Raptors—birds of prey such as eagles, hawks, falcons and owls—will soon be the center of attention for the bird watchers of South Jersey.

“Celebrating Raptors of South Jersey” is the theme of the 2013 Winter Eagle Festival, originating from the Mauricetown Firehall on Saturday, Feb. 9. The day-long event (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) will feature special programs, lectures, exhibits and guided walks to observe wildlife amid the area’s wetlands and forests.

Several species of raptors are familiar sights in the skies of Cumberland County during the winter months, as they are driven south to find a more suitable, warmer environment. Birding experts will be available throughout the day at various viewing sites to answer questions and provide guidance.

Guided Walks

The first event, a “Sunrise Walk,” begins at 7 a.m. at Turkey Point, led by Karen Johnson, followed by the Tat Star Trail Walk on Fortescue Road at 10 a.m. with Brian Johnson of the Glades Wildlife Refuge of Downe Township.

The Strawberry Avenue Trail will be explored at noon by representatives from the Nature Conservancy, and a Bald Eagle Trail Walk begins at 1:30, led by Steve Eisenhauer of the Natural Lands Trust. An Owl Watch is set for 5 p.m. at Turkey Point, conducted by Mike Crewe of the Cape May Bird Observatory.

The firehall in Mauricetown on Noble Street is headquarters for the festival, where participants register ($10 for adults and $5 for children 12 and under). The hall is also the location for exhibits and programs, as well as vendors and food. The Cultural & Heritage Commission, one of the sponsors of the event, will host a kids’ activity table in partnership with Cumberland County College’s Clay College. Children as well as adults can sculpt eagles—or anything else—with colorful “sculpey clay” that will be cured in toaster ovens and ready to take home as a keepsake.

(Continued on page 2)
Commission announces arts and history grant awards

The Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission is pleased to announce the arts and history re-grants awards for 2013.

Thirty recipients from around the county received awards ranging from $1,000 to $10,000 to support dance and ballet, heritage events, sculptural exhibits, ongoing gallery programming, ethnic festivals, historic preservation workshops, theater performances, and many more cultural activities.

Funded by grants from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the New Jersey Historical Commission, the Commission and Board of Chosen Freeholders were able to re-grant $95,000 in arts funding and $12,000 in history awards.

To learn more about the grant opportunities available from the Commission, visit the “Grant Opportunities” page on the Commission’s website at www.ccculturalheritage.org. Grant funding from the State Council on the Arts and the Historical Commission is provided through the State’s Hotel and Motel Occupancy Tax.

When you enjoy some of the many cultural or history events and sites throughout the county, take the opportunity to thank your state legislative representatives for providing the grant funds to make them possible.

Eagle Festival offers up-close look at wildlife

(Continued from page 1)

Maps and directions to the viewing or walking sites will be provided at registration; participants can then drive themselves to the event of their choosing.

Speakers

Lectures scheduled throughout the day are:

- **10 a.m.**, “Status of Eagles,” Kathy Clark, N.J. Endangered Species;
- **11 a.m.**, “Using GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to investigate New Jersey’s American Kestrels,” Peter Windler, ENSP (Endangered Species Program);
- **1 p.m.**, “Osprey Migration, There and Back Again,” Rob Bierregaard, Visiting Research Professor, University of North Carolina, Charlotte;
- **2 p.m.**, “DDT is Gone, So What’s Troubling Eagles Now?”—Erica Miller, DVM, Conserve Wildlife volunteer; and
- **3 p.m.**, “Photographing Butterflies and Dragonflies,” Mike Hannisian, N.J. Audubon and Cape May Bird Conservatory.

Union Hall in Dividing Creek also will be open throughout the day to offer a break from outdoor activities, a bake sale and heated restrooms.

Organizers suggest that participants alternate indoor and outdoor activities, and to be sure to layer clothing to be prepared for any weather-related eventuality. They also advise bringing binoculars, a camera, and to take advantage of the knowledgeable experts who will be on site to answer questions and share information.

Sponsors, in addition to the Cultural & Heritage Commission, include ANJEC, Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, the Natural Lands Trust, Citizens United and the Nature Conservancy. For more information, call (856) 453-2177.