

Big Cat Chronicles

Fall 2024



Fergie

Female Liger
(*Panthera leo* × *tigris*)
Born 9/30/2011
Rescued 9/30/2016

Read more about Fergie on page 3.



An update from Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge. **COMING SOON: Rescue to Refuge, A New Era.**

Letter from the President



Dear Friends,

An adventure at TCWR offers heart-pounding roars, soulful eyes, and transformation stories of the exotic, native, and endangered wild cats and bears we rescue from the captive wildlife trade. Whether you've been with us from the start or are new to our family, there's a roar in all of us, a will to protect and preserve the majestic beings that grace our planet.

Due to your grassroots advocacy, the Big Cat Public Safety Act was passed in December 2022, turning the tide in our favor. Thanks to your generosity, we've since expanded our habitats, preparing to accommodate up to 200 animals. This was a result of our collective roar. We are grateful to everyone in our TCWR family who helped make this a reality.

However, a more significant, lasting change starts with understanding through education and advocacy. **To accomplish that, we're looking toward our next mammoth endeavor: the TCWR Education Center & Museum.**

The TCWR Education Center & Museum will promote informed advocacy against the captive trade of wild cats and bears and foster environmentalism to preserve their species and habitats in the wild. This new center will also provide our team with the space needed to perform their jobs. We've outgrown our cramped old offices that lack storage space, are expensive to heat and cool, and suffer persistent rodent infestations.

To bring this vision to life, we need your help. We urge you to join other supporters in making this crucial leap towards wildlife conservation.

No matter the size, every gift brings us one step closer to realizing this dream. Remember, you won't just contribute towards a cause; you'll be investing in the future of these incredible animals. Many of our supporters give stock, grants from donor-advised funds, or make a Qualified Charitable Distribution - all of which are "tax-smart."

In this issue, we give you a snapshot of where we are today in our work and what lies ahead. As we look to the future, we know we will face challenges. But with your help, the TCWR Education Center & Museum will not just be a building but a beacon of hope and education and a testament to our commitment to the bright future of wildlife and a more sustainable planet.

No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. So, here's to the roar inside of you that longs to make a difference. Let's build a wilder future together.

Until next time,

Tanya Smith, President & Founder



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

Featured Animal: Fergie

Between 2016 and 2017, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge rescued and rehomed 115 animals from a 12-acre Colorado roadside zoo that was breeding to support the cub petting and entertainment industries. It was common knowledge that the owner bought and traded animals with Joe Exotic, Jeff Lowe, and 'Doc' Antel. Our team brought 34 animals to TCWR and rehomed the rest at reputable sanctuaries nationwide, helping to establish the Big Cat Sanctuary Alliance.

Of the 115 animals we saved, 24 originated from Joe Exotic; five came to spend their lives at the Refuge, including a young liger named Fergie. Fergie was born at Joe Exotic's facility and she was shipped to a known cub-petting facility in Colorado. She was later sent to Dirk Arthur in Las Vegas, where he forced her to perform in his magic show, and then back to Colorado. Fergie was living with a male lion at the time of her rescue, supposedly to breed li-ligers for more profits.

Fergie's exuberant personality has emerged since she settled into true sanctuary life. She loves interacting with her keepers and animal neighbors by rubbing on the fence, walking with them, and playing stalk and pounce. In her quiet moments, this spirited liger enjoys lounging on her habitat bench while keeping a keen eye on our visitors as they walk by her habitat in our Discovery Area.

Fergie loves her smaller boomer balls and will attack and bat them with her two front paws in soccer-like play. In summer, being a liger, she doesn't care to bathe in her pool. We fill it to just enough depth for her to dunk and attack her balls in the water, then run away and return to strike again! One of her favorite forms of treat enrichment is the meaty bones we provide throughout the year to supplement her diet. Your support allows Fergie to enjoy every day of her life as she chooses!



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How Karma's Story Reminds Us To Be Wary Of Animal Attractions

Karma is a liger, a hybridized cat between a male lion and a female tiger—something that would never occur naturally in the wild. Breeders and roadside zoos create ligers because their mysterious appearance to the public is highly profitable. At just 18 months old, we rescued Karma in 2010 from an animal safari park in Missouri. The USDA APHIS division enforced stricter laws for the fence height requirements of big cat habitats, and the owners did not want the financial strain of rebuilding enclosures.

For the past 14 years, Karma has been thriving at the Refuge. Over that time, our mission has affected substantial, positive change for big cats in captivity, including stricter enclosure and welfare laws. We have also seen unaccredited animal attractions get much better at hiding their abuse as they adapt to the transparency of social media. TCWR has played an important role in protecting animals like Karma. By supporting the passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act, it is now illegal to breed hybrid felines like ligers.

Although many animal safari parks exist throughout the US, most are not ethical destinations focusing little on animal welfare. Disney's Animal Kingdom, San Diego Zoo, and Fossil Rim Wildlife Center are examples of safari parks doing things right. All three are accredited and participate in the Species Survival Plan to assist wildlife conservation. You can majorly impact animal welfare by researching a safari park before visiting it (Google search for the USDA APHIS inspection report, which will show any violations), and by investing in GFAS-accredited sanctuaries like TCWR.



FreeWill: Free and Easy Estate Planning

A successful legacy giving program is one where our generous supporters are investing in the present to rescue and provide for the animals into the future. This is accomplished by naming Turpentine Creek Foundation, Inc. as a beneficiary in their trusts, wills, and life insurance policies. Your return on this investment is the financial strength and certainty to continue achieving our mission of compassion.

This year, we launched our partnership with FreeWill — a tool that can help you create an estate plan for free. This online platform helps you through the step-by-step estate planning process in detail, without the legal and filing fees that are typically required. We encourage our supporters to take advantage of this free tool and consider making the Refuge part of your lasting legacy.

FREEWILL 



Letter from the Curator

Emily McCormack



The main goal of behavioral management training is to enhance the overall welfare of the animals. Operant conditioning is the foundation for developing reinforcement-based training methods to make veterinary and husbandry procedures less stressful for animals and more manageable for their caregivers. By teaching certain behaviors, some animals will voluntarily participate in medical procedures.

We have several animals that partake in our training program. This training has expedited voluntary injections for sedation and annual vaccines. We have also trained small cats to load into a crate, which helps when transporting them to our hospital or relocating them to a new habitat. Training can be as simple as having an older tiger follow our veterinarian, Dr. Kellyn, around the perimeter of their enclosure to reduce age-induced muscle atrophy. All actions we as caregivers perform daily inevitably can turn into a form of training. An example is how we shift and lock in animals when needed. The food or new enrichment we provide becomes their positive reinforcement.

Recently, Bam Bam rejoined the training program. His current trained behaviors are come, sit, and target (touch his nose to a ball we extend at the end of a short pipe to reposition his body). We are working on multiple behaviors to achieve the end goal of trimming his front claws without sedation. Grizzly bear claws can be two to five inches long, while black bear claws are typically less than two inches long. Bam Bam's are in great shape now, but the training could be beneficial later. He is working on presenting his paw on the enclosure fence and holding it there while we tap his claws with the trimming tool. Eventually, a second person will join the training to complete the task of trimming.



Behavioral training can help strengthen the bond between an animal and their caregivers, as seen here between Bam Bam and Curator Emily McCormack.



We are working on multiple behaviors to achieve the end goal of trimming Bam Bam's front claws without sedation.

Training can help strengthen the bond between an animal and their caregivers. Animals can develop trust and a positive relationship with their trainer. We have noticed this with all the animals currently in the program. Training is also another form of enrichment. Enrichment is crucial for captive animals, as it helps prevent boredom and behavioral issues from lack of stimulation.

Behavioral training has numerous benefits for the animals and our animal care team. By providing mental stimulation, enhancing welfare, strengthening the bond between animals and caregivers, and educating the public, behavioral training can play a vital role in the overall care, management, and quality of life for captive wildlife. You can watch some cats participate in training right before the 9 am tour. We suggest you arrive by 8:30 for check-in!

Animal Personalities Linked to Key Welfare Decisions in Captivity

Turpentine Creek has always been at the forefront of Animal Welfare, often developing protocols and husbandry techniques years before they are published. For this reason, accredited zoos and animal organizations worldwide seek our advice. One specific area that the Refuge has always emphasized is making decisions based on each animal's needs.

Last year, an article published in Cambridge University Press' International Journal of Animal Welfare Science found an important link between individual big cat personalities and managing stress in captivity. Scientific research rarely considers an animal's personality in the study of animal welfare. However, this study found that life history, genetics, and health play a role in reducing stress—which is very important to our work at the Refuge. TCWR rescues animals with a life history vastly different from their wild counterparts or those raised at a zoo. These animals are pulled from their mothers and siblings at young ages and are influenced by their owners' attempts to domesticate their behaviors. Genetics also apply since many are modified for their exotic variation or through speed breeding.

In our most recent expansion of Freedom Field, we specifically focused on designing habitats off the tour road for animals like Kimba, who are happier being away from people.



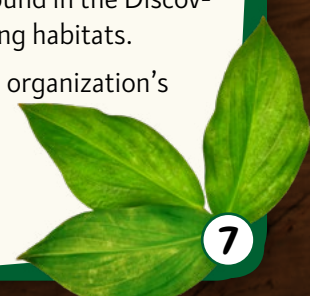
Luna thrives on attention and play but developed arthritis as she matured. We moved Luna to the flat ground in the Discovery Area, where she still gets stimulation from visitors and animals in neighboring habitats.

Jasmine 2 became aggressive around the public in her previous life, especially with baby strollers. Our team moved her to Rescue Ridge, a secluded area of the Refuge where she thrives.

In our most recent expansion of Freedom Field, we focused on designing habitats off the tour road for animals like Kimba, who are happier being away from people. When we rescued Jasmine 2, our team was informed that she became aggressive around the public, especially with baby strollers. Because of this, our team moved her to the more secluded area of Rescue Ridge, where she thrives. Unlike Jasmine 2, Luna delights in attention and play - undoubtedly due to her past life being used for pay-to-play schemes. As Luna matured, she developed arthritis. Our team moved Luna to the flat ground in the Discovery Area where the terrain is easier but she still enjoys stimulation from visitors and animals in neighboring habitats.

Thankfully, the Refuge has been taking this approach since the very beginning. We are proud to see our organization's approach to big cat welfare in captivity highlighted in the broader community and will continue to do so.

*Vaz et al. *Linking the Roles of Personality and Stress Physiology for Managing the Welfare of Captive Big Cats*. 2023. Journal of Animal Welfare Science. Vol 31. Issue 1.



Bronx to Refuge: Helping Other Big Cats Like Sasha

Sasha, an 11-month-old cougar, made national headlines in August 2021 when TCWR rescued her from a Bronx apartment in New York City. Sasha's previous owners, who purchased the young cub from a breeder, were bewildered by how fast she grew. Despite occasional outdoor walks on a leash and collar, her owners eventually concluded that their indoor apartment was not what Sasha needed to thrive.

The threat of an accidental escape in the crowded neighborhood could have been fatal for both Sasha and others. Luckily, Sasha now lives her best life in a safe environment at TCWR. As Sasha's story gained national attention, Congress enacted the Big Cat Public Safety Act (BCPSA) into law in December 2022. The BCPSA phases out private ownership of big cats as pets and prohibits public contact with big cats, including cubs.

Though the passage of the BCPSA is a victory, an informed public is needed to ensure that officials can effectively enforce the new legislation to protect big cats like Sasha. TCWR aims to triple our educational outreach with the new TCWR Education Center & Museum.



Sasha, an 11-month-old cougar, made national headlines in August 2021 when TCWR rescued her from a Bronx apartment building.



Luckily, Sasha now lives her best life in a safe environment at TCWR.



If you have firsthand knowledge of an animal welfare concern, here are steps you can take.

- First, contact your local animal control. Many animal facilities operate under permits issued by local animal control agencies.
- Second, contact the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA will inspect a facility and issue citations for violations of the Animal Welfare Act protections. Violations may result in revocation of an exhibitor's license. **Scan the QR** code to find a USDA Animal Welfare Complaint Report.
- Next, please report any instances of big cat neglect, public interaction with big cats, or big cat private ownership situations you feel are unsafe to the US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) at **lawenforcement@fws.gov** or their tips line at **1-844-397-8477**. When authorities like the USFWS confiscate big cats, rescue operations kick into gear to transfer them to qualified sanctuaries like TCWR.
- Lastly, if your advocacy efforts result in a license revocation or animal confiscation, please inform us so we can encourage others to be their voice. Share your story and any related newspaper coverage with us by emailing **cheryl@tcwr.org**.

Since 2020, TCWR has strategically planned to accommodate large-scale rescues. Your support will help us educate the nation to help the thousands of big cats awaiting rescue.

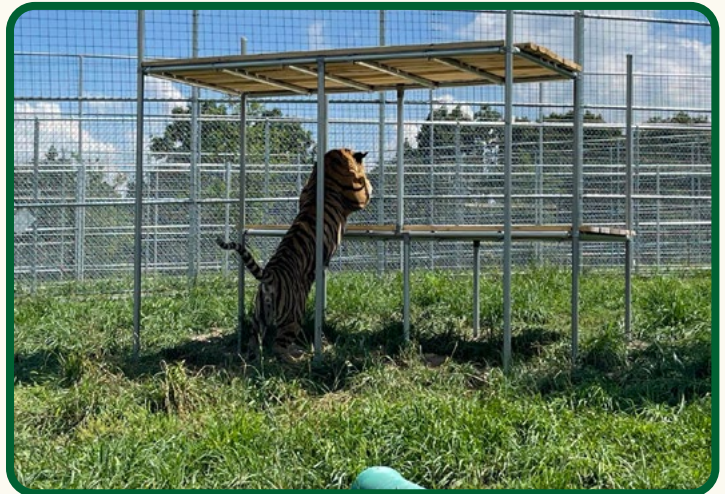
New Benches in Freedom Field

TCWR provides each animal we care for with a species-appropriate habitat that stimulates their natural behaviors and makes their life in captivity as enjoyable as possible. One of the most popular habitat features we provide wild cats is their bench.

This vital enrichment offers extra shade and satisfies the cats' need to be higher to look out over their territory. Since the cats use their benches as scratching posts, we designed them with a metal frame and sturdy wooden tops. The new two-tiered Freedom Field benches for big cats can be lowered as the cat ages to make them more accessible.

Recently, Max Tiger received his new bench. When our care team released the curious tiger, his delight was evident as he immediately investigated it. Max jumped onto the first level, rubbing his head against the poles, then quickly hopped onto the top to check out the new view of his surroundings. He then excitedly ran about his habitat and back onto his bench to rub on it further, instinctively scratching the boards.

We thank everyone who has contributed to this vital form of enrichment. Each big cat bench costs \$2,500, but the benefits it provides the cats are priceless. Please donate to help us give every cat this vital form of enrichment!



Supporters Grant Wishlist Success

Our **Wishlist Program** is a unique way for individuals like you to impact the everyday needs and activities at the Refuge directly. Our Animal Care Team has specific duties they must accomplish daily to provide lifelong care. Some animals need additional daily supplements like Vitamin E and Cod Liver Oil. In summer, we chlorinate their pools and minimize the risk of insect-borne diseases with fly bate and tick spray. Every animal at the Refuge benefits from the tick spray; we spray over 50 acres monthly! We also use dewormer on each animal quarterly to help eliminate intestinal parasites that are transferred from the environment.

While the Animal Care Team has degrees in biology and years of experience working with dangerous predators, you can directly contribute to the work each day through Wishlist contributions. Individuals like yourself can bring these simple items to the Refuge to reduce costs and directly impact the animals. We are already halfway through 2024, and have received more support from our Wishlist in just six months than any other year in total. We want to honor everyone who has made this such a success.



The Power of Recurring Donations: A Lifeline for TCWR



TCWR relies on monthly donations to sustain ongoing efforts to care for animals like Samira, including daily care, emergency medical care, habitat maintenance, and rescue operations.

TCWR's mission to provide lifetime refuge for abused and abandoned big cats is a daily commitment. This unwavering dedication is made possible through the generous donations of our donors like you. While one-time donations are immensely valuable, recurring donations help the Refuge sustain ongoing efforts like daily care, emergency medical care, habitat maintenance, and rescue operations.

One of TCWR's committed monthly donors, Judy A., was inspired to contribute when we announced our Freedom Field habitat expansion. "We started donating a few times throughout the year, but after visiting and seeing first-hand what you were doing, we felt we could help more by giving monthly" (Judy A.). Judy recognized that her monthly donations were a powerful way to advocate for the thousands of wild cats and bears in private captivity.

Monthly donations provide TCWR with a reliable and predictable source of income, allowing us to plan and allocate resources more effectively. Your recurring gift, no matter the amount, directly impacts providing lifetime refuge. Your decision to become a monthly donor is not just a financial contribution; you are investing in a future where these animals can experience ultimate freedom.

Due to rising costs for everything from animal care and grounds maintenance to gasoline and cleaning supplies, TCWR has had to increase our pricing slightly.

As of September 1, 2024, entry fees are:

General Admission (now includes ages 13+): \$35 at the door; \$32 online
Kids 3-12, Seniors 65+, Military & Veterans: \$25 at the door; \$22 online
Pride membership annual pass is \$175 at the door & online.

For only the cost of one additional general admission ticket, a Pride membership offers unlimited visits for the cardholder and up to three guests. Each time you visit the Refuge with friends and family, you help spread our mission and attract new supporters, ensuring the animals we rescue can live their best lives.

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 VALUE! Increases to \$175 9/1/24*

\$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): _____

Email Address: _____

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!

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 Joey? 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 help spread our mission by bringing friends and family to visit TCWR!

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.

NEW in December 2024! All Wild About Wildlife members will have access to our live streaming quarterly Happy Hour with exclusive videos and Q&A with TCWR senior team members.

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.

Letter from the Veterinarian

Dr. Kellyn Sweeley, DVM

This past spring, we were lucky to forge a new relationship with Dr. Kara Amstutz, a board-certified American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation veterinarian. She is the CEO and owner of the Canine Rehabilitation Institute and runs a specialty practice, Momentum Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation, out of Springfield, Missouri. She specializes in alternative treatment modalities for pain. This past March, Dr. Kara came to TCWR for consultations. From there, we planned for our first collaborative exams, making use of Dr. Kara's joint injection skills.

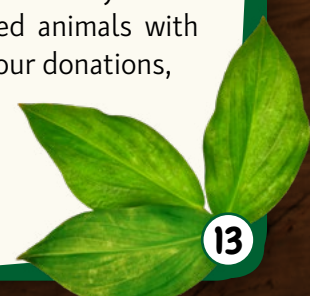


The first cases involved Shiloh and Hutch, two geriatric small cats who suffer from progressive, debilitating orthopedic conditions of their knees. Both geriatric boys are on a pain management plan consisting of joint supplements and pain medication with alterations to their habitat structures. The goal is to slow arthritis progression and help manage their pain. But of course, if there is more that we can do for them, then we would like to try it!

So, on July 6th, while I performed routine wellness exams, Dr. Kara was able to perform joint injections. We found while examining both boys that their left knees showed severe arthritis along with their right elbows. Therefore, injections were performed on both left knees and right elbows. The injections consisted of a steroid to provide immediate pain relief, hyaluronic acid, a lubricant of joints to improve mobility, and a polyacrylamide gel, Arthramidvet, that acts as a cushion, supporting the joint and slowing down the progression of arthritis for up to one year!



Shiloh and Hutch already displayed great mobility improvements and overall comfort levels in the days following the examination. We are so grateful to Dr. Kara for using her skills to improve the lives of TCWR felines. On top of this, she performed these services pro bono! We cannot thank her enough for what she is doing and cannot wait for our next collaboration. This is yet another way we are raising the bar on the standard of medicine practiced at TCWR, and we look forward to the future and more ways we can continue to provide these rescued animals with the best care possible. Through your donations, we hope only to continue raising the bar on the veterinary care these sanctuary animals receive.



Khaleesi and Emma Make Big Moves

Since her arrival in spring, Emma the Caracal has had no trouble adapting to her new life at TCWR. Before we relocated Emma, she was privately owned and spent most of her days in a basement with only two windows. After a comprehensive exam, including the removal of a large benign tumor, Emma spent weeks healing inside the veterinary hospital to allow the TCWR team to closely monitor her for any new changes during the healing period.

On June 3, Emma was relocated to her new spacious habitat at Freedom Field. She eagerly ran out into the tall grass to explore and was curious about her new neighbors, bobcats Hutch and Lovey. Emma quickly embraced the sun's warmth and can be spotted lying on her wooden platforms most days.

Meanwhile, Khaleesi, a golden tabby tiger rescued from Colorado in 2016 and a favorite among visitors, was relocated to her own habitat mid-summer. Khaleesi was living with her companion, Joey, outside the Bengal and Siberian Suites but can now be spotted further down the habitat loop.



Emma enjoys exploring the tall grass and soaking up the sunlight in her Freedom Field habitat.



Khaleesi enjoys her new habitat and extra space after being relocated during mid-summer.

Naturally, tigers are solitary animals and often contend for territory and resources. Therefore, when Khaleesi and Joey could no longer coexist peacefully, the team separated the two tigers for their physical and mental well-being.

During the move, Khaleesi was sedated, which allowed the team to perform a comprehensive examination. This examination included claw trimming, teeth cleaning, routine vaccinations, and blood work. Khaleesi enjoys good health and the extra space in her new habitat.

TCWR STAYS UP-TO-DATE ON NEW DISEASES

This summer, a wild mountain lion (also known as a cougar) in Colorado became the first one in North America to contract the “staggering disease.” This fatal neurologic syndrome has been an issue in Europe for the last five decades and now threatens cats here in the United States. The Colorado Parks and Wildlife immediately investigated a “staggering” mountain lion spotted on private property. They humanely euthanized the cat and expedited the case to the CDC for the official diagnosis.

As an animal sanctuary, news like this is vital to our team and our work to provide optimal animal welfare and to educate the public. We need to be aware of new diseases and medical challenges that we may face, especially since cougars are native to the forest that surrounds the Refuge. We have seen similar past challenges with Bobcat fever, another disease in native feline populations that we must prevent from spreading to the animals at the Refuge. Our team will monitor this developing story and prepare to fight to protect the animals in our care.

Freedom Field Naming Rights



Max

Your naming rights contribution will help us maintain these habitats for future generations of wild cats while creating a legacy for your family at the Refuge.



Showing Up for Animals That You Know Nothing About

Throughout our history, Turpentine Creek has worked with government agencies and law enforcement on criminal cases linked to abused animals. Unfortunately, we cannot share the history or stories of these animals until the cases are closed, which can take years. This puts TCWR at a disadvantage, as we cannot fundraise when the animals need immediate care.

In 2016, PETA filed a lawsuit against a roadside zoo and cub petting facility in Florida regarding two white tiger cubs. Turpentine Creek was on standby for two years until we could finally rescue and fundraise for Luna and Remington. In 2021, we rescued 13 animals from a former Tiger King facility in Oklahoma, all needing immediate medical treatment for worms, fly strikes, and other welfare concerns. The court case against the facility's owner took a year to complete. Bagheera, a black jaguar, was one of the thirteen rescued who needed additional treatment for hair loss on his tail, stomach issues, and a small mass located in his mouth.

The Refuge created the Witness Protection Program to address this challenge by raising funds for future rescues involving criminal allegations. Since the passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act in 2022, we have received increased calls to rescue both big and small cats. Law enforcement and prosecutors are actively leveraging the law to bring justice, which means there is an increase in these high-profile criminal cases. But again, we cannot disclose this information to our supporters during these rescue scenarios.

By contributing to the Witness Protection Program, supporters help fund animals' immediate rescue and medical needs even before we can openly share their stories. This giving has a profound impact because you are supporting an animal you know nothing about. **But that animal gets the care it needs and deserves for the first time in its life.**



Your Safety and Theirs are Paramount at TCWR

Safety is always number one during TCWR rescues and daily operations. The increase in severe weather events impacting our operations, such as the tornadoes and thunderstorms this past Memorial Day weekend, highlights the need to prepare our infrastructure accordingly.

While the Refuge only suffered downed trees across access roads, the multi-day power outage forced us to ration our water supply while we relied on only a few small generators. Thankfully, team communication was not impaired, as TCWR Emergency Response team members maintained fully charged two-way radios in their homes. Since then, your generosity enabled us to acquire six additional small generators to power refrigeration, lighting, and the bear habitat electric fences. We will purchase a shipping container at \$5,000 to house the generators safely.

Meanwhile, we will secure our water supply for animals and humans by installing a 26kW generator for each well and a 26kW generator to power our freezer and safeguard our on-site food storage for \$55,900 total costs, including installation, tanks and first gas fill. When funding allows, we will install a 48kW generator by our office to keep our staff working for an additional cost of \$50,000. We want to thank each of our donors, including the Walmart Foundation, for their generous gifts towards these generators, totaling \$47,673.04 as of July 31, 2024.

Currently, six underground tornado shelters with a capacity of six to eight people are adjacent to our treasurer, intern, and animal care team housing, the RV park and lodging suites, and Rescue Ridge. We must install three more of this type at roughly \$5,500 each for the three administrative teams' houses. We will install two larger units for eight to ten people at \$10,000 each near our offices and Freedom Field.

The 2026 TCWR Education Center and Museum construction will include a \$97,600 steel-enforced storm shelter for 40 to 60 people. Additional plans include hosting an Education Day for all first responders in the Refuge's local area. We are investigating ways to get another tornado siren closer than the current one, which is seven miles away.

We thank each of you who have donated to our disaster preparedness. Securing shelter during storms and water, food, and power for their aftermath will ensure that TCWR remains the premier Big Cat Sanctuary in the US while keeping animals and visitors safe.



The multi-day power outage caused by severe weather this spring forced us to ration our water supply for animals like Miles.

Help to Create New Stewards of Wildlife & the Environment

TCWR hosts Summer Day Camps to help the youth who love apex predators understand their role in nature. The camps sell out quickly, with only eight spots in two sessions we offer for ages 6-8 and 9-12.

Attendees enjoy three days of educational crafts, programs, activities, and tours of the Refuge conducted by our Wildlife Interpreters. Kids discover how to become advocates for animals exploited by the exotic pet trade and entertainment industry and for their species and native ecosystems in the wild. Since we have no commercial kitchen, each child must bring their lunch. We only offer the camps in June because of how hot July and August are in Northwest Arkansas and our lack of indoor classroom space.

The TCWR Education Center & Museum will significantly expand our educational offerings. Planned for 2026, or as soon as funding is complete, this \$4M complex will allow for year-round classes and day camps for children, with the capacity to host 30 students in each session. Our new fabricated exhibits, classes, and the TCWR animals' stories will teach children about apex predators in captivity and the wild and the role these animals play in ecosystem health.

Your support towards this critical educational expansion will help thousands of children each year become stewards of wildlife and our environment by practicing the skills of collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking while enjoying an incredible adventure at the Refuge!



TCWR hosts Summer Day Camps each June to help the youth who love apex predators understand their role in nature.

Fall Colors in the Ozarks

Immerse yourself in the vibrant autumn colors at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge, nestled in the stunning Ozark Mountains. Enjoy our guided educational tours to learn about the majestic big cats, bears, and other exotic animals we rescue. Each resident, from tigers and lions to ligers and leopards, has an inspiring story of rescue and resilience. The colorful foliage provides the perfect backdrop for capturing unforgettable moments as you support wildlife conservation with your visit. This fall, discover nature's magic and learn how you can make a difference for wild cats and bears. Plan your multi-day visit to Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge today and make memories that last a lifetime!



Announcing Our New TCWR Holiday Freedom Team

TCWR was founded by our President, Tanya Smith, her mother, Hilda Jackson, plus her father, Don, and her brother, Robert. As a family-focused nonprofit, the holiday season is special to our organization and supporters. As the cooler months roll in and days get shorter, we can slow down and focus on the connections around us. At the Refuge, we will transition from our summer duties to winter ones, trading watermelons for pumpkins or Christmas Tree enrichment and lawn care in the habitats for mulch and heated dens.

As the holiday season approaches, we want to make as many connections with our supporters as possible and provide many ways for them to feel more connected to life at the Refuge. To help accomplish this, we will launch a new opportunity this fall called the TCWR Holiday Freedom Team. This will be a Facebook Group that is open to all of our supporters and will be a central communication point for Holiday Giving. Through interactive crowdfunding initiatives, like bake sales, popcorn contests, and more, supporters will unite worldwide to help support the Refuge. If you want to combine your holiday spirit with saving big cats, please join us on our TCWR Holiday Freedom Team!



Aurora



POJ

Fireside Chat!



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