

BLM News

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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FIRE CREW BUILDS WILDLIFE GUZZLER

When they're not fighting fires, the Ruby Mountain Hot Shot fire fighters can turn their hand to just about any project – including building a wildlife guzzler that was airlifted into a remote section of the Spruce Mountains south of Wells, Nevada.

The Spruce Mountain guzzler was the 12th guzzler built in a five-year partnership project that is now in its third year. The partnership includes the Nevada Department of Wildlife, Wildlife Heritage Trust Account, the Soil Water Enhancement Action Team Coalition (a local volunteer group affiliated with the Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group), Rocky Mountain Elko Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, Elko Bighorns, Boss Tanks of Elko, and the Bureau of Land Management. Depending on available funding, the partnership tries to build four to six developments each year.

This most recent project was built in the Spruce Mountains about 60 miles south of Wells. All the materials were airlifted into the project site with the help of the Elko BLM Helitack Crew and El Aero Services helicopters from Elko. The Ruby Mountain Hot Shot Crew hiked about one mile to the project site and were able to build the entire development in one day using only hand tools.

The wildlife water developments or “guzzlers” are designed to collect water from rain and snow, storing it in tanks for use by wildlife in various mountain ranges where water is the only factor limiting wildlife distribution. Each development has an apron made of metal or polyethylene which collects the water and directs it to an 1,800-gallon tank. Each development has two tanks.

BLM Elko Wildlife Biologist Ray Lister commented, “The wildlife water developments would not be done without the partnership. Northeast Nevada has many isolated mountain ranges that provide excellent wildlife habitat. The most limiting factor, however, is water. Construction of these wildlife water developments will help provide water on a year-long basis in an effort to enhance wildlife values, making beneficial use of available habitat. In some instances, these

wildlife water developments are designed to improve big game distributions on public lands, mitigating impacts to adjacent private land resources.”

In addition to the generous donations of time and money from the partners, BLM has been able to secure matching funds from the Cooperative Conservation Initiative program which focuses on wildlife habitat enhancement. The program requires a minimum 1:1 match of non-federal dollars.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife and BLM are planning a volunteer effort to construct another similar water development on June 26th, 2004. Each year, at least one guzzler has been built by volunteers. As many as 30 volunteers have come out to participate, donating their time and efforts to construct these wildlife water developments.

If people are interested in participating in the June 26th project, please contact Ray Lister at BLM (753-0222) or Joe Doucette at NDOW (777-2305). Volunteer time and labor is used to apply for matching federal funding for future developments.

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