

## Breaking old ground

JARED DuBACH Free Press Staff Writer | Posted: Friday, June 4, 2010 11:05 pm



Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge districts Ranger Gar Abbas, right, takes a quick breather while Gerald Miller, past president of the Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group, pulls some sagebrush from the trail.

LAMOILLE — About 20 people gathered at the pull-out on the Lamoille Canyon Scenic Byway above the Powerhouse Picnic Area Friday morning for the groundbreaking of a trail that organizers hope will eventually grow into a network that ties Secret Pass with Lamoille Canyon.

According to Gerald Miller, a past president of the Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group, the project has taken almost six years to get to this point. Miller said portions of the Secret-to-Lamoille Trail haven't been used in decades.

According to Sue Kennedy, who has been spearheading this project with the stewardship group and the Great Basin Institute, the trail now starts just off the main road by the paved pull-out above the picnic area, but eventually a more developed trailhead may be placed further onto the hillside in order to accommodate more parking for horse trailers.

The section that is estimated to be completed by this fall is an 11-mile one way section that goes from Lamoille Canyon to Talbot Canyon.

The improvements made to the trail range from clearing sagebrush and cutting mahogany to forming tread on the path for mountain bikes in key locations and installing water bars to mitigate possible water erosion.

Lou Schack, director of communications for Barrick, was on-hand to represent the gold producer since the company was instrumental early on with helping the stewardship group in its quest to get the necessary funding for the project.

Miller said Barrick donated \$12,000 for the survey work and trail design to determine where private property boundaries were and where the trail needed to be moved in order to proceed with the grant process and show the U.S. Forest Service it had done its homework.

Schack said Barrick, as both a mining company and a ranch owner, is conscious of land use, and supports programs and projects that open access to public lands.

“We want to do things that support the land and keep the land open for everyone,” Schack said.

Joe Payne, head group supervisor for Nevada Youth Training Center, said the center will have work groups of some of the young men out on the trail helping with the project. This is one of a few projects Payne said the work groups will assist the Forest Service with, as well as helping to clear or improve some camping and picnic sites in the area.

Payne said at one time the center had a youth fire fighting program, but since that has gone away, the center looks for other ways to get the youths involved in the community. Work groups recently assisted with the Elko Clean-Up Green-Up Day, and conservation projects such as the trail project help the youth to do more than enrich their lives.

“It’s also about giving back to the community,” Payne said. “We appreciate that opportunity.”

Gar Abbas, district ranger for the Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge districts, said the grassroots effort behind the project has impressed him, and he’s confident the work put into the trail system will not only attract area riding and hiking enthusiasts, but also people from out of the area.

“Because of the energy to seek the resources they were able to bring it to (the Forest Service),” Abbas said. “It’s hard to say ‘No’ when someone is bringing you that kind of opportunity.”

Volunteers are always encouraged to assist in the trail development. Those interested may contact Kennedy at 934-4466.

Updates and other contact for the project may be found online at ruby [mountaintrails.blogspot.com](http://mountaintrails.blogspot.com).

Abbas said supervisors from the Forest Service will also be on-hand during the project, and the Ruby Mountain district office located in Wells can be reached at 775-752-3357.