

Townsend's Big-Eared Bat Roost Conservation Project

Jeff Krupka, USFWS Central Washington Field Office, Wenatchee, WA

April 2011



A Challenge....



In July 1998 a rare maternity colony of Townsend's big-eared bats was discovered in a dilapidated building. This building was slated for demolition to make way for a golf course resort.

THE COLONY:
A discovery of Townsend's big-eared bats

....and a Solution

A partnership formed to build a new bat house while moving the old building to a site where it could be retained. Bat Conservation International, USFWS, and US Forest Service contributed a total of \$62,000 for the project.

STRETCHING SOME WINGS:
A big-eared bat takes flight



MAZAMA, WASHINGTON:
Eastern gateway to the North Cascades in the Methow Valley

Conservation in Action

During the summer of 2001, Kelly Westman, a local contractor, worked along with the Washington Conservation Corps and a large group of volunteers, to move the old building and construct an alternate bat house.

EXTREME MAKEOVER – BAT EDITION:
WCC crew and volunteers building the new accommodations



This very large bat house provided a roost the bats could choose if the old building did not successfully make the trip, or was not suitable in the new location. Our goal was for the bats to find the new bat house and recognize it as a possible home if the old building was lost.

COMPLETING THE TASK:
WCC crew and volunteers adding salvaged siding and roofing



Beginning in May 2002, crews visited both houses multiple times to determine if the bats moved successfully. No bats were found in May to early August. On August 19, the old building was found to be full of more than 100 adult and young Townsend's big-eared bats, and the new bat house had two adult bats as well.

The Successful Colony

For the next 5 years, 80-100 nursing female bats and young continued to use the old building, and 2-5 bats were found at each visit in the new bat house. By 2008, we found no bats in the old building, and the new bat house held the entire nursing colony of 120+ bats. This was wonderful news since the new bat house was built very soundly and will last for multiple decades.



MOVING THE OLD BEAST:
The old building is gingerly transported

Since the move, *more than 350 young bats have been born to this group.* We anticipate that perhaps as many as 10 times that number of young will be provided a nursery colony site thanks to this project. This successful conservation project was due to the much appreciated efforts of:

- Methow Institute Foundation
- Bat Conservation International
- Kelly Westman Construction
- Washington Conservation Corps
- US Forest Service
- WA Department of Fish & Wildlife
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- The Merrill Corporation
- Eastern Oregon University
- More than 40 individual volunteers



OUR HOUSE IS A VERY, VERY, VERY FINE HOUSE:
The new house (foreground) with the old building at its final location.