Critter Creek Chronicle

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Newsletter of Critter Creek Wildlife Station **Spring 2024** **Volume 29, No. 1**



Expansion Project

We are starting a fund-raising campaign for a room addition to our infirmary trailer to house our x-ray equipment. We will be seeking grant monies and donations for a shed or small mobile office we can renovate into an exam/x-ray room. The area can only house a structure 10X14. Currently, we have to use our x-ray equipment in our quarantine area. When we are busy, this is difficult to coordinate. Our goal is to raise $15,000 to purchase the structure and renovate it. If you are able to help in any way please contact us.

X-ray Equipment Current Location



New Shed/Mobile Office Location Behind Infirmary



Repair Work Moving Very Slowly

The repair work on the 100 foot eagle flight cage is moving forward but very slowly. We have purchased all the building materials and have done most of the debris removal. The chain link on the bottom of the flight cage has been removed and the area leveled. Unfortunately in the meantime, the roof of one of our older cages, the barn owl flight cage, has fallen apart. We have the material to fix it, but again we need the volunteer labor to put it up. We are already starting to get baby barn owls, so this repair will have to take priority. We have built some of these enclosures over 25 years ago, so it is no wonder they are starting to show their age.

Debris removed from flight cage to be able to remove chain-link floor and level the ground





Where Are the Burrowing Owls?

Our inspectors for our permits need to see the birds they are inspecting. Lately our burrowing owls have been quite elusive. Years ago, when the enclosure was first constructed, we buried a utility box near a boulder pile in the enclosure with corrugated plastic pipes running underground to it. All this time the burrowing owls have been happy with it. For a time, we had a camera set up in the box for visitors to be able to view them in their "burrow." That worked for a time but because the camera emitted warmth they would huddle up to it, making it impossible for anyone to see them. It was so successful that in the heat of the summer the burrowing owls showed the screech owls how to escape the heat by going underground.

In the past few months, the burrowing owls have decided the quarters were getting crowded and dug a new burrow under the boulder pile. We have absolutely no access to these burrows. Everyone comes out for dinner, but when they see people coming into their enclosure they run for their burrows. The inspectors are never here during dinner time and won't accept pictures, so the challenge is catching all of them so we can somehow block these new burrows. Remember they have nothing but time.

Tyler, one of our volunteers who can move a lot faster than either one of us, was able at dusk to throw a piece of tarp over the entrance to the newly constructed burrow before they could make their getaway. That allowed us to capture them and temporarily move them to another enclosure until we can fix their home.

Left: Burrowing and Screech owls temporary location
Below: Right side of large boulder is entrance to newly constructed burrow





Electronic Option For The Newsletter

For those of our supporters who are interested in receiving an electronic version of our newsletter The Critter Creek Chronicle, please email us at news@crittercreek.org and provide your name, address, and the email address where you would like us to send the newsletter. We tried converting over in Spring of 2012 but only had one person opt for the electronic version. Also let us know if in addition to the electronic version of the newsletter you still want to receive the hard copy in the mail. If we do not hear from you, we will continue to send the newsletter to you through the mail.

Towels and Sheets Needed

As we get deeper into spring, we will be needing flat and fitted sheets and towels both regular and face towels. Other linen like pillowcases, mattress covers, bedspreads, wash cloths, and blankets, are not needed. E-mail us or call us if you have items to donate.