

## Saluting our partners — Friends of Nevada Wilderness

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With a small staff responsible for more than 1.6 million acres comprising four national wildlife refuges in southern Nevada, the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex relies heavily on volunteers to staff visitor centers and assist with projects. This is the first in a series of articles highlighting the support provided to the Desert Complex by partner organizations and thanking them for their dedication to the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Friends of Nevada Wilderness** is an organization 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.

Over the last five years alone, Friends of Nevada Wilderness organized and deployed more than 700 volunteers to the Desert and Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuges to complete major cleanup and restoration projects. Highlights of those projects include:

- **2012**

173 volunteers installed 644 feet of post and cable fencing, removed 2,082 pounds of debris, planted 873 native plants and 73 native trees, removed weeds from two acres, and restored 3,060 feet of unauthorized roads (incursions) on the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. Some of the volunteers represented SH Architecture, the Boy Scouts of America and REI.

- **2013**

222 volunteers removed 4,740 feet of fence, removed weeds from 1.5 acres, restored 8,448 feet of unauthorized roads (incursions), and planted 435 native plants and 35 native trees on the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. Some of the volunteers represented MGM Resorts, SH Architecture and the Boy Scouts of America

- **2014**

214 volunteers planted 1,461 native plants, dispersed 75 pounds of native seed, maintained 2,000 feet of trail, and removed weeds from 4,871 acres on the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. Some of the volunteers represented MGM Resorts.

- **2015**

128 volunteers removed 15 cubic yards of weeds, rerouted a trail and extended it 400 feet, naturalized 300 feet of old trail, planted 175 native plants on the Desert National Wildlife Refuge and planted 300 willow trees around Upper Pahrnagat Lake on the Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuge.



In 2012 and 2013, Friends of Nevada Wilderness removed more than 11,500 feet (Approximately 2.17 miles) of unauthorized roads (incursions) on Desert Complex refuges. The group also restored those areas to their natural state. *Photo Courtesy of Friends of Nevada Wilderness*



Friends of Nevada Wilderness volunteers pull an old fence post out of the ground on the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. The project involved removing nearly one mile of old fencing from Enclosure Ridge on the Desert NWR. *Photo Courtesy of Friends of Nevada Wilderness*

- **2016**

14 volunteers removed 10 cubic yards of invasive grass and reeds from the Corn Creek area on the Desert National Wildlife Refuge.



Friends of Nevada Wilderness working to reduce the volume of invasive reeds and grass at Corn Creek on the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. *Photo Courtesy of Friends of Nevada Wilderness*

“Thank you just doesn’t seem adequate when you consider the volume of work this organization has done over the years,” said Christy Smith, Project Leader for the Desert Complex. “There is no way we could have accomplished these things without the Friends of Nevada Wilderness.”

“We are so thankful that the U.S. Fish Wildlife Service gives us the opportunity to engage volunteers and introduce them to the Desert Complex,” said Jose Witt, southern Nevada Manager for Friends of Nevada Wilderness. “Without agency partners that share a conservation vision, we would not be able to accomplish our goal of keeping Nevada Wild!”

Friends of Nevada Wilderness also works with the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service on numerous projects throughout the state, and coordinates with many of the Service’s other partners on the national wildlife refuges in Nevada. Learn more about the organization by visiting [www.nevadawilderness.org/](http://www.nevadawilderness.org/)