

For Immediate Release  
October 3, 2006

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## ***EAGLE MARTHA PUT DOWN AFTER SEVERE INJURY***

Martha, one of two bald eagles that have nested next to the Wilson Bridge Project for the past several years, was euthanized late yesterday after sustaining a severe wing injury. The injury, a complete dislocation of her right elbow, was sustained in an apparent collision with a structure.

Given their nest's proximity to the project – literally casting a shadow on the construction site – protection of the eagles has been a key part of the Wilson Bridge Project's environmental program.

The injured raptor was discovered on Friday in a grassy field in the under-construction National Harbor development, which abuts the Wilson Bridge Project on the Maryland shore. Found after her injuries were already three to four days old, Martha was immediately transported to the Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research Center in Newark, Delaware, where her condition was assessed by staff veterinarians.

Options included surgery to fuse her wing followed by Martha being placed in a zoo or other educational facility, or euthanasia.

After consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state resource agencies and other veterinarians, the decision was made to put down Martha.

With her complete elbow separation, Martha was a poor candidate for surgery because the procedure would not have enabled her to fly ever again. Forces exerted on the wings during flight are extreme and the elbow joint must be both strong and flexible. In addition, the passage of several days since her injury further decreased the likelihood of success.

As for the prospect of grounded existence in a zoo or other controlled facility following recovery without surgery, Martha would have faced a painful, compromised quality of life. After recovery, Martha likely would experience increasingly painful arthritis from her injuries. At a minimum of 13 years of age (eagles live 20 to 40 years), the adjustment to captivity for the wild bird would have been an difficult and frightening transition. Additionally, eagles are made to fly and Martha being on her feet permanently would have made her more susceptible to chronic foot sores.

In April, Martha experienced life-threatening injuries in a ferocious turf-battle with another eagle. After treatment at Tri-State, Martha was released and returned to the Wilson Bridge Project area.

Martha's mate, George, was seen with Martha following her return and remains in the area.

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