



LAKELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Injured Bald Eagle Rescued in South Lakeland

Lakeland --- At approximately 7:00 AM, the Lakeland Fire Department (LFD) responded to a unique call for help to rescue an American Bald Eagle that had become entangled in wire and trapped in a pine tree behind 3902 Cheverly Drive West, Lakeland FL.

The bald eagle, who homeowners say is a resident, is often seen perching on trees near and around the lake at the center of the community. The eagle tangled its left wing in a wire-like material that was attached to the tree. The tree hangs over the water of the lake bank it sits on. The specific material of the wire the eagle was caught in is unconfirmed; however it was not fishing line.

The eagle, exhausted from its attempts to flee had grown exhausted and in the process caused damage to its left wing. The homeowners at the property called for assistance and in the process a cooperative rescue effort was formed with city and state agencies. In addition to the Lakeland Fire Department's Battalion Chief and crew from Engine 21 others lending a hand included City of Lakeland Parks and Recreation crew members, biologists with the Fish and Wildlife Commission, Polk County Animal Control, several volunteers from local birding and wildlife groups, and residents from the community.

Parks and Recreation crew members securely climbed the pine tree and were able to successfully cut the eagle loose while Battalion Chief Mike Williams navigated a kayak directly underneath the tree on the lake to retrieve the eagle using a fishing net to retrieve the fallen bird. This was well planned prior to execution and rescue personnel were in place prior to any attempt at cutting the wire free. Additionally the Fish and Wildlife Commission's biologist and PC Animal Control representative were waiting ashore to provide immediate assistance. The rescue was a success.

Once ashore rescuers were able to secure the eagle that will be rehabilitated by Fish and Wildlife Commission officials before being released back into the wild.

In unique situations like these, LFD is often called to assist due to the specialized equipment and training the emergency response personnel is prepared with.

Photos are attached. Additional photos of the rescue can be found on LFD's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/lakelandfd.

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Gary Ballard, Fire Chief

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