

FRIENDS OF NEVADA WILDERNESS



SUMMER OF SHELDON 2011

75 MILES OF FENCE REMOVED FROM PRONGHORN HABITAT

Volunteers and crew members from Friends of Nevada Wilderness and the Oregon Natural Desert Association removed over 75 miles of barb wire fencing from the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern Nevada.

Over 1,200 hours of volunteer time was donated, a total in-kind value of \$34,400.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness hosted trips to the refuge, bringing volunteers to work with the four-person crew.

Lucas Alvarez decided to help public lands in Nevada, coming up to spend his summer pulling out barb wire fence. "I like Nevada, I think Sheldon is a unique piece of Nevada," said Lucas.

Anna Breen, assistant crew leader, spent 3 months pulling and packing out fence while appreciating the wild landscape around her. The crew lived on the refuge in a stone cabin – courtesy of the USFWS – venturing out to restock every two or three weeks.

"It's something different, I like the adventure of it," Anna said.

Anna also had a chance to spend her off time exploring the refuge and spent August hunting with her archery tag for an antelope. Despite three treks stalking



pronghorns with her 50-pound bow, she came up empty handed.

"You have to get within like 30 yards to hit it with a bow!" she reasoned.

TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AT 11,000 FEET



Working together for butterflies and hikers, over 20 Friends of Nevada Wilderness volunteers participated in a two-week long trail project near the top of Griffith Peak in the Mt. Charleston Wilderness. The project funds came through a generous grant from REI to reroute the trail out of important habitat for the Mt. Charleston butterfly. This shy blue creature is found on only a few acres and now it doesn't have to share that with hikers.

Stewardship Coordinator Jose Witt headed up the volunteer project in



partnership with the Forest Service and other volunteer user groups. Volunteers had to hike a 3,000 foot elevation gain to the project site. A local packer and horse string was hired to bring up about 1,800 pounds of water and some supplies for volunteers.

"The Griffith Peak trail project created a community of folks who have taken real ownership of their public lands and built something that will be there for the future," said Kurt Kuznicki, Friends' Southern Nevada Director. "A big thanks to everyone who made this possible."

MAINTAINING THE SUMMIT TRAIL



The 32-mile Summit Trail in the Santa Rosa Ranger District is one of the longest and prettiest hiking trails in the state. The Summit trail has not seen much maintenance recently but this year, in partnership with the District, Friends of Nevada Wilderness volunteers set out to begin years of care and stewardship on this wonderful backcountry trail.

In 2011 alone, volunteers have cut back 12 miles of encroaching brush; fixed 3 almost impassable areas, and logged out 53 downed trees and more projects are scheduled. Friends just signed a cooperative agreement with the Forest to have a small crew work on the trail until the snow flies.

FIELD-TESTING MONITORING PROTOCOLS IN THE LAKE MEAD RECREATION AREA



Just south of Lake Mead Boulder Basin, along the Colorado River and Lake Mohave, six wilderness areas line the western shore. In 2011, the Student Conservation Association/Southern Nevada Agency Partnership and Friends of Nevada Wilderness team have been implementing new protocol for collecting baseline data, a system that will provide a field-tested template for land management agencies and third party non-profits to efficiently monitor wilderness areas on a national scale.

Rather than a specialized field study, the baseline report covers a broad range of concerns; from off-highway vehicle activity, to invasive species, to the status of cultural resources.



The report generates a quantified score for each wilderness area. The score is used to track changes, both natural and human-caused, as well as to provide a catalogue of possible stewardship projects and restoration needs.

With the pressure of increasing visitor-use and recreational demands, the baseline report is becoming critical to effective Wilderness management. Field assessments for the six Wilderness areas to the South have already been completed by the monitoring team.

SCRUTINIZING SPRINGS

CITIZEN SCIENCE IN THE BLACK ROCK CONSERVATION AREA

After training in April, volunteers have arranged over half a dozen spring monitoring trips and gathered data on almost 24 springs. The data that will be considered in management plans by the Bureau of Land Management.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness teamed up with the Winnemucca District

BLM to learn about the ecology of springs and how to gather pertinent spring data and train volunteers to perform citizen science in the Black Rock National Conservation Area.

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 visited



over a half dozen springs, practicing with the equipment under the guidance of Dr. Sada.

Volunteers can check out kits from the project partners with all the necessary equipment along with maps to springs in the Black Rock NCA, and training will be held each spring for new volunteers.



FRIENDS AT WORK IN THE DESERT REFUGE

Volunteers and Friends of Nevada Wilderness staff contributed over 1,500 hours of in-kind labor in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge to date during the 2011 field season.

30 volunteers from the University of Nevada, Reno, and the community joined the US Fish and Wildlife Service for a five-night camping expedition in March to remove fence obstructing water access for bighorn sheep.

“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.

In the spring, volunteers joined interns from the Student Conservation Association for several days of invasive species removal and habitat restoration.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness celebrated the opening of the Bird Song Loop trail in the refuge. Worked on in fall 2010, the official ribbon-cutting was held in early 2011.

Volunteers gave over \$32,000 of in-kind labor throughout the 2011 season.