

# Focus on Animals

THE FOUNDATION FOR ANIMALS ANNUAL REPORT NEWSLETTER ▲ 2012 - 2013 EDITION



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## PROJECTS BENEFIT ANIMALS REHABILITATED AT THE MONTANA WILDLIFE CENTER

### Birds And Bears: Latest Projects Boost Their Chance Of A Successful Return To The Wild

The Foundation for Animals helped raise funds for two projects at the Montana Wildlife Center in Helena. The projects are the latest in a long list of projects accomplished through generous donor support and through the cooperative spirit of our longstanding private-public partnership with Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks.

**The cubs are happy!** Orphaned bear cubs are building muscle and strengthening survival skills on jungle gyms installed last year in the cubs' outdoor compounds. The structures add to a carefully planned rehabilitation environment that also includes a pond, boulders, grass and fallen trees to mimic natural environment as closely as possible.

It was a monumental feat to assemble and anchor the massive tree trunks so the jungle gyms can withstand years of rough-and-tumble use by cubs eager to climb, play and sleep on them. Thanks go to those who made it happen: Robert Peccia & Associates, Marks-Miller Post and Pole, and many other volunteers who donated materials, time and energy.

**The raptors will fly!** A 104-foot flight pen will enhance rehabilitation of raptors with wing



Photos courtesy of Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks.



*Wilderness is the best home for bears but for orphaned cubs being rehabilitated, jungle gyms are the next best thing, providing exercise, strength training and a great view.*

injuries. The flight pen will reduce rehab time required for eagles, hawks, owls and other raptors to rebuild their flying skills during recovery.

The building's pre-fab exterior was delivered in November and Helena Sand & Gravel's crew generously gave up several Saturdays to work on site preparation. In mid-December, installation of the exterior began, using equipment donated by Helena Sand & Gravel and Tractor and Equipment Co. Interior improvements will be completed in spring 2014.

This project is possible because of donations from individuals, as well as grants from Last Chance Audubon Society, Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks Foundation, Treacy Foundation, NorthWestern Energy, Plum Creek Foundation and Burlington Northern Sante Fe Foundation. Our thanks to everyone who supported this project to help Montana's injured raptors spread their wings and soar back into the wild! 🐾



Photo courtesy of Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks. Dianne Nickman Photographer.

*The new flight pen takes shape at the Montana Wildlife Center.*

## INTERN SERVES AT WILDLIFE CENTER

Erlend Knutsen, a native of Norway, began a 2-month internship at the Montana Wildlife Center in April. After internships in Norway, Africa, Canada and Oregon, Erlend was eager to work more with bears. Through his experiences with raptors in Montana, he also became passionate about eagles.

Erlend found the biggest difference between zoo-keeping and rehabilitation efforts to be the interaction with animals. In zoos, bonding and building a strong relationship with an animal works best. When rehabilitating animals for a return to the wild, a “hands-off” policy is critical so they don’t become habituated to humans. For Erlend, the best part of working in rehabilitation was seeing vulnerable, frightened animals become the strong wild creatures they were meant to be.

Rehabilitation of bears is not common in Norway. With knowledge gained at the center, Erlend would like to return to Norway to see what can be done there to give bears a chance at a return to the wild. 🐾



Photo courtesy of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Dianne Nekeman Photographer

*Clean up was all in a day's work for Norwegian intern Erlend Knutsen at the Montana Wildlife Center.*

## RAPTOR RELEASE BECOMES A CHERISHED FAMILY MEMORY

The June release of a Golden Eagle near Big Sandy MT held special meaning for the family of Dr. Ed Everts. The eagle, successfully rehabilitated at the wildlife center, was released after Dr. Everts' death. Watching the release, the family shared memories and knew Ed would have loved to see the eagle returned to its home in the rocky crags of the Bear Paw Mountains.

Donations from his daughter, Shannon Everts-Brown, and her mother, brother and sister, were received by the Foundation for the raptor flight pen project in honor and loving memory of Dr. Everts. In her letter, Shannon wrote that although two memorial services were held for her father in Oregon where he had lived, “the family agreed that the ‘real’ memorial service took place on a lovely Saturday afternoon near Big Sandy, when an eagle stretched her wings and flew free above the willows.” 🐾



Photo courtesy of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

*A Golden Eagle takes flight when released to the wild after rehabilitation at the Montana Wildlife Center.*



Photo courtesy of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Dianne Nekeman Photographer

*Vince Yannone (left) and Jeff Hagener, Director of Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, at a celebration honoring Vince's vision and dedicated service to wildlife conservation and rehabilitation.*

## VINCE YANNONE HONORED BY THE STATE OF MONTANA

Vince Yannone, FFA advisory board member and a longtime Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks educator, was recently honored by the State when the auditorium at the Montana WILD Education Center was named in tribute to him. During his 25 years in Montana's Conservation Education division, he reached thousands of people of every age in his effort to raise awareness of wildlife and the environment that we share. He brought about lasting changes by initiating the state's wildlife rehabilitation program.

In 1992 Vince inspired FFA to take on a fundraising project to build a rehabilitation facility adjacent to Spring Meadow Lake State Park in Helena. Teaming up with public and private partners, FFA was able to turn over the wildlife rehabilitation intake building, three bear compounds and 5 acres of land to Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks in 2002. Vince's vision was complete when Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks developed the Montana WILD Education Center adjacent to the rehab facility. 🐾

## MT WILDLIFE CENTER: 2013 IN REVIEW

The rehab facility acquired eagle display permits, made 68 presentations through various programs, collaborated with Carroll College's Anthrozoology Program, and began construction of a raptor flight pen (see story on page 1). Of 184 animals admitted to the rehab center, there were 21 Black Bears, 6 Grizzlies, 8 Bald Eagles, and 15 Golden Eagles. Hard-working volunteers logged 7100 hours at the facility. 🐾

## MONTANA WILD EDUCATION CENTER

The education center, adjacent to the wildlife rehab facility, has attracted thousands of visitors since opening in 2011. In 2013 alone, visitors numbered 16,684, including 3,922 school program participants from 115 schools, and 3,432 participants in 55 Montana WILD events. Volunteers contributed 960 hours to help keep things running smoothly. For information on the education center, call Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks at 406-444-9944. 🐾

## SMALL GRANTS AWARDED

- Lewis & Clark Humane Society received \$1,000 to help with construction of a new cat room planned at the shelter in Helena.
- Carroll College Anthrozoology program, Helena MT, was awarded \$500 in February to help pay for a visit by internationally-known author/speaker Mike Dowling, who spoke to classes in the anthrozoology program which explores the human/animal bond. One presentation was open to the public.
- Spay Montana, based in Helena, received \$500 to help fund community spay/neuter clinics in Montana.
- Helena Area Friends of Pets received \$500 in December to support spay/neuter clinics for low-income pet owners.
- Flyaway Foundation in Helena received \$200 in April to buy bird seed for song birds being rehabilitated, and \$200 was set aside at Agri-Feeds for feed to be distributed at Lewis & Clark County Fairgrounds duck pond. 🐾



Dianne Nickman Photographer

*It gets crowded in the cat cubbies at the Lewis & Clark Humane Society. FFA recently awarded the Society \$1,000 toward construction of a new cat room.*

## HELPING PETS AND PEOPLE Spay/Neuter and Emergency Funds Programs

**Spay/Neuter.** To significantly decrease the number of homeless cats and dogs, it is critical that pets be spayed and neutered. Since 1992, FFA has dedicated \$104,500 to spay/neuter efforts in Montana through our spay/neuter certificate program and through grants to organizations that offer low-cost clinics to pet owners who otherwise could not afford to have their pets altered. Since our last newsletter, FFA contributed \$1,375 to spay/neuter efforts: \$375 directly through individual FFA certificates and \$1,000 through grants that support low-cost public clinics (Lewis & Clark Humane Society/Spay Montana and Helena Area Friends of Pets).



Dianne Nickman Photographer

*"Stella" gets a gentle hug from Logan after surgery. The family dog was spayed at a clinic held by Helena Area Friends of Pets.*

Ongoing low-cost clinics are good options for having animals altered before unwanted litters occur. For pets that require spay/neuter surgery outside of scheduled public clinics, assistance is available through FFA's certificate program. For information, call 406-443-6532.

**Emergency Funds.** This program helps make it possible for low- or fixed-income pet owners to meet unexpected expenses of emergency veterinary care. Since the program began in 1992, FFA has dedicated over \$70,000 to benefit animals and the people who love them. 🐾



Dianne Nickman Photographer

*Left: Abandoned by his owner, this kitty was emaciated and needed veterinary care. With food and patience, a neighbor convinced him to trust her, then dubbed him "Pretty Boy" when he joined her family.  
Right: "Lucky" and his owner, a military veteran, have been family for each other for 10 years. Lucky needed veterinary treatment for a serious skin condition.*

## PAWS PARK IS OPEN IN HELENA Grand Opening at Centennial Park

The first phase of the planned off-leash dog park at Centennial Park was up and running by August 2013 thanks to a hard-working citizen committee. Two foundations, Pad for Paws Foundation and the Foundation For Animals, collected donations for the dog park committee and many businesses participated in fundraising events.

In July, the Foundation For Animals turned over a check for \$12,000 from donations, and Pad for Paws helped wrap up the campaign with a \$25,000 donation to the City of Helena Parks and Recreation Department. The city matched the private sector donations and the dog park was on its way. The park offers separate fenced areas for large and small dogs, convenient water stations and other amenities.



Dianne Nickman Photographer

*Susan and "Cody" leash up before leaving Paws Park.*

The second phase of fundraising is underway for planned shade structures, benches and agility equipment. If you would like to support the dog park, check out the Helena Paws Park Facebook page where fundraising events are announced and ideas for park improvements are solicited, along with photos posted by dog owners at the dog park. 🐾



Dianne Nickman Photographer

*Above: Small dogs have a play area separate from the large dogs – and their own hydrant.*



Dianne Nickman Photographer

*Left: FFA representative Rex Walsh presents Helena Mayor Jim Smith and City Parks Director Amy Teegarden with a check for \$12,000 that was raised for Paws Park.*

Visit our website:  
[www.FoundationForAnimals.org](http://www.FoundationForAnimals.org)



## Focus on Animals

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## CONNECTING CULTURE, PLACE & WILDLIFE Adopt-a-Species Program in Elementary Schools

This year's Adopt-a-Species theme in Helena-area elementary schools is "Connecting Culture, Place & Wildlife." It allows shared research between the Adopt-a-Species program and another program in the schools, "Indian Education for All." As students learn about central characters in Native American stories, they will also learn how animals became important to all forms of tribal life, including being predictors of weather patterns and contributing to the health and well-being of Native Americans.

Each elementary school studies a different Montana species and its habitat. Students write essays and create art that connect their species to the current theme. Selected entries from each school are then published in a special newspaper supplement around Earth Week.

The Adopt-a-Species elementary school program, now in its 16th year, is sponsored by the Helena National Forest, Montana Discovery Foundation, Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks, and the Foundation For Animals. 



Photo courtesy of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Alana Driskill photographer.

*Townsend Elementary School chose to study the porcupine in the Adopt-a-Species Program this year.*

*"Sasha," a Montana porcupine that can't be returned to the wild, is an ambassador animal at Montana WILD Education Center.*