



## FRIENDS of NEVADA WILDERNESS

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Friends Volunteers “Clean Up” in 1<sup>st</sup> Half of 2022

### Scrubbing graffiti and pulling weeds all part of stewarding the land

*June 28, 2022* - There's so much natural beauty to see and experience in Nevada's wild open spaces that one could wander for a lifetime and still not take it all in. But every now and then, wilderness explorers come across something they'd rather NOT see or experience.

That's where the Friends of Nevada Wilderness Stewardship Coordinators and their teams of volunteers step in for some serious cleanup work. Two major grant-funded projects have now been completed in the first half of 2022.

This spring, 140 volunteers put in almost 1,000 hours scrubbing graffiti off boulders along four trails on Mt. Charleston in southern Nevada and digging up 25,000 invasive musk thistles in the Mt. Rose Wilderness in the north. While Friends considers its volunteer contributions to be priceless, on paper, the crews' time totaled more than \$28,000 in value, saving taxpayers' dollars and federal land managers' time.

### **Graffiti Removal**

In partnership with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and with funding from the Mt. Charleston License Plate fund, Friends staff, Americorps members and volunteers scrubbed graffiti from boulders along the Mary Jane Falls, Fletcher Canyon, Little Falls/Echo Canyon and Cathedral Rock trails in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.

Armed with environmentally-friendly cleaning agents, scrub brushes and a can-do attitude, volunteers hiked high up into the hills and, section by section along miles of trails, patiently scrubbed visually jarring graffiti from nature's landscape. The volunteer corps included employees and members of local businesses including Knit and Wyld Canna and the Southern Nevada Climbers Coalition. Friends also led graffiti-removing volunteer projects in 2021, with funding from the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act.

“While it's unsettling for true nature lovers to encounter such an unwelcome sight, we hope they will revisit their favorite trail and appreciate the work of these dedicated volunteers who give up so much of their time and energy to restore the natural landscape,” Friends Executive Director Shaaron Netherton said in reviewing the six-month report.

According to USFS, the fine for “damaging any natural feature or other property” in a national forest is \$250. Anyone who observes an act of graffiti or other damage is asked to call the Visitor Center at (702) 872-5486.

The Southern Nevada field season is wrapping up with one last sold out event, but interested folks can [check here](#) for future volunteer opportunities.

### **Invasive Weed Removal**

With funding from the Truckee River Fund, the National Forest Foundation and the Charles H. Stout Foundation, Friends led eight Weed Warrior trips this spring into the Hunter Creek Trail Head area of the Mt. Rose Wilderness to dig up 25,000 invasive musk thistles. Volunteers came from several organizations and businesses including Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful, the Patagonia Service Center and the Midtown Rotary Club.

Friends provides the shovels and gloves and the volunteers bring energy and enthusiasm. The musk thistle is classified as a noxious weed that replaces native plants in meadows, pastures and disturbed areas, such as after a wildfire. It is unpalatable to wildlife and alters their native habitat.

“Managing invasive weeds is an ongoing effort and we are so grateful for the Weed Warriors who keep after it, year after year,” Netherton added. “The Mt. Rose Wilderness is such a heavily used area and we hope everyone who enjoys this amazing space so close to Reno and Sparks values the efforts of these volunteers like we do.”

This fall, Friends will revisit areas where weeds were pulled to spread native seeds to further restore the natural habitat. Interested volunteers can [sign up here](#) for the event and many other northern Nevada outings this summer and fall.

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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/>.

See pictures below or attached – more are available on request.



*Heading up to Little Falls/Echo Trail to scrub some rocks*



*Hard at work at Little Falls/Echo Trail in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area*



*Got another one – digging up invasive musk thistle in the Mt. Rose Wilderness*



*One of the 2022 Weed Warriors crews in Mt. Rose Wilderness*