

Volunteers Turn Out For National Public Lands Day 2021 Near Ely



Back Row: Beth Cristobal, Kelli Eichler, Carol Ferguson, Ava Hamilton, Julie Long, Emma Baker, Gretchen Baker, Melissa Renfro, Matthew Baker, David Cochran, AJ Flint. **Front Row:** James Woolsey, Elizabeth Woolsey, John B Free, John Miller. Baker area residents Saturday stuffed enough weeds into lawn and leaf bags to fill the beds of two pickup trucks.

National Public Lands Day volunteers, including representatives of ENLC, participated in two separate projects Saturday, September 25. They pulled weeds at the Baker Archaeological Site to improve the visitor experience and cut tree limbs at the Ward Mountain Recreation Area's Birkebeiner Trail to enhance public safety.

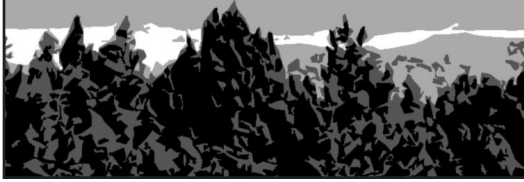
Wielding rakes and small gardening tools, more than 20 Baker area residents removed Halogeton and Russian Thistle, two invasive and noxious weed species, from the archaeological site just outside Great Basin

National Park. The frequently-visited site contains the remnants of a pre-Columbian Fremont people's village. The project was sponsored by the Baker Area Citizens Advisory Board in collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management Ely District. The Board hopes to make the clean-up a regular event.

"It takes a village to care for a village," Elizabeth Woolsey, Baker Area Citizens Advisory Board chairperson, said.

Continued on page six

Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition



Our Mission

The mission of the Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition is to restore the dynamic, diverse, resilient landscapes of the arid and semi-arid West for present and future generations through education, research, advocacy, partnerships, and the implementation of on-the-ground projects.

Our Vision

We envision a future where the ecosystems of the arid and semi-arid West thrive. Functioning, diverse ecosystems will be the result of restoration achieved and maintained with naturally occurring disturbances such as fire, in combination with other management prescriptions, including traditional uses. The Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, will be a recognized contributor and leader in this effort for future generations of Americans.

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The Landscape News is published two times per year. Design and layout by
Tempra Board & Associates.

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View from the Forest

Eric Horstman, Executive Director

Weeds

In the course of my work at the Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition, I have had the opportunity to visit some of the front-line sites in the work to control and eradicate noxious and invasive weeds. A visit to Pahrangat Valley brought home the difficulties of eradicating Russian Olive, seen by some as an ornamental to be maintained and others as a threat to the riparian areas of the valley and threatened and endangered species of fish and birds. White Top was another species I quickly became familiar with, as I was shown thick clumps that were just beginning to flower along the watercourse in the lower end of the valley. A visit to the Eagle Valley near Pioche also showed the impact that introduced thistles are having in the area.

The area surrounding Elko has also been heavily impacted by weeds and I had the opportunity to participate in a two-day field course where we were taken to several sites and shown both noxious weeds like bur buttercup, spotted knapweed and Dyer's woad. We also were shown some of the natives including a native thistle and balsamroot.

Through a SNPLMA Grant from the US Forest Service, ENLC continued to provide monetary support to CWMA members in White Pine County as well support for Newark/Long Valley CWMA members through a grant from the Nevada Department of Agriculture.

A key component of ENLC's work, the coordination with CWMA members through periodic meetings, was put on hold because of COVID-19 concerns, but I am happy to report that our new CWMA Coordinator, Susi Algrim has been reaching out to the various CWMA representatives to set up meetings with your members. It is with great pleasure to announce the dates for the **2022 Winter Weeds Conference, January 19-20 at the Bristlecone Convention Center in Ely.** We hope to see you there!

Eric Horstman

Nevada Agencies to Prioritize Wildlife Migration Corridors

Suzanne Potter, Nevada News Service in the Elko Daily, August 31, 2021

CARSON CITY — Sage grouse, pronghorn, mule deer and bighorn sheep are just a few of the species expected to benefit from a new executive order on wildlife migration corridors signed this week by Gov. Steve Sisolak.

The order instructs state agencies to collaborate to make sure animals migrating between their winter and summer range aren't held up by poorly placed roads and development.

Lydia Teel, board member at the nonprofit Nevada Bighorns Unlimited, said more than 360 species depend on uninterrupted access to the sagebrush habitat that covers more than half the state.

"With recent wildfires and drought, our wildlife is in peril," Teel asserted. "And that's why this is so important that we work together to try and enhance that ecosystem for them, so we can continue to have healthy populations."

The order instructs the Nevada Departments of Wildlife, Transportation and Natural Resources to

develop a plan called the Nevada Habitat Conservation Network. The agreement does not mandate any new restrictions on development, but will facilitate projects such as wildlife crossings that direct animals under or over the highway.

Tony Wasley, director of the Nevada Department of Wildlife, said the new framework is a win-win.

"It helps keep the roads safe for the public. It helps reduce the cost for emergency response, automobile insurance and repair, or medical costs associated with animal-vehicle collision, and then it also helps the wildlife population survive," Wasley outlined.

The order means the state wildlife department will develop a Sagebrush Habitat Plan to tackle the problems of declining populations of the iconic sage grouse. A recent report from the U.S. Geological Survey found the sage grouse population across the West has declined 80% since 1965.

ENLC Membership

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Membership contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Student (enrolled in school)	\$ 15
Senior (60+)	\$ 35
Individual	\$ 50
Restoration Partner and /or Nonprofit Org.	\$ 100-\$ 999
Corporate	\$ 250
Lifetime Restoration Partner	\$ 1,000+

Send your check and this form to:

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Ely, NV 89315

UNR Helps Forage and Livestock Producers in Times of Drought

According to a September 1, 2021 article in the University of Nevada, Reno's *Nevada Today* (www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2021/alfalfa-drought), the drought affecting several Western states is hitting alfalfa and other forage producers, as well as livestock producers in Nevada, extremely hard.

Producers utilizing reservoirs, such as in west central Nevada's Churchill and Pershing counties, and those relying on groundwater and wells, such as in Eureka County's Diamond Valley, are dealing with water shortages. This is resulting in less forage being grown and some fields to lie fallow, and for livestock producers to purchase more hay to offset the lack of feed on dry public rangeland. The ability of even alfalfa (known as a deep-rooted and somewhat drought tolerant species) to survive and remain viable into next year, is at risk.

According to Gary McCuin, an ENLC advisor and former board member, and director of the University of Nevada, Reno's Great Basin Research & Extension Center, "the lack of snow and too much pinyon-juniper



have robbed our groundwater. We've been pumping this Basin dry since 1960."

The Great Basin Research & Extension Center is a 644-acre ranch in Diamond Valley, opened in 2020. It addresses issues of sustainable grazing management of rangelands, livestock, crop production under water-

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(above) Current ENLC advisor and former board member Gary McCuin monitors irrigation strategies at the Gerat Basin Research & Extension Center in Diamond Valley.

(left) Low Elevation Sprinkler Application (LESA) can save 20% in water normally lost to evaporation.

UNR Helps Forage and Livestock Producers

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limited environments, alternative water and irrigation strategies for crop production, and other issues. The ranch maintains a herd of Rafter 7 sheep, produces alfalfa hay and other forage crops, and has a cattle feedlot and a dryland crested wheat pasture.

McCuin estimates that the Center's tonnage will be down 20-30% this year, similar to the rest of the county. "What's keeping the valley economically viable at this time is the growing of alfalfa and hay," he said. "We can grow other things, but for lower dollar amounts. With our short growing season and long distance to markets, there's just not a lot of other viable crops."

To address water shortages, McCuin is encouraging growers in his valley to implement a number of water conservation techniques, including Low Elevation Sprinkler Application (LESA), which can save about 20% in water being lost to evaporation, as well as reduce pumping costs as less pressure is needed. Another strategy is the use of soil moisture sensors, though their use is most successful in normal precipitation years. Right now, all of the ground is dry.

At UNR's Experiment Station Valley Road Field Lab in Reno, researchers are getting even more high tech, experimenting with a computer-aided "smart" deficit irrigation scheduling system that can help producers manage their available water and still produce the best possible yield. Producers should also manage how much and when they harvest to ensure their crop can return next year. Once plants are stressed, they need help to ensure their roots have enough stored energy to recover and become productive again.

UNR Develops First Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit in Nevada

Excerpts from UNR's Nevada Today, Sept. 9, 2021 (www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2021/new-cooperative-research-unit)

The newly formed Nevada Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit brings state and federal wildlife-management resources together, providing cooperative partnership that ensures resources are best serving Nevada's wildlife and wild places. The partnership consists of the Nevada Department of Wildlife; the University of Nevada, Reno; the Wildlife Management Institute; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to focus on scientific research and conservation of fish and wildlife in the state and region.

The Nevada Cooperative Research Unit program will include three unit scientists employed through the USGS who will have adjunct faculty appointments to the University. Based on the University campus, the program will focus on wildlife research, ecology and management, and will promote collaboration among the participating partner organizations. In addition, the program will support a focus on human dimensions and the importance of wildlife conservation to the public's overall quality of life.

Since 1935, the Cooperative Research Unit program has grown from the original nine wildlife-only units and now – with the addition of the Nevada Unit – includes 41 units located on university campuses in 39 states. The mission of the Cooperative Research Unit program focuses on developing the conservation workforce of the future through applied graduate education, helping fulfill the training and technical assistance needs of the cooperators, and delivering actionable science to cooperating agencies and organizations. The unique model of the Cooperative Research Unit program increases productivity and capacity by allowing partners to benefit from each other's strengths, developing better management at every level of fish and wildlife conservation.

Public Lands Day 2021

Continued from page one

Volunteers toting hand saws and loppers trimmed protruding branches from nearly three miles of the Birkebeiner Trail on Ward Mountain near Ely. Hikers, mountain bikers, and winter sports enthusiasts use the trail year-round. It is home to the annual Bristlecone Birkebeiner Winterfest. Participants in the BLM Ely District-hosted event included the Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition and National Park Service.

“This was the first year since COVID that BLM was able to host a NPLD event. The Ward Mountain Recreation area is beloved by the community and the event helps to enhance the visitor experience to the area,” said Jared Bybee, BLM Bristlecone Field Manager.

The nation’s largest, single-day volunteer event for public lands, NPLD has brought together hundreds of thousands of volunteers to help restore America’s public lands since 1979. The event, coordinated



each year by the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation, is a success nationwide because of the collaboration between federal, state and local agencies, private organizations and individual volunteers.



(above) NPLD Volunteer Angelina Haines lops tree limbs protruding onto the Birkebeiner trail at the Ward Mountain Recreation Area.

(left) NPLD Volunteer James Woolsey removes Russian Thistle, an invasive and noxious weed, from around the fence at the Baker Archaeological Site’s day use area.

Weed News You Can Use

Strategic Grazing of Cheatgrass Can Reduce Fire Threat

According to studies by Berry Perryman, Professor of Rangeland Ecology and Management at the University of Nevada, Reno, strategic grazing can reduce cheatgrass and reduce fire danger across the semi-arid West.

As reported by Heather Smith Thomas on FarmProgress.com (www.farmprogress.com/livestock/grazing-tool-control-cheatgrass), Perryman experimented with fall grazing of cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), which sounds counterintuitive. Cattle typically will graze cheatgrass in the spring, but avoid it once it goes to seed due to the sharp seed awns. However, “later in the year, after the seeds drop, it becomes palatable again,” says Perryman. Although protein levels are low at this time, a protein supplement can be added to resolve the problem.

The goal is to reduce the amount of dry accumulated cheatgrass in the fall, which is highly combustible, thereby giving fire fighters a better chance to make a direct attack on wildfire. In Perryman’s three-year pilot study of 1,500 acres, after three years of strategic

grazing, cheatgrass coverage was reduced from 500 pounds per acre to 100. They followed this with a larger study of 6,000 acres.

“We had 800 cattle out there for five weeks, grazing a line across the landscape to create a firebreak—using protein supplement as the attractant to keep them in that area,” said Perryman.

Interestingly, although fall grazing takes places after cheatgrass has gone to seed, reproduction of cheatgrass was still reduced. This is because cheatgrass needs litter from last year’s plants to survive. It doesn’t thrive on bare soil. After three years, the team found that perennial grass started to regain dominance in these areas.

However, land managers must continue fall grazing, as Perryman found that even missing one year resulted in rebounds of cheatgrass back to its original numbers. “It’s an aggressive species and you can’t let up on it,” he adds.

Researchers to Study Effects on Native Plants of Herbicides Used for Cheatgrass Treatment

In September, *Nevada Today* reported that two University of Nevada, Reno researchers in the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology & Natural Resources will be expanding studies of two herbicides for use on cheatgrass in Nevada. Professors Paul Meiman and Brad Schultz will conduct large-scale testing of two herbicides: Plateau and Rejuvra on their impact on native forbs and grasses. While these herbicides are known to suppress cheatgrass, their effects on desired native plant communities has not been tested in Nevada’s arid and semi-arid ecosystems.

The goal is to suppress the highly flammable cheatgrass in order to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire, while paving the way for native grasses and forbs to get a foothold and re-establish. The study will take place in collaboration with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the

Nevada Department of Wildlife, and Bayer (which manufactures one of the herbicides, Rejuvra), and will be conducted on Nevada Gold Mines land. The 20- to 40-acre sites will be sprayed with either of the herbicides or a mixture of both, and will be tracked over the course of a couple of years.

“If this herbicide treatment proves effective, it provides an additional tool for managers to reduce cheatgrass on sites where native plants are being pushed out, but still maintain sufficient presence to provide seed for populations to expand,” Schultz said. “It has the opportunity to give native plants at risk of transitioning to primarily annual grasses, a three-to-six-year window to increase their abundance over time and, eventually, out-compete the cheatgrass in determining future vegetation change.”



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Calendar of Events

CWMA MEETINGS:

Newark/Long Valley	Tuesday, Nov. 9 • 10:00 a.m.	Eureka County Administration Facility: 701 S. Main St., Eureka, NV
Steptoe Valley	Thursday, Nov. 11 • 5:00 p.m.	Bristlecone Convention Center, White Pine Meeting Room, Ely, NV.
Railroad Valley	Tuesday, Nov. 16 • 6:00 p.m.	Currant Community Center
Southern Nevada	Wed., Nov. 17 • 2:00 p.m.	Call-in only
Spring Valley	Thursday, Nov. 18 • 2:00 p.m.	Yelland Ranch
Snake Valley	Tuesday, Nov. 23 • 4:30 p.m.	Baker Community Center
Pahranagat Valley	Tuesday, Nov. 30 • 4:00 p.m.	Alamo Annex
White River Valley	Wed., Dec. 1 • 6:00 p.m.	Lund Community Center
Upper Meadow Valley	Thursday, Dec. 2 • 1:00 p.m.	Ronda Hornbeck's house

WINTER WEED CONFERENCE:

January 19-20

Bristlecone Convention Center, Ely, NV.