



Set aside Saturday, September 23rd
from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm
for Critter Creek's Fall Open House

Landline Telephone Not Working

The land line (Frontier) in our entire area has been down for two months. We are sorry for the frustration and inconvenience, but despite frequent calls there has been no progress in restoring the phones. The company refuses to forward our calls to our cell phones. Our cell phone coverage is not great on the property, so texting works best. Our cell numbers are Dan 559-285-8341 Louise 559-304-5475. After two months, we are pursuing reliable alternatives to Frontier's land line service.



Small Songbird Aviary Arrives and Is Assembled

Last year we were able to obtain a grant to purchase a custom crafted bird aviary to house our fledglings. The three compartments can hold small birds like sparrows, finches, wrens, etc. Another compartment can house scrub jays, mockingbirds, robins, blackbirds, etc. The last compartment can hold quail, killdeer, etc.



Above: Crate Arrives

Once these birds are eating on their own, we have never had a safe enclosure for them to become strong fliers. The aviary sits on a concrete slab ensuring no predators can intrude. We still need to "furnish" the enclosures with limb perches, potted plants, substrate, and places to hide. Each compartment has an interconnecting passage that acts as a double entry, so the birds can't escape until they are ready for release. We need to thank Kirk Turner for his ability to read and make sense of poor assembly directions. He managed to put it together with no extra pieces when finished.



Day One of Assembly



Day Three: Completed

CIRCLE OF SUPPORTERS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Membership Categories	Annual Dues
Student	\$ 15
Senior	\$ 15
Individual.....	\$ 25
Family	\$ 50
Sponsor	\$ 100
Patron	\$ 250
Corporate or Life	\$ 1000

Members receive our quarterly newsletter
Visit CritterCreek.org for back issues of the Chronicle

Make checks payable to:
Animals for Education

Mail to:
Critter Creek Wildlife Station
36710 Sand Creek Road
Squaw Valley, CA 93675

Flood Waters Undermine Alligator Biofilter



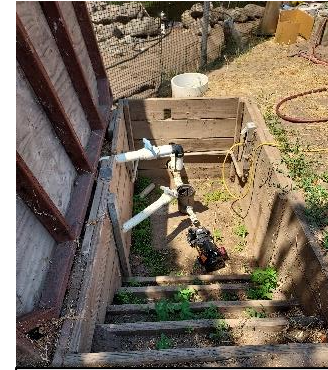
Before



Above: Lava Rock
Below: Re-bagged



As the rainwater saturated the ground in the lower lying areas of Critter Creek, it caused the alligator biofilter to tilt and flooded both pump houses ruining the pumps. Thanks to the generosity of Bruce and Michelle Lowe, both pumps have been replaced, but fixing the biofilter has become a monumental task. First the plants had to be removed and stored in little wading pools. Then the bags of lava rock had to be hauled out of the mucky water and set aside to be water blasted and cleaned. The bags were ancient and fell apart easily. Next came the awful task of bucketing out the slime from years of filtering the water. We want to thank a few brave volunteers willing to deal with the smell and mess. Once emptied the tank was still too heavy to move, so again one of our intrepid volunteers came with a boom truck to help move it out of the way, so we could pour a concrete pad. He will then reset the tank in place and hopefully it will no longer be threatened by erosion. We will have to re-bag the now clean lava rock, do some plumbing to get the new pump hooked up, add the plants, and set it all into motion. The alligators will definitely be happy to have clean water again.



Pump House



Dirty, sludge filled biofilter



Baby Season in Full Swing

We are fortunate enough in the quagmire of repairs, to enjoy spring babies. We have quite a variety this year: coyotes, grey fox, bobcats, a ton of raccoons, an even greater number of young opossums, three injured mother opossums who are soldiering on and raising their tribes, and rabbits and a squirrel thrown in. The birds are not to be outdone. Many young Great Horned Owls, Barn Owls, some Screech Owls,



One of many raccoons



Why NOT to leave a baby bobcat in a cardboard box while cleaning its cage



What a mom has to put up with

Kestrels, Red-tailed Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Ravens, Crows, Herons, Egrets, and too many songbirds to name have all arrived.

Heavy Rain Damage Will Take Time to Repair

Last winter the Sierra Foothills experienced steady rainfall that turned Sand Creek that bisects Critter Creek Wildlife Station into a raging river. Unfortunately, fallen trees and tree trimming debris upstream blocked the creek causing it to change its traditional stream bed. The new path took all the water through our eagle flight cage and eroded much of the cage bottom. In addition, it destroyed both double entries on each side of the enclosure. Tree limbs came down but did not cause much damage to the top of the cages. We were able to get into the cage to rescue the three eagles housed there.



Above and Below: Sand Creek became Sand River, flooding Flight Cage



Piled up debris after water receded



Erosion from Creek



Side of flight cage after clearing debris



Erosion damage at bottom edge

It has taken weeks to try to clear the area and backfill the eroded places. A lot of tractor work still needs to be done. Until there is a substantial and clean base of dirt under the bottom of the cage, we can't make the repairs. The plan is to use heavy metal poles rather than telephone poles for the bottom rails. We can easily attach the fencing wire to those poles. We will need wooden beams to reconstruct the double entries.