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Community Volunteer Day and BBQ to Support Local Public Lands

The Eastern Sierra's public lands provide an irreplaceable community resource. Whether you like to hike, bike, climb, fish, or simply sit back and admire the wide-open views, our local public lands give residents and visitors of all ages the opportunity to get outdoors and experience the wonders of the wilderness.

Now is the time to give back to the lands you love. In honor of National Public Lands Day, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bishop Field Office is partnering with Eastern Sierra Land Trust and numerous other local agencies and conservation groups to hold a community-wide volunteer event and barbecue on Saturday, October 1. Come together with neighbors and friends, and join in the effort to improve local wildlife habitat and recreational trails!

The workday will begin and end at the Paradise Fire Station (5300 Lower Rock Road, Bishop, CA 93517). After convening at 8:30 am, participants will split up and go to work on one of two different activities. Then around 12:00 pm, volunteers will take off their gloves and return to the fire station for a barbecue to celebrate the important work accomplished that day.

One volunteer project will be to plant bitterbrush seedlings in an area affected by the Round Fire, which burned large portions of important habitat in early 2015. Native plants in this area have long provided a critical source of nutrients for migrating mule deer and other wildlife. To help the area regrow and flourish, volunteers will be put to work planting bitterbrush seedlings that will provide food and shelter for the deer in the years to come.

The second project that day will bring volunteers to the public access trail along Lower Rock Creek. Participants will help pick up trash, pull weeds, remove brush, and perform minor trail maintenance on this popular hiking and biking trail.

Parking will be limited, so carpools will be coordinated from the Pine Creek Road pull-out, as well as from Bishop. Those who enjoy biking are encouraged to pedal to the Paradise Fire Station, and mountain bikers will have the opportunity to complete volunteer work while riding their bikes down the Lower Rock Creek Trail. For more information about the logistics of bringing your bike or carpooling, please contact Sara Kokkelenberg at the Eastern Sierra Land Trust office, (760) 873-4554.

National Public Lands Day is the nation's largest single-day volunteer event to support public lands. Hosted by the National Environmental Education Foundation and sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc., National Public Lands Day aims to connect people to public lands, inspire environmental stewardship, and encourage use of public lands for education, recreation, and general health. The 23rd annual National Public Lands Day takes place around the country on September 24, 2016 – one week prior to the Bishop volunteer workday in its honor.



In addition to the BLM Bishop Field Office, the following agencies and organizations have partnered to assist with the local volunteer effort: Eastern Sierra Land Trust, Friends of the Inyo, Paradise Volunteer Fire Department, California Deer Association, Inyo National Forest, Sierra Eastside Mountain Bike Association, California Native Plant Society – Bristlecone Chapter, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

By volunteering in honor of National Public Lands Day, you will stand with hundreds of thousands of people at thousands of national, state, municipal, and community public lands sites across the country who want to support local public lands. To learn more about the National Public Lands Day volunteer effort taking place on October 1, please contact Martin Oliver (BLM) at (760) 872-5035.

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Sample pictures and captions are provided below; high-resolution pictures are attached to email. For additional images, please contact Marguerite Merritt, Communications Director: marguerite@eslt.org.



Caption 1: The Round Fire burned significant portions of important habitat for mule deer and other wildlife. On October 1, volunteers participating in local National Public Lands Day efforts will help restore the landscape by planting bitterbrush seedlings in the fire's footprint. Photo © Eastern Sierra Land Trust staff.



Caption 2: The Lower Rock Creek Trail is a popular hiking and mountain biking destination. Bring your bike and help improve trail conditions by volunteering on October 1! Photo © Aaron Johnson.



Caption 3: Volunteers will work to pull weeds, clean up debris, and clear brush on the Lower Rock Creek Trail – one of two projects taking place in honor of National Public Lands Day. Photo © Bill Dunlap.