

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Heidi Hagemeyer, director of communications, 541-382-4754 ext. 166,
hhagemeyer@highdesertmuseum.org

High Desert Museum Reopens Outdoors

BEND, OR — The High Desert Museum’s outdoor exhibits are now open once again to the public, in accordance with recently revised state parameters to stem the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We’re pleased to welcome visitors back to enjoy winter at the Museum,” says Museum Executive Director Dana Whitelaw, Ph.D. “We reopened for the first time in mid-June and are practiced now at operating with the best possible safety protocols in place for visitors, volunteers and staff.”

The Museum reopened its outdoor exhibits and the patio at the Rimrock Café on Saturday, December 5. The Museum store, Silver Sage Trading, is also open. Through January 1, the Museum anticipates being open from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm Saturdays through Wednesdays with reduced admission rates: \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors and college students and \$5 for children ages 3-12. On Thursdays and Fridays, the Museum will be closed.

The Museum closed on November 18 as part of measures aimed at mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the state’s criteria, museums may not open indoor exhibitions until their resident county moves from the Extreme Risk to the High Risk category. Deschutes County is presently in the Extreme Risk category.

In addition to new admission prices, the Museum is launching a new reduced admission rate for preK-12th grade students and their caregivers in Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson counties. Wonder Wednesdays provides \$5 admission to help keep children engaged during comprehensive distance and hybrid learning. Wonder Wednesdays will not take place on school holidays, such as December 23 and 30.

“We are excited to offer families and learning pods the opportunity to make Wednesday a regular and accessible day of continued education,” Whitelaw says.

Timed tickets are encouraged, as Museum capacity is limited. Caregivers and students can secure timed entry tickets at highdesertmuseum.org/wonder-wednesdays. Group size is limited to 10.

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Set on 135 acres with indoor and outdoor exhibitions, the Museum provides room to roam. The number of people visiting at any given moment is also capped to ensure adequate space for physical distancing.

The Museum requires visitors and staff, both in front of and behind the scenes, to wear face coverings. They are not required for those younger than age 2. Signs and reminders are present throughout the grounds to “stay a wingspan apart” to encourage physical distancing.

Visitors are encouraged to use a timed entry system for advance ticket purchase to help manage visitor numbers: highdesertmuseum.org/tickets. More information about safety measures at the Museum can be found at highdesertmuseum.org/reopening.

Exciting experiences await at the Museum. Daily programming will be added: Check highdesertmuseum.org/daily-schedule for details. See raptors up-close along the exterior of the Donald M. Kerr Birds of Prey Center. Visit the High Desert in 1904 at the Miller Family Ranch. And say hello to the three resident otters at the Museum, Pitch, Rogue and Brook.

“River otters are adapted to cold weather and are very active this time of year,” says Museum Curator of Wildlife Jon Nelson. “A snow day is especially one of the best days to come see the otters, because they will often be out digging tunnels and playing in the snow.”

The public may continue to enjoy the Museum’s virtual offerings at highdesertmuseum.org/resources, a hub for virtual field trips, educational activities for children to do at home and other resources.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM:

THE HIGH DESERT MUSEUM opened in Bend, Oregon in 1982. It brings together wildlife, cultures, art, history and the natural world to convey the wonder of North America’s High Desert. The Museum uses indoor and outdoor exhibits, wildlife in natural habitats and living history demonstrations to help people discover and appreciate this diverse region. The Museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, is a Smithsonian Affiliate, was a 2018 finalist for the National Medal for Museum and Library Services and is the 2019 recipient of the Western Museums Association’s Charles Redd Award for Exhibition Excellence. highdesertmuseum.org

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