



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Skagit Eagle Festival begins January 7, 2012**

The Concrete Chamber of Commerce presents the 2012 Skagit Eagle Festival beginning January 7 and continuing every Saturday and Sunday throughout the month. This is the second year the Concrete Chamber has hosted the event in its new four-weekend format, offering a wide range of recreation, education and entertainment options that celebrate the annual return of the eagles to the Skagit River Valley.

According to Valerie Stafford, president of the Concrete Chamber of Commerce, the expanded format offers more variety, convenience and flexibility for visitors, who can choose among dozens of activities in Concrete, Rockport, Marblemount and beyond, during each of the four weekends.

“Visitors can select the activities they’re most interested in and design their own personalized experience,” said Stafford. “With more smaller venues offering indoor and outdoor activities through the month, this has become a very diverse and dynamic celebration.”

A mainstay of activities is offered every Saturday and Sunday, including eagle-watching stations provided by the US Forest Service and staffed by specially trained volunteers; river rafting and float trips available from several companies; fish hatchery tours where visitors learn about the salmon that attract the eagles to the area each year; and wine-tastings and related events offered at local vineyards.

The Skagit River Bald Eagle Interpretive Center and Nature Store is open every Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., in Rockport, providing guided walks and lectures, as well as cultural and historical information about eagles, the Skagit River Valley and surrounding area.

Other activities are offered only on Saturdays, including free hayrides at a historic family-owned ranch, and free admission to the Concrete Heritage Museum, where the history of the upper Skagit Valley is on display, with a focus on the logging and cement industries.

Throughout the month, numerous one-time special events are also planned, including photography workshops and wildlife presentations at the historic Concrete Theatre, Native American dancing, drumming and crafts at the Marblemount Community Hall, as well as book and bake sales, a fundraising chili feed, and a unique art walk and contest featuring hand-crafted artwork made exclusively from recycled items.

New this year is Puget Sound Energy Day in Concrete on Saturday, January 21, during which the utility company is offering presentations and performances at their facility, and helping to sponsor special events at the Concrete Theatre as well as other locations in the community.

The first eagle festival was held in 1987. It continued each winter for 22 years as a one- or two-day event, sponsored by a group of dedicated volunteers. In 2010, the event was cancelled due to lack of funding but was brought back to life by the Concrete Chamber of Commerce in 2011. The newly designed celebration is a collaboration of dozens of agencies, businesses and non-profit organizations in eastern Skagit County, who invite visitors from all over the region to experience the natural beauty of the area and enjoy the friendly small-town environment. The event is funded by sponsorships, donations and a grant from the Skagit County Lodging Tax Fund.

For more information about the event, including free maps and brochures, visit the Skagit Eagle Festival Information Center, located in the Concrete Center at 45821 Railroad Avenue, adjacent to State Route 20 in Concrete. The Center is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday in January. Rotating displays, vendors and the Skagit Eagle Festival raffle will be featured onsite each weekend. Coffee, snacks and restrooms are also available.

Event information can also be obtained online at [www.skagiteaglefestival.com](http://www.skagiteaglefestival.com) or by calling the Concrete Chamber of Commerce at (360) 853-8784, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., or sending email to [chamber@concrete-wa.com](mailto:chamber@concrete-wa.com).

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