

News Release

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Appalachian Wildlife Refuge

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Surprising Way to Recycle and Save Wild Animals – Wands for Wildlife

Asheville, North Carolina, April 21, 2017 – In the beautiful mountains of Western North Carolina, a small all-volunteer nonprofit has a very special and surprising option for recycling a common makeup tool. Appalachian Wildlife Refuge accepts old mascara wands to help save wild lives. These small brushes are used by the wildlife rehabilitators to remove fly eggs and larva from the fur of injured and orphaned wild animals. The wands work great because the bristles are so close together and soft enough not to injure the animals.

The “Wands for Wildlife” program started in March when Savannah Trantham, a home-based wildlife rehabilitator and Co-Founder of Appalachian Wild, decided to share a photo of her wands on social media. Her Facebook post read, “Did you know something as simple as an old mascara wand can help wildlife?” She went on to explain how they are used in her work to rescue and rehabilitate the wild animals. She included Appalachian Wild’s post office address and the first mascara wands arrived the following Monday.

Included with the first package was a note from Priscilla Gutierrez, a makeup artist in California. Gutierrez shared, “I am a combat veteran, and my life was saved by my Bulldog Boli. I have a deep love for all animals.” Gutierrez shared the post in 20 makeup groups and on her beauty page tagging several makeup companies. “I was extremely touched after I saw the post,” wrote Gutierrez. Apparently, so were many others as the organization has received old mascara wands and notes of support from across the country, Canada and Great Britain.

Appalachian Wild received a special package from “the girls at Cosmopolitan Magazine” in New York full of old wands to help the animals. Even the makeup artists with NBC’s The Blacklist are holding a “Wands for Wildlife Wandraiser” to support the cause. There are Wandraisers happening all over the country hosted by college sororities, Girl Scout troops, salons, spas, cosmetology schools, numerous businesses and high schools. Arianna Bard, Miss WEMCHS at Wayne Early Middle College High School in Goldsboro, NC shared, “Because of my love for wildlife and makeup, I became interested, and wanted to use my platform to take this to the school wide level for donations of the wands and money.”

The strength of social media to move people to action stunned Kimberly Brewster, Co-Founder and volunteer in charge of outreach efforts. The Facebook post about the “Wands for Wildlife” recycling program went viral along with a video by Yahoo, receiving over 3.2 million views. “The outpouring of love and support to help care for the wild animals is astounding,” said Brewster. “We have worked so hard to have the bare minimum needed to care for these animals. Now we have food, equipment, supplies and funds coming in from all over – because of mascara wands!”

The group has been working tirelessly to open a wildlife triage facility for the thousands of injured and orphaned animals needing care. Fortunately, in addition to mascara wands, the group is receiving much needed supplies and support. They are still in need of funding to help finish repairs and renovations on a building that was donated for the triage unit. Old wands should be cleaned and can be mailed with the form found on the website to Appalachian Wild, P.O. Box 1211, Skyland, NC 28776. Find out more, see how the wands are used and join in the efforts by visiting www.appalachianwild.org.

Appalachian Wildlife Refuge is a 501c3 nonprofit that coordinates the needs of wildlife rehabilitation in Western North Carolina providing care for injured and orphaned wildlife, support for the wildlife rehabilitation network, and conservation education to the community.

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