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Friends of Nevada Wilderness Celebrates 1st Designation of New Wilderness Areas in Eight Years

Reno, NV - The U.S. Congress is expected this week to approve designation of more than 180,000 acres of new Wilderness Area (WA) in Nevada, marking the first time since 2014 that new Wilderness has been added to the previous inventory of 3.4 million acres. In addition, Congress will create the new Numunaa Nobe National Conservation Area, for a total of more than 346,000 acres of land with new conservation protections. The designations are part of the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act, which the House has approved and the Senate will vote on this week.

The new Wilderness Areas are the Clan Alpine Mountains (128,362 in Churchill County), the Desatoya Mountains (40,303 acres in Churchill and Lander Counties), and the Cain Mountain Wilderness Area (14,050 acres in Churchill and Lander Counties).

The new National Conservation Area totals 160,224 acres and encompasses much of what were the Stillwater and Jobs Peak Wilderness Study Areas.

“There is much to celebrate as this year comes to a close,” Friends Executive Director Shaaron Netherton said on House passage of the bill. “New Wilderness and Conservation Area designations provide greater protection of wildlife habit and cultural resources and keeps these special places open to the public.”

These newly designated areas provide beautiful scenery, interesting geology, hiking and camping opportunities, as well as valuable wildlife habitat for desert bighorn sheep, Greater Sage-Grouse, Golden Eagles and many other species.

While earlier versions of the measure contained additional conservation designations, Friends is grateful to Congressman Mark Amodei, and Senators Jacky Rosen and Catherine Cortez Masto for their efforts in navigating a difficult legislative process to get to the current outcome that also includes provisions long sought by Indigenous communities in Nevada.

“It’s become more and more difficult it seems to move conservation-oriented legislation through Congress,” Netherton added. “That’s why here at Friends we invest so much time and energy reaching out to affected communities and working with our Congressional delegation to reach common sense agreements. We have more work to do in the next Congress and we look forward to it with the same level of commitment we’ve always had to keeping much of Nevada wild and open to us all.”

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About Friends of Nevada Wilderness

Founded in 1984, Friends of Nevada Wilderness has helped protect nearly 3.6 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/](http://www.nevadawilderness.org/).

The proposed new Clan Alpine Mountains Wilderness Area
Photo by Kurt Kuznicki

The Stillwater Wilderness Study Area to be part of new NCA
Photo by Kirk Peterson