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Critter Creek Wildlife Station
36710 Sand Creek Road
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Members receive our quarterly newsletter
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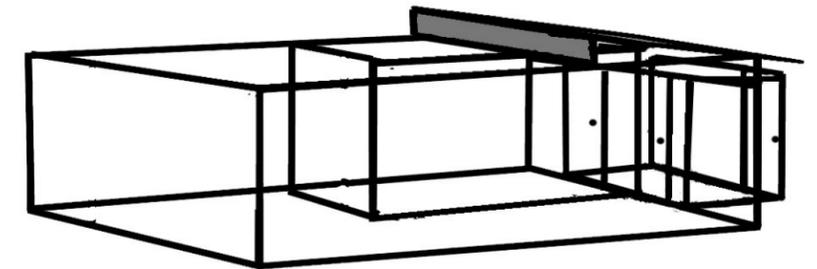
NO SPRING OPEN HOUSE

We have a number of our trained volunteers who have taken ill. They are unable to help with our regularly scheduled Open House. We are training new volunteers throughout the year, but we are short-handed this spring. Usually we are able to allow the public to walk around the facility spending as much time as they want with their favorite animals. We have volunteers posted at critical locations to answer questions and to oversee the area. We are unable to do that this spring. Spring is early this year which also has created a problem. We are sorry for disappointing anyone who was looking forward to visiting Critter Creek. We will be able to have the September Open House after this year's "baby season."

BAD BOYS OF NATURE

CROWS AND RAVENS

Critter Creek is always in a state of becoming. We have had in the past two years to stop growing in order to do several maintenance projects (see the inside of the newsletter). The next two expansion projects involve creatures that are not so "loved" as other wildlife. We need to build a better cage for our recovering crows and ravens. Say "crow" in front of most granting agencies and their eyes roll and their lips tighten. Some even point out that crows are frequently shot or poisoned as nuisance animals. Crows are considered one of the most intelligent animals in the world. Research has shown they are able to create and use tools. We have had plans for the cage for years, but no source of funding. The cage is designed to house ravens as well. We try to build as much flexibility into cages, so that the best enclosure is available to meet the bird's needs. The materials will cost close to \$3000. If you would like to donate money specifically earmarked for this project please send your donations to Critter Creek designating that the money should go to the "CROW FUND."

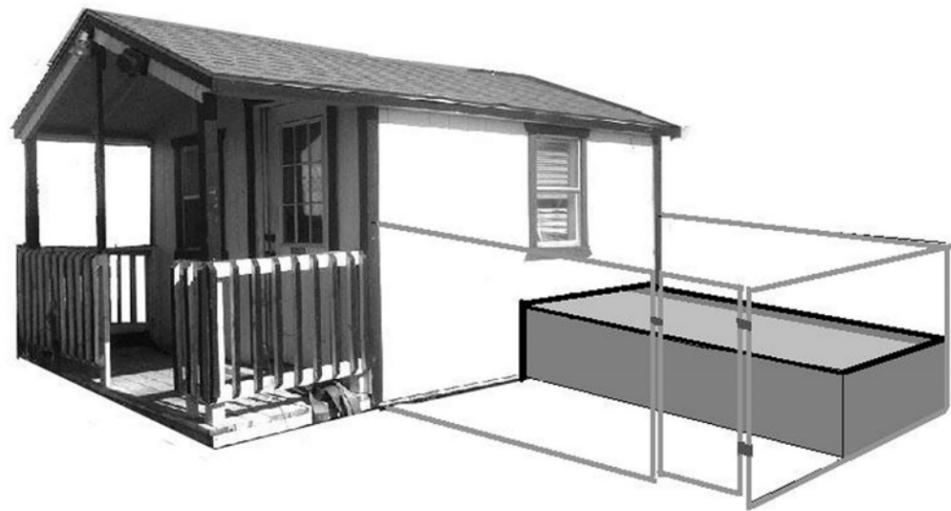


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REPTILE HOUSE

Yeuuwww a snake! Yep, the other project is our reptile house. In the past we have had desert tortoises, Western pond turtles, iguanas, boa constrictors and other reptiles that were just passing through. We currently have a carpet python and an American alligator residing on our back porch. We need to provide more room for the alligator. We have already purchased a mobile office that is 9 X 11 with a front porch attached. The inside can be temperature controlled, thus providing a great place to house our three or four reptile enclosures. The other portion of the building will be the indoor wintering area for the alligator. We will be able to provide a ramp that will lead outside into a fenced-in ponding area. The building has not been moved yet to Critter Creek. We had hoped to use a donated 4 X 8 fiberglass fruit bin for the alligator pond, but it was so deteriorated that it will not hold water. We hope to have a larger pond constructed out of polypropylene. We need to raise funds for the renovation of the building and the construction of the fenced-in reptile yard including the necessary plumbing. If you have an appreciation for reptiles please send your donations to Critter Creek noting that you would like to see the funds used for the "REPTILE HOUSE."



RENOVATION OF THE COMPOUND HUNTING CAGE AND MEWS COMPLETED

Despite the damp winter, we were able to complete the renovations in the compound just in time for spring. We will be able to test-hunt the young birds of prey more rapidly and release them more quickly now that we are back at full capability. The four spacious mews replace the two small mews making better use of the area. The double entry is wide and provides safe entry into the mews. None of these projects would be possible if it weren't for the volunteers willing to work at painting, construction, clean-up, etc.



WINTER FESTIVAL

Over 250 people showed up for the activities and tours during the December 11th Open House. It was a rare sunny day in December when it wasn't raining. Visitors enjoyed wood-fired pizza from the Dragon Wagon or items from the bake sale. Kids had a chance to win prizes at the bean bag toss or sand box treasure hunt. There were art activities and games. Hand-made wooden toys and Critter Creek T-shirts were for sale. All the items in the Silent Auction were perfect Christmas gifts. By the end of the day everyone was exhausted and ready for holiday cheer.



ABOUT SPRING

- ❖ Remember this is the breeding season for most wildlife, so if an animal is annoying you and you kill it or relocate it, you are probably sentencing its young to death by slow starvation.
- ❖ Do not prune trees, especially palm trees, during the spring season.
- ❖ If you plan to disc or mow, try a cursory walk over the area first to check for dens or nests of ground-nesting birds.
- ❖ Baby birds do fall out of nests, but parent birds will accept the young when placed back in the nest or as near to the nest as possible. With the exception of the turkey vulture, birds have little sense of smell.
- ❖ Our advice is to learn to share your environment with the native dwellers. Remember they were often there first.