



## FRIENDS of NEVADA WILDERNESS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Friends Honors More than Fifty Volunteers for Outstanding Stewardship**

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**Reno, NV.** – Dozens of miles of trails were maintained. More than three tons of metal garbage carried out of a wildlife refuge. Thousands of invasive weeds were yanked and graffiti scrubbed from rocks high up in the hills.

Volunteer crews accomplished those feats and much more over the last year or so, led by the Friends of Nevada Wilderness Staff Coordinators. Taking care of Nevada's wild public lands is a priority mission for Friends, one that simply could not be met without the hundreds of stalwart volunteers who are passionate about giving back to the great outdoors.

Those volunteers were honored over the last weekend in Northern Nevada and in August down south with celebratory picnics and award presentations. Nearly 40 volunteers achieved "Blue Helmet" status, meaning they put in 30 hours or more during the 2021 season. For many, it was a repeat achievement.

"We are continuously amazed and humbled by the output from our committed volunteers," said Shaaron Netherton, Friends Executive Director. "Because of them, our wild public lands are better able to support native plant and animal life and are more accessible to the people who venture out to the most beautiful and remote areas of the state. We tip our hard hats to these wonderful individuals and thank them from the bottom of our hearts."

In addition to the Blue Helmet awards, Friends also recognized Kirk Hastings of Berkeley, CA, as the Volunteer of the Year and Kevin Wilmot of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest as Agency Partner of the Year. Vikki and Danny Riddle received the Above and Beyond Award for providing their pack of mules to haul volunteer crews and their gear into the roadless areas where they do their good works.

For many years, Friends has relied on Bart Koehler for his special mix of knowledge and skills. He received special recognition for working diligently and patiently with rural Nevadans to arrive at common sense solutions for designating new Wilderness areas and other protections for public lands.

Volunteers have also helped plant thousands of native plant seeds in areas scarred by wildfire, surveyed more than 100 remote springs and pulled hundreds of mining claim markers that kill birds and other wildlife. The Northern Stewardship team has wrapped up its overnight season, but day trip and southern Nevada trip opportunities are still available. More information can be found at [nevadawilderness.org/volunteer](http://nevadawilderness.org/volunteer).

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### **About Friends of Nevada Wilderness**

Founded in 1984, Friends of Nevada Wilderness has helped protect over 3.4 million acres of Nevada's wild lands by leading efforts in the expansion or designation of all 70 Wilderness areas in the state. Over the past twenty years, the Wilderness Stewardship Volunteer Program has generated over \$2 million of in-kind services to benefit Nevada's public lands. For more information, visit <http://www.nevadawilderness.org/>.



Hauling hand tools for trail repair/maintenance in the Santa Rosa-Paradise Peak Wilderness



Scrubbing graffiti from rocks high up on Mt. Charleston



Some of the 32 Northern Nevada 2021 Blue Helmet award winners



Gabbs Valley - Flattening one of hundreds of mining claim markers that trap and kill wildlife