

Omya provides air transport to eagle chicks

Omya of Vermont recently gave the Vermont Bald Eagle Restoration Initiative a big assist, providing air transportation for three eaglets from Maryland to Vermont.

The chicks were removed from nests in Maryland by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service so they could be raised and released in Vermont to help establish a breeding population in the Green Mountain State.

Omya's help meant the birds got a one-hour flight instead of a 15-hour ride in the back of an SUV, significantly reducing the possibility of increased stress or other problems for the birds.

Steve Costello, director of public affairs at Central Vermont Public Service, one of the partners in the bald eagle program, said Omya's help made a high-stress time much less stressful for the birds and the people involved in the program.

"Fish and Wildlife was looking to provide about a half-dozen birds at the same time, but thanks to Omya, they were able to send up the first three as soon as they were captured, and the others followed later on," Costello said. "Without that assist, it would have been much more complicated for the birds and people alike."

"We were approached by one of the Eagle restoration program's partners to fly three eaglets from Maryland to Vermont," said Jim Reddy, president of Omya North America. "There is a personal and professional satisfaction in knowing the company helped fly these incredible birds to their new home, and that ultimately the hope is they will nest here. It's a permanent part of history."

For Christie Harris, communications manager at Omya, who coordinated the company's efforts, it was a special day.

"Being a hands-on partner in this project was very cool for us," Harris said. "I clearly have a personal bias toward this project, since I have followed and studied raptors in Vermont for well over 20 years. Congratulations to the Restoration partners for exhibiting such passion for, and caring so deeply about, these birds. It really is special."