

Press Release



32275 Fox Hollow Rd
Eugene, OR 97405

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cascades Raptor Center Faces Significant Damages After Winter Storm

Local wildlife center turns to community for help after falling trees and ice damage property, forcing closure



Atticus, Bald Eagle, and Lorax, Great Horned Owl, (pictured above) both lost their aviaries to the storm.

Eugene, January 18, 2024 – While most of the city was bunkered inside, waiting out the worst of the winter weather that buffeted the region over the past weekend, Cascades Raptor Center Staff trekked through ice and debris, looking for an owl.

“When we arrived at the Center and saw the damage, we were terrified,” said Trainer Carrie Lorenz as she recounted the moment she and the other trainers arrived on-site Tuesday morning to find the destroyed aviary of Lorax, a Great Horned Owl who serves as an Ambassador Animal for the Raptor Center. “We all went into action mode, doing anything we could to remove the tree debris and make sure she wasn’t still in the rubble. We were all fearing for the worst. As we were heading back with our axes to clear the tree, we were calling out for her just in case. All of a sudden we heard her calling back to us. We ran up the hill towards her call, and there she was: perched in a tree near another aviary. It was the biggest relief imaginable...I put out my glove and she flew right down to it, which was the best feeling in the world. As trainers, we spend a lot of time developing a

strong relationship between us and the birds we work with. I'm so glad our relationship with Lorax was strong enough that she trusted me, and flew right down to the glove even after that traumatic experience."

The destruction of Lorax's enclosure is just one of the many damaged areas at Cascades Raptor Center due to the severe weather that took place January 13-16th. Fallen trees and electrical damage have made the center inaccessible and dangerous, forcing a closure that may last weeks as the Center struggles to repair the walkways, parking lot, and damaged aviaries. Reparations to the damaged infrastructure and removal of all fallen trees are estimated to cost the Center over \$30,000, and will take hundreds of hours of labor from Cascades staff and volunteers.

"Closing our doors is always a hardship for the Center," said Executive Director Julie Collins. "But in this instance, it is a must. We have a lot of hard work to do to make the Nature Center safe for our guests...One of our biggest threats right now are the large number of widowmaker branches hanging over newly constructed aviaries; getting those branches removed safely and quickly is necessary to protect both the staff and the site."

Donations to the Cascades Raptor Center's emergency repair fund can be made online at www.cascadesraptorcenter.org/donate. If members of the community know an arborist who may be able to lend a hand with widowmaker branch removal, they can contact the Center at info@cascadesraptorcenter.org.

While the Center will remain closed to the public while restorations are being done, the Louise Shimmel Wildlife Hospital will remain open. If a member of the public finds an injured bird, they should please call the Raptor Hotline at 541-485-1320 ext. 1 between 8 am-6 pm. With the winter weather, rehabilitation staff have been taking many wildlife emergency calls and will continue to do so.

Cascades Raptor Center is able to offer the press interviews, photo or video access, or additional information about the Center, the storm damage, or the reparations process. To schedule an interview with executive staff or the Resident Care Team, or get more information, please reach out to Maddy, the Development Director, at maddy@cascadesraptorcenter.org or at 541-485-1320.

About Cascades Raptor Center

The Cascades Raptor Center is a 501(c)(3) nature center and wildlife hospital in Eugene, Oregon that specializes in raptor rehabilitation. The Center, which hosts 33 permanent inhabitants from 25 species, is open to the public year round for visits and educational programs,

www.cascadesraptorcenter.org	info@cascadesraptorcenter.org	541-485-1320
--	--	--------------