



Rocky Mountain  
**RAPTOR**  
Program

a second chance at freedom

Fall 2023 Newsletter

# ON THE Wing

## RMRP Ponders Move to Hughes Stadium The Dream is Alive!

We're announcing a major development in the pursuit of our dream of opening a wildlife conservation and nature center in Fort Collins where we can finally be open to the public! While our initial plan from 2007 was to develop our Vine Drive property in Old Town North, it has taken nearly 15 years for water issues on the property to be resolved. In that time, significant development in the area close to our property has made the site less than ideal for what we wish to create.

Enter the City of Fort Collins, which purchased the 163-acre, former Hughes Stadium land from the State of Colorado in June 2023. The City is exploring options for the use of the property that is aligned with the will of the voters who, in April 2021, passed a ballot measure stating that the city would rezone the Hughes site as "Public Open Lands."

"We know the site has got what is now a fairly prescriptive list of uses," said City of Fort Collins' Chief Financial Officer Travis Storin. "But

that's still a pretty broad list in the eyes of a community, so there's going to have to be quite a bit of outreach efforts on a continuing basis, and we're anticipating that in 2024 is when this comes back in a really big way and continues with the work started in March of this year to determine the future of the site."

RMRP has notified the City of our interest in the Hughes property and is preparing a proposal for city council when they reconvene about this topic in 2024. In cooperation with the Northern Colorado Wildlife Center, the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, and other similarly-missioned groups, we would like to propose a "conservation campus" concept that honors the intentions of the nearly 70% of citizens who voted for the proposal, and requires the city to develop the land for uses such as parks, recreation, open lands, natural areas, and wildlife rescue and restoration.

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### **Our New Home?**

In partnership with other Fort Collins nonprofits, RMRP seeks to create a conservation campus as ideas for the future of the old Hughes Stadium site are discussed.

Photo - City of Fort Collins

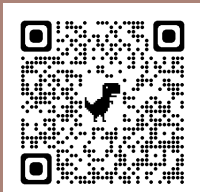


# Excellence in Raptor Education

RMRP Ponders Move - Continued from Page 1

## Stay In-the-Know

Scan to get the latest news about this exciting project!



Or go to:  
[www.rmrp.org/future-home-update-subscriber/](http://www.rmrp.org/future-home-update-subscriber/)

The Hughes property sits at the base of the foothills on Overland Trail in west Fort Collins west of the Holiday Twin drive-in theater.

It is adjacent to Maxwell and Pineridge Natural Areas. We feel strongly that our project will fit perfectly into the City's stated goals for the land and will rally community support to our side.

We have engaged the University of Colorado Denver's College of Architecture and Planning to generate ideas for landscape and site design

plans which we will use for our presentation to the City of Fort Collins next year. While there are still many details that must be discussed, we are excited about the possibilities that this conservation campus can offer to our community and the organizations involved!

We invite you to be a part of this conversation. I value your thoughts and insights, as well as your ardent support of RMRP and our direction. We would love to hear from you!

Warmest thanks,

Carin Avila (she/her)  
Executive Director



## Join Us!



# It's gonna be a hoot!

# Owl-O-Ween

October 28th, 12-3PM  
720 E. Vine Drive  
Fort Collins, CO

Trick-or-treating!

Whooo are they?  
Learn all about owls!

Fun family activities!

Meet our Ambassador owls!

Come celebrate owls with us!

### Contact Us:

**Physical Address**—Call in advance if you'd like to schedule a visit.  
720 E. Vine Drive, Unit B  
Fort Collins, CO 80524

**Mailing Address**  
2519 S. Shields Street, 1K-115  
Fort Collins, CO 80526

**Phone:** 970-484-7756  
**Rehabilitation Hotline:** 970-222-0322  
**Website:** [www.rmrp.org](http://www.rmrp.org)  
**Email:** [Carin@rmrp.org](mailto:Carin@rmrp.org)

**Other wildlife emergency?**  
Go to: [www.animalhelpnow.org](http://www.animalhelpnow.org)



## Nature's Clean-Up Crew Soars Again

### Turkey Vulture Survives Despite the Odds

A Turkey Vulture was rescued on Sunday, April 30th from the Old Town area of Fort Collins, near the historic Mountain and Washington roost. Upon admission, we found the classic symptoms of lead poisoning. This sad fellow was subdued with general weakness with no signs of trauma. He couldn't stand or use his feet.

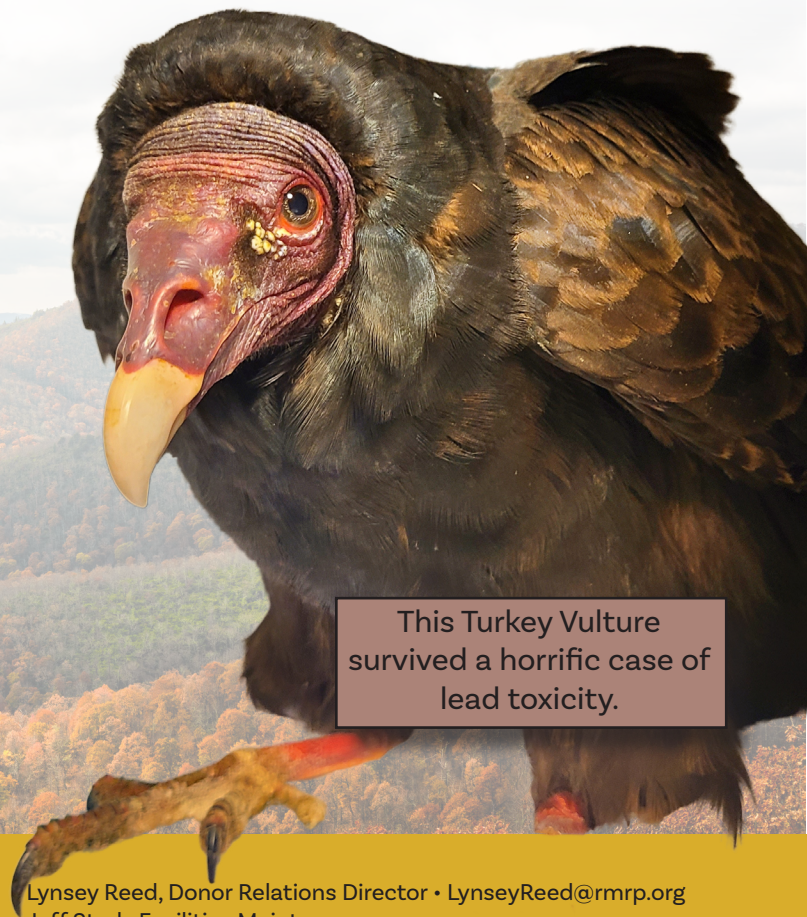
A blood test showed that he had extremely high lead levels, which exceeds our testing equipment's ability to read (above 65mcg/dL). A level of only 3.5 mcg/dL can cause symptoms. Sadly, lead toxicity is the most common cause of Turkey Vulture admissions to our hospital. More than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Vultures that come to us have high lead levels! Unfortunately, this was the second lead-stricken vulture to be found in the span of a week in the same location. The first patient did not survive with lead values of an incredibly lethal 1,300 mcg/dL.

For ten weeks, this vulture stoically tolerated 6 rounds of twice-daily chelation treatments. Chelation is the process of removing lead from the blood by using a binding agent which can be filtered by the kidneys and excreted. This process is time intensive because lead can be deposited in the muscles, internal organs (liver, kidneys, brain, heart), and bones. It takes multiple rounds of medication over months for this lead burden to be fully removed.

We celebrated when this vulture's lead value fell to 13ug/dL. Although any lead in the system is considered abnormal, at this value he was showing us all the wonderful attributes of a

healthy vulture with no clinical symptoms. Our Rehab Team believed that further treatments would have diminishing returns and cause undue stress to the patient. This vulture was more than relieved when it was finally time to leave our hospital and stretch its wings in our flight conditioning enclosure. After so many months on mandatory bed rest, the Turkey Vulture worked hard to rebuild its muscles and stamina and on July 3rd, we joyously released this graceful flier back to the skies once again for its Second Chance at Freedom.

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This Turkey Vulture survived a horrific case of lead toxicity.

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#### **Board of Directors:**

Carin Avila, Chair  
Susan Baker, Secretary  
Jessica Manning, Member  
Judy Scherpelz, President

# Get Involved

## You Have the Power to Make a Difference

*Turkey Vulture Survives Lead - Continued from Page 3*

For some, vultures may not have the same charismatic appeal as other species of raptors, but they still play a crucial role in the health of our ecosystems. They can digest and neutralize almost anything that nature throws at them, including diseases such as rabies, botulism, and even anthrax! By removing disease-stricken carcasses from the environment they help to prevent the spread of disease to wildlife, livestock, pets, and people. How can you not appreciate the Turkey Vulture?

Help our vultures so they can help us. Their scavenging ways make them more prone to ingesting lead ammunition fragments from field dressed game carcasses and small game animals that are shot but not recovered. Many hunters have already made the switch to lead-free ammunition sources and you can too!

### Watch A Second Chance at Freedom!

Watch the Turkey Vulture fly free by scanning the code, or go to:

<https://www.rmrp.org/vulture-release/>



Learn more about how lead affects our environment, wildlife, and your family at: [www.huntingwithnonlead.org/](http://www.huntingwithnonlead.org/)

## How You Can Help: Feed the Masses

One of RMRP's biggest raptor care expenses is food. Nutritious food is important for our patients as they recover from illness or injury, for baby raptors that need to grow strong to return to the wild, and for our Educational Ambassador raptors to live long healthy lives.

With our admissions at a record high, can you help us feed these hungry mouths?

### What it costs to feed me to feed me for a week:



Scan to donate or go to: [www.rmrp.org/feed-the-raptors/](http://www.rmrp.org/feed-the-raptors/)

Since 1987, The Rocky Mountain Raptor Program has rescued and rehabilitated thousands of raptors, educated the public about human/wildlife conflicts and conservation, and conducted research to protect raptors in the wild. As an independent, 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, RMRP is non-government, and is not state or federally funded. We do not receive regular operating support from any national or international humane organizations but are supported mostly by gifts from individuals and grants. Our Federal Tax Identification Number is 90-0131614.