Critter Creek Chronicle

Animals for Education

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

Critter Creek Chronicle

Newsletter of Critter Creek Wildlife Station **Spring 2026** **Volume 31 No. 1**



CRITTER CREEK WILDLIFE STATION
SPRING OPEN HOUSE
SATURDAY, May 16, 2026
11:00 AM until 2:00 PM

Enjoy the wildflower display on your way to Critter Creek. All of Critter Creek's rehabilitation enclosures are empty now. This allows us to repair and thoroughly clean them. Visitors to our Spring Open House will have a rare opportunity to go inside the enormous flight enclosures for a true bird's eye view of what the larger birds of prey experience. You will be able to tour the infirmary where injured and orphaned wildlife are first brought to Critter Creek.

The Open House will be unguided, so the pace is leisurely offering more opportunities to take pictures. Our mountain lion, alligators, coyotes, foxes, desert tortoises and bobcat, are all enjoying the warmer temperatures of spring. Our educational birds are also enjoying the excitement of spring and are still on display. Our volunteers will be on hand to answer questions. Visit our gift shop. A picnic area is available so bring a lunch.

Call (559) 338-2415 for information or
look online at www.crittercreek.org for a map.

- Gate will close at 1:30 pm to allow you enough time to tour.
- Entrance is by donation and tour takes more than 1 hour.
- Our field parking is free.
- Country Store has refreshments for sale next door.

Celebrating 40 Years of Wildlife Rescue

The Creation of Critter Creek Wildlife Station--1986-2005

When I moved from Southern California to the Central Valley to take a full-time job at College of the Sequoias, I had no idea what an adventure I was about to embark on. I had permits for a few wildlife animals that I did educational programs with under the non-profit "Animals for Education." I needed a place where I could expand and still commute to COS. That proved to be a challenge. Most fellow teachers lived in Three Rivers, but there were few affordable pieces of property with established buildings. Then I found Squaw Valley. Myself and two friends who would join me in the move found an "EXTREME" fixer upper. It was the original ranch facility used as a real estate office after the ranch had been sold for development. In the '70's and '80's, it had fallen on hard times. I was able to purchase it, and we were able to build caging for the wildlife I transferred from Southern California. It took the next four years to transform the house (well, plumbing, electrical, trash clean-up, etc.) which finally allowed me to get it financed (Squaw Valley was a red-lined real estate zone).

During this time, California Department of Fish and Wildlife came to inspect regularly and they came to appreciate us and asked us to do wildlife rehab as well as education. They wanted us to be a centralized facility—no backyard rehab that is spread all over the valley. At that moment Critter Creek Wildlife Station was born. I had no idea what was about to happen. I had a full-time job at COS, Dan had a seasonal job at the National Park, and Robbie was our friend and worked as our handyman. This was 1991. Rehab was picking up. That year, there were approximately 320 injured or orphaned animals that passed through Critter Creek. In addition, it became obvious that for a youngster to become releasable, we had to have much larger enclosures for the mammals and larger flight cages for the birds (especially birds of prey). During the next four years we built two 60' flight cages for large birds of prey. Several years later one of the flight cages had to be expanded to 100' to accommodate eagles. We also built several large wood and wire kennels for coyote, fox or bobcat to run around in.







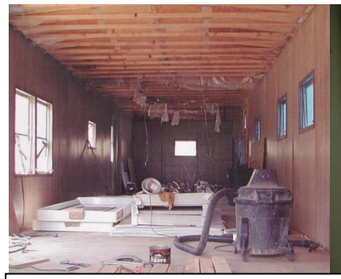


Flight Cage at 60' Expanded to 100' and Completed Foot bridge
Below: Walk-in Freezer in Pieces and Completed holding food.



In Spring 1996, "The Critter Creek Chronicle" newsletter was first published and has been sent quarterly to all of our supporters ever since. We owned 10 acres that was bisected by a seasonal creek called Sand Creek. We needed to expand to the other side of the property, so in 1998 we set in motion plans to build a concrete drive across the creek and a golf cart/foot bridge over the creek. With the help from a volunteer architect and materials from the Army Corp, of Engineers, we started the work in the fall of 1998 and completed both crossings in the winter of 1999.

In 2001, food storage became an issue, so in 2002, we purchased a walk-in freezer. By then we had set up a food supply network with the Fish and Wildlife fisheries, several hatcheries, farmers and ranchers who were trapping rather than poisoning ground squirrels and gophers, and 4-H members who were showing rabbits. We needed the ability to store excess food for the winter, and a walk-in freezer was the answer. At this time, we also had a 30' trailer donated that we began to rebuild into three rooms plus bathroom infirmary. We were able to get five stainless steel caging units that increased our capacity for housing injured and orphaned animals to 31 fairly large cubicles. This is where an animal stays until they are well enough or old enough to be in an outdoor enclosure. By 2001, the number of wildlife coming through Critter Creek had doubled. With permitting and other delays, we were finally able to complete the infirmary and move in in early 2004.







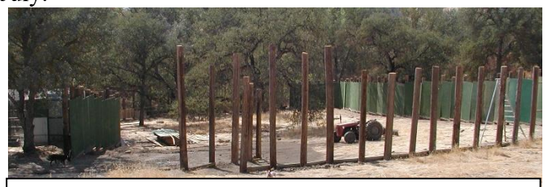


Infirmary start to finish At Right: Caging Bank

Also in 2001, we started our website: crittercreek.org which has been operational ever since. By 2002, the number of baby and juvenile barn owls had increased, and we needed a large enough flight cage to accommodate the busy spring and summer population. That project was begun in 2002. We were becoming pros at wood slat enclosures, so it was completed in a few months. To give us flexibility, we divided it in half 36X12X12 with large doors at the top to allow us to open the entire enclosure to everyone making it 35X24X12. This has proven to be a huge asset during the busy months of May, June, and July.

Flight Cage that can be divided into 2.





Above: Deer Enclosure Being Built
Below: Completed Right: Viewing Windows





In 2004, through one of our supporters, Dr. Robert Fishback, we had 50 telephone poles donated which began our 1/3-acre deer enclosure. We secured funding for extra-long plywood sheets. With the help of the Cal Fire crews when they weren't fighting wildfires, we were able to set the telephone poles and attach the plywood. We added a shed separated in half, so fawns were raised in one half and the other half was turned into a viewing shed with one-way glass. At the time, we were allowed to keep permanent adult female deer that had been confiscated from people keeping them as pets. Some of you may remember Olive, our long-lived resident in our deer enclosure.

Fraud Alert

PayPal over the past 4 months has been unable to stop hackers from making unauthorized purchases from our non-profit account. We have closed all accounts with PayPal. If you wish to support Critter Creek do NOT use PayPal, PayPal Giving Fund, GoFundMe, or Venmo. To donate safely, go to our website, crittercreek.org, and use the Give Direct link at bottom of home page.