

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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News Release

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Bald Eagle to be Released at Brantley Lake State Park

Carlsbad, NM –The eagle has landed—almost. A bald eagle will be released back into the wild at Brantley Lake State Park at noon on Sunday, February 1, after recovering from lead poisoning with the help of many throughout New Mexico.

“Pecos” was found on the ground late last year at a roping arena in Artesia, NM. Lethargic and unable to fly, Game and Fish Department’s Josh Waldrip brought the eagle to Dr. Samantha Uhrig at the Desert Willow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Carlsbad.

Uhrig’s friend and fellow veterinarian Kathleen Ramsay, who founded The Wildlife Center in Española, was in Carlsbad the day Pecos was found. Pecos had no outward injuries, so they decided to transport Pecos to Española for tests.

“Once we determined Pecos had an acute case of lead poisoning, we started him on chelation therapy designed to remove heavy metals from the body,” Ramsay said. Ramsay said Pecos was retested twice more to make sure the poisoning was completely out of his system. Lead poisoning is leading killer of North American raptors, according to Ramsay.



Ty Horak holds Pecos, a young bald eagle at the Cottonwood Rehab

Pecos has spent the last month at the Santa Fe Raptor Center, exercising in their 100-foot flight cage. On Sunday, with Uhrig and Ramsay looking on, benefactors of the Desert Willow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center will do the honors of releasing him.

Uhrig said Brantley Lake State Park is a perfect place to release Pecos before the northward migration in Spring. “Brantley Lake is a good safe place to release him—we’ve had eagle sightings here, and there’s plenty of food for him,” she said. The release will take place on the east boat ramp at the day use area.

“It’s a true honor for Brantley Lake State Park to be chosen for this bald eagle’s return to the wild,” said Park Manager Paul Fishell. “Preserving all natural resources within the park is a part of the job we love and take seriously.”



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