



## FRIENDS of NEVADA WILDERNESS

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Friends Celebrates Volunteers and Supporters at Annual Wingding** So many volunteers and so little time!

*Reno, NV* - Friends of Nevada Wilderness honored its outstanding volunteers and supporters at the annual Wingding at Rancho San Rafael Friday night, but didn't have time to read off the names of [every person](#) who donated time, money and energy in 2022.

"We would have been there all night in order to recognize and personally thank everyone who supported our organization over the past year," Executive Director Shaaron Netherton said after the event. "It's our hope that each and every one of them know how much we appreciate their passion for public lands and their dedication to helping protect it. Many of our stewardship projects require substantial commitments of time and perseverance and we are incredibly grateful that so many people are willing to give it."

Friends presented the coveted Blue Helmet Award to 13 volunteers who for the first time put in 30 hours or more of volunteer time in 2022. They join the list of 19 volunteers who have earned the award multiple times and are presented with blue hard hats to wear in the field, identifying them as committed volunteers and inspiring others to earn their own.

The Volunteer of the Year award was presented to Bob Ralston who knows the backcountry of Nevada as well as anyone. In 2022, he put in more than 150 hours on overnight stewardship projects across Northern Nevada for a total of more than 500 hours on Friends projects over the years. Bob is of course valued for his time, but also for his tool box in which he carries an uncanny number of handy implements.

The Agency Partner of the Year, Kathy Torrence, is the Wilderness Specialist for the Bureau of Land Management's Black Rock Field Office, where she facilitates a number of volunteer projects in the Black Rock National Conservation Area. A knowledgeable leader, Kathy is also full of contagious energy and makes a mean camp fried rice.

Lucy Moreton-Hall and David Book were named Champions of Northern Nevada Stewardship for their generous financial support, including a significant matching grant so Friends can purchase a new field truck.

NV Energy was named Corporate Partner of the Year for supporting many of Friends' stewardship programs in northern and southern Nevada and special events including the Wingding and the Wild and Scenic Film Festival.

Jason Weiss and Dan Johnson were recognized with the Above and Beyond Awards and John Drakulich received the Marge Sill Wilderness Legacy Award.

Friends was also presented an award, from the Back Country Horsemen of Nevada, for "keeping backcountry trails open so others can enjoy the Nevada wilderness experience." The Back Country Horsemen every year help pack food, equipment, and other supplies into roadless areas so Friends crews can conduct their restoration work.

In 2022 alone, 428 volunteers donated 5,664 hours of time on 48 stewardship projects for a total in-kind contribution of \$218,000.

"We simply could not accomplish what we do without these amazing people," Netherton added. "Thousands of people get out to enjoy Nevada's wild public lands every year. Their outdoor experience is greatly enhanced thanks to the people who volunteer with our organization and others. What they contribute is priceless."

Eight local businesses and restaurants provided food and beverages for the Wingding and another three dozen provided raffle prizes and goodies for the volunteer gift bags.

See the event program [here](#).

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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 \$3 million of in-kind services to benefit Nevada's public lands. For more information, visit <http://www.nevadawilderness.org/>.



Some of the Blue Helmet Award winners



Friends stewardship staff present Bob Ralston with the Volunteer of the Year Award



Lucy Moreton-Hall and David Book are the Champions of Northern Nevada Stewardship



It was a full house at Rancho San Rafael