

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



**NATURE
& WILDLIFE**
DISCOVERY
CENTER

Meaningful Moments of 2025



Thank You to Our Program Partners

Our work is made possible through strong partnerships. We are grateful to the organizations that collaborate with us to expand access to nature throughout our community.

Alpine International Preparatory Academy | Arkansas Valley Audubon Society | Beulah Fire Dept | Beulah School of Natural Sciences | Beulah Social Club | Boys & Girls Club of Pueblo County | City of Pueblo Parks and Recreation | Civic Canopy | Colorado Parks & Wildlife | Colorado State University Extension | Colorado State University Pueblo Communities That Care | D.Vine Connections | Fountain Creek Watershed District | Girl Scouts of Colorado Grassroots Gravel | Palmer Land Conservancy | Pueblo County Parks and Recreation | Pueblo District 60 | Pueblo District 70 Pueblo Food Project | Pueblo Library | Pueblo Zoo | Southern Colorado Trail Builders | Trout Unlimited | United States Forest Service



A NOTE FROM OUR BOARD

I'm stepping down from the Board of Directors, filled with nearly a decade of memories of special people and spectacular natural spaces. This is my humble attempt to share what the privilege of being a part of the Nature & Wildlife Discovery Center has meant to me.

I grew up in northern Wisconsin with a river out my front door. As a Girl Scout, I felt an awakening with nature while lying on a frozen lake gazing up at the night sky blanketed by uncountable stars. Becoming a science teacher increased my awe of nature's complex simplicity and gave me joy to see wonder fill adolescent eyes. Science teacher evolved into outreach specialist, curriculum director, and director of teaching and learning. Upon retirement and a move to Colorado, a new chapter was about to unfold.

Random chance or serendipity led me to a place then called the Mountain Park Environmental Center (MPEC) in Beulah. From my initial awe at the captivating splendor of the foothills, the mystical silence of the varied landscapes, to the whispering voices emanating from towering Ponderosas, I knew that this piece of land would somehow connect the many dots and pieces of my life and form them into a new whole.

My first volunteer experience at MPEC was learning how to be an Environmental Education Ranger for Pueblo 5th graders as part of the award-winning Earth Studies program. One needs to reach deep to allow middle schoolers their own permission to momentarily abandon "coolness" so they can sit absolutely still long enough to immerse themselves in the sounds of quiet. Drinking in the unabashed joy of young people seeing deer within a few feet of themselves or craning their necks to catch vultures soaring effortlessly near the clouds was the fuel I needed. With each field study lesson that our cadre of rangers shared with rambunctious urban adolescents, the unique importance of this place and its people grew.

Over time, MPEC metamorphosed into the Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center, becoming a multi-campus organization which included the River Campus and the Raptor Center. I was now a part of an organization committed to environmental stewardship, community health, nature education, wildlife rehabilitation, and outdoor recreation. As the pandemic brought changes, I became a member of the Board of Directors, serving as Secretary and Board Chair. Because of resilient and experienced staff, dedicated volunteers, generous donors, and a strong Board of Directors, the fusion of people and place could no longer be separated. Every acre of NWDC was a beacon of hope and safe haven for people of all ages to be a part of the natural world. For the tiny toddler to the more seasoned, for the family reunion to the lone hiker, these are the precious domains where people come to make their own connections to earth, sky, water, and wind.

Being a small part of this organization has felt quite large. Thank you to everyone who has, is, and will commit a portion of their life to ensuring natural spaces endure. For me, my time with NWDC has been deeply meaningful and hard to convey using the convention of words. I believe the whisper among the pines and the sounds of silence from the foothills say it best.

*With appreciation,
Lisa Wachtel*

IMPACT

REPORT

Land Management



Thank You

to our 2025 Project Partners



MASTER GARDENER
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



MILE HIGH
YOUTH CORPS



Volunteers working on a Mace Trail re-route

6,230 ft
of river
cleanup



2 miles of trail
maintenance



9 drainages installed



375 ft of trails
re-routed



22 ft of monowall
constructed



3 retaining walls
constructed



77 acres of fire mitigation



324 hours of River Campus
garden bed-tending



12 rock steps built

Volunteer Impact



139

total volunteers

In 2025, 139 total
volunteers gave 1,397
hours of stewardship
work, valued at

\$54,119.78*

Thank You

To Our Dedicated 2025 Volunteers

Aline Cook | Allen Weaver | Allison Schwartz | Alyson Buchanan
Aodhan Shepherd | Beth Jordan | Blair Griesheim | Buffy Shaver
Chris Comins | Christian Baker | Coralee Walker | Dave Overlin
Dave Van Manen | Deanne Castellucci | Debra Wellen | Dermont
McCarthy | Di Graski | Diana Biggs | Diane LoPresti | Elizabeth
Colucci | Emma Califf | Gabriel Castillo | Helene Van Manen | Hollie
Wells | Jacob Shaw | Jan Dash | Jett Hewston | Jim Richardson
Joey Wren | Jordan Hewston | Juan Morales | Kaelin Enga | Kara
Laszczyk | Kristi Raney | Lamar Trant | Laura Gutierrez | Laura Martin
Mary Wang | Melody Davis | Michael Drewry | Misty Hinkle | Nancy
Schricker | Payton Ferguson | Penny Whitten | Pete Montoya |
Raquel Zubi | Richard Walker | Rick Hanger | Robert Frederick |
Roger Riekena | Serenity DeBrunner | Sherry Musso | Steve Douglas
Teffenie Bright | Teresa Valenti | Theresa Hewston | Toni Manuel
Tyson Hinkle | Zoie Zub

Raptor Rehabilitation



301 BIRDS
cared for

In 2025, 40 dedicated Raptor Center volunteers gave 5,967 hours of work, valued at

\$231,161.58

\$38.74 per hour value of volunteer labor in Colorado in 2025, per the Independent Sector

149

birds released back into the wild

More than double the amount in 2024!



6,099 people attended a Bird of Prey Program ▲

Public & Educational Programming



3,620
students

enrolled in NWDC's school programs

3,637 community members attended

54 community programs & events throughout 2025

1,747 people impacted through community outreach



Registration is OPEN for NWDC's



26-27 Nature Schools



2026 Summer Camps

"Thank you for letting us go on these trip and letting us learn about new things."

~ Klarissa B, Boys & Girls Club of Pueblo County

5 transformative summer camps serving 61 children

7 years celebrated for Earthkeeper Nature School, NWDC's certified Forest Preschool and Kindergarten

5 years celebrated for the FREE Outdoor Explorers Program (OEP)

600 hours spent outside by students in Earthkeeper Nature School

56 children enrolled in OEP for the 2025-2026 school year



4



Pueblo Region

In 2025, the Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center celebrated a major investment in outdoor access for our community.

Through a \$1,750,000 award from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Generation Wild of the Pueblo Region will expand opportunities for youth and families to connect with nature over the next five years. The grant, awarded to Palmer Land Conservancy, supports a coalition of public agencies, nonprofits, and community partners working together to reduce barriers to outdoor participation and create pathways to outdoor learning and careers. NWDC serves as the backbone organization, coordinating collaboration and community engagement across the partnership.



Generation Wild of the Pueblo Region joins 13 other coalitions across Colorado, becoming part of a statewide network

working to ensure all young people can experience the health, belonging, and lifelong benefits of time outdoors.

The most visible expression of this role is the addition of Carelo, who joined NWDC in early 2026 as Generation Wild Coalition Coordinator to support partner coordination and implementation.

The initiative focuses especially on youth and families in historically underserved areas, including Pueblo's Y-Zone and Avondale communities. Planned efforts include free family outdoor events, biking, and stewardship programs, and hands-on environmental experiences, with transportation, equipment, and bilingual support provided to reduce barriers. Together, this collaborative effort will help thousands of local youth build confidence, develop stewardship skills, and form lasting connections to the outdoors.



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION





In 2025, the Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center was proud to partner with the Colorado Lottery to support the Fly On initiative- an investment in raptor recovery, public access, and wildlife education.

Colorado Lottery proceeds help protect and enhance the state's outdoors, and this partnership directly strengthens our ability to care for injured and orphaned birds of prey while expanding opportunities for the public to connect with their stories.

Each year, hundreds of raptors across Colorado are found injured, displaced, or in distress. With the Lottery's support, the Raptor Center is improving rehabilitation outcomes, expanding statewide response and outreach capacity, and increasing access to free educational experiences that inspire stewardship.

Since 1983, the Colorado Lottery has returned more than \$4.5 billion to outdoor projects and education across the state. Their investment ensures that the message of conservation, recovery, and responsible stewardship continues to take flight for years to come.

Fly On

Initiative Impact

- Free raptor public tours: 2 Saturdays per month, Oct 2025 – Oct 2026
- New flight cages to be constructed at the NWDC Raptor Center to improve the birds' chance of a successful release
- Expanded statewide rescue & outreach
- Supporting care for hundreds of raptors every year

Are you a business interested in stepping up to support NWDC's mission through donations, sponsorship, matching gifts, or on-the-ground volunteering in 2026? Learn more about how your workplace can give back by scanning the QR code here! ➤



STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

In 2025, NWDC focused on strengthening our foundation while navigating staff transitions and financial challenges. Our priorities centered on stability, operational improvements, and long-term sustainability.

2025 Highlights

- Added an Operations & Administrative role to strengthen organizational capacity
- Launched a new website and upgraded our database, backend systems, and facilities rental platform
- More than doubled consistent volunteers, piloted a new tracking system, and launched the Friends of NWDC group
- Expanded partnerships through the Generation Wild Pueblo Region coalition
- Launched our Adopt-a-Raptor program
- Advanced long-term stewardship planning for Pueblo Mountain Park, including participation in the Recreation and Tourism Action Plan (RTAP) process and initial exploration of conservation easement opportunities.

Looking Ahead to 2026

- Maintain core services while implementing careful financial planning and cost management in a challenging funding environment
- Strengthen long-term City partnership models
- Explore energy-efficient and sustainable facility system solutions
- Expand corporate partnerships and diversified funding
- Grow regional impact through Generation Wild and collaborative partnerships

These efforts are building a more resilient organization—positioning NWDC to sustain its mission and serve the community for years to come.



Save the Date!



February
1: Summer Camp & Nature School registrations open

APRIL
22: Earth Day

JUNE
8: NWDC Summer Camps Start (Register NOW!)

13: National Get Outdoors Day

SEPTEMBER
5: Vulture Day



OCTOBER
TBD: Wild owl release (members only)

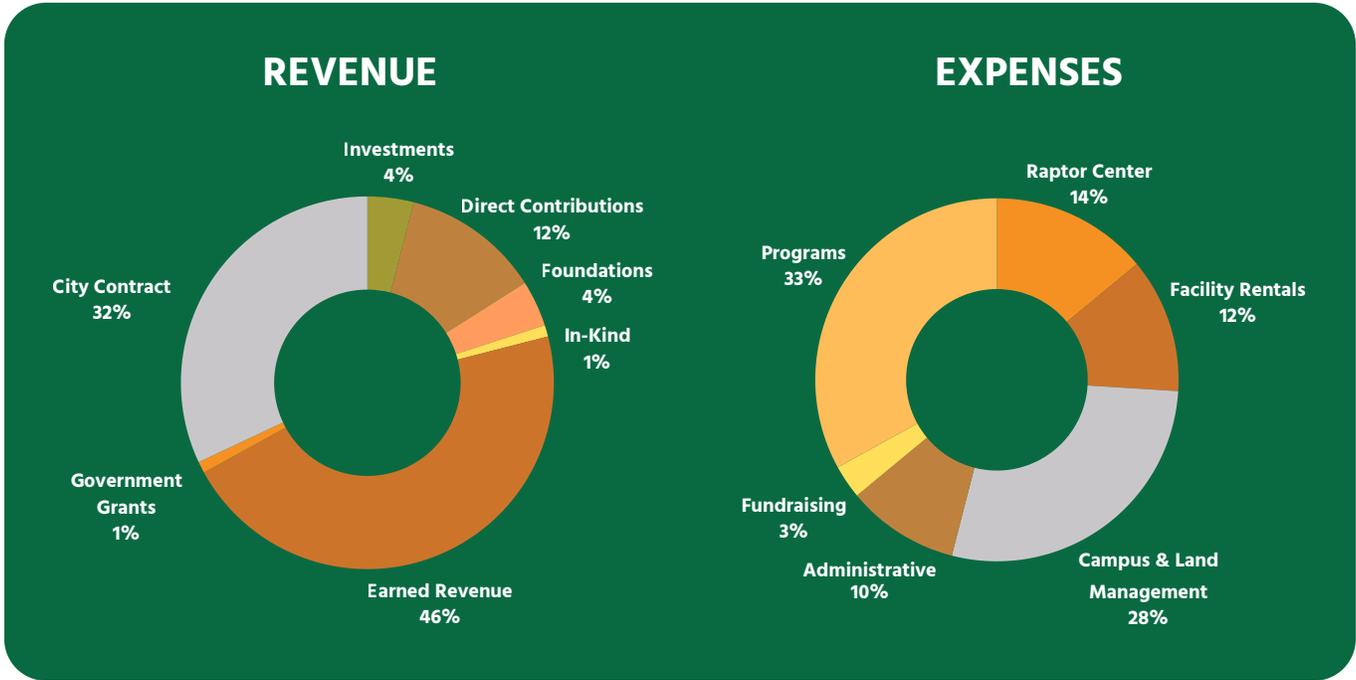
DECEMBER
1: Giving Tuesday

8: Colorado Gives Day

13: Beulah Yule Log Festival

19: Winter Solstice Celebration

FINANCIALS



NWDC's 2025 Board of Directors

OFFICERS

DR. LISA WACHTEL
Pueblo, CO
Chair

CAREN ERMEL
Beulah, CO
Vice Chair

DAVID COCKRELL
Pueblo, CO
Secretary

PATRICK GALVIN
Beulah, CO
Treasurer

DIRECTORS

ADAM DAVISON
Pueblo, CO

APRIL BOJORQUEZ
Pueblo, CO

BRODIE KETTELKAMP*
Aspen, CO

HAWLEY YOUNG*
Pueblo, CO

JACOB EL BEKHTY*
Pueblo, CO

JOSHUA MAC TERRY*
Pueblo, CO

KATHY CHRISTIE*
Beulah, CO

MICHAEL HAZEL
Pueblo, CO

PEG ROONEY
Penrose, CO

In 2025, NWDC strengthened its governance by adding five new board members(*). We also extend our sincere gratitude to the board members who completed their service in 2025 or following the January 2026 meeting: Adam Davidson, Michael Hazel, April Bojorquez, Lisa Wachtel, and David Cockrell. Their time, insight, and commitment have helped advance NWDC's mission and strengthen the organization.

We offer special appreciation to Lisa Wachtel and David Cockrell, who served in board leadership roles over the past several years. Their steady guidance, thoughtful leadership, and deep investment in NWDC have left a lasting impact. We are deeply grateful for their dedication and for the strong foundation they helped build for the future.

Together, We Achieve Great Things

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

\$25,000+

City of Pueblo
Colorado Lottery

\$10,000 - \$24,999

Caring for Colorado

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Jeff Chostner
Pueblo Day Nursery Children's Foundation
Ryals Family Foundation
Southern Colorado Community Foundation
The Ohana East Foundation

\$1,000 - \$4,999

Grassroots Gravel
Annabelle Corboy
Brodie Kettelkamp
Caren Ermel
Christine Plentyhoops
Francoise Navarro
Jackson Foundation
Jenny Stafford
Kathy Christie
Lenore Raich
Lisa Wachtel*
Mona Askwig
Reichert-Prince Charitable Fund
Todd Kettelkamp

\$500 - \$999

Andrew Daughtery
Carol Kyte
Claire Zilm*
Dave & Linda Overlin
David Poulin
Debora Elam
Donald Pfof
James Salvatore
Janeen Igou
Jeannine Hyde & Donna Nelson
Kenneth Rhodes
Lamar Trant
Lester Ward
Michael Hanson
Orla Callaghan
Pam Kubly
Patricia McKay
Sandy Taylor
Stewart Title Foundation
Teresa Valenti
The Heijmans
Twin Buttes Wind LLC

\$250 - \$499

Alice Hill
Bill & Ellie Crain
Bonita Bowman

Brandon Payne
Cleo Zarr
Corinne Brown
David Cockrell
Diane Miller
Douglas & Diane Mesner
Gay Davis Miller
Gerald Brown*
Greg Pardue
Margi McCarver
Marjorie & James Penrod
Marsha Trant
Mary & Mark Driver
Nancy Shaw
Robert Ham*
Robert Lucero*
Solar Solar Roast Coffee
Thomas Hillyer
Thomas Hausman
Tom Monroe
Wendy Treminio

\$100-\$249

Alan Ziff
Alexandra Aznar
Amy L. Frandson
Ann Moylan
Beth Jordan
Brian & Marlene Linkhart
Cheri Bashor
Dale Bauder
David Fryberger
David Spahr
Dawn Pagano
Deanna Sanders
Denise DeBelius
Devin Jaffe
Diana Graski
Dinah Cullen
Dolph Courchaine
Donna J. Duncon
Elaine & John Sartoris
Elissa Ball & Jay Richter
Erin Frew
Fred Curtis
Geepress Corpuz
Gerald Miller
Gigot Hudspeth
Holly Hanson
Isobel Drysdale
James & Marlene Stiles
James Stuart*
Jennifer Gerring
Joe Jenkins*
Jon Zadra
Karen Wallace
Kathleen Howard*

Kathy Wolyn
Kelly O'Rourke
Lezlie Tafoya
Lucinda Galvin
Lynne Casebeer
Maggie Reichel
Mareda Ann Salazar
Marilyn Frank
Marjorie Joy
Matthew Goodwin
Melissa Herlyck
Michael Gan
Michele McMurray
Michelle Healey
Mike Blazer
Pamela Parks
Patrick Mara*
Paulette Arns
Pearle Sandstrom-Smith
Peg Rooney
Penelope Whitten
Pete & Sara Quinby
Phebe Swope
Pueblo Friends of the Arkansas River
Rebecca Robler
Rita Ellsworth
Robert Hillyer
Robin Cope
Roselawn Cemetery
Roxanne Hulet
Russ Bogardus
Sandra Kemper*
Sheila Cover
Stan Dromey
Steve & Linda Stefanic
Steve Douglas
Sue Keefer
Susan Anderson
Sylvia Clair
Taylor Driver
Tom McDougall
Tracy Duren*
Yvonne Davidoff

\$50 - \$99

AJ & Lynn Pilarski
Alex Zipp
Allie LaSavio
Alysia Adam
Amanda Weidner
Andrea Birgers
Carol Young
Charles Hoosier
Cynthia Russell
Darrel Therriault
Deb Weis
Donna Stinchcomb Doyle



* Sustaining Members:

\$21,845
Raised for Colorado Gives Day

Duane Therriault
Fernita E. Eby
Geisel Family
Geri Combs
James Curtis
Jerry & Christine Curtis
Kevin Frei
Lisa Yaeger
Lloyd Kiser
Lynette Markus-Melton
Mark Rickman
Matthew Emmons
Megan Storms
Mona Klein
Philip C Pierce
Philip Rickman
Q Parvin
Robert & Patricia Gardner
Samantha Albawab
Steve McLaughlin
Teresa Therriault
Tom Seaver
William Grisham

\$50 & Under

NWDC extends its sincerest gratitude for the support of the 139 individuals who made a charitable gift under \$50 in 2025.

Gifts in Memory of

William Glenfield
Bucky Calarco

Gifts in Honor of

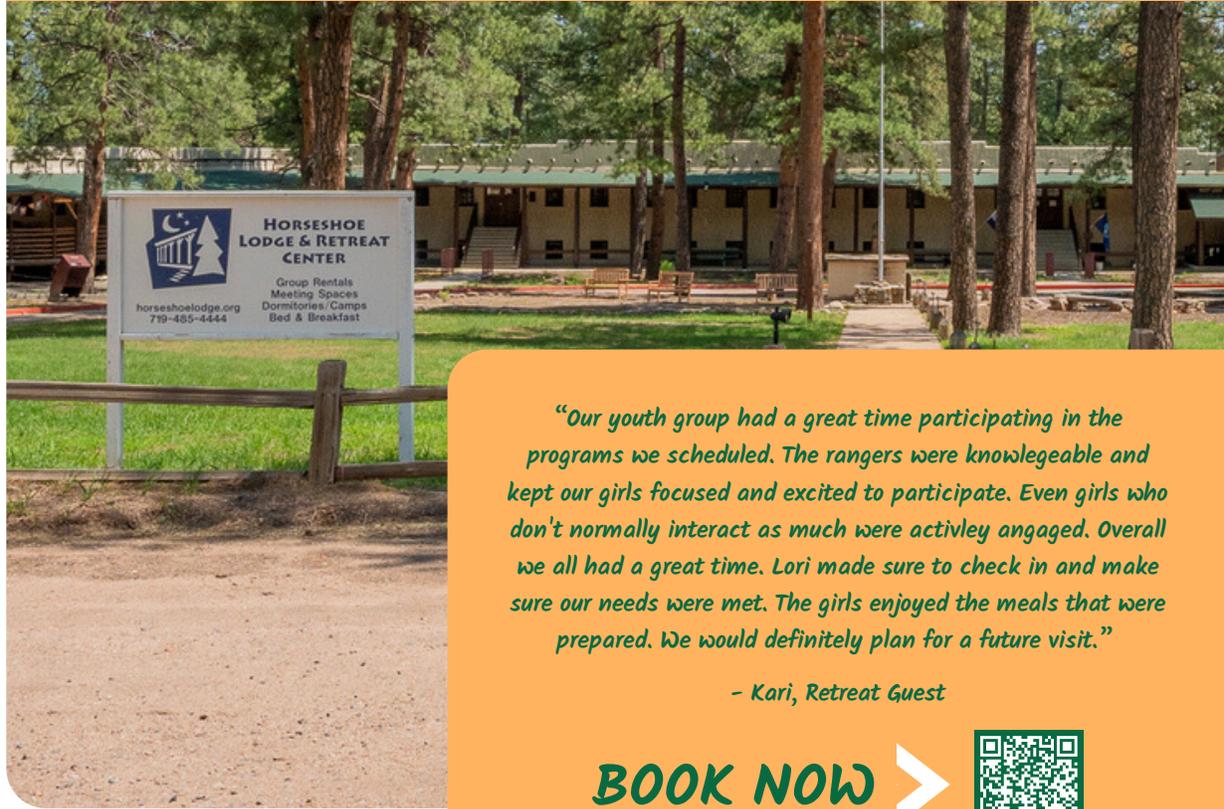
Diana Miller
Lamar Trant
Taylor Driver
Tami Montoya

In-Kind Supporters

April Vickey
Brenda Cain
Carla Bishop
Cleo Cervantes
Dan Hanratty
Dave Overlin
Don Dutton
Don Love
Earl Vaughn
Ernie Chavez
George Burgers
Jan Cisneros
Jeremiah Wodiuk
Jerry Fuller
Jim Deisia
Joan Grant
Johanna Klein
Kayce Medina
Kaycee Medina
Kurtis Rollter
Laura Fadenrecht
Martin Kilmer
Mazid Monaco
Stan Drome
Stephanie Johnson
Travis Scott
Wayne Vincent
Wendy Chandler
Zeruiah Borre

MEANINGFUL MEETING SPACES

NWDC's facility rentals directly contribute revenue toward our stewardship efforts, nature ed programs, and raptor rehabilitation efforts. Our priority is to create an environment where our rental guests not only have an enjoyable time, but also forge connection with themselves, each other, and the wonders of the natural world. So if you are looking for a meaningful space to gather in the great outdoors, your search ends here!



"Our youth group had a great time participating in the programs we scheduled. The rangers were knowledgeable and kept our girls focused and excited to participate. Even girls who don't normally interact as much were actively engaged. Overall we all had a great time. Lori made sure to check in and make sure our needs were met. The girls enjoyed the meals that were prepared. We would definitely plan for a future visit."

- Kari, Retreat Guest

BOOK NOW



DONORS & MEMBERS MAKE THE MAGIC HAPPEN

552
members

THANK YOU, NATURE LOVERS!

Each donation and membership makes a meaningful impact on our small but mighty non-profit organization. Your commitment and generosity to NWDC make it possible for us to connect more people with nature, care for wildlife, and steward the land we all love.

JOIN TODAY





Nature & Wildlife Discovery Center

PO Box 99 Beulah CO, 81023

719-485-4444 | www.hikeandlearn.org

FAREWELL AGGIE

GREAT HORNED OWL

It is with much sadness that we share that our beloved foster mom Aggie has passed. At the age of 43, this beloved Great Horned Owl leaves us after a very special life.

She came to the Nature & Wildlife Discovery Center at the age of 25 from the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo. Initially, we trained Aggie for education programs, but found that her true calling was to be a foster mom. Over 18 years, she fostered more than 200 owlets, helping to ensure their social development and successful return to the wild.

Fierce with humans, and devoted to her foster kids, Aggie will be well remembered and very missed.

