

# Golden eagle cam up and running

By Jim Anderson  
Correspondent

Who would have known that way back in 2002, when a newly hatched golden eagle nestling blew out of its nest, that tragic event would be the beginning of the only known golden eagle family video streaming around the world. Yet, that's how it all began.

Janet Zuelke, who was watching it all happen, was beside herself not knowing what to do. She watched helplessly as mother eagle tried in vain to coax her only child back into the nest by offering it tasty morsels of jackrabbit. The poor little guy, however, was too young — not enough strength in its legs and feet — to climb back to safety. He perished because of the cold spring winds. To Zuelke, it was like losing one of her own children, and she took it hard.

As she related the tragic story to her partner, Forrest Babcock — an optical engineer who worked with telescopes and binoculars — they hatched the idea of setting up a telescope with a TV camera attached to the eyepiece to send an image to their home TV so they could watch the nest full-time next season.

Forrest put up a tent on the hillside below their home and used it as a shelter for his ingenious telescope and camera. In the meantime, Wolfree, a local conservation group based in Sisters since 1994, got into the project and

took the video nationwide.

Wolfree once owned the cliff the nest is on. That land is now owned by the Deschutes Land Trust. Due to financial difficulties Wolfree is concentrating their conservation efforts in the Willamette Valley, leaving the eagle cam for others to operate and maintain.

Zuelke and Babcock moved to other parts of the Northwest, but not before Forrest built a gazebo and poured loads of concrete making a pier that comes up through the floor of the structure as a solid base for the telescope/camera.

The new owner of the property, Leslie Lawrence, asked Babcock to leave everything in place, as she wanted to get it up and running again.

Gary Miller and the Sisters Area Photography Club showed their dedication to the Wolfree eagle cam in the 2014 season and got the cam going. Lawrence footed the bill out of her own pocket.

After the 2014 season, when the young eagle fledged (there were two nestlings, but one perished after apparently falling out of the nest), Babcock needed his telescope and took it with him to Idaho, leaving just the TV camera.

Again the people of Sisters jumped in. Jim Hammond of the Sisters Astronomy Club

had a big telescope donated to the club that he thought would accept the TV camera. After countless hours of jury-rigging and finding things that didn't work, he finally hit the jackpot and captured an image that he could send.

Now you can watch mom and dad golden eagles exchange places as he takes over incubating while mom goes to the grocery store for a fresh rabbit or two, and then as they raise their nestling(s).

If all goes as planned, East Cascades Audubon Society (ECAS) will take over the long-term operation of the eagle cam. Ken Hashagen, president of ECAS board, is taking it to the board this week for approval.

What Zuelke, Babcock, and Wolfree started so many years ago will be ongoing for the enjoyment and education of people worldwide who may have wondered what the life of a golden eagle is like — thanks to the residents who enjoy working together for the common good of everyone.

View the cam online at [www.GoldenEagleCam.com](http://www.GoldenEagleCam.com).

# Relief fund set up for fire victims

A relief fund has been set up at U.S. Bank to assist Jeff Kindle, whose home in Sisters was destroyed by fire last weekend.

Monetary donations may be made to account number 153666911752 at any U.S. Bank.

Jeff and Gina Kindle narrowly escaped their burning home Sunday afternoon when

a pan being used to cook French fries ignited on the stove. The residents told fire department personnel that the pan caught on fire and then the cabinets caught on fire. Jeff and Gina were able to evacuate the home and run to the house across the street and call 911. The home was located at 703 S. Ash St. in Sisters.

# Input sought for new superintendent

The Sisters School Board will take community input on what qualities they'd like to see in a new superintendent at their meeting on Wednesday, April 8, 6 p.m. at the Sisters School District office.

A superintendent search committee will be formed at a later date and community members will be invited to apply. The community

input will provide guidance to the board and the search committee as they work together to select the new superintendent.

The board's goal is to have Jim Golden's replacement under contract by July 1.

For more information call board secretary Mel Petterson at the Sisters School District: 541-549-8521, Ext. 4013.

**CONSUMER ALERT:**  
BIG CHANGES COMING TO HOT WATER

Effective April 15, new regulations require all water heaters to meet a higher energy factor (EF) rating. This translates into **larger, higher-priced water heaters** that are often more difficult (and costly) to install.

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