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## VERMONT BALD EAGLE INITIATIVE HAS ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SEASON

WATERBURY, VT – The doors to the man-made bald eagle nesting boxes at the Dead Creek Wildlife Area in Addison will soon be hoisted back in place, signaling the end of another successful season for the Vermont Bald Eagle Restoration Initiative.

Eleven young bald eagles were raised and released from the Addison hack site in an effort to help restore a breeding population of bald eagles to Vermont.

“We had a very busy hacking season,” said Dave Sausville, manager of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife’s Dead Creek Wildlife Area. “The first six birds arrived from Maryland during the first week in May and the last one, an orphaned bird from Maine, was placed in the hack box on July 10. During June, four more birds arrived from eagle rehabilitators in Massachusetts and New York.”

The May arrivals had their first taste of freedom when the doors were removed from their hack boxes on June 2. Within five days, all six eagles were flying and exploring their new surroundings. On June 21, one eager eagle was released, and the remaining four were set free on July 16.

“Two eagles fledged on the 16th, but the other two decided to stick around for awhile,” said Amy Alfieri, hack site and volunteer coordinator for the project. “In fact, we thought one bird was never going to leave. It finally decided to try its wings on August 3.”

Volunteers play a vital role in this eagle restoration project.

“We rely on volunteers to care for the young eagles while they’re in the hack boxes and to monitor their activities and movements once the birds are released,” said Eveleen Cecchini of Outreach for Earth Stewardship, a project partner. “Fifty volunteers participated this year, donating over 1,500 hours. Their commitment is amazing and an important part in the project’s success.”

This is the Vermont Bald Eagle Restoration Initiative’s second year. The project is being coordinated by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Wildlife Federation, Outreach for Earth Stewardship, Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS), and Senator Jim Jeffords. Eight young eagles were released from the Addison hack site in 2004.

“This year was particularly satisfying because we were able to give a home to two orphaned eagles that might not have survived otherwise,” said Margaret Fowle of the National Wildlife Federation. “Unfortunately, we did lose two eagles after they left the hack box. One was found dead in a field near the hack site about a month after it fledged, and the other was hit by a Hudson River train in New York in September while scavenging for food.”

According to Fowle, the eagle found in Addison was in good condition, but necropsy results indicated a severe bacterial infection in the bird's trachea.

“Losing a young eagle is disappointing but not unexpected,” said Michael Amaral of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. “Survival among wild eagles during their first year is only about 50 percent. Finding the eagle in New York was a good sign, in a way, because the bird was doing what it's supposed to do. That area is a known wintering spot for eagles, and this bird had found its way there.”

The Vermont Bald Eagle Restoration Initiative will raise another group of eagles in the spring of 2006. To learn more about the project and bald eagles in general, visit the Vermont Bald Eagle Restoration Initiative website: [www.cvps.com/eagles](http://www.cvps.com/eagles).

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