

People meet eagles at Eagle Watch 2016

By **Jim Anderson**
Correspondent

For once it wasn't raining, snowing or windy, and eagles were soaring by all day at the Oregon State Park's 2016 Eagle Watch event held last Saturday and Sunday at PGE's Round Butte Overlook Park near Culver.

Both golden and bald eagles passed by the observation areas where spotting scopes were set up, causing people to exclaim, "Oh, look, you can see the white head of that bald eagle!" and, "Wow! See how the gold shows on that adult golden eagle..."

More than 800 people from all over Oregon and other states attended the annual free Eagle Watch event which started back in 1986. Frank Isaacs, Project Manager of the Oregon Eagle Foundation, presented the latest results of the research he and his team have been doing

over the last five years on a statewide survey of golden eagles.

The Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Oregon Parks & Recreation Department, Oregon Eagle Foundation, East Cascades Audubon Society, The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Portland General Electric eagle telemetry team and biologists, and the Sunriver Nature Center all had yurts with displays representing their work.

The Sunriver Nature Center and Observatory had an adult rehabbed golden eagle on display along with a Great Horned Owl used for educational programs. People of all ages, from 6 to 60, were given wild bird names as they entered the Audubon yurt to learn about Oregon's native birds.

One highlight of Saturday was the presentation of the

"Order of the Eagle" to Ralph Opp, retired ODFW manager from Klamath Falls. The award was presented for the work he accomplished in starting the celebrated Winter Wings Eagle Festival and his part forming the Oregon Eagle Foundation in cooperation with Frank Isaacs.

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs dancers added a cultural highlight with their program on Sunday afternoon. Smokey the Bear was on hand to keep the message of fire safety in the forest at the forefront of the participants, while PGE's costumed light bulb wandered through the area reminding people of conserving electricity.

Parents helped their children assemble bird houses from the pre-cut lumber provided by Oregon parks and rec. Assembly began right after lunch on both days, and the sound of hammering could be heard throughout



PHOTO BY SUE ANDERSON

Ralph Opp (L), Founder of the Oregon Eagle Foundation (OEF) and recipient of the Order of the Eagle and Frank Isaacs, OEF Project Manager.

the rest of the day as children and parents completed boxes to house birds in their backyards.

"This part of Eagle Watch

will keep bird conservation alive in the minds and activities of the children all year," said Erin Bennet, organizer of Eagle Watch.

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