

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

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Contact: Damian Fagan, communications manager

541-382-4754 ext. 300, dfagan@highdesertmuseum.org

MUSEUM'S BABY OTTER GROWS UP AND IS ON EXHIBIT 'Pitch' joins Brook and Rogue in "Otter Space"

Bend, OR – Baby's grown up. The baby otter the High Desert Museum received in May from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), is now a thriving 26-weeks-old youngster who's joined Brook and Rogue, the Museum's two other otters, in the *Autzen Otter Exhibit*. But, just don't call him 'Baby.' The Museum auctioned off his naming rights during the High Desert Rendezvous in August and the winners decided to name him 'Pitch.'



"Our wildlife staff has done an incredible job of raising Pitch through bottle feedings and some sleepless nights," said the Museum's Executive Director Dana Whitelaw, Ph.D. "They've spent a considerable amount of time with Pitch, even helping him learn how to swim, a skill he would have learned from a parent in the wild."

A hiker found the otter pup along the Metolius River in May and took it to a local wildlife rehabilitator. ODFW District Wildlife Biologist Corey Heath and ODFW wildlife veterinarians decided the best outcome for the pup would be

to place the animal permanently with the High Desert Museum. Now after 15 weeks, Pitch spends most of his day on exhibit swimming and playing with the two other otters.

The *Autzen Otter Exhibit* was designed to have three otters. During the recent renovation of "Otter Space," many upgrades including new pumps and filters, glass-viewing walls, interior exhibits, a beautiful mural and an otter slide have greatly enhanced the living space for the otters as well as viewing opportunities for visitors.

"We'd like to remind folks that finding a young animal alone in the wild doesn't necessarily mean that it has been abandoned," said the Museum's Curator of Wildlife Jon Nelson. When an adult goes to feed or rest, most times it will leave its young in a secluded spot, then return to check on the young or protect them from predators. If hikers find a young or injured animal, they should contact a local ODFW

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office or local wildlife rehabilitator. A list of licensed wildlife rehabilitators can be found on the ODFW (www.dfw.state.or.us) or High Desert Museum website (highdesertmuseum.org/injured-wildlife/).

For more information about Pitch or the *Autzen Otter Exhibit*, contact the Museum at 541-382-4754 ext. 241 or visit the website at highdesertmuseum.org/autzen-otter-exhibit.



ABOUT THE MUSEUM:

THE HIGH DESERT MUSEUM opened in 1982 and brings regional wildlife, culture, art and natural resources together to promote an understanding of the natural and cultural heritage of North America's high desert country. The Museum uses indoor and outdoor exhibits, wildlife in natural habitats, and

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living history demonstrations to help people discover and appreciate the high desert environment. The Museum is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and is a Smithsonian Affiliate. <http://www.highdesertmuseum.org>

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