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## FRIENDS OF RED ROCK CANYON

P.O. BOX 97, BLUE DIAMOND, NEVADA 89004 (702) 255-8743 FAX (702) 363-6779

Dear Friends of Red Rock Canyon,

The following is a general policy statement from the Board of Directors regarding urban encroachment into the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

The Friends of Red Rock Canyon have been committed to the preservation of Red Rock Canyon since our formation in 1984. It is vitally important to maintain its priceless beauty, spiritual quality and ecological integrity, for us as well as future generations. This irreplaceable natural resource would be jarringly and negatively altered by any residential development on adjacent lands, which integrate visually and physically with Red Rock Canyon.

As an organization dedicated to Red Rock Canyon, our membership now stands united against any encroachment by residential development on lands adjoining the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

Sincerely,

Tom Pfaendler  
President

## **To the Assembly Government Affairs Committee**

The Friends of Red Rock was incorporated in 1984 as a not for profit organization for the purpose of assisting the BLM in developing and supervising a volunteer program at Red Rock Canyon. Friends' membership is currently over 560. Friends is an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff. Since 1984, Friends volunteers have contributed over 175,000 volunteer hours as well as in excess of \$750,000.00 in direct financial support of Red Rock Canyon NCA.

Over the years Friends has expanded its charter to include assistance in enhancing and preserving the Conservation area and its facilities through volunteer activities and financial support. Many parts of the visitor center have been totally or partially funded by Friends. We funded a \$30,000 boardwalk at the Lost Creek portion of the Children's Discovery Trail in 2001 to help stop the considerable impact to a fragile riparian area caused by overuse. Our proposed budget for this year is \$154,600.

Our activities are organized under several committees including Natural Resources, Ways and Means, Transportation Scholarships, Environmental Education, Landscaping and Cultural Resources.

Friends' volunteers provide manpower and supervision for projects from litter clean up to graffiti removal to the preservation and cataloging of petroglyphs. We maintain the tortoise habitat. Friends provides funds for a variety of educational programs at Red Rock for area schools and teachers.

Friends is also involved with the BLM and the Yosemite Foundation working to establish an Environmental Education Center to be located at Oliver Ranch within the

Conservation Area. This center will concentrate on educating school children brought in from around the western region to study desert ecology.

The Volunteers of Friends of Red Rock are deeply involved in, and committed to, every aspect of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. We know our efforts are important in the experience of the 1.2 million local, national, and international visitors, who come to Red Rock and Las Vegas each year.

Because of our close working relationship with BLM and other organizations and agencies, Friends does not usually take positions regarding policy. We feel our role is to support the BLM in preserving and protecting Red Rock. However, in light of the aggressive and misleading manner in which the development of Blue Diamond Hill has been portrayed, we are compelled to speak out.

The James Hardie mine site, which is not within the Red Rock National Conservation Area boundary is in fact physically and geographically an integral part of Red Rock Canyon. The mine site is only a portion of Blue Diamond Hill. The rest is within Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. And is used by visitors. Several trails have been developed on Blue Diamond hill that are used frequently.

The mine site can be seen from nearly every point on the Scenic Loop including the Willow Springs picnic area, one of the most popular stops on the Loop. From the higher elevations along the escarpment the entire site can be clearly seen. The mine site can be reclaimed and replanted with indigenous plants. Once a housing development is in place it can never be reclaimed. The increase in traffic, noise, and light pollution can only degrade the experience of all who visit Red Rock. There will also be an adverse affect on native plants and wild life.

Each volunteer has felt the impact of growth in the Las Vegas Valley. We have born the burden of the increase in litter, graffiti and wear and tear on trails and facilities in our effort to protect this National Treasure. High-density housing within the geographic boundary of Red Rock will substantially and negatively increase that impact.

SB 358 will insure that rural zoning will remain in place, not only on Blue Diamond Hill, but also at the entrance to Red Rock, along Highway 159. Visitors to Red Rock do not want to see more urban development. They want to see the natural beauty that Red Rock has to offer.

The 560 members of Friends of Red Rock Canyon and I thank you for the opportunity to present our position.

### **Board of Directors 2002-2003**

President - Tom Pfaendler  
Vice President - Pat Williams  
Secretary - Dawn Vargas  
Treasurer - Richard Augulis  
Director at Large - Blaine Benedict

### **About Friends of Red Rock Canyon**

*Friends* was incorporated as a not for profit 501 (3)(c) organization in 1984 for the purpose of assisting the Bureau of Land Management in developing and supervising a volunteer program at the Canyon. *Friends* is a totally volunteer organization with no paid management or staff. We currently have more than 500 members, the highest in *Friends* history.

Over the years, *Friends* has expanded its charter to include assistance in enhancing and preserving the Conservation Area and its facilities through volunteer activities and financial support. Sources of funding are membership dues and contributions, donations, occasional corporate grants, sales of limited products to the canyon bookstore as well as the Memorial Walkway, our newest fundraiser.

*Friends* financial contributions to Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area have been substantial over the years. Many elements in the Visitor Center have been totally or partially funded by *Friends*. Some of the items include carpeting, concrete slabs for room additions, the "Friends Room" addition, the Information Desk, solar telephone batteries, batteries and equipment for Law Enforcement, multiple slide and overhead projectors and other office equipment including computers, the Tortoise Habitat, sand blasting equipment and various tools. *Friends* budget for the past fiscal year exceeded \$147,000.00. The proposed budget for the current fiscal year totals \$154,600.00.

*Friends* also provide funds annually for the discretionary use of the BLM at the Canyon to provide Interpretive Ranger training, public awareness training and materials, etc. We funded a boardwalk at the Lost Creek/Children's Discovery Trail in 2001 to help stop the considerable impact to a fragile riparian area caused by overuse.

*Friends of Red Rock Canyon*, Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association and the Bureau of Land Management were very proud to have constructed the first permanent Memorial to the victims and hero's of the September 11 terrorist attacks. This Memorial was conceived on September 14, 2001 and formally dedicated on September 29, 2001.

Our activities are organized under various committees. Among the most active are the Natural Resources/Canyon Keepers, Ways & Means, Membership, Transportation Scholarships, Environmental Education, Landscaping, Cultural Resources and Newsletter (*The Desert Trumpet*). Last year *Friends* members contributed 15,600 volunteer hours supporting Red Rock Canyon.

The Natural Resources Committee conducts monthly projects which include painting picnic tables, fences and grills, building or removing fences, reconditioning bulletin boards, installing trailhead signs, reworking trails, removing endless graffiti, repairing riparian areas and removing non-indigenous species of fish and plants.

The Cultural Resources Committee provides detailed photo-monitoring, record detail and site protection for the petroglyphs, pictographs and cultural sites found within the NCA. This team also has indexed Red Rock Canyon's collection of archived photos.

Through the Environmental Education Committee, *Friends* assist with training teachers K-12 in Mojave Desert Environmental studies through the BLM Explore the Great Outdoors Workshops. We have also contributed facilitators on a regular basis to the State of Nevada Project Wet and Project Wild teacher workshops and the BLM Project Archeology Workshops. In addition, we fund all of the expenses for these and other programs, including paying stipends to necessary personnel where needed.

Twice a year, the Transportation Committee provides school busses to at-risk area public schools to bring their classes to the canyon for EE programs. Commitments for spring 2002 total 40 busses at about \$285 per bus. This results in over 2,500 children, annually, being able to visit the Conservation Area.

Ways & Means helps to generate funds through the sale of patches, pins, hats and posters to the Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association Bookstore. *Friends* and the Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association are both non-profit partners of the Bureau of Land Management.

The Landscaping team, PLANT, works closely with the Master Gardeners to maintain and improve the vegetation within the Conservation Area as well as assisting with other public land projects. The team also harvests indigenous seed to assist with area re-vegetation.

The Newsletter staff publishes *The Desert Trumpet* on a monthly basis, providing our members and corporate partners with Canyon news and available programs. Included is news of special training, Mojave related information as well as hike and desk schedules.

*Friends* manage the Information Desk program, scheduling all desk volunteers, the majority of which are *Friends* members.

Additional information may be found on our web site located at: [www.friendsofredrockcanyon.org](http://www.friendsofredrockcanyon.org)