

Big Cat Chronicles

Fall 2023



Thurston

Male Tiger
(*Panthera Tigris*)
Born 10/6/07
Rescued 10/6/16



Letter from the President

Founder Tanya Smith



This autumn marks a new milestone in our 31 years of Rescue to Refuge history, with our largest habitat expansion ever! Since the passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act (BCPSA) last December, we have seen the pressing need for habitat expansion. Not only to rescue the big cats confiscated by officials in upholding the new law but also for the small and medium wild cat species left unprotected by it. When we complete our 44 new Freedom Field habitats later this year, we will be able to give generations of wild cats the lifelong care they deserve.

We plan to welcome the first Big Cat Rescue tigers to the Refuge this September with an official ribbon cutting, with the smaller cats to follow. Your Freedom Field donations will help us complete the remaining third of this critical project and ensure we can maintain these habitats with the same high standard as the rest of the Refuge. We plan to offer you a guided tour of Freedom Field by next year, so stay tuned as we work out the details.

Meanwhile, our Big Cat Education Center & Museum is scheduled to open in 2025. TCWR's public education program is more crucial than ever. Authorities must rely on an informed public to help locate BCPSA offenders. At the same time, we need to spread awareness of the growing crisis in our country for small and medium wild cats. This fantastic educational resource will provide our community with over 200 new jobs in the hospitality sector alone, with a local economic impact of \$51.7 million! Since we launched our capital campaign two years ago, your generous support has helped raise over half of what is needed to complete our expansion for animals and people!

In this issue, we will explain how vital your help is for Witness Protection cats to get the initial care they need, even while authorities prevent us from telling their stories while prosecuting their past exploiters. You will also learn more about what it takes day in and day out to provide freedom for the animals we rescue.

Like every year, fall is an expensive time for the Refuge, even without an expansion project. TCWR receives no public funding from the State or Federal Government. Animal care staff will provide our bears with extra food to prepare for winter torpor and begin to heat their dens, along with those of all our elderly and African cats. By becoming a habitat sponsor or sponsoring an animal's medical care, you will help us give our new cats and those waiting for rescue the life they deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tanya Smith".

Tanya Smith, President & Founder



Check out our education resources: [Education.Tarpentinecreek.org](https://www.education.tarpentinecreek.org)

Through the Eyes of a Tiger: Opie

My early memories are foggy. Since humans tore me away, screaming from my mother, there was a time of endless misery. People held, stroked, and fed me watered-down bottles all day, yet I was always hungry. They met my protests with swift punishment.

When I grew in size, they sent me to a place with cages just big enough to take a few steps. It was uncomfortable lying on the sand and splintered wood, but there was nothing else to do. My back began to stiffen as the years slowly went by. Then one summer day, many people came; I felt a sharp prick and fell asleep.

When I awoke, I lay on a clean, smooth floor in a large cage with a dish of clean water and a cool, dark den that allowed me privacy and shade. These humans, called 'interns,' brought me fresh meat daily, and I learned to chew raw bones. I began to feel stronger.

Soon, the interns made a door open to the outdoors! I cautiously extended a paw, expecting a trap – but they cheered for me as I stepped out and felt the soft, lush grass on my paws. I was free to run! Exploring this vast, open space they called my 'habitat' was pure joy. My new world was full of trees, fallen logs, and tall benches to climb. There were so many smells! I became *obsessed* with sharpening my claws on the logs; it was exciting to destroy them, and the interns just brought me more! I could spend my days how I wanted.

Exploring my habitat never got old. I love the scents my care team sprinkles around – especially cinnamon! I enjoy cooling off in my water hole after my daily meal in summer. Then it's time for a long nap on my bench. By afternoon I might lounge in the grass in a shady spot and keep an eye on my neighbors. When I spot lioness Lyla, I get a bit goofy with her through the fence. Sometimes, I'll hide in my den and then pounce at tigers Roman and Donner (on the one side) or Miles (on the other).

Over time I learned what 'toys' are. I enjoy knocking them down the hill and watching my interns bring them back up when they clean my habitat. The barrel is one of my favorites! While they tend, they give me baths with the hose in my big cage and let me play in the stream of water. Sometimes they'll build me walls of boxes to destroy, which is great fun!

If you were a tiger, suffering through endless days at a cramped roadside zoo, wouldn't you want a chance to live free at the Refuge? Your support helps TCWR transform more lives



I enjoy cooling off in my water hole after my daily meal in summer. Then it's time for a long nap in the shade!

Recurring donors are the foundation of the Refuge, thank you!

Your First BCR Bobcat Introduction

Kewlona is a shy little bobcat, very selective in who she lets into her private world. She was found with her brother Dryden in Wyoming in 2015 near their deceased mom and two siblings; who knows what horrors they possibly witnessed just weeks after their birth? Kewlona only had Dryden to keep her safe in those early weeks.

The kittens were found and sent to a pseudo sanctuary in South Dakota, but having crossed state lines, she and Dryden were not candidates for rehab and release and became imprinted with too much handling. In 2016, the USDA revoked the facility's license due to a failed inspection. Additionally, one of the tigers at this facility was killed by law enforcement after it escaped and attacked the facility director.

Authorities awarded the siblings to Big Cat Rescue (BCR), where they have since lived in natural habitats. Soon, Kewlona and her brother will join us in Freedom Field. Like their home at BCR, these two will have open access to their natural habitat and night house all hours of the day and be left free to enjoy the night sounds and air.

Kewlona and Dryden enjoy having places to hide but also enjoy observing from their platform. At the Refuge, they will have the same options, along with heated dens and plenty of natural space to play. We've been told that their favorite enrichment items are spices and bloodsicles! You can help Kewlona, and Dryden get the care they deserve at TCWR by sponsoring.



Kewlona only had Dryden to keep her safe in the weeks after they were orphaned in the wild.



Jamie Veronica of BCR created this mixed media artwork of Kewlona with Dryden watching over her.





Subscribe Today!

Roar BOX

Support the animals you love all year long by becoming a member of The Roar Box Program.

A Roar Box Subscription is just \$35 per month - or pay annually and receive one month's box FREE!

Each box contains a curated item from our collection (shipping included) delivered to your door every month! Treat yourself to a Roar Box subscription today, or gift one to a friend or family member - either way you'll be helping the animals at TCWR with your financial support and helping to spread awareness about them and our mission by sporting our gear! To subscribe, scan the code or go to: <https://shop.turpentinecreek.org/pages/memberships>

Fireside Chat!

What was the most dangerous rescue you have been on?

What kind of medication is BB King on?

What will be included in the new education center?

Live Q&A, Monday September 11 at 6PM.

With your help, Servals live wild and safe.

In 2019, authorities contacted TCWR about a male African Serval that had been captured in the New Mexico wilderness. Its microchip led to the owner, who claimed that Hunter and a female serval had escaped him in 2016 on the day he'd planned to move rather than relinquish them. It is illegal to own servals as pets in New Mexico; he'd purchased the two from an Arkansas breeder.

Hunter distrusted his keepers and animal neighbors when he arrived at the Refuge. The five-year-old serval was ravenous but otherwise in surprisingly decent condition. Sadly, his female companion was never found alive. Even though servals are the most proficient hunters among wild cats with an over 50% success rate (vs. the 20% success rate of most other cat species), a declawed African Serval living in the cold New Mexican wilderness for three years would have faced incredible hardships.

Since then, Hunter has come to love his new life. Like all TCWR servals, he has a building with benches, toys, and an indoor litter box that is vented in summer and heated in winter. His avid interest in our behavioral management program has gradually transformed his fear into trust. Eventually, we introduced him to two other servals, JJ and CeCe.

Hunter is a big talker and will meow happily to JJ and CeCe while walking around the habitat. He enjoys scent enrichment, like perfumes, herbs, and spices. In warm weather, Hunter loves to lounge in the shade and revels in the freedom to live each day on his terms.

Since big cats can no longer be bred or sold due to the passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act, breeders focus on exploiting small wild cats for profit. Social media posts unrealistically portray servals as glamorous companions. Sadly, these fierce predators have a poor quality of life when kept as pets. Though not much bigger than a medium-sized dog, servals retain their wild instincts and are cunning escape artists. Since 2020, TCWR has taken in five other servals. JJ and Mondo had escaped their owners, CeCe and Jake needed sanctuary when their owners realized they could not adequately care for these feisty predators, and serval Lexi was rescued from a notorious roadside zoo.

Our Freedom Field habitats will give many more servals a chance to live their lives cared for and respected as wild animals, along with other species of wild cats!

Hunter



You Can Help Us - Funding Freedom

At 13 acres, Freedom Field is the most ambitious habitat expansion we have ever tackled with our supporters. This new habitat development is over 2X the size of our Tour Loop and over 4X the size of Rescue Ridge! Our team built both of those areas one enclosure at a time, which took years to complete. This time, we knew we'd have to finish all the new habitats in time to avoid the health risks of moving the cats in cold weather. We must finish before winter sets in, or risk delaying the cats' move for several months.

Thankfully, BCR & their supporters will fund \$1.8M towards this \$2.5M expansion project. We must depend on YOU to help us raise the remaining \$750,000 – the tigers, bobcats, servals, and caracals rely on us for their forever homes! The first tigers will be transported to our facility as habitats are completed, starting this September, with the small cats to follow later this fall.

If your family or business wishes to leave a lasting legacy at TCWR, contact Sandy Ames at sandy@tcwr.org to sponsor a habitat or night house gable plaque in Freedom Field.

Every donation makes a difference for the animals waiting for their new forever home! You can support our habitat expansion here <https://turpentinecreek.harnessgiving.org/campaigns/9900>



You are Funding Freedom when you sponsor habitat construction in Freedom Field! Above is the entrance view.



Concrete is poured at the base of the enclosure fencing to create more stability, keeping both the cats and our staff safe.



The ground has been levelled and the dens have been installed, while work proceeds on the nighthouse fencing.



Letter from the Curator

Emily McCormack



Building trust in any animal, especially rescued big cats, can be complex. Not only does this task require an understanding of animal behavior, but it also requires an understanding of their past. Some cats require more time, patience, and respect for their boundaries. As always, each rescued animal at TCWR is treated and respected as an individual with a specific plan for their rehabilitation to trust humans again.

As you read in our previous issue, Chief was our featured animal. Within moments, trust in our team was sealed as he loaded into a roll cage and was on his journey to the Refuge. It was an easy plan for Chief's rehab, as he loved his new home and caretakers. Thankfully, we have built a bond based on trust and mutual respect over the last three years.



In May, we sedated Chief for a routine exam and claw trim.



Thankfully, due to Chief's trust, he allowed us to continually give him subcutaneous fluids throughout three weeks without sedation.



Miraculously, after a long three weeks, he responded appropriately to treatment without any assistance.

In May, we sedated Chief for a routine exam and claw trim. Without knowing at the time, Chief was already in a state of hypovolemic shock. Being a lion, these predators are excellent at masking illness. Very quickly, Dr. Kellyn diagnosed him with Addison's disease. Of course, there is very little, if any, information reporting cases of treating this disease in lions. Like many challenges we face, it is unthinkable to give the maximum supportive care to big cats without sedating them. Unlike a domestic cat or dog, supportive care would be dangerous and, in most cases, impossible.

Thankfully, due to Chief's trust, he allowed us to continually give him subcutaneous fluids throughout three weeks. He voluntarily accepted treatment and allowed us to insert a needle without sedation. We were trying to stabilize his electrolyte values to appropriate levels while he was receiving hormone replacement therapy. The prognosis at the time was poor, and euthanasia was a serious discussion.

Miraculously, after a long three weeks, he responded appropriately to treatment without any assistance. We continue to monitor him daily and will give him hormone replacement for the rest of his life. Had it not been for Chief's trust and bond with the animal care staff, he probably wouldn't be here today.

Every animal saved is given the best and most appropriate care for their individual needs. Chief's story continues from Rescue to Refuge. Please support our mission and help fund freedom, so that we can save many more.

Together, we are making a difference!

Getting Warm in the Winter



Tigger

Nestled in the Ozark Mountains, TCWR experiences all four seasons and has always taken extra precautions for our animals during the extreme summer heat and cold winters. While our cold-adapted animals (cougars, tigers, and bobcats) enjoy cold weather, we provide heat for our warm climate species (lions, jaguars, leopards, Servals). We also heat dens for our older animals, whose bodies are not as resilient as they age, and for our bears to sleep comfortably for weeks during their torpor.

Our journey to provide warmth in the winter has come a long way. We have spent years innovating designs, technologies, and materials to heat the animals' dens. The Refuge worked with the University of Arkansas for fifteen years to find a solution. Our first attempt was calculating the cost of solar-powered heaters for the dens. In the end, the solar panels were too expensive and could not generate enough energy from the sun to provide adequate, consistent heat. Next, we tried installing heated floors like many people have in their houses. Again, this approach did not warm the dens and was more costly than solar. After that, we ran electricity to each enclosure and installed platform heaters. Unfortunately, we quickly learned that the cats would treat them like toys.

Finally, we went back to the basics. From our own research and innovation, we found the best way to keep the dens warm is by installing black-out heat lamps (protected by steel). We insulate the den with doorway flaps and a mulch bed on the floor. Whether the animals have a heated building or a heated den, you can be sure that they have the freedom to find warmth or roam outside during the cold months. This is "Funding Freedom" as it relates to lifelong care, and we need your help.

PRE-ORDER TODAY!

The official **TURPENTINE CREEK CALENDAR** featuring every resident's birthday, Refuge events, wildlife holidays and government holidays. Big, vibrant 12-by-9-inch pages featuring Refuge inhabitants will brighten the 12 months ahead and keep your favorite big cats close to your heart.

Turpentine Creek calendars make excellent gifts for the animal lovers in your life! Pre-order yours today using the form on page 13, or through our web store:

Shop.TurpentineCreek.org



Poncho

From Bare Cages to Bear Paradise



Lolli

Holli and Lolli were first kept in barren cages, exposed to the stifling hot sun of Colorado. Now, they live in a natural bear habitat.

Habitat design and complexity, vital for animal welfare in captivity, means that each habitat needs to be species-specific. An easy test to determine if a facility is accomplishing this is by observing the presence of stress-related behaviors in the animals, including pacing, swaying, hair plucking, nervous ticks, etc. Almost all animals rescued by TCWR initially show these behaviors, which makes funding for immediate medical treatment essential. After medical treatment, much of the animal's recovery comes from gaining trust in their caretakers and spending time in an enclosure designed to allow them to express natural behaviors.

Harley



Harley has spent the first 8 years of his life living in deplorable enclosures, but for the last 13 years living like a bear should.

Over the years, TCWR has worked with leading animal facilities and research institutions to design species-specific habitats to promote rescued animals' emotional and physical transformations. For example, a black bear named Harley was found living with a black leopard, a cougar, and a lion in a small, glass enclosure. The other animals and the jail-like enclosure created a very stressful environment for Harley, who suffered from significant hair loss as a result. Today, Harley lives in a habitat specially designed for bears, where our Animal Care team scatters some of his food daily so he can forage like a wild bear. He has a thick, black coat and lives as close as possible to how a wild bear would live.

In 2018, TCWR completed a massive habitat innovation by fencing acres of natural forest (and natural black bear habitat) at Rescue Ridge. This 100% natural bear habitat was the first of its kind, and it has been so successful that the bears can source much of their diet from foraging what the forest provides. They also display natural behaviors like collecting twigs and branches to build nests, climbing trees, and digging.

TCWR continues to build a better future for animals, working with research and innovation to improve captive animal welfare industry-wide. As we continue to complete the habitats at Freedom Field, we are also trying new designs and building better enclosures that will benefit generations of animals.

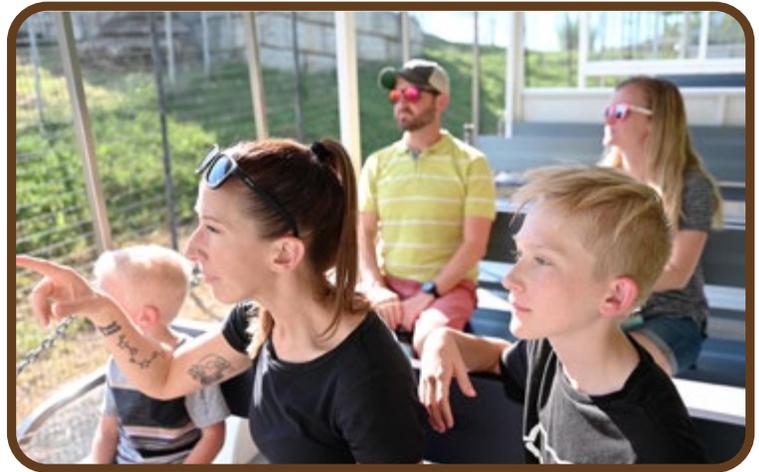
Holli



Are you a Member of Turpentine Creek?

Imagine being able to bring your friends and family to the Refuge to introduce them to your favorite animal. Is it Spyke? Is it Shakira II? You can help your close circle learn about the cats' individual stories and connect with them too. With all the memberships on this page, you get free entry to TCWR for you and four guests all year long. These memberships also include discounts for lodging, the gift shop, specialty tours, and more. Become a Wild About Wildlife member today and be the voice of the animals, bringing your friends and family into our world together.

TCWR.org/support/memberships/



Wild About Wildlife Membership Program

Help the animals that call Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge home and make it easy to visit them often with friends and family by signing up for one of our membership options. Members may bring up to four guests each time they visit, and receive valuable discounts on lodging, specialty tours and our gift shop inventory!

All Members Receive:

Free year-round entry for cardholder & 4 guests, TCWR yearly calendar, an annual subscription to the Big Cat Chronicles, recognition in our annual report and website, and exclusive member e-mails & events.

Friends of India \$300- \$1,249*

- Friends of India membership card & decal
- 15% off of Gift Shop purchases
- 10% off lodging
- 10% off on specialty tours for cardholder and up to 4 guests
- Framed 5x7 photograph of India

Bam Bam Benefactors \$1,250 - \$2,999*

- Bam Bam Benefactor's membership card & decal
- 15% off of Gift Shop purchases
- 20% off of lodging
- 20% off on specialty tours for cardholder and up to 4 guests
- Framed 5x7 photograph of Bam Bam
- Bam Bam Travel Mug

The Kenny Fellowship \$3,000 - \$9,999*

- Kenny Fellowship membership card & decal
- 20% off of Gift Shop purchases
- 30% off of lodging
- Private Tours with Senior Staff
- A Senior Staff Liaison
- Framed 8x10 photograph of Kenny
- The Kenny Fellowship Shirt
- Kenny Travel Mug

The Hilda Jackson Society \$10,000+*

- Hilda Jackson Society membership card & decal
- 20% off of Gift Shop purchases
- 50% off of lodging
- Private Tours with Senior Staff
- Senior Staff Liaison
- Framed 8x10 photo of favorite animal
- The Hilda Jackson Society Shirt
- The Hilda Jackson Society Travel Mug

*To be part of a membership level you must sign up for that level, donate the amount required to be part of that specific level and are encouraged to pledge to make a similar donation the following year.

**Limitations on lodging dates may apply.

Yes, I will help the animals!
Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of:

100% of my donation goes to help the animals!

Your Contribution: \$25 \$35 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

I would like to make my loving donation recurring:
 **Repeat Monthly**



Go Paperless: You can opt to receive this newsletter by email. Enter your address here: _____@_____

Choose Your Membership

A membership with TCWR is the perfect opportunity to help support the amazing work that the Refuge does every single day and also gives the opportunity to visit multiple times a year!

\$45 The P.A.W. Club, Kid's Membership (Ages 6-13) Name of child: _____
 See TCWR.org/kidsclub for more info. Email address: _____

\$150 Pride Membership - You and 3 guests get a full year of visits to the Refuge. *BEST ADMISSION VALUE!*

\$300+ Friends of India

\$1,250+ Bam Bam Benefactors

\$3,000+ Kenny Fellowship

\$10,000+ Hilda Jackson Society

Shirt Size (circle one) S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL

Shirt Size (circle one) S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL

Total:
 \$ _____

Opt Out of Membership Signup Gifts

Adopt or Sponsor an Animal Today!

Printed Animal Adoption:

- \$150/yr - Small Cat
- \$150/yr - Cougar/Leopard/Jaguar
- \$150/yr - Lion/Tiger/Bear/Hyena

Animal Sponsor: TCWR no longer limits the number of sponsors per animal because sponsorships help all rescues.

- \$1,000/yr - Small Cat
 - \$2,200/yr - Cougar/Leopard/Jaguar
 - \$2,500/yr - Lion/Tiger/Bear/Hyena
- Sponsorship includes Pride membership. Opt out to make donation 100% tax deductible.
- Membership Opt Out**

Monthly payments available for sponsorships, See website: TCWR.org

Adopted/Sponsored Animal's Name(s): _____

Total Contribution Today: \$ _____

Donor Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Recipient Name (if different): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Input Credit Card below or make checks payable to TCWR.

Credit Card #: _____

Exp. Date: ___/___/___ CVC Code: _____

Please fill out this donation form, detach, fold as needed, and mail with included envelope. Thank You!

Letter from the Vet: Update on B.B. King Tiger

Dr. Kellyn Sweeley, DVM

B.B. King is a 15-year-old tiger diagnosed with a rare form of aggressive cancer located on his tongue in the summer of 2020. After determining he would be a good candidate for intravenous chemotherapy, he went through five treatment courses to slow the spread of the cancer. The following summer, a small amount of cancer regrowth was found, so an aggressive surgery was performed to remove the part of his tongue with cancer. All cancer margins were achieved, and B.B. was doing very well. Unfortunately, two more masses were found on his tongue this past May during a follow-up screening. These masses were removed and confirmed to be a return of his previous cancer. Though the cancer seems to have likely spread microscopically, due to numerous factors and considerations, no further aggressive treatment plans are being pursued. We will continue to monitor him and try to slow the cancer down as much as possible while ensuring B.B.'s quality of life. Because of his routine veterinary check-ups, we have been able to catch the spread of cancer again early on and we are hopeful that B.B. King still has years of quality life left. Unlike many other TCWR residents who were rescued from horrific conditions, B.B. King is one of the lucky few who have known no other home than TCWR, as his pregnant mother was rescued back in 2008. He has received proper care and attention for his entire life, a span of over 15 years at the Refuge, and will continue to do so.



Recently, I was brought on full-time at TCWR. I am so excited about it and what this means for our residents. B.B. King is an excellent example of how routine veterinary preventative and wellness care saves and extends quality life in animals. It is through routine examinations that early disease detection can be identified, and treatment plans developed early on to either cure, slow down, or at least maintain quality of life for extended periods. At TCWR, we continue to raise the bar for the standard of care provided to sanctuary animals and ask for continued help from our supporters to maintain that level of care.



B.B. King



B.B. King has received proper care and attention for his entire life, a span of over 15 years at the Refuge, and will continue to do so because of your support.

Our routine veterinary check-ups have allowed us to catch the spread of B.B.'s cancer again early on, and we are hopeful that B.B. King still has years of quality life left.

AZA vs. ZAA: Contrasting Approaches

AZA and ZAA are two distinct organizations in the field of zoological parks and aquariums. While they share a common goal of promoting wildlife conservation and education, there are fundamental differences.

The AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) is a widely recognized and established organization representing over 230 accredited zoos and aquariums in the United States, Canada, and several other countries. Accreditation by the AZA requires meeting rigorous animal welfare and safety standards, fiscal responsibility, conservation, education, and policies to prevent wild animals from entering the pet trade and canned hunting facilities. The AZA strongly emphasizes conservation efforts, collaborating with international organizations and participating in the Species Survival Plan to ensure the long-term viability of endangered species.

On the other hand, the ZAA (Zoological Association of America) is a smaller organization supporting privately owned and operated facilities in the United States with vague standards that permit conditions that are not acceptable at AZA zoos. While the ZAA also emphasizes animal welfare and conservation, its membership criteria and accreditation processes are less stringent than those of the AZA, requiring its members to meet basic standards of care for animals while still allowing the breeding of big cats without a peer-reviewed Species Survival Plan.

We would like you to look closely at any ZAA facility you wish to visit. It may be a great place, but unlike AZA, some breeding facilities and facilities with inadequate animal care programs are given this accreditation. Remember, do your homework.

True Sanctuary Checklist

| | |
|---|--|
| Does not allow hands-on interaction or photo opportunities with animals of any age | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Does not breed animals outside of AZA Species Survival Plan | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Does not take animals off property for events | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Does not buy or sell animals or animal parts | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Animals have access to clean water, shade, places to hide from public view, and proper medical care | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Facility has 501(c)(3) nonprofit status | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Bonus: Facility is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Bonus: Facility is accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

For more information about the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries visit their website: SanctuaryFederation.org

A true sanctuary is a *place of refuge or safety* that provides quality lifetime care for the animals it has rescued. The term “*sanctuary*” is not regulated by any governing body. Anyone can start a sanctuary, but only a few facilities can be considered a true sanctuary.

It is crucial to practice ethical tourism and only support true sanctuaries that care for animals. We can make a difference through our choices! Before you visit any facility that keeps wild animals, please check to see if they are a true sanctuary and make sure your patronage will not fund abusive exploitation, dangerous breeding practices, or the exotic pet trade.



TCWR has launched its first Witness Protection Program, created to ensure we are always prepared to rescue animals whose owners are in the middle of litigation for various reasons. The details of their rescue story often contain critical information in these court cases, so law enforcement prevents us from sharing that information publicly.



Fred



Unfortunately, our inability to share their story hampers successful fundraising efforts for any medical attention they may require after rescue. A recent example is when we rescued the adorable tiger cub, Fred, last April. His first exam revealed an infestation of the coccidia parasite, which needed immediate treatment to combat his underweight condition and prevent more severe consequences.

Continued on page 18.





This same scenario played out on a much larger scale with the cats we rescued from Jeff Lowe's Tiger King Park in May 2021. The ongoing court case against the Lowe's prevented us from releasing the details of their story. During that time, many animals needed medical attention and surgical procedures. Each medical decision had to be approved by the DOJ, and they did not allow us to share any details with our supporters. Unfortunately, this meant that TCWR was unable to raise funds to supplement our immediate increase in medical expenses. Just 12 days after rescue, a female tiger named Priscilla gave birth to three cubs. These cubs faced life-threatening conditions which required many months of treatment, during which TCWR was unable to reach out to our supporters for financial help.

Now that authorities are enforcing the Big Cat Public Safety Act, we expect more witness protection animals like our recent rescue, Fred, that need sanctuary pending the litigation of their former owners. Through the Witness Protection Program, it is our hope to fund their freedom whether it be medically or building a home structurally. With this new program, your contributions will help our sustainability and allow our team to give these witness protection animals the attention they need without worrying about the cost.

Purchase a digital copy of our documentary "Uncharted" to follow the story of Priscilla and her cubs and understand what caring for witness protection animals entails:



Uncharted

Finding and Funding Freedom



The purpose of a vacation is to rest, relax, and recharge, which you will find when you stay at Turpentine Creek this fall. Our unique nature-based lodging experiences offer the ideal environment to ground yourself in a life of running nonstop.

Have a sunrise coffee on the porch, overlooking the colorful fall Ozark Mountain landscape.



Then join a behind-the-scenes tour to remind you of all the work you support in creating a sanctuary for animals. Later, take an afternoon stroll to find the peace to put things into perspective while watching these magnificent big cats in their habitats. If all else fails, enjoy time in our hot tub with a cold beverage and gazing at a spectacular view of the stars in the night sky.

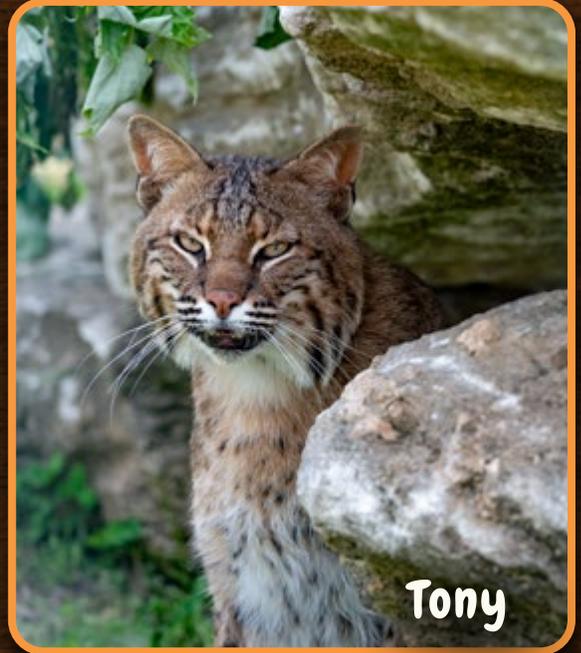
Stay with us this fall, where your journey to find freedom from life's stresses will fund the freedom of animals we rescue.



Bobcats Need Your Help to Stay Wild



Lil Miss Priss



Tony



Prince

Since January, we have had to turn down ten calls for bobcat rescue. Sadly, the other nine accredited U.S. sanctuaries also have had no small cat space. The large number of bobcats needing rescue stems from two main issues.

Bobcat hunting and trapping are commonplace throughout the US. When a female is killed, her kittens cannot survive independently. Little Miss, Tony, and Prince were all found motherless in the wild and taken in by well-meaning individuals who found they were unprepared to care for these mid-sized wild predators. If you find a baby bobcat, do not try to touch it – instead, call a professional wildlife rehabilitator for instructions.

Bobcats have also become the target of wildlife dealers, promoting them as unique pets. Sadly, it is still legal to own bobcats captured by hand as pets in Arkansas and several other states. While it is illegal to sell them once captured, they are trafficked illegally. Sanctuaries must focus on new advocacy efforts aimed at national legislation to protect bobcats from trophy hunters and traffickers.

Meanwhile, you can help bobcats live as wild predators in our 28 new Freedom Field small cat habitats! Email sandy@tcwr.org to become a quarter, half, or full sponsor of a small cat habitat.



Rayn's Journey to Freedom

All of the cats that we rescue have their own personalities. Watching their transformations and getting to know them as individuals is incredibly heartwarming and memorable. Rayn was rescued in 2008, along with another tiger and a breeding pair of leopards, from a failed roadside zoo after the state of New York pulled their license due to poor animal husbandry. Shortly after arriving at TCWR, the leopards gave birth to Spyke, who now calls our Discovery Area his home.

Rayn makes it clear who she likes and who she doesn't by her flirtatious chuffs or intense roars! From the beginning, she made her rescue difficult by refusing to load into the roll cage and needing to be sedated for transport. Once she arrived, she also told us through deep grumbles and roars that she was not a fan of her neighbors in the Discovery Area, and we put up visual barriers to make her happy. While Rayn thoroughly enjoyed stalking Bam Bam, the grizzly bear, she was still selective about the people she liked, or wanted to be around, often roaring at random guests.

During 2014, we rebuilt all of our habitats around the tour loop and decided it was in Rayn's best interest to give her a habitat where she could choose whether or not to be around people and her neighbors. Despite the beautiful, expansive habitat with a custom hammock bench and pool, Rayn spent most of her time near her night house. It was almost like there was so much space she did not know what to do with it. In 2017, we moved her again to Rescue Ridge, where it is quiet and away from the public - the perfect spot for Rayn, with bears whom she loves to stalk.

Working with big cats teaches you a lot about pride and patience because they choose the people they like and do not like. While we do not know why, it is an honor when the cat decides whom they are willing to trust after a life of abuse, abandonment, and neglect. Rayn represents that experience as she is highly selective of who she interacts with. When she hears a familiar voice approaching, Rayn is the type of tiger that immediately hides behind her water dish to play stalk. She turned 17 years old last month.

The best way to get to know the cats at the Refuge and to visit Rayn at Rescue Ridge is through our private tours. This behind-the-scenes experience accommodates up to five people and an Animal Care Staff member as your guide. Book a private tour today for a more expansive and intimate experience of the Refuge.

Some Find Freedom . . .

Rescue is always a difficult task and a constant concern regarding the safety of our staff and the animals. When we arrive at a facility, we have yet to learn about the condition of the animals or how safe the enclosures are compared to those we've built at the Refuge. Our first goal while on a rescue is to ensure the animal is safe and begin medical assessment and treatment as soon as possible. All animals find freedom once they arrive at the Refuge, whether it's for 15 years or just a few months. Unfortunately, not all animals make it to the Refuge nor experience the freedom of a large grassy habitat between their paws and a trusted food source.

In 2012, TCWR embarked on its biggest rescue mission up to that point in time, the Mountainburg Rescue. The Crawford County Sheriff's Office needed help to relocate 34 big cats from a private owner and backyard breeder. To date, it was the most dangerous rescue situation we've seen. Enclosures were held together by tie wire, with five-foot fencing that a tiger could easily scale. From November 2012 to March 2013, TCWR raced to the rescue, making 15 trips and building 20 new enclosures on what is now called Rescue Ridge.



Howard's cage was barely standing, making it very dangerous for our team as they raced to get the tiger medical attention.

One of the tigers, Sumpter, was limping around and hissing - an obvious sign of discomfort. Once he arrived at the Refuge, he was given immediate medical attention but would not eat. Sadly, Sumpter was in renal failure and had to be humanely euthanized. After returning to the Refuge one evening with four more tigers, we received a call from the owner that one of the other tigers, Howard, was also not doing well. We immediately left the following day with a veterinarian, who found that Howard had signs of an intestinal blockage. Howard underwent surgery to remove the sharp object that had caused the blockage and pierced his intestines. Unfortunately, Howard's heart stopped beating during the procedure and he was too weak to recover.

All Find Peace



We found Diesel in rough shape. He was bloated and extremely lethargic. While we could not give him freedom, we were able to help him find peace.

Much like the Mountainburg Rescue, the team faced another hard decision in 2019 with the Oklahoma Six Rescue. Diesel, a tiger, arrived at the Refuge lethargic and bloated. Immediately, he was taken to our on-site veterinary clinic, where he declined rapidly. He refused to eat and showed very little signs of recovery. Collectively, the team made the decision to end his suffering and give him the most heart-wrenching and selfless thing we could: peace.

With the passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act, authorities are now able to remove animals from neglectful situations, like the team saw in Mountainburg, before it is too late. Under the law, the animals can be seized and placed in a sanctuary where we can give them a better chance at survival, while a court works to pass litigation that will prevent their return to their previous owner. Not all of the animals our team rescues find the freedom they deserve, but we have the ability to help them find peace from a life of abuse, abandonment, and neglect.



Sumpter was in the last stages of renal failure when we reached him. He knew he was cared for at last, and would no longer suffer. The Big Cat Public Safety Act allows authorities to remove animals from neglectful situations, before it is too late.

Donate to create a better future for the animals that call TCWR home.



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