there."

For some, it was an eye-opening experience Anna

Breen was awed by the beauty of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, where the team was removing the fence. "There's a lot of color out here. I've never been around Joshua Trees, although they do attack!"

Toby Marble wishes he had another spring break so he could come out again. "I didn't really know anyone on this trip and it turns out there's some fantastic people here. It's been a lot of fun getting some laughs in and getting a lot of work done."

Toby, a student at UNR, liveblogged the experience for the Reno Gazette Journal – read his day-to-day experiences at rgj.com.

"This project ranks up there with my favorite Friends experiences," project leader Wes said. "I hope we do it again next year."

THE SCIENCE OF SCRUTINIZING SPRINGS IN BLACK ROCK NCA

Volunteers from Friends of Nevada Wilderness and Friends of Black Rock/High Rock joined the Winnemucca District BLM to learn about the ecology of the springs and how to gather pertinent data from them.

Dr. Don Sada of the Desert Research Institute lectured 30 volunteers, staff, and agency personnel on the ins and outs of desert springs before the group headed into the field.

The group visited over a half dozen springs during their weekend in Soldier Meadows, practicing with the equipment

with Dr. Sada's guidance. Volunteers can check out kits with all the necessary equipment at the BLM office in Winnemucca, the Reno office of Friends of Nevada Wilderness, or the Friends of Black Rock/High Rock office in Gerlach. Upon checkout, volunteers will be given maps to a few springs in the Soldier Meadows area of the Black Rock NCA.

The program is designed to assist the BLM in gathering information to consider in their management plans. Visit www.blackrocksprings.blogspot.com for more information.

