



## *Raptor Chapter Express* *December 8, 2006*

Greetings! We hope this missive finds you and yours well, happy and enjoying the holiday season. There's not been a lot of time to get a newsletter out before the end of the year, but we thought you'd like a quick update on the happenings here at Three Rivers Avian Center.

We have been spending much of our time during the last 12 weeks working on construction of the new 52 foot x 64 foot flight barn. As you may recall, the flight barn is in an oval shape with 3 cages set into the center and a "racetrack" cage around the outside. Patients that have healed up from their injuries will be put in these new cages to practice their flight skills and build endurance prior to their release. We are currently working on building the 3 interior cages and plan to build the "racetrack" in the Spring. This \$33,000 project has received grants totaling \$17,500, which has been augmented with personal donations from several TRAC members. Twenty three individuals have donated 378 hours of labor, in-kind donations and services are helping to fill in many of the funding gaps. Of special note is our new volunteer Caleb Keneipp. This 23 year old's love of wildlife and raptors in particular has led him to donate 280 hours of his time towards completion of the project. He has been a tremendous help! As of this writing, the walls are framed out and have most of their plywood sheathing on, the rafters are up with the wire mesh center roofing installed, the electricity and water lines are in and buried, and the sand substrate is in place. The next step is to put on the tuftex roofing panels, then the last of the plywood panels on the walls, put in the doors, establish perching areas and water bowls and the cages will be ready to use. Ron has been

posting pictures of the building progress on our website; just click on the flashing link from our main page, then scroll down through the pictures: [www.tracwv.org](http://www.tracwv.org).

As soon as we get the 3 rooms ready in the flight barn, we have patients who need to be moved in. Most notable are 2 peregrine falcons who come from Randolph county. One came in towards the end of September (a second year male), the other in mid-October (a first year female), both with broken wrist areas. Both are healing up well, and in a week or two will be ready to move into the flight barn. The female is already showing signs of good flight skills, but the male is suffering from feathers damaged by malnutrition during the past year in the wild, and a lot of his flight feathers have broken off or are damaged. We will be replacing those feathers with good ones salvaged from a male peregrine that we were unable to save several years ago. With good feathers and a healed wing he has a pretty decent chance at being able to be released in a few more weeks, and the female is looking very much like a releaseable bird too. The female is HUGE compared to our educational female peregrine, Perry, but she is a bit shy and careful. The male, who is a year older, really KNOWS great things are in store for him, and he is gregarious and a bit of a busy-body. He's a real charmer (from afar), even if he does try to drive us out of the cage on a daily basis at feeding time.

We also have a great horned owl ready to move into the new barn and a barred owl. There is a red tailed hawk too, but she's had 2 weeks in a temporary flight cage we constructed when we tore down the old ones. She's flying well (although she tends to be a bit lazy) so we hope to be able to release her back to her home in the Huntington area sometime around December 19<sup>th</sup>.

Education program requests are still coming in. The last one for the year (so far) is at Lashmeet-Matoka Elementary School in Mercer county on December 21<sup>st</sup>. The current first program in 2007 is unusual and an exciting opportunity. We are honored to have been asked by the Kentucky State Parks to bring our birds and present a program at Lake Barkley State Resort Park for their Eagle Watch Weekend January 26<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup>. Now in it's 35<sup>th</sup> year, this has become a huge event, with watchers taking all kinds of boats out on this very large lake in the south-western part of Kentucky, scanning the sky, water and shoreline for bald and golden eagles. We're going to get ourselves prepped and ready by first participating in the second annual Winter Eagle Survey, sponsored by Pipestem State Park. If you'd like to participate in this fun and important West Virginia count on January 6<sup>th</sup>, contact Jim Phillips, Pipestem State Resort Park Naturalist at (304) 466-1800, extension 344. The Survey is scheduled from 10 am through 2 pm.

We hope to see you soon. As always, we appreciate your help and support this year. Best wishes from all of us for a happy, healthy and fun New Year!



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