



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**UNLV Students Give Back to Public Lands during Alternative Spring Break Hosted by Friends of Nevada Wilderness**

Contact Jose at (702) 839-5568 or [jose@NevadaWilderness.org](mailto:jose@NevadaWilderness.org)

Photo, Video, Interview Opportunity

**Las Vegas – March 26, 2014** Friends of Nevada Wilderness, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and The Great Basin Institute, hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual “Alternative Spring Break” volunteer and educational opportunity for UNLV students last week. Seven UNLV students, along with five volunteers from the public, gave four days and four nights in service to the National Desert Wildlife Refuge – the nation’s largest wildlife refuge in the contiguous United States. The event was made possible by a generous grant from REI. Volunteers planted mesquite trees, naturalized an illegal road and multiple road scars, and hiked out remnants of a decommissioned water guzzler.

The volunteer trip was the first camping experience for most of the students who attended. Students, most of them environmental science majors, gained on-the-ground experience in the management and restoration work of desert landscapes – an experience that will complement their studies, as well as add practical experience on their resumes. Guest speakers from University of Las Vegas, the College of Southern Nevada and the state of Nevada traveled each night to the Refuge to lecture on various related topics to the students, including plant life zones of the Desert Refuge and Spring Mountains, climate change, and the effects of solar radiation on plant distribution in the Desert Refuge and Spring Mountains.

“Being in the desert with such passionate people is something amazing,” said Natasha Kotte, one of the students who attended Alternative Spring Break, “I feel more grounded...we’re doing things that make a difference!” Natasha is currently studying biochemistry at UNLV and is seeking a career on water purification and filtration.

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Friends of Nevada Wilderness is the only statewide non-profit organization dedicated to preserving Nevada’s wild lands. The organization works closely with the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Park Service to identify service needs in public lands and connect volunteers with those areas.

For more information on this event, please contact Jose Witt at [jose@nevadawilderness.org](mailto:jose@nevadawilderness.org) or call the office at (702) 839-5569. Get information about future projects with Friends of Nevada Wilderness at our website: [www.nevadawilderness.org](http://www.nevadawilderness.org).