



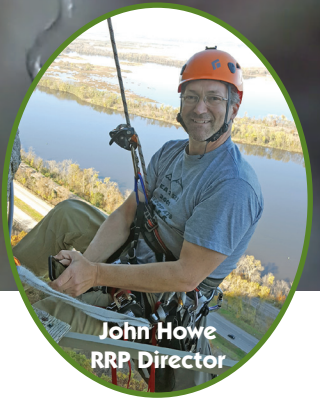
Michelle, Great Spirit Bluff

...the peregrine falcon will not be the last raptor that needs help sharing the earth with us, but I can say that there is a light at the end of the tunnel when research and education efforts are combined to map out the best outcome.

Vickie, Great Spirit Bluff

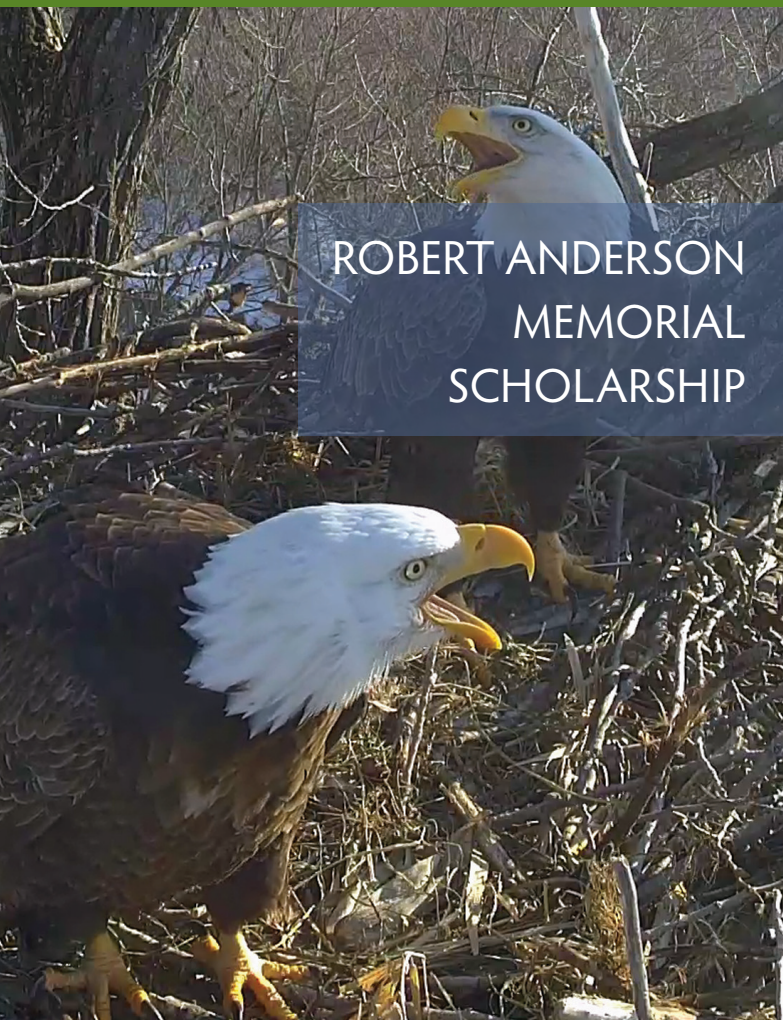


MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



I'm happy to introduce raptor fans and volunteers to our first newsletter! 2017 will be exciting and new as I assume a full-time position as executive director of the Raptor Resource Project (RRP). The door on a 30-year career as an environmental engineer has closed. That career started with research to map the effects of pesticides and other industrial chemicals in the environment. It seems fitting to have shifted my talent and efforts to RRP and creatures like the peregrine falcon, the bald eagle, and other raptors that came close to extinction because of the pesticide DDT.

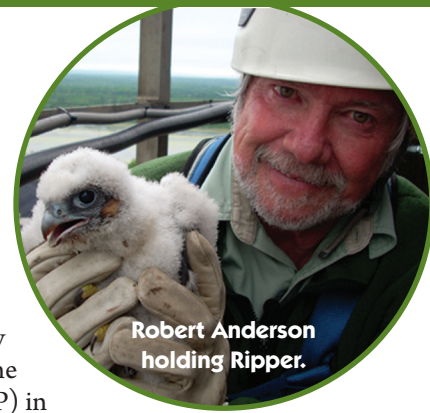
I'm very excited about the year ahead – fulfilling our mission working with raptors and expanding our educational outreach programs. We get to tell the story of our conservation efforts through our partners and volunteers. The recent Iowa Public Television broadcast of *"The Eagles of Decorah"* is an example of those partnerships. We are also in the early filming stages of our portion of the movie *"Decoding the Driftless."* A section of that film will focus on the remarkable story of RRP peregrine falcon repopulation efforts led by our founder, Bob Anderson. I'm sorry to say that the peregrine falcon will not be the last raptor that needs help sharing the earth with us, but I can say that there is a light at the end of the tunnel when research and education efforts are combined to map out the best outcome. Winning over the hearts and minds of young and old and connecting them with nature is both a challenge and opportunity. We are up for that challenge. Nature expressed in Mom and Dad Decorah or our peregrine falcons Michelle and Newman, speaks directly to young and old in a way that we cannot. Thanks for helping us make that connection and for your continued support!



ROBERT ANDERSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

We are pleased to present the Robert Anderson Memorial Scholarship Fund!

Robert (Bob) Anderson was passionate about falconry and restoring the peregrine falcon to the bluffs of the Mississippi River. His excitement and dedication attracted the attention of many to the cause and he founded the Raptor Resource Project (RRP) in 1988. Bob's passion for scientific research and raptors spilled out to everyone around him, including children and teachers. Eagle research and filming in Decorah, Iowa led to the establishment of the world-famous Decorah Eagle camera that reaches millions of naturalists and students today.



Robert Anderson holding Ripper.

This scholarship fund is presented through the Winneshiek County Community Foundation and RRP. The fund endowment will award scholarships to selected Luther College students and is designed to receive gifts through contributions, bequests, charitable trust remainders, and other gifts directed to the Fund. Students will be selected on criteria including demonstrated concern for the environment through positive environmental activism and community involvement or independent studies related to environmentalism.

To make donations to the fund, contact the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa at 319-287-9106 or go to the donation page: www.cfneia.org/robert-anderson-scholarship

TEACHER'S CORNER... Lori Carnes

The Raptor Resource Project offers teachers and students a no-cost dedicated educational chat. Our team leads classrooms through the biology, habitat, and life histories of the Decorah eagles in real time, engaging students with learning through the lens of a bald eagle's nest. Second-grade teacher Lori Carnes helped build our eagle education network and she agreed to be featured in our first teacher's corner.



Lori Carnes

Q: Lori, how do you use the Decorah Eagle's nest in your classroom?

The Decorah Eagle web cam is a wonderful way to engage students to learn and can be used in all areas of curriculum including language arts, math, geography, and science. While people think of science, I have seen the most impact in language arts. Students benefit from having access to nonfiction books about Bald Eagles and practice reading when involved with educational chat. Parts of speech (for example, adjectives) are easier to learn when connected to the *majestic* Bald Eagle. Each student has a journal to record facts. They write paragraphs and create glossaries with definitions and pictures. Getting students

to write can be difficult, but when the topic is connected to Bald Eagles, reluctant writers disappear!

Q: What is your favorite part of the eagle education program?

The eagle education program enables students to observe, form questions, and use higher order thinking skills. My students are actively participating in gaining life-long learning skills and becoming stewards of nature while they learn!

In 2016, the Raptor Resource Project provided 450 hours of dedicated chat to over 421 teachers and their classrooms.

This year, we would like to chat with even more of you! We invite teachers to join our online classroom by registering at www.raptorresource.org/register/. If you have questions or need any help, please email Amy Ries at amy@raptorresource.org.



Teaching youth is an important program of RRP.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: BANDING



RRP Banders – Amy Ries,
Jim Robison and son David

You know about our birdcam program, but did you know that we also band peregrine falcons? Bird banding is the process of attaching a small metal or plastic band around a bird's leg to identify individual birds from the band's unique ID. Last year, we banded 76 falcons at 25 nest sites. This year, we are monitoring roughly 40 nest sites in an area that stretches from Cohasset, Minnesota down through Peoria, Illinois, although only 20 to 30 of them are likely to be active.

Our banding season looks something like this. Depending on the weather, we'll begin surveying sites, contacting volunteers and landowners, and stocking up on banding supplies in late February or early March. As March turns into April, we'll note egg-laying dates, begin hatch watch, continue surveys, and plan our calendars. Banding season kicks off with a bang in mid-to-late May as we scramble to get to all of our sites! For the next month, we'll hand-capture nestling falcons and fit them with two bands: a federal band from the Bird Banding Laboratory on the right leg, and an auxiliary color band coordinated through the Midwest Peregrine Society on the left leg. We'll band falcons on power plant catwalks and in elevators, on rooftops, on the ground, and hanging from ropes. We'll band falcons on calm sunny days and in howling gale force winds, racing down smokestacks and up cliffs just ahead of thunderstorms to get every site done! When nestlings become fledglings in mid-to-late June, we'll respond to emergency calls about downed and injured birds and provide banding data to state, regional, and federal partners. When July comes – finally! – we'll take a deep breath and begin evaluating our sites and banding processes. Five months and thousands of miles after it started, banding season is over for another year.

Why do we band falcons when banding takes so much time and effort? Although peregrines are no longer endangered, much remains to be learned about them. Our banding data has been used to study peregrine dispersal, migration, nest site imprinting, and wintering grounds; monitor the health of the peregrine population; reveal information about mate fidelity, nest dynamics, and nesting chronology; and aid toxicology and disease research. While technologies like satellite transmitters have added a vital dimension to bird studies, there is nothing like a hands-on field program to bring us face to face with the

Female falcon, "Virginia" 39P



Dave Kester at 12-Mile Bluff



Amy and JP at Xcel Energy Riverside

lives and deaths of the birds we study. Our mission calls on us to preserve and strengthen raptor populations. Our banding program is an essential part of that charge.

We love to get band reports! To learn about band reporting, follow this link: bit.ly/2pz2G9O. To read more about the history of banding, go here: bit.ly/2oKCdJd.



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This newsletter was made possible by a generous grant from explore.org – Thank You!

UPCOMING EVENTS: AFTER THE FLEDGE



After The Fledge is a three-day celebration of the Decorah eagles that takes place in Decorah, Iowa from Thursday, July 13 through Sunday, July 16.

Karla Bloem from the International Owl Center and Kay Neumann from Save Our Avian Resources will be speaking at Luther College on Saturday. Other events include bicycling, kayaking, a 'pay it back' volunteer opportunity at the fish hatchery, and some Saturday morning break-out sessions. For more information, follow this link:

www.raptorresource.org/event/after-the-fledge-2/

Get cool RRP stuff at our RRP website merchandise page...
www.raptorresource.org/support-the-raptor-resource-project/merchandise/

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