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Friends Celebrates, Stewards
Nevada's newest National Monument

Mar. 21, 2023 - The designation of the Avi Kwa Ame National Monument is a historical addition to the list of legacy public land designations in Nevada, according to the non-profit Friends of Nevada Wilderness.

“It’s hard to overstate the importance of this National Monument designation by the Biden Administration,” said Friends Executive Director Shaaron Netherton. “Permanent protection of this place expresses reverence for cultural antiquity and the spiritual power this land will always hold for Indigenous people.”

In addition to preserving sacred Indigenous lands, the National Monument designation will now protect a vast swath of public land and critical wildlife habitat that remains relatively undisturbed but still threatened by potential negative impacts.

“The native desert species that inhabit these lands remained vulnerable to potential uses that could have threatened their delicate habitat and therefore their existence,” Netherton added. “The designation has created a critically important connectivity between the Wilderness Areas and National Park lands to the east and the Mojave Wilderness and Castle Mountains National Monument to the west. These plant and animal life corridors are crucial to survival as these species struggle to adapt to changes in the climate.”

The National Monument designation was supported by a broad cross section of Nevadans, including local elected officials. It guarantees a vast open public space worth exploring for generations to come and a local economy bolstered by visitors seeking adventure.

"The administration's commitment to protecting this sacred area for future generations is a testament to the hard work by Tribes and supporters of Avi Kwa Ame over many years,” said Grace Palermo, Southern Nevada Director at Friends. “Friends also has a long-time commitment to protecting this special place. Our stewardship staff and volunteers have already spent hundreds of hours on a variety of projects in the area and we remain committed to helping to protect what is now the Avi Kwa Ame National Monument.”

Over the last 10 years, more than 100 Friends volunteers have spent nearly 3,000 hours on stewardship projects in the National Monument, totaling nearly $30,000 in kind-contributions. Crews have removed six tons of litter in that time, including two steel tubs, an old boat, and an abandoned vehicle. In addition, staff-led volunteer teams have monitored and collected data on 49 critical springs in the area.
“Our work isn’t done,” Palermo continued. “We continue to steward this landscape through projects such as our Alternative Spring Break that happened just last week. The goal of that program is to foster the spirit of stewardship in young adults by engaging them in beginner-friendly projects and providing training to help them feel confident in their volunteer abilities. We’re so excited to be able to share the rich story of Avi Kwa Ame with these students and hope it inspires them as much as it does us.”

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Students and Friends of Nevada Wilderness staff at the 2023 Alternative Spring Break in the new National Monument

Photo by Meg Tait

**About Friends of Nevada Wilderness**

Founded in 1984, Friends of Nevada Wilderness has helped protect over 3.7 million acres of Nevada’s wild lands by leading efforts in the expansion or designation of all 73 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/](http://www.nevadawilderness.org/).