

Native American Eagle Aviary Workshop

August 2014

In its continued effort to strengthen tribal trust relations, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Southwest Region Migratory Bird Permit Office held the Region's first Native American Eagle Aviary Workshop (workshop). On August 19 and 20, 2014, the Southwest Regional Office hosted over thirty workshop participants including tribal officials, wildlife managers, biologists and Service personnel. Aviary managers from the Pueblo of Zuni, Pueblo of Jemez, Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma, Comanche Nation of Oklahoma, Citizen Potawatomi Nation of Oklahoma, Navajo Nation and San Carlos Apache Tribe gave updates and presentations on their activities. Group discussions took place regarding statutes and regulations, proposed procedural changes to permitting, placement of live eagles, disaster planning, tribal wildlife grants, and a question and answer session with the Office of Law Enforcement. "Supporting these eagle aviaries is a labor of love for us in the Southwest," said Benjamin Tuggle, the Service's Southwest Regional Director. "The tribes are our neighbors, and honoring their traditions and beliefs is extremely important to us. To me, the aviaries represent an amazing example of a true conservation partnership."

Currently, two new eagle aviaries are being planned for construction. One will be built by the Navajo Nation in Window Rock, Arizona, as part of the Nation's zoo. The other will be built by the San Carlos Apache Tribe on their lands in Arizona. Both tribes were awarded tribal wildlife grants to start their projects.

The Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma has the largest aviary, with 48 eagles, and is currently the only tribe in the United States permitted by the Service to rehabilitate sick and injured eagles. To date the Iowa Tribe has rescued, rehabilitated and returned 12 eagles to the wild. In all, the established tribal aviaries have proven very successful and are now home to over 120 live bald and golden eagles. These eagles come from all over the United States, and would have faced certain death in the wild due to severe and permanent injuries. The overall goals of these aviaries are to give injured eagles a good home where they can live out their lives, and to provide naturally molted feathers to enrolled tribal members for cultural and religious use.

During the workshop, a live webinar and call-in listening session was also made available for Migratory Bird Permit personnel and Native American Liaisons from other Regions. The workshop materials, along with information on future workshops, will be posted on the Southwest Region's Migratory Bird webpage:

www.fws.gov/southwest/migratorybirds/index.html and the Native American Liaison webpage: www.fws.gov/southwest/NAL