

SPRING/SUMMER 2024



Introducing Nevada's own
dark sky specialty license plate!

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FRONTLINES

By Shaaron Netherton / Executive Director

It's hard to believe that 2024 marks the **OFFICIAL 40TH ANNIVERSARY**

of Friends of Nevada Wilderness. So much has changed in those 40 years. Nevada's population grew from 925,000 to 2.9 million people, putting more and more pressure on our public lands and increasing the need for protections. Indeed, we have protected nearly 6.5 million acres in those forty years, but there are still so many deserving places that continue to need our attention. See our future plans on page 9.

As our nation struggles with the need for green energy, Nevada has been ground zero for solar energy, geothermal and transmission line development. We are facing a perfect storm of unintended consequences as project after project are being proposed on our public lands, including those we have long identified as having wilderness values. The Nevada BLM's lack of current land use plans has all but given industry a free rein to propose projects virtually anywhere. Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas are off limits but that's about all. We have been spending

more and more time fighting projects that threaten wildlands and wildlife. Frankly, we can't keep up with the deluge.

On a cheerier note, I am excited about our Save Starry Skies license plate and encourage all Nevadans out there to get one of these beautiful plates on your vehicles. Funding from the plates will support our Dark Skies Program. I am also excited about our 60th anniversary Jarbidge Wilderness Map (hot off the press). Make sure to visit our website to order your trail maps for your Wilderness adventures. We will have Mount Rose and High Schells Wilderness maps available later this year.

I hope that many of you will come out and volunteer with us - your volunteer power keeps us going!

In closing, I am very saddened by the recent loss of Mary Winston and Valerie Cohen, both amazing women who cherished Nevada's wild places. Our hearts go out to their families.

Shaaron



OUR 2023 VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR!



Thank you to everyone who attended southern Nevada's annual Wahoo for Wilderness! We appreciate your time and efforts in helping us steward Nevada's public lands! Congratulations to our southern Nevada 2023 Volunteer of the Year (pictured above), Dan Wright!

During the 2023 Wingding we awarded the prestigious Volunteer of the Year award to Daniel Kurmonavicius (pictured below), who only began volunteering with Friends last year! Daniel took time off his job to volunteer 98 hours on 8 projects. We appreciate his dedication to the program and excitement about the projects.



WE ADVOCATE

To Keep Nevada Wild

Friends is accustomed to playing offense when protecting the wild places we love. With assists from our small army of supporters and strategic moves by members of our Congressional delegation, we've had some very big wins over the years.

Now, in our 40th anniversary year, we're pressing for additional victories.

Senator Rosen's Truckee Meadows Public Lands Management Act is due for a hearing in the Senate any time now, Congressman Amodei's Northern Nevada Public Lands Bill, including new protections in Pershing and Douglas Counties and the Ruby Mountains, had a hearing in March. And we're optimistic there may be some forward movement this year on a Nye County bill.



Part of the proposed Tobin Crest Wilderness in Pershing County

Photos by Kurt Kuznicki

Friends staff has spent countless hours on offense over the years talking with stakeholders, working out solutions to conflicts on the ground, mapping boundaries and otherwise keeping proposed federal legislation moving on a path forward. We are hopeful that these bills will continue to move through Congress. As always, we will continue to rely on our amazing team of supporters to help take us to the finish.

But as Shaaron also mentioned in her Frontlines column, we've had to mount a strong defensive effort in the last year or so fighting off poorly-planned projects in places where they simply don't belong, like these:



» What's called a pumped storage project in White Pine County would destroy wildlife habitat, deplete water supplies and ruin the outdoor dark sky recreational experience on the popular Great Basin Star Train. It is completely unnecessary and would forever scar the Duck Creek Range and Steptoe Valley areas.

» The BLM's plans to open up vast stretches of sensitive wild lands to industrial scale solar development and transmission lines threaten some of our most beloved scenic and wildlife corridors. Because BLM's land use plans are so out of date, much of this infrastructure could end up in highly sensitive areas rich in habitat, scenic, cultural, dark sky and recreational values.

» Our proposed Esmeralda/Fish Lake Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is ground zero for one of those industrial-sized solar energy projects. Of course, we support development of new alternative energy sources, but that can be done without threatening public lands that exhibit wildland characteristics. Read more about this ill-conceived proposal on page 6.



We're pushing back as hard as we can on defense, trying to stop these projects before they do irreparable harm. This sort of battle is somewhat new for us, and we can use all the help we can get. Your support is needed now more than ever.

The Washoe bill would designate much of the Washoe County portion of Sheldon Nat'l Wildlife Refuge as Wilderness

Find out how you can help at nevadawilderness.org/action

WE STEWARD

In Northern Nevada

WORKING TO SAVE A THREATENED SPECIES

The northern crew has rested up and is now gearing up for the upcoming fun-filled, busy field season! We wrapped up our 2023 season with two seed-spreading projects in Mount Rose Wilderness in December, and since then we have been inventorying gear, maintaining tools, managing grants, and skiing! We also have our first aid kits, truck kits, and kitchen kits loaded up and ready for the field.

Do you remember our whitebark pine projects from last year? We caged (early summer) and then collected (fall) the pinecones from this threatened species in the Pine Forest Range. These seeds have been sent to two locations - one will store them in a seed bank for future use, and the other will grow the seeds out to trees to identify any disease resistance. Stay tuned for any future updates about the seeds.

While we enjoy the slightly slower pace of work over the winter, we are so looking forward to all the new volunteer opportunities we have planned for this upcoming season. Our project sign-ups are live at nevadawilderness.org/volunteer where you will find projects that range from Mount Rose day trips to overnight camping across the state from May through October.

While we're waiting for that first project to start, you can find us daydreaming about what's ahead...hiking in Jarbidge, identifying wildflowers in Table Mountain Wilderness, scouting for musk thistle in Mount Rose Wilderness, and winning the dutch oven cook-offs at the Black Rock Rendezvous and National Public Lands Day. We'll see you out there!



2023 Great Community Cleanup in the Mt. Rose Wilderness

Photo by Meg Tait



HITTING THE 2024 TRAILS

FNW trail crews and volunteers will celebrate the 60th Anniversary of Jarbidge, Nevada's first Wilderness area, by clearing trails along the East Fork of the Jarbidge River. We'll work with the Backcountry Horsemen of Nevada and Forest Service packers to set up basecamps over multiple hitches. Our crews and volunteers will also spend time in central Nevada, repairing roads and trails that took a beating from Hurricane Hilary last year, focusing on the more popular access points, Barley Creek and South Twin in Table Mountain and Arc Dome. Down south, we have a special project planned in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge to define

the trail to the summit of Hayford Peak from Hidden Forest Cabin to prevent multiple user trails from proliferating. Then, out east, we'll start a large multi-year project in Mt. Moriah Wilderness to reestablish the trail system. This season, the crew will begin a rebuild of the Hampton Creek trail that years ago suffered a lot of fire and flood damage. To get all of this great work done, we're really excited to welcome back Wes Hoskins, a former FNW staff member, as one of the 2024 Crew Leads. Wes has extensive Nevada trail knowledge and looks forward to getting back out on the trails he loves.



Welcome back Wes!

In Southern Nevada ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK IN THE DESERT



Alternative Spring Break Photos by Chris Cutshaw

In mid-March, six college students joined us at the Desert National Wildlife Refuge for the first of two Alternative Spring Breaks (ASB) this year. ASBs allow college students to upgrade the stereotypical spring break party activities for a week of conservation, recreation, and exploration!

Participants camped beneath the stars, ate delicious camp cooking, and spent the week exploring and rolling up their sleeves on projects like removing invasive plants and truckloads of dead cattails to restore water flow to a section of stream near Corn Creek. They even got to participate in citizen science by monitoring a spring!

The students also met representatives from land management and non-profit partners to discuss career paths and ways to get started on a dream career in conservation.



Checking the Springs

With grant funding, Friends puts on this event free of charge for the students, providing tents, sleeping bags, and other necessary gear for participants to borrow. Making this opportunity accessible to all students, even those who don't have the gear, is important to our mission and a great way to make sure that the next generation of public land advocates has life-changing outdoor experiences that inspire them to keep Nevada wild!

SPRINGS MONITORING

With over 75 (and counting) springs monitored down south between November and February, the crew is pushing further off the beaten path getting to more rugged monitoring sites that historically have not been reached. The crew led Alternative Spring Break participants to the Desert National Wildlife Refuge to educate folks about why these complex ecosystems are so important to Nevada and beyond. Soon, the crew will head out to tackle many of the springs in remote parts of Gold Butte National Monument. As summer approaches, the crew will work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine best practices for yet-to-be-monitored springs within the rugged Sheep Mountain Range. Then we'll head into the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area to monitor many of the springs that have yet to be surveyed in the aftermath of Hurricane Hilary.



Springs technician Etienne Nunez

"I like observing these [spring] sites in a scientific way and seeing the role they play in the larger ecosystem. The most surprising thing for me was the spring that was literally on the side of a mountain. I love being able to see these sites that I wouldn't have seen otherwise," said Etienne.

FRIENDS FIGHTS FOR ESMERALDA/FISH LAKE ACEC



Fish Lake Valley, home to dry lake systems and alluvial formations, is threatened by development

Photos by Kirk Peterson

Esmeralda County is quite a place, for many reasons. It's home to Nevada's highest peak, Boundary Peak, at 13,145 feet and there are more than a dozen areas in the county that qualify as lands with Wilderness characteristics.

It's the least populated county in Nevada and the 20th least populated in the country. So, obviously, there are hardly any lights, meaning the star-gazing is amazing and nocturnal wildlife can flourish. It's home to one of the most scientifically important North American archaeological sites. And it's where Friends is proposing the designation of a new Area of Environmental Concern (ACEC) to protect this amazing landscape.

We spent the past decade mapping and collecting data there to document the case for designating an area encompassing 850,000 acres as the Esmeralda/Fish Lake ACEC, a proposal we formally sent off to the BLM in August last year.

And yet, this unique place in Nevada is under attack on three fronts:

#1 - NV Energy wants to build a major power transmission line right through a corridor that is relatively untouched, when they have the option to place it in an already disturbed corridor.

#2 - BLM has been presented with a proposal for a massive 60,000-acre private solar energy development project, called the Esmeralda 7, in the heart of the proposed ACEC.

#3 - And the BLM's sweeping Western states solar development Preliminary Environmental Impact Statement would make a jaw-dropping 40%+ of the acres in the county eligible for additional industrial solar development.

Almost all of this would happen on public lands that qualify for permanent conservation based on their natural resource values, including wildlife habitat connectivity, summer bighorn sheep habitat, springs and aquifers; geological resources, scenic vistas, cultural resources and more. All of this is threatened by plans to turn this natural resource mecca into an industrial zone.

We're working hard to prevent that from happening. But we're not just being obstructionist. We support renewable energy development to combat the devastating effects of climate change. We're simply trying to help land managers and energy developers see that there are other places where projects can go, without the devastating impacts on the wild public lands we hold so dearly.

We're up against some strong headwinds, though. For years, the BLM has been understaffed and underfunded so it lacks land use plans based on current data. In our comments to the agency regarding the Greenlink project, for example, we emphasize that the BLM is in no position at this time to make the best-informed land use decisions that are in the best interests of ALL Nevadans. Therefore, the agency should defer these major decisions until it updates land use plans, and, in the meantime, protect the area of the proposed ACEC so we don't lose this unique landscape forever.



Help us protect the environments this Zebra-Tailed Lizard and many others call home

As always, we need your help to make sure the voices in favor of conserving Wild Nevada are heard. Please visit nevadawilderness.org/takeaction to learn more.

WE EXPLORE

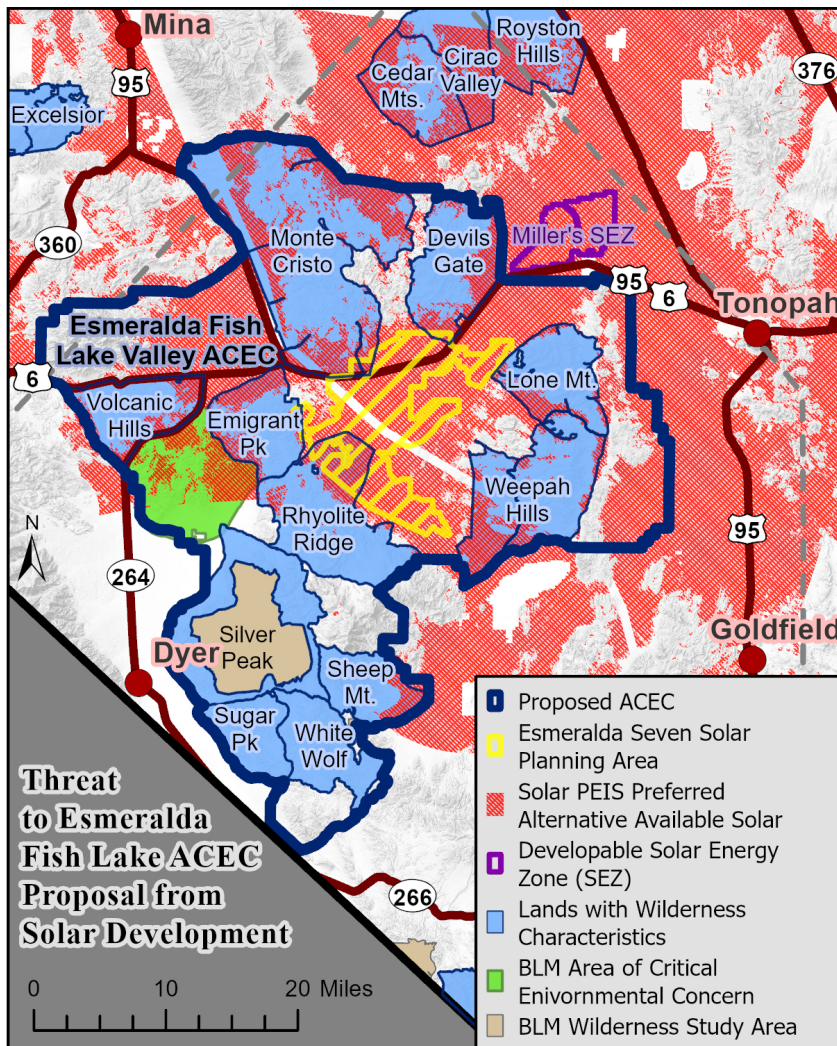
MONTE CRISTO RANGE

The Monte Cristo Range is spectacular with a diversity of natural ecosystems punctuated by surprising and wondrous geological features. The core of this area is comprised of rhyolitic volcanic materials that erupted through the region 12 to 17 million years ago. These violently erupted volcanic materials produced the colorful tuffs, pyroclastic materials, and ash falls composed of ash, crystals, molten rock fragments, and pumice. These materials provide the medium from which the varied formations of the area were sculpted. One of these eccentric formations is pictured to the right.



*The spectacular landscape of the Monte Cristo Range
Photos by Kirk Peterson*

CURRENT THREATENED AREA



The alluvial fans are fascinating desert communities and good examples of a healthy Great Basin desert ecosystem. These slopes abound with many reptile species, small mammals, numerous bird species, and a rich diversity of insects. The Monte Cristo Range lies in the northern portion of the proposed Esmeralda/Fish Lake Valley ACEC and is currently threatened with solar development along these pristine slopes.



One of many unique Monte Cristo formations

Monte Cristo (south) is best accessed from a dirt road turn-off from Highway 95 directly north of county highway 265 at Blair Junction. Monte Cristo (north) is best accessed from interstate highway 95 also, though closer to Tonopah just southeast of Doyel Peak, Monte Cristo Range. This dirt road travels due north for a few miles, then angles northwest and eventually encircles the northern portion of the range.

WE REACH OUT

BRAND NEW BILINGUAL PROGRAM AND EVENTS!

We are excited to announce that our Bilingual Program (English & Spanish) is official! Thanks to the National Forest Foundation and the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance we will have multiple bilingual hikes and projects planned throughout the year. We are also happy to announce that we will have brochures in Spanish showcasing Jarbidge and Mount Rose Wilderness Areas as well as Kyle Canyon in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The Friends of Nevada Wilderness Bilingual Program will include hikes and projects that will be led by bilingual staff who speak both English and Spanish.

WILD ABOUT BIRDS

For part of our Wild Speakers Series, we hosted a four part series about bird biology by David Lukas, a naturalist and former interpretive guide at Yosemite National Park. The talks included the morphology of bird bones, bird songs and behavior, the wow of bird colors, and bird nests, eggs and early life as a chick.



Photo by Kurt Kuznicki



During Latino Conservation Week, September 14th - 21st, we will be leading a hike in the Mount Rose Wilderness and for Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15th - October 15th, we will be hosting a guided hike in Mount Charleston Wilderness. Both hikes will be led by bilingual staff with talks about Leave no Trace, volunteering, and Wilderness Areas. We are also working on three bilingual day projects for the season, so keep an eye out for those as well!

OUTREACH ON THE PLAYA AND MORE

Reaching out is a great way to connect with our organization and business partners, supporters, students and the general public. In 2023 we had fun tabling at Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Pint Night, the Annual Backcountry Horsemen of Nevada state meeting, Nevada Land Trust's Banff Film Festival, trivia night with the Nevada Wildlife Federation, the Nevada Conservation League National Public Lands Day, the Soroptimist Society, and Midtown Rotary Pint Night. We had numerous outreach events at the Patagonia Outlet and Warehouse in Reno, the Mesa Rim Climbing Center and a Gear Hut Trail Run.

We participated in several Earth Day Events, and numerous tabling events at UNR career fairs, UNLV Involvement Fair and the Nevada State College.

From August 26th - September 2nd, five of our staff provided interpretation and outreach at Burning Man in partnership with the California Trail Center and BLM at the BLM Interp Camp. There were 6,971 outreach interactions over six days and as you can imagine most of these interactions were pretty interesting.

We love getting out and about to talk about Wild Nevada! See you out there!



You probably all heard about the mud – it was ankle deep!

FRIENDS CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF PROTECTING THE PLACES NEVADANS LOVE

While national conservation groups had been working on Wilderness preservation since the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964, it became obvious that Nevada needed a Wilderness group representing Nevadans. National groups were considered outsiders and were dismissed by Nevada politicians. So in March of 1984, a group of Wilderness loving Nevadans officially formed Friends of Nevada Wilderness. The group's founders were determined to ensure Nevadans had a strong voice in how their wild public lands would be protected and managed for generations to come.

Some of those early founding members, including Wilderness heroes like Marge Sill, Roger Scholl, Karen Boeger, John and Hermi Hiatt, and Larry Dwyer, would go on to steer the organization for decades. They created a movement that eventually led to the organization we have today. Thanks to the tremendous support we've had along the way, especially from our amazing corps of volunteers and leaders like Senator Harry Reid, we have been able to accomplish so much.



Jarbidge Wilderness Area protected under the Wilderness Act of 1964

Photo by Chris Cutshaw

In our first 40 years we were able to protect 73 Wilderness areas (3.6 million acres) from Jarbidge, the first Nevada Wilderness created with the passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act, to the Clan Alpine Mountains designated in 2022. Protected Wilderness Areas include popular iconic areas like the Mount Rose, Mount Charleston and Ruby Mountain Wilderness Areas, as well as dozens of more remote areas that await the adventuresome explorer. Our awesome volunteers have contributed millions of dollars of volunteer service caring for these areas over the years. Our trail crews have maintained about 50 miles of Wilderness trails every year keeping them safe and accessible.

Friends has also been instrumental in establishing another 3 million acres of public lands as National Monuments, National Conservation Areas and the Great Basin National Park.

Perhaps the most valuable thing Friends does is simply encourage people to get out and explore Wild Nevada, to see for themselves why we work so hard to protect it. Toward that end, Friends just released a 60th Anniversary Edition Jarbidge Mountains Recreation Map. It includes trails, campgrounds, local food and lodging, detailed topography of the entire Wilderness Area and information on how to explore the area responsibly by leaving no trace behind. Check it out at nevadawilderness.com/shop.

Over the past 40 years Friends of Nevada Wilderness has been instrumental in the protection of nearly 6.5 million acres of wild places in Nevada.

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 73 Wilderness Areas | 3.6 million acres |
| 1 Great Basin National Park | 77,180 acres |
| 6 National Conservation Areas | 1.2 million acres |
| 4 National Monuments | 1.5 million acres |

*Happy Anniversary
to everyone who has
been a part of this
incredible journey!*

Photo by Kurt Kuznicki

YOU CAN HELP SAVE STARRY SKIES

Five years ago, right after all our hard work paid off with the certification of the Massacre Rim Dark Sky Sanctuary, we had this crazy idea to apply for a specialty license plate celebrating Nevada's uniquely dark skies. We pursued it only because the public reacted so enthusiastically to Nevada's brand new Dark Sky Sanctuary and seemed to be as intrigued with our starry skies as we are.

So, now, we are thrilled to reveal the design of Nevada's newest specialty plate that will be available to the public in just a few weeks! Please visit nevadadarksky.org for all the information on how to obtain the plate.

The plate will cost a few dollars more than the standard-issue plate, but those proceeds will go to an excellent cause - the protection of our dark skies.

Friends and other dark sky advocates will use the revenue to educate the public about how dark skies are threatened by increasing use of artificial light and why it's important to wildlife and human health to protect the dark. We will also help rural areas promote low-impact astro-tourism as a way to boost rural economies that now rely heavily on ranching and mining for their survival.

After reviewing more than two dozen designs, we chose this one from graphic artist and dark sky advocate, Jonathan Boarini of Las Vegas. We can't wait to see it on cars, trucks, motorcycles and trailers throughout the great state of Nevada! Watch the website and your social media where we'll announce when the plate becomes available.



For Demonstration Purposes Only! We expect the plate to be available to the public in May or June



FNW 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- » 39 stewardship projects
- » 17,109 lbs of metal garbage removed
- » 31 outreach events
- » 28 springs monitored
- » 56 miles of trail maintenance/brushing/tread repair
- » 268 trees cleared from trails
- » 40 drains built for trails
- » 90 miles of storm damaged trails assessed in Spring Mountains
- » 515 volunteers
- » 5,168 volunteer hours
- » \$235,574 In-kind service donated

JOIN US FOR 2024 AND MORE!

YOUR SUPPORT POWERS THE PROTECTION OF WILD NEVADA

You can be a champion for Nevada’s wild places while also optimizing your financial planning, reducing taxable income, and maximizing your philanthropic impact.

If you hold an Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA) you are required to take Required Minimum Distributions each year beginning at age 73, even if you don’t need or want the funds. It is possible to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution of up to \$105,000 to one or more qualifying nonprofits that satisfies your required minimum distribution without increasing your taxable income.

A Donor-Advised Fund, or DAF, is like a charitable investment account for the sole purpose of supporting charitable organizations you care about such as Friends. When you contribute cash, securities, or other assets to a donor-advised fund you are generally eligible to take an immediate tax deduction. You can then recommend grants over time to any eligible IRS-qualified public charity, including Friends of Nevada Wilderness.

Your monthly donation to Friends of Nevada Wilderness powers stewardship that restores and protects Nevada’s wild places. Over 80% of donations we receive go directly to advocating for wilderness protection, restoring habitat for wildlife, and maintaining hiking trails. Being a Steward of the Wild is an impactful way to ensure our work protecting and stewarding your public lands can continue for generations to come. Together, we can protect the wild places that make Nevada so special.

*Become a **Steward of the Wild!***
nevadawilderness.org/donate

Gold
Transparency
2024

Candid.

100%

Giving Board
Award 2023

To learn more about these, or other giving options contact Jim Stanger, Community & Development Manager, at 775-324-7667 x202 or jim@nevadawilderness.org

Get Ready to Explore Nevada!

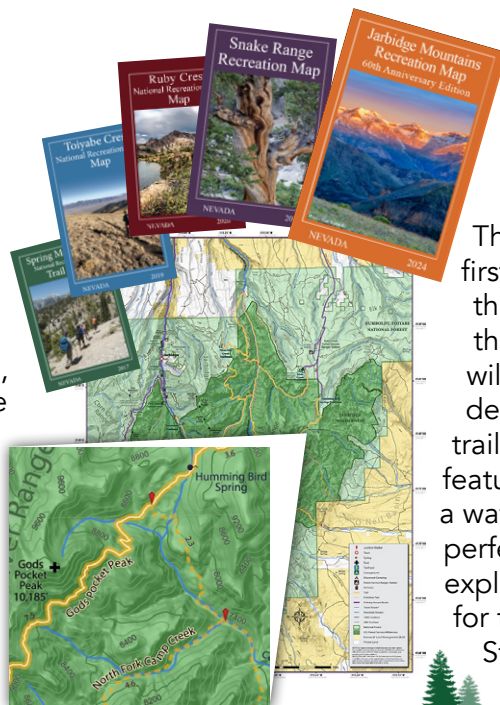
As snow melts and temperatures rise it’ll soon be time to gear up and explore Nevada’s wild places.

Consider purchasing Friends of Nevada Wilderness-branded gear to keep you hydrated, warm, and safe.

We have an online store that sells specialty items such as maps, patches, and more. We also partner with Zazzle to provide print-on-demand t-shirts, hoodies, water bottles, and more directly from their site.

nevadawilderness.org/shop

Explore today!



Brand New Maps and Merch!

Jarbidge Wilderness Map - 60th Anniversary Edition

The Jarbidge Wilderness was among the first lands given that designation as part of the Wilderness Act of 1964. To celebrate the 60th anniversary of this beautiful and wild land our mapping Jedi, Jake Kastner, designed a topo-style map that highlights trails, creeks, junctions, and other recreation features found in the area. We’re offering it in a water-resistant, tear-resistant map that is the perfect companion for a safe and responsible exploration of northeastern Nevada. Funding for this project was provided by the Nevada State Parks Recreational Trails Program.

Pick up your copy today!



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.

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RETURN SERVICE
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Northern Nevada

May 24th — 27th: Black Rock Rendezvous - Join us in the Black Rock Desert for a full weekend of projects, activities, the famous Dutch oven cook-off, and a lot of fun!

May 31st — June 2nd: National Trails Day at Steven's Camp - Give back to hiking trails! This year National Trails Day in northern Nevada will be held at Steven's Camp, north of High Rock Canyon and the Black Rock Desert.

August 2nd — 3rd: Dark Sky Festival in Cedarville, CA - Join us for a family-friendly weekend filled with "out of this world" fun and unbelievable stargazing!

September 27th — 29th: National Public Lands Day at Soldier Meadows - Come out and have a blast with a weekend full of projects, fun, and great food! There will be multiple projects for all skill levels, camping in a beautiful location, and a great community. You don't want to miss this one!

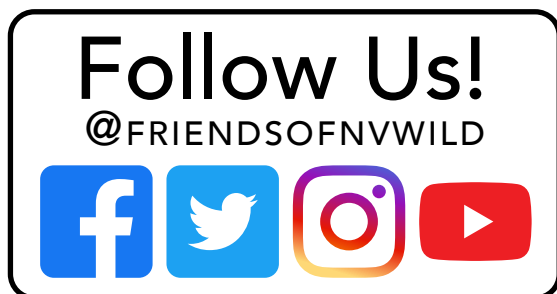
December 14th: Wilderness Wingding Volunteer Appreciation Celebration in Northern Nevada - The annual end of the year celebration of our volunteers and the entire Friends of Nevada Wilderness community. Join us for dinner, music, a silent auction, raffle prizes, and more.

Southern Nevada

April 25th — 29th: Alternative Summer Break - A 5-day long service-learning experience designed for college students and young adults (18-39) to gain hands-on experience collecting data at springs and improving trails while also having the opportunity to meet with local experts in the outdoors community.

October 5th: Wild & Scenic Film Fest Las Vegas at Spring Mountain Ranch State Park - Join us for a special film fest for the 60th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, and the 40th anniversary of Friends of Nevada Wilderness!

Visit nevadawilderness.org/calendar_of_events
to sign up for these
important projects!



CONTACT OUR OFFICES

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NEVADAWILDERNESS.ORG

Massacre Rim Dark Sky Sanctuary
Photo by Chris Cutshaw