



FIND YOUR PATCH

Wilsonville Patch

Monday, October 9th, 2017

63° | POST

Nearby Patches ▾

Sections ▾

Calendar

Jobs

Board

Real Estate

Video

Advertise

Subscribe



Home & Garden

Oregon Corrections Inmates to Protect, Raise Endangered Butterflies

The Coffee Creek Correctional Facility's butterfly recovery lab will allow female inmates to help restore Oregon wildlife ecosystems.

By Travis Loose (Patch Staff) - Updated Mar 23, 2017 2:45 pm ET

Like 55 Share



Taylor's checkerspot butterfly adult. Photo: US Fish and Wildlife Service

WILSONVILLE, OR – Endangered butterflies in Oregon will soon count female inmates among those working to improve wildlife ecosystems and prevent extinction.

Beginning next month, Department of Corrections and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel will activate the [Coffee Creek Correctional Facility's](#) butterfly recovery lab for the endangered [Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly](#).

Coffee Creek, a multi-custody facility in Wilsonville, provides intake and evaluation of all female and male inmates committed to state custody. Housing more than 1,200 women, Coffee Creek is the state's only prison for women.

<https://patch.com/oregon/wilsonville/oregon-corrections-inmates-protect-raise-endangered-butterflies>

According to corrections officials, the butterfly project lab will be set in the medium facility housing unit and will expand opportunities for women in custody to gain valuable work experience as butterfly lab technicians.

"Overall, the female population is enthusiastic about programs such as this and embrace any ability to take part in projects like the Butterfly Program, and recycling," said Laurene Brenner, management assistant for Coffee Creek. "The fact that this is happening at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility -- where they live -- is a matter of pride and to some degree a sense of participation in what is happening here.

"Being able to bring new ideas to fruition and show inmates there is a broad spectrum of possibilities in which they can take part is yet another bonus about this program."

The project is funded by a grant awarded to the [Oregon Zoo](#), which will also provide oversight and equipment.

Project goals include raising butterflies from the caterpillar stage and raising the plants needed to feed said caterpillars.

The first batch of butterfly egg clusters will arrive at the project lab in April, allowing the new technicians to immediately begin raising caterpillars to the pupation phase.

Ultimately, the butterfly recovery project builds on the Department of Corrections' [long-term sustainability program](#) by bringing science and nature into the Coffee Creek medium institution, helping to improve Oregon's ecosystems, and maintaining partnerships with others who work to protect Oregon's endangered species and native plant habitats through similar restoration projects.

According to corrections spokeswoman Betty Bernt, the Coffee Creek butterfly lab project builds on the Washington State Department of Corrections' [Sustainability in Prisons Project](#), which -- since 2003 -- has grown into a network of corrections

<https://patch.com/oregon/wilsonville/oregon-corrections-inmates-protect-raise-endangered-butterflies>

facilities across several states all working to bring science, education, and nature into prisons.

All 14 corrections institutions in Oregon participate in a variety of sustainability programs and efforts, Bernt said.