KEEPING WASHOE WILD
I have never been so happy to see summer end! What a year this has been.

Our hearts go out to all people and creatures who have been impacted by the Pyrocene in the west. Despite dismal air quality and COVID we were still able to have a great field season this year and you can see some reasonable progress on the ground thanks to our volunteers and crews. We have also been quietly moving forward this year on our Wilderness protection campaigns and we have our fingers crossed that this Congress (2021-22) will be the year for significant new Wilderness designations in the state.

Friends has been so fortunate over the years to have had many exceptional staff members, a lot of whom stick around for years and move up through the organization. This fall we have a number of exciting changes, with staff moving into new and more challenging roles. When Kurt retires at the end of the year (see below), Darcy Shepard will move into the #2 slot as Associate Director. Nora Richter is moving into managing grants, Chris Cutshaw will take over as Northern Nevada Stewardship Manager and Tara Kleemann and Megan Tait, our long-time awesome seasonal trail crew leaders are joining us year-round. We are also thrilled to welcome Clarice Wheeler in our southern Nevada office along with several new AmeriCorp volunteers.

We recently lost a long-time member and friend, Nona Hamblin. Nona had a passion for big dogs including my beast of a dog, Oso. She would send him a $25 check now and then for me to buy special treats from Auntie Nona. She will live in our hearts along with so many other wonderful members who have passed our. Enjoy the changing season and be kind to yourselves and others.

Stay safe,
Sharon

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I have been quiet about the 2021 NV Wilderness designations campaign, but now it’s time to go public with our campaign goals. The Southern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act, or SNEDCA, inched forward in Congress with a June hearing held by the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests and Mining, chaired by our own Senator Catherine Cortez Masto. She introduced the Senate bill, which was also co-sponsored by both Congresswomen Dina Titus introduced the companion legislation in the House. It is supported by all six members of Nevada’s Congressional delegation.

At the hearing, committee members heard from Nevada conservation advocates who support the bill’s provisions to designate more than 1.6 million acres of land as Wilderness, including 1.3 million acres in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, and another several thousand acres for recreation and habitat conservation. Work continues to strengthen the bill.

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THANK YOU, KURT

Kurt Kuznicki has been an important part of the Friends family for so many years it is hard to think of the organization without him here full time. But adventure and grandchildren call and I am very happy to see my friend devoting some time to himself and his family.

Kurt started with Friends as a volunteer in the early 2000s and worked his way up to the board of directors. With the recession, he left the troubled construction world and joined Friends as a staff member in 2009, really kicking off our southern Nevada program and building strong partnerships with all the agencies in Las Vegas.

After several years in the south, he moved back to Reno to become the Associate Director. He built up our trails program, our photo library and helped Friends become a stronger organization. He also mentored some great talent to follow in his footsteps with Tara Kleeman taking over the trail program and Darcy Shepard moving into his Associate Director position. Kurt will still be working part time with us focusing on photography and dark sky monitoring. Happy Trails, Kurt, we will all miss you!
**We Steward**

**In Northern Nevada**

**Return to a (Somewhat) Normal Stewardship Season**

In many ways, 2021 has been a return to normal for our Northern Nevada stewardship team. And in other ways, this season has been unprecedented. Coming out of 2020, we had a backlog of priority projects and a community of volunteers eager to get back to work. We’ve also had to contend with an ongoing pandemic, heatwaves, and hazardous smoke. Despite these challenges, our volunteers, AmeriCorps members, and staff have been hard at work protecting and restoring Nevada’s wild places.

The work of Friends of Nevada Wilderness volunteers is essential to wild places in Nevada and we’re thankful that we’ve been able to have our volunteers safely back out in the field. We’ve also had to contend with an ongoing pandemic, heatwaves, and hazardous smoke. Despite these challenges, our volunteers, AmeriCorps members, and staff have been hard at work protecting and restoring Nevada’s wild places.

This year we added a Mt. Rose Wilderness Monitoring Program to collect data on opportunities for solitude and the location and condition of recreation sites. The data will be used by the Forest Service to improve the management of Mt. Rose Wilderness. Staff and volunteers spent the summer collecting data while hiking hundreds of miles through the Wilderness. There will be more opportunities for volunteer this fall.

Northern Nevada volunteers removed over 23,000 invasive weeds, maintained 11.8 miles of hiking trails, removed barbed wire fences, restored damaged habitats, and donated over 2,000 volunteer hours this year; and the season isn’t over yet! If you’re looking for an opportunity to camp in some of the most beautiful and remote areas of the state, eat some delicious camp food, and give back to our public lands, visit our Calendar of Events.

Our fabulous volunteers do such important work AND get to enjoy the amazing beauty of places like this, the Arc Dome Wilderness.

We Appreciate AmeriCorps!

We would like to thank our four AmeriCorps Service members who worked with us this summer season. Jane Armstrong and Olivia Wolff created weekly menus, grocery shopped, and prepared meals for volunteers on projects while Tyler Morris and Erin Garmen trained new volunteers for Mt. Rose Wilderness monitoring and hiked the wilderness extensively during the entirety of the summer. Olivia will be staying on with us this fall, leading projects and helping the program run smoothly. We’re thankful for our AmeriCorps members and wish them all the best in their future endeavors!

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**In Southern Nevada**

Volunteers removing graffiti at Mary Jane Falls

**Hundreds of Springs Surveyed!**

As the weather heated up, so did the springs team’s work! Over the summer, we began hosting in-person volunteer projects again. Volunteers have blown us away with their dedication, as independent spring surveyors or participants in restoration projects. They’ve documented previously unrecorded springs, removed hundreds of feet of plastic tubing, identified future restoration project needs, and much more.

Simultaneously, we’ve been surveying hundreds of springs, thanks in large part to our wonderful AmeriCorps Springs Monitoring Technicians. 2020-21 AmeriCorps Tara and Tali finished strong at the end of August with a visit to the highest elevation spring in Clark County on the peak of Mt. Charleston. We’re sad to see them go but very excited to welcome James and Sophia to pick up the torch as the 21-22 yearlong AmeriCorps volunteers.

Thanks to funding from the Volunteer Grant Foundation through Nevada Wildlife Grant Foundation through Nevada Wildlife, we were able to celebrate our fantastic AmeriCorps members and volunteers with a celebration at the end of August.

We’ll have more spring surveying trainings and restoration projects coming up throughout the year, so keep an eye on the calendar and social media to secure your spot!

Chefs extraordinaire Jane and Olivia feeding volunteers at Steamboat Mountain

Springs monitors: Springs Coordinator Chantal Fossio, S. NV Programs Coordinator Clarice Wheeler, and AmeriCorps Talia Bar Yaacov and Tara Blake

**Down south, our dedicated AmeriCorps members have been very active this year helping to improve trails at the Spring Mountains Visitor Gateway, South Loop Trail, Mary Jane Falls, and other wonderful wild places. In the spring, volunteers rehabilitated vehicle damage at Wee Thump for Earth Day and installed a much needed barrier at a sprawling unofficial campsite in Desert National Wildlife Refuge.**

Our stewardship program was especially effective because of the unwavering support of our stewardship AmeriCorps member, Melissa Guerrero. Melissa came back for a second hitch after serving on our Summer 2020 crew. Her hard work and dedication helped to build the foundation for our future stewardship AmeriCorps members. With that, we would like to welcome Nicole Collar aboard as our newest AmeriCorps member in southern Nevada!

**Check out our Northern and Southern stewardship project schedule at nevadawilderness.org/calendar_of_events**

AmeriCorps Stewardship and Outreach Assistant Melissa Guerrero on South Loop Trail
A change in course can be a good thing, especially if you end up in a much better place.

That seems to be what’s happening as decision-makers at the local and federal levels attempt to steer a process leading to adoption of a Washoe County public lands bill.

After a few starts and stops over the last several years, it now seems that folks are on track to draft legislation that the variety of interests affected by the bill could, just maybe, support. We are grateful to Senator Jacky Rosen and her dedicated staff for their leadership in this latest effort.

Friends has long been strongly advocating for permanent protection of the amazing Wilderness Study Areas and other Wilderness quality lands in the sagebrush sea of northern Washoe County. And we’d like to thank all of you, again, for helping us by filling out postcards and showing up at public meetings to urge our local elected officials to do just that. You are responsible for getting this whole discussion back on track.

We’re completely committed to protecting very special places, like the Massacre Rim Wilderness Study Area, now also an International Dark Sky Sanctuary, certified as such by the International Dark Sky Association in recognition of its rare and spectacular quality of starry nights and nocturnal environment that needs protection for its natural resource values. The certification is specifically intended to promote Massacre Rim’s long-term conservation and we won’t settle for less!

Much of the adjacent Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge is also Wilderness quality, which is why, years ago, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recommended it be designated as such. It’s an action that is overdue and we will continue to fight for it in this bill.

The Hays Canyon Range/Wall Canyon area is not only beautiful, it contains some of the most important wildlife habitat in the county, and is a critically important source of water. It’s such a special area, that a considerable amount of private land has been purchased by tax payers to protect its natural and cultural values. We must secure permanent protection for this place.

And who hasn’t heard of the “playa” in the Black Rock National Conservation Area? Well, that area has a backdrop that includes the Granite Range that contains some of the highest Wilderness values in the Black Rock Desert region. It is also a critically important link or corridor for wildlife and must be protected. There is another huge swath of connected wildlands near the California border made up of the Poodle Mountain, Buffalo Hills, Twin Peaks and Dry Valley Rim WSAs. We will fight for permanent conservation designations for all of these areas.

Closer to the urban area, we are working with conservation partners to find ways to preserve recreation opportunities that are so important to our quality of life in Washoe County. Places like the Virginia and Peterson Mountains are more easily accessed and must stay open to the public. Of course, there are long-standing management issues at popular places like Tahoe Meadows and Peavine Mountain that we hope can also be addressed in this legislation.

It’s been a long, slow process, but thanks to leaders like Senator Jacky Rosen and County Commissioner Alexis Hill, we now see progress. We will continue to need your help. Our voices will need to be raised together to stay on this course and make it perfectly clear – we love our special wild places and we want them protected, once and for all! Watch your E-Newsletters for our Call to Action!

The writer/artist and her husband, with three generations of family, practice regenerative agriculture. The book was published September 7th and is available at Sundance Books and Music in Reno. During the month of October, Sundance has generously agreed to donate 10% of all sales of this book to Friends! The book is also available at barnesandnoble.com.
The 2021 trail season began in the cool clean air of May with Kurt, Tara and Megan doing some scouting trips to Arc Dome Wilderness and Alta Toqima Wilderness before being chased out by a snowstorm! Once the crew members were all assembled, they spent eight days undergoing intense trails training with Dolly Chapman under a beautiful summer backdrop of the Arc Dome Wilderness.

Tara’s crew spent much of June and July working hard on opening up the Jett Canyon Trail connecting it to the Toiyabe Crest Trail, in the Arc Dome Wilderness. Megan’s crew devoted their time to improving the north Mt. Jeffeson Trail in the Alta Toqima Wilderness. Additionally, volunteers cleared the whole 15-mile North-South Twin Trail loop.

After wrapping things up in central Nevada, the crews moved to the far northeast part of the state in August and September to maintain the trails in Nevada’s first wilderness area, Jarbidge. It was in Jarbidge that the crews faced their toughest challenge, the wildfire smoke from California. It was so bad that the crews were forced to work shorter hours and in one instance they had to return early.

Despite all the challenges, and some of the most physically demanding trails in the state, the crews were able to maintain over 60 miles of wilderness trails. The crews would like to thank the Nevada Chapter of Backcountry Horsemens, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers of America, Sage-N-Pine Outfitters and all of the hardworking trail volunteers whose sweat, hard work, and commitment to wilderness made this season an overwhelming success.

TARA Kleemann joined the crew as a seasonal crew member, and has returned every year since to build on her leadership and technical skills. In May 2021, Tara was promoted to the new Trails Coordinator position to ensure the program continues thriving after trails program guru and Associate Director Kurt Kuznicki retires from fulltime work in December. When she’s not backpacking, running, or working on trails, you can find Tara splitboarding, dancing, watching her plants grow or eating cookies.

In October, another crew will descend on the Refuge for another eight days to remove the remainder of the downed metal at Hell Creek. At the same time, volunteers will work on a stretch of fence at the west end of Swan Lake.

Our work in the Sheldon Refuge is largely funded by a grant from the Greater Hart Sheldon Conservation Fund. This funding has been critical in re-naturalizing the landscape of this sagebrush steppe ecosystem. To date, our crews and volunteers have removed over 331 miles of barbed wire fence, ensuring that wildlife can move safely and unhindered across the landscape.

Despite some unexpected challenges this season, we were able to remove a significant number of metal posts from the old Hell Creek Sheep Enclosure on the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge. Significant as in 3,600 pounds of t-posts hiked out by our trail crew during an eight-day hitch in June! The elite crew worked tirelessly over the course of the hitch, lashing the t-posts to pack-frames and hauling the heavy loads up the steep walls of Hell Creek Canyon.

Our 2021 Trail Crew Members along with Dolly Chapman, trail instructor

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WARM WELCOMES

MEGAN Tail has been working with the FNW trail crew since 2018 and is excited to make Nevada her year-round home after living in both Florida and Argentina. After showcasing her skills with trail program volunteers, Meg was hired to support our volunteer programs as the Northern Nevada Stewardship Coordinator, a position left vacant when Chris Cutsbaw was promoted to Stewardship Manager. Meg’s trail crew background makes her a great fit for the position.

CLAIRE Wheeler was born and raised in Las Vegas and most of her experience on our public lands occurred through college, with friends, and as a volunteer with us – especially on Alternative Spring Breaks. She has worked all over the southwest as an interpretive naturalist and field tech. When she’s not getting dusty at work, she enjoys hiking, birding, baking, running, and making ceramics. Claire is the point person for the Wild Speaker Series, Wild & Scenic Film Festival, and is passionate about connecting our community with the magic of Nevada’s public lands.

WILDERNESS IN WAITING

The Gates of the Grand Canyon are comprised of adjacent Wilderness Proposals that lie within the far eastern side of Lake Mead National Recreation Area. This is a land of extremes and visual beauty unlike any other area in Nevada. The Gates of the Grand Canyon present a wide diversity of landscapes from the aptly named south-facing Hell’s Kitchen to the sprawling, wide alluvial surfaces east of the Overton Arm of Lake Mead. This is an area of a surprising diversity of Mojave plant communities and wildlife. Almost unlimited access to this area is available by boat or kayak from Lake Mead. The challenging dirt road system of Gold Butte National Monument provides access to these areas with high clearance vehicles. The Gates of the Grand Canyon Wilderness Study Area have been awaiting formal Wilderness designation since 1974. Visit them virtually on our updated website.

www.nevadawilderness.org/gates_of_the_grand_canyon_summary

YOUR TRAILS BENEFIT FROM GIVING TUESDAY

GIVING Tuesday 2020 was an incredibly successful day with an outpouring of financial support from people like you to fund and equip our fantastic trail crews. Your generosity allowed us to send two fully-vaccinated and well equipped crews out on your public lands to restore some beautiful trails. Thank you. Since many trails we steward receive maintenance only every 5 years or so, the forces of nature can take a heavy toll. Our crews work hard to keep your trails up to agency standards, so that you will have safe access to Nevada’s Wilderness Areas for years to come. We hope you get the chance to explore Nevada’s amazing Wilderness trails knowing that we’re committed to keeping them safe to hike and enjoy! Maintaining trails deep into the Wilderness requires extensive resources. All these miles of maintained trail wouldn’t be possible without the help of our volunteers, donors, agency partners, the Recreational Trials Program administered through Nevada State Parks, and the Great American Outdoors Act.

As this year’s Giving Tuesday approaches on November 30th, we hope that you continue your support of Friends of Nevada Wilderness programs that restore and preserve our wild public lands. Again, thanks for all you do for your public lands.

FRIENDS RECEIVES TWO PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS!

Wow! Just as the newsletter was headed to the printer, we discovered that the Griffith Peak Trail Rebuild project on Mt. Charleston was chosen as the winner of the Coalition for Recreational Trails Annual Achievement Award for Outstanding Use of Recreational Trails Program funds. Thanks to all the amazing volunteers who hiked waaay up the mountain to complete this great work!

The award-winning volunteer crew on the Griffith Peak Trail! Photo by Grace Palermo

Earlier this year, Friends was proud to accept, on behalf of our amazing volunteers, the 2021 “Group Excellence” award in the Bureau of Land Management’s annual “Making a Difference” National Volunteer Award competition. Thanks to the South Nevada BLM District Office for nominating us in recognition of our partnership to conserve our wild public lands and keep them accessible to the public. According to the BLM, the annual awards recognize exceptional volunteers who have contributed to improving our public lands.

Congratulations to the Southern Nevada crew and all of the tireless, passionate volunteers who continue to give back to their public lands.

Nona Hamblin (July 8, 1940 - July 8, 2021)

We bid farewell to a long-time member and dear friend, Nona Hamblin. Nona was passionate about children and education, having served as a grade-school teacher for over 30 years in Clark County. She was equally passionate about horses, dogs and wild places. After her husband Jerry died, she moved to a 5-acre ranch in Pahump where she cared for her rescue horse, Rascal, and a family of rescue dogs and cats. Nona gave her open heart and laughter to all and was a beacon of hope, honestly, and trust. Nona was an anonymous member of Friends Wild Nevada Legacy Circle and we thank her deeply for her forward-thinking generosity. Nona was truly a remarkable woman and we will all miss her very, very much.

For more information about leaving a bequest to Friends, please go to: www.nevadawilderness.org/legacy_giving

Proceeds benefit wild places across Nevada!

Order today at NevadaWilderness.org/shop for these and additional merchandise

Or send this form with your check to Friends of Nevada Wilderness, PO Box 9754, Reno, NV 89507

GIFTEES

Gift Item: 
Address:  
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FREE CALENDAR WILL BE SENT WITH GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

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<td>Clothing Logo on front and “Keeping Nevada Wild” on back</td>
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<td>Southern Nevada Director Grace Palermo and Stewardship Coordinator Peter Siracusa accept the award on behalf of Friends</td>
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Donations (not purchases) are tax-deductible. Proceeds benefit wild places across Nevada!
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.

Northern Nevada

Santa Rosa Fence Removal & Wildlife Habitat Improvement
**October 15th thru 17th** - Join us in the Santa Rosa Range to remove unnecessary barbed-wire fence and directly improve wildlife habitat. Your work on this project will leave a lasting impact on one of northern Nevada’s most beautiful mountain ranges.

Mining Claim Marker Knock-Down Festival 2021
**October 29th thru 31st** - Join us for a fun adventure out to Gabbs Valley Wilderness Study Area and hunt for mining claim markers. PVC mining claim markers are a hazard to wildlife, so come help us pull them out!

Mt. Rose Wilderness Native Seed Spreading Fall 2021 - This fall, we are spreading native seeds in recovering riparian areas to encourage the return of native ecosystems. These are fun projects that usually only take half a day to complete.

Fall Projects Sign Up Link: nevadawilderness.org/northern_nevada_calendar_of_events
Mt Rose Wilderness Volunteering Sign Up Link: nevadawilderness.org/mt_rose_wilderness_monitoring

Southern Nevada

**October 17th** - Join us at Mountain Springs to learn how to survey springs! We’ll get hands-on practice measuring flow, taking water quality, and more. After this training, you’ll be able to survey springs on your own schedule within Clark County.

**October 16th, 23rd, 30th, and November 6th** - We’re teaming up with the Nevada Department of Wildlife for a series of restoration events. Help us with post-wildfire restoration by planting native perennials near Mormon Mountains Wilderness!

**Wild Speaker Series** - On the first Thursday of every month at 7 pm, join us via Zoom or Facebook live to hear about topics related to Nevada’s wildlife, public lands, and local advocacy efforts.

South NV Events Signup Link: www.nevadawilderness.org/southern_nevada_calendar_of_events