

BIG CAT CHRONICLES

SPRING 2026



Axle

Male Leopard (*Panthera pardus*)

Rescued May 2025

Learn about me on page 4.



Turpentine Creek
FOUNDATION, INC.

Letter from the President



Dear Friends,

As we welcome spring and the promise of new beginnings, I find myself reflecting on the extraordinary way we began 2026—by participating in the most complex and challenging rescues in Turpentine Creek’s history.

In January, TCWR helped facilitate our second international rescue of the year: a historic relocation of three lions and five tigers from Honduras to accredited sanctuaries in the United States. This effort required close collaboration with the Honduran government, international regulatory agencies, veterinary professionals, and an accredited partner sanctuary. It marked the first time large felines were permanently and legally transferred from Honduras in full compliance with CITES and international wildlife transport regulations.

Today, those three lions are settling into spacious, species-appropriate habitats at the Refuge, designed for lifelong care. Their transition reflects what international rescue truly requires—months of planning, complex logistics, meticulous veterinary oversight, and cooperation across borders. It is a powerful reminder that rescue is never simple, but it is always worth it.

Here at home, we have continued to strengthen the foundation of care our animals depend on every day. This winter, specialist physicians and veterinary dentists generously donated their time and expertise, allowing us to improve the care for residents with some of our most complex medical needs. These visits have made a lasting difference in the comfort, health, and quality of life of animals who have already endured so much.

We have also invested in the experience of those who walk alongside us. New guest bathrooms and a pavilion are now in place, helping ensure that your visits to the Refuge are as comfortable and welcoming as possible—so you can focus on the animals and the mission you support.

Today, 127 animals rely on us every day for specialized diets, enrichment, veterinary care, and safe, well-maintained habitats. The scope of that responsibility increases each year, and I am deeply grateful to our monthly supporters whose steady generosity makes this work possible. In times of rising costs and complex rescues, your recurring gifts are more crucial than ever.

None of our achievements this spring—such as international rescue, advanced medical care, or improved facilities—would be possible without you.

Thank you for standing with us as we face the challenges ahead, one life at a time.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Tanya Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tanya Smith, Founder and President
Turpentine Creek Foundation & Wildlife Refuge

Check out our educational resources: Education.TurpentineCreek.org

Wild Instincts Don't Disappear

At Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR), people often ask why rescued cats can't just be released back into the wild. The answer is complex—but two recent moments reminded us how crucial it is.

Sioux, a bobcat rehomed from a Florida sanctuary, recently caught an opossum that wandered into her habitat—and she ate it. Ginger, an African serval rehomed from the same facility, caught a rabbit. Encounters like these are rare at TCWR. Rabbits and other small critters sometimes find their way into enclosures, and most of our cats don't even react. Sometimes their predator instincts kick in, and they may chase or kill, but many don't eat what they catch.

But Sioux and Ginger did. And while that may seem surprising to some, it's a strong reminder: **these animals aren't domesticated**. They are predators, and their instincts can come out suddenly.

Most of the cats that come to TCWR cannot be released because they never learned how to hunt properly or survive on their own. Many were separated from their mothers too early, which left them missing important lessons wild cats need for independent living. Others have been raised around humans, creating dangerous human-wildlife conflicts that put people, pets, and livestock at risk. Additionally, animals bred for the exotic pet trade often have genetic issues or inbreeding problems that make releasing them unsafe for wild populations.

Even small cats like bobcats or servals can be unpredictable and dangerous. Sioux and Ginger are examples of what we advocate: wild animals belong in the wild—not in homes.



Ginger



Sioux

Rescue doesn't always mean release. Sioux and Ginger illustrate why even small wild cats are unpredictable—and why they belong in the wild, not in homes.



Nearly a year after his rescue, black leopard Axle is settling into what true sanctuary means—and the change is unmistakable.

Because of You, Axle Is Finally Thriving

Nearly a year after his rescue, black leopard Axle is settling into what true sanctuary means—and the change is unmistakable.

In May 2025, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR) stepped in after a California facility lost its permit due to repeated animal welfare violations. Working with the USDA and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, TCWR rescued eight wild cats—including Axle—and provided them lifelong sanctuary.

For years, Axle lived in a roadside zoo that showcased his rare black coat rather than addressing his long-term health needs. During his intake exam, Dr. Kellyn identified the toll of neglect: Axle was missing a claw, had never been microchipped, and—most concerning—was diagnosed with advanced kidney disease and a heart murmur, both of which had remained untreated.

Today, Axle is receiving personalized veterinary care. This includes daily visual checks, blood tests to monitor kidney function, and medications and supplements for his kidneys and heart, along with a carefully designed diet to support renal health. Caregivers update his treatment daily to keep him stable and comfortable.



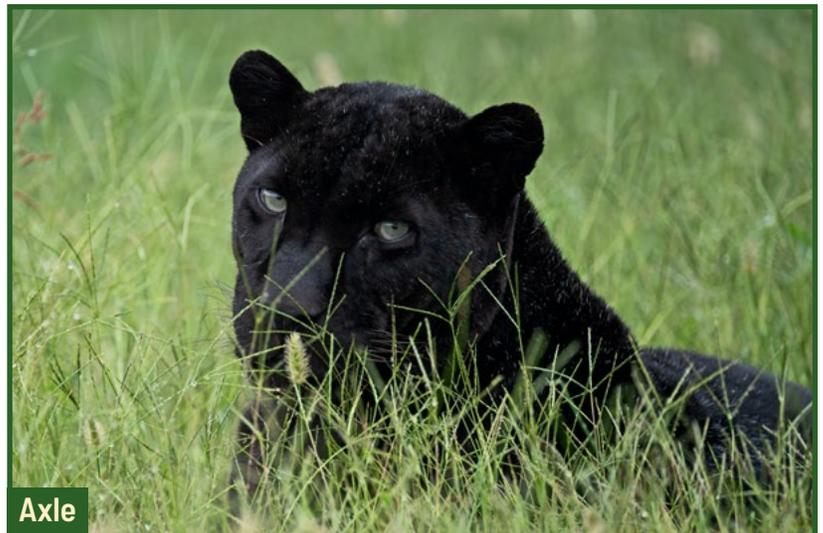
Axle now lives in a species-appropriate habitat in Freedom Field with climbing structures, soft natural ground, and quiet, shaded areas.

At 14, Axle lives in a species-appropriate habitat in Freedom Field, with climbing structures, soft natural ground, and quiet shady spots. Despite his age and kidney disease, he remains one of the most active cats throughout the day. He loves lounging on his tall perch, watching staff and interns come and go. On warm days, he often sprawls out in unusual positions. Rolling in the grass remains a favorite activity, as does playing with his boomer ball, cardboard tubes, and other toys—especially the large industrial-sized tubes he eagerly rolls, kicks, and shreds.

Axle is selective about his relationships and often sends mixed signals—greeting staff with a hiss, then stalking after them a moment later and breaking into a playful run before rolling in the grass when they walk away. If he hears animal care staff nearby, he'll quietly lie in wait, watching carefully, then Axle chirps and calls to his favorite caregivers just for attention.

Food-motivated and deliberate, he takes his time with meals but is always eager for snacks and his twice-daily medications. Axle enjoys watching his neighbors—though he's not shy about voicing his opinion if someone else appears to be getting a treat meant for him. Vocal and expressive, he communicates with gentle leopard sounds and his distinctive "sawing" call.

Axle's thriving life is thanks to you. By adopting or sponsoring him, you provide the specialized veterinary care, nutrition, and enrichment he needs not just to survive but to truly live life on his terms. *Thank you for giving Axle the life he always deserved.*



Axle makes his signature "sawing" call when treats are on the line—and he's thriving because of you.

[TCWR.org/Adoptions](https://www.tcwr.org/Adoptions)

Letter from the Curator

Emily McCormack



When planting the final flag, the vision of Freedom Field was no longer just a plan or a dream. It now stands complete and full of life.

From the very beginning of the project, each flag placed across the field carried a purpose. Together, all the flags mapped the design of Freedom Field, outlining pathways, habitats, buildings, water, and electricity with intention and detailed care. What once looked like a crazy arrangement of markers slowly revealed itself as natural habitats that reflect open spaces, respecting every animal it would soon support.

The last flag marked more than the end of a long layout process. It symbolized an emotional moment when planning gave way to reality. When that final marker was set, the design was no longer invisible. It was real, ready for construction, and ready for the years of rescued animals who would eventually call it home.

Unbelievably, that moment came full circle this January.

As we released Zephora into her new habitat in Freedom Field on January 15 upon completion of the Honduras rescue, I suddenly realized that this was the exact spot where I had planted that final flag years earlier. The last cat to be placed in a now full Freedom Field stood in the very place where the future had once only been imagined.

Zephora was curious and unmistakably at home. She completed the living picture for which the field was strategically designed. Where there was once an empty grass pasture reserved for our future plans, there is now movement and saved lives.



When Zephora stepped into Freedom Field, she completed a vision years in the making.

Together, that final flag and the final cat remind us why Freedom Field exists at all. It is not just about the layout; it's about creating the spaces we need to continue our mission of rescue. And now that last marker has become the final habitat where a beautiful lioness finally belongs, exactly where she is.

As we step back and take in the finished project, we do so with gratitude to all our donors for taking the journey with us and excitement for what comes next. Freedom Field is complete, has its own story, is now fully inhabited, and is just beginning for so many saved lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily McCormack".

Emily McCormack, Animal Curator
Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge



The final flag of Freedom Field.



FREEDOM FIELD IS NOW FULLY INHABITED

Thanks to Your Support, Three Honduras Lions Start Their New Lives at TCWR



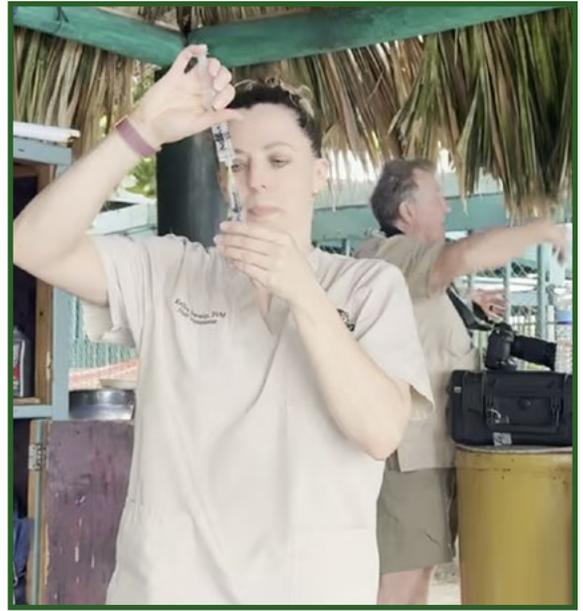
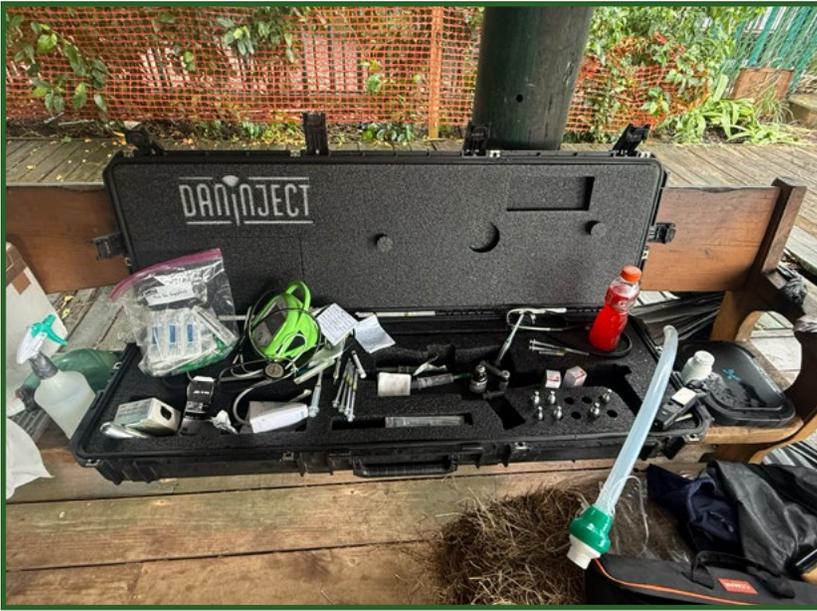
This was the first time large felines were permanently and legally moved from Honduras to accredited U.S. sanctuaries in accordance with CITES and international wildlife transport regulations.

Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR) recently welcomed three rescued African lions after a historic, fully permitted international relocation. This was the first time large felines were permanently and legally moved from Honduras to accredited U.S. sanctuaries in accordance with CITES and international wildlife transport regulations.

This rescue took over 18 months to plan. Long before the lions began their journey, TCWR quietly coordinated with government agencies, international regulators, veterinarians, and an accredited sanctuary partner to secure the necessary permits to move exotic big cats across borders. Every step was carefully organized to ensure the relocation was legal and safe, with the animals' long-term well-being as the top priority.

Despite careful planning, unavoidable delays extended the timeline far beyond everyone's expectations. Securing the export permits turned out to be the most challenging part. Once they were finally obtained in January, last-minute resistance arose from the air cargo carrier over how to interpret crate regulations.

"It got so frustrating because we wanted those animals to arrive before the cold weather set in so they could have a nice winter coat," said President and Founder Tanya Smith. "What these cats have had to go through is more than I've ever had to put any other animals through in my entire life."



Every step was carefully organized to ensure the relocation was legal and safe, with the animals' long-term well-being as the top priority.

This complex rescue involved eight big cats. TCWR committed to providing lifelong sanctuary for the three lions, and because our habitats would be full with their arrival, we reached out to an associate GFAS-accredited sanctuary to partner with us and care for the five tigers. From the beginning, our focus was on ensuring each animal had the space, resources, and long-term care needed to thrive physically, behaviorally, and medically.

Vice President Scott Smith oversaw the construction of custom crates in Honduras late last summer to meet international air freight standards. Once the export paperwork was approved by the Honduran government, TCWR's team flew to Honduras on January 10, 2026. Veterinary oversight from Dr. Kellyn, along with Curator Emily McCormack, ensured the safe administration of anesthesia and the loading of all eight cats into their transport crates, amid heavy rain. The animals were then transported by cargo ship to the Honduran mainland—normally a five-hour crossing—in just four hours to stay ahead of an approaching major storm system, and then by land to the airport, with Dr. Kellyn and Scott accompanying them.



The animals were then transported to the Honduran mainland by floating helipad to cargo ship.

More on the next pages!



The animals' crates were then loaded by crane on a flatbed truck that was transported by cargo ship to the Honduran mainland—normally a five-hour crossing—in just four hours to stay ahead of an approaching major storm system

The lions and tigers were flown to Miami, FL, on a cargo flight with DHL. From Miami, President and Founder Tanya Smith, along with Emily McCormack and animal care team member Mia, drove over 1,250 miles to ensure their safe delivery to TCWR. From loading on Monday, January 12, to arrival shortly after noon on Thursday, January 15, every part of the 60-hour journey was carefully coordinated to prioritize safety, comfort, and veterinary oversight.

Today, the three lions are settling into large, species-appropriate habitats designed for lifelong care. Their move highlights the planning, logistics, and teamwork involved in international rescues.



The lions and tigers were flown to Miami, FL, on a cargo flight with DHL.

CYRUS

Cyrus is a ten-year-old African lion who arrived at TCWR underweight and in need of a full physical exam and diagnostic testing to evaluate possible gastrointestinal disease or other underlying conditions. He is calm and laid-back and now resides in a spacious, naturalistic habitat where he can rest and observe his surroundings. He receives individualized veterinary care, pain management, and a tailored diet, along with enrichment to support physical activity and mental engagement. Cyrus is possessive of his food and water dish but is becoming more relaxed and increasingly vocal. With warmer weather, he has shown more playful behavior and has begun running along the fence with Dr. Kellyn, occasionally joined by Shakira Luna.

TCWR.org/Adoptions



Cyrus

Cyrus, after your long journey, welcome to your new life at TCWR.

JUANCITO

Juancito, an African lion, is 10 years old and has mobility issues that are being carefully managed under veterinary supervision, including pain management and a special diet. Curious and alert, he enjoys exploring his large habitat, patrolling his space, and engaging with rotating enrichment activities that promote problem-solving and physical activity. Daily personalized attention ensures Juancito's needs are met, helping to maintain his strength, confidence, and naturally curious personality as he adjusts to life at the Refuge.

TCWR.org/Adoptions



Juancito



Juancito

Meet Juancito, a curious African lion adapting to life at the Refuge with specialized care.



Zephora

ZEPHORA

Zephora, a nine-year-old white African lion, arrived with mobility issues and a history of health problems. Playful and curious, she now lives in a spacious habitat with a heated den, climbing areas, and weekly enrichment activities that encourage safe exploration and choice. With personalized veterinary care, pain management, and supportive nutrition, Zephora can move at her own pace, interact with caregivers, and thrive in a secure environment that respects both her physical needs and her inquisitive, social nature.



Zephora

Zephora now lives in a spacious natural habitat at the Refuge that encourages her instincts.

Stay tuned for updates in our summer edition, when temperatures permit Dr. Kellyn to conduct full examinations. Already, this rescue has garnered international attention, with coverage from the Honduras National Institute of Forest Conservation (ICF), *People* magazine, the *Arkansas State Gazette*, and from Aaron Parnas of *The Parnas Perspective*—one of the top-ranked news newsletters, with hundreds of thousands of subscribers.

You can help give these lions the second chapter they deserve. By sponsoring, adopting, or donating, you help ensure a future filled with safety, space, and stability. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our supporters and the dedication of the TCWR team, these lions now have a place to call home—and with your ongoing support, they always will.

**Adopt or sponsor Cyrus,
Juancito or Zephora!**

Northwest Arkansas — Ready To Volunteer?

Turpentine Creek is now on **GivePulse**! Find local volunteer opportunities at the Refuge and make a real difference for captive animals.

Want to bring your friends, coworkers, or a group out for a service project?
You can help create a volunteer opportunity, too!

Email volunteering@tcwr.org and we'll use GivePulse to help organize your event. **Share your love of the Refuge with your community through community service.**



Preparing for Warmer Weather & Ticks: Bravecto

At Turpentine Creek, we work year-round to keep every animal healthy through consistent preventative care—but as temperatures rise, those efforts become even more critical. Warmer weather means ticks become more active and more widespread, increasing the risk of painful bites and dangerous illnesses. That's why our annual Bravecto treatments are so important during the spring and summer months. Each dose is a significant cost per animal, but it's a vital part of the commitment we make to protect the cats who call our sanctuary home.



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 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 & four 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 Exclusive Insider Access! 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 \$375- \$1,249*

- Friends of India membership card & decal
- 15% off of Gift Shop purchases
- 10% off of 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 want to give!

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: _____@_____

\$25 X _____ quantity + \$5 shipping. Pre-order 2026 TCWR Calendars! Featuring Refuge residents, makes a great gift!

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!

\$100 Wild Within PAWS Membership Visit (tcwr.org/wild-within) to learn about all the extra benefits this special kids & teens membership offers for a limited time only!

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

\$175 Pride Membership - You and 3 guests get a full year of visits to the Refuge. **BEST VALUE!**

\$375+ Friends of India

\$1,250+ Bam Bam Benefactors

Total: \$ _____

\$3,000+ Kenny Fellowship

\$10,000+ Hilda Jackson Society

Opt Out of Membership Signup Gifts

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

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

Adopt or Sponsor an Animal Today!

Printed Animal Adoption:

\$175 annually (printed certificate)

\$150 annually (digital certificate)

Animal Sponsor:

\$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!

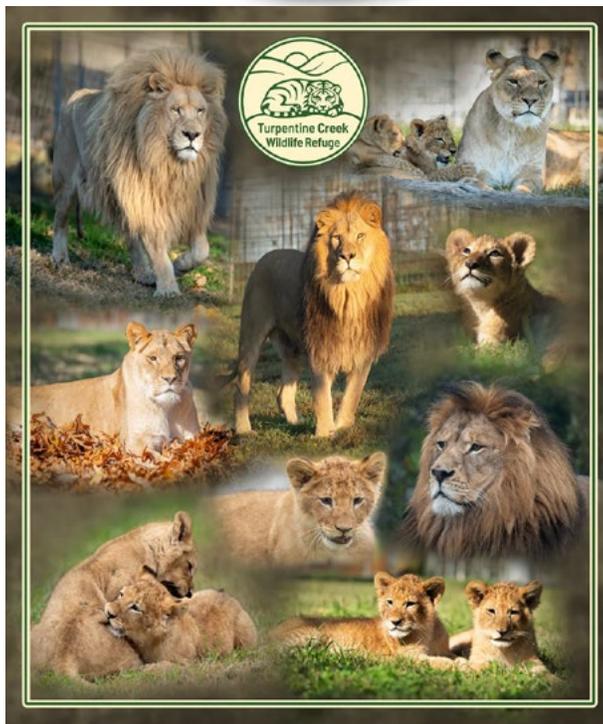
Two Tiny Lions — One Huge Rescue Story

Visit our gift shop today for new Canada Rescue-inspired swag, featuring **Reggie and Archie**. Gift shop purchases help provide the animals at Turpentine Creek with a forever home. Now, you can celebrate their story (and help support their future!) with **brand-new Gift Shop swag inspired by our newest cubs**.

Because rescue doesn't end at transport day. It lasts a lifetime. And you make it possible.



Reggie & Archie Plush



Canada Lion Rescue Throw



Bringing in Expert Colleagues to Improve the Lives of TCWR Animals

Dr. Kellyn Sweeley, DVM



As a General Practitioner (GP) of exotic animals, it is always exciting to bring in my colleagues, experts in their specialized fields, to ultimately improve the standard of veterinary care for the animal residents of TCWR. This past winter, we were fortunate to have not only one group collaboration but two! Again, Dr. Kara Amstutz, DVM, DACVSMR, and the crew from her clinic, Momentum Veterinary Sports Medicine & Rehabilitation, located in Springfield, MO, were out in November to treat both Samson and Lucy, the lions, with multiple joint injections and shockwave therapy to improve their musculoskeletal comfort. She even helped us get an oral muscle supplement, Ursolyx, donated by the veterinary company Virbac for Samson, and he has been showing excellent results from that treatment.

Then, in December, we were able to host the Dental Coalition for Conservation (DCC), a group composed of Dr. Charles Dyer IV, DDS, MS, PS, and Dr. Barron Hall, DVM, DAVDC. Our veterinary care team was in charge of anesthesia and monitoring for the cats receiving the dental work, while also performing other wellness tasks such as physical exams, blood work, claw trimming, vaccines, etc.

The team of dentists performed three canine root canals for Livia tiger, an oral tumor removal for Sebastian tiger, a retained canine extraction, meaning the tooth never erupted and was embedded deep in the mandibular bone, for Prince bobcat, and another canine root canal for Donner tiger; all of which was very impressive dental work!



In December, we hosted the Dental Coalition for Conservation. Dr. Charles Dyer IV and Dr. Barron Hall provided dental care while our veterinary team managed anesthesia and monitoring and completed additional wellness procedures, including exams, blood work, claw trims, and vaccines.



As always, we loved having Dr. Kara out here and plan to continue fostering our relationship with her, but we are also excited to have created a new relationship with the DCC to help with advanced dental work on our 100+ animal residents. Dental health is so important, but it is often very difficult for GPs to provide efficient and effective care due to a lack of specialized equipment and advanced training.

By bringing in these wonderful experts, TCWR veterinary care continues to go above expectations and makes me proud to lead the development of our veterinary medicine program. And the best part is, these doctors offer their expertise pro bono, which takes away the financial burden of providing excellent veterinary treatment for a non-profit sanctuary, and we cannot thank them all enough for their compassion for these animals. I am excited to see what our next collaborations will bring and how we can deliver top-notch vet care for the animals here at TCWR in new ways.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kellyn Sweeley, Veterinarian,
Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge

Advanced Veterinary Care Bringing Relief to Samson and Lucy



Dr. Kara Amstutz, DVM, DACVSMR, a board-certified veterinarian with the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation, provides advanced diagnostics and treatment for Samson lion.

When Samson, a male African lion, arrived at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR), his twisted front limbs and weakness from severe Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD) raised serious concerns about his long-term comfort and quality of life. Rescued in May 2025 after a California facility lost its permit, Samson required immediate, specialized evaluation and care.

Rescued alongside him, Lucy, a lioness born in 2016, also arrived with significant skeletal deformities caused by MBD, affecting her mobility and daily comfort. Both lions now receive individualized, lifelong care focused on reducing pain and supporting mobility.

To support their recovery, Dr. Kara Amstutz, DVM, DACVSMR, a board-certified veterinarian with the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation, provided advanced diagnostics and treatment. She is the CEO and owner of the Canine Rehabilitation Institute and operates Momentum Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation in Springfield, Missouri. Dr. Kara donates her expertise pro bono, with TCWR covering only material costs.

Lucy received joint injections in both elbows and shoulders, along with shockwave therapy, a noninvasive treatment that promotes healing and tissue regeneration. Imaging confirmed lasting skeletal impacts of MBD, including a dropped pelvis, which required dietary adjustments to support digestive comfort. Within weeks, Lucy was moving more comfortably and showing significantly reduced pain.

Samson's evaluation revealed milder arthritis than expected, shifting his care plan toward strength-building and mobility support. After targeted joint injection, shockwave therapy, and a donated muscle-support supplement, he showed increased activity and engagement.

The joint injections, combining anti-inflammatory medication with a cushioning hydrogel, are expected to provide up to one year of pain relief, improving daily comfort for both lions.

By adopting or sponsoring Samson and Lucy, you will help us continue to provide the high level of care they need to thrive!

TCWR.org/Adoptions



Lucy



Samson

When Samson and Lucy arrived at the Refuge, their skeletal deformities raised serious concerns. Dr. Kara Amstutz of Springfield donated her expertise pro bono, diagnosing and treating both lions. Adopt or sponsor Samson or Lucy to help us continue providing lifelong care!



Double Your Impact — At No Extra Cost

Good news! Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge now offers **Double the Donation** matching gifts.

Did you know that many employers will match your donation, turning \$25 into \$50 (and sometimes more)? Together, we can make the world a better place—through your individual gift and the support of employers who choose to match it.

How to Double Your Donation today:

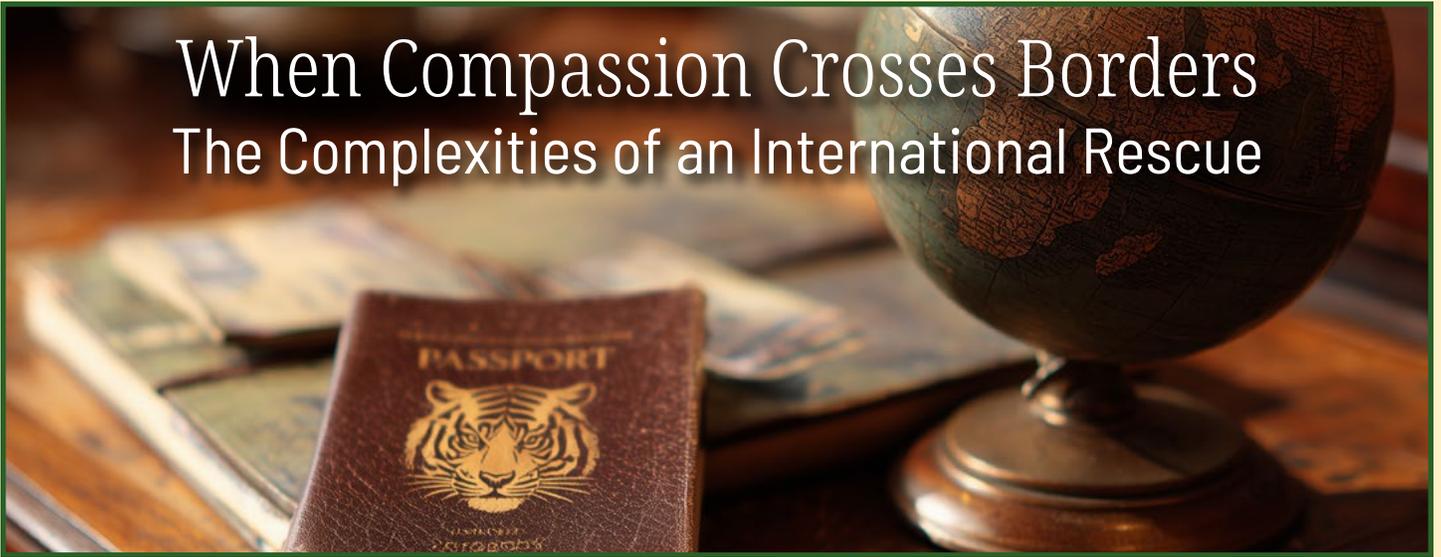
1. **Scan the QR code**
2. **Search your employer**
3. **If your employer participates, donate and request a quick match**

Your gift now helps double the impact, providing lifelong care, enrichment, and a safe, forever home for rescued wild cat companions.



When Compassion Crosses Borders

The Complexities of an International Rescue



At Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR), each rescue serves as a reminder that saving animals across borders is far from easy. International missions demand months of planning, coordination, and unwavering commitment to protect every life involved.

The work starts well before the first animal is loaded. Our teams must handle extensive permits, government approvals, veterinary regulations, and customs clearances—each with its own timeline, rules, and required paperwork. Missing a form, a processing delay, or a change in permit language can push a rescue back by weeks. When you're handling wild animals, there's no room for shortcuts, and no such thing as "close enough."

Beyond the paperwork, animal welfare remains our top priority. International rescues require ongoing communication between veterinarians, government agencies, sanctuary partners, and transport professionals. This also includes one of the most difficult aspects: coordinating logistics and transportation for a type of cargo most companies never handle—big cats.

Transporting dangerous, rare wildlife is not like moving standard freight. Every handoff matters. Every delay can impact animal welfare. Every decision must balance safety, stress reduction, and compliance with international regulations.

One of the most critical and high-risk parts of any rescue is sedation, and it is never routine. Sedation isn't just an injection — it's science. Veterinarians must know an animal's relative age and weight as accurately as possible because safe dosing depends on both. Too little can create a dangerous situation during handling, and too much can be life-threatening. Whenever possible, we also perform a field exam to better understand an animal's immediate medical condition before transport begins. If there are underlying illnesses, injuries, or complications we don't know about, sedation can become dangerous or even deadly.

The weather is another factor we can't ignore. Temperature influences how animals recover from anesthesia, and extreme heat or cold increases the risk during travel. Weather also affects human safety, especially when teams are moving heavy equipment around stressed, powerful animals on wet or slippery ground.

Moreover, we must legally secure the medications needed for sedation and emergency care, which are already complex across state lines and even more challenging across international borders.

International rescues require patience, precision, and compassion—they also need the right logistics partners. Coordinating logistics for big cats is different from moving other cargo: it demands specialized planning, secure handling, strict scheduling, and constant communication to protect both the animals and everyone involved. We're extremely thankful to **DHL** for helping us navigate these challenges during our latest rescue mission in **Honduras**. Their support helped turn a complicated international operation into a safe journey forward—because when the cargo is rare, powerful, and alive, every detail counts, and every successful rescue contributes to a safer future for animals who deserve it.

Spring Sun, Winter Work: Keeping Our Cats Warm

As spring nears at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR), we notice the season's change in our cats. Longer days bring increased energy—more exploring, stretching in the sunlight, and playful activity as warmer weather starts to return soon.

But even when the afternoons feel warm, the cold hasn't completely gone away.

Spring in the Ozarks is unpredictable, with chilly mornings, sudden cold snaps, and overnight temperatures that can drop quickly. While our rescued wild cats are adapted for the outdoors, many come from situations where neglect, stress, or poor nutrition weakened their bodies. At TCWR, it's our duty to ensure they have a warm shelter during every cold night.

Behind the scenes, our Animal Care Team continues to work daily to keep den areas comfortable. That means higher electricity costs for heating dens, replacing heat lamp bulbs, and performing repairs to block cold air and moisture from seeping in. We also regularly swap out mulch in the den areas, which helps insulate and retain heat—but it breaks down quickly in wet spring weather and needs frequent refreshing.

These seasonal needs add up quickly, and they don't stop just because the calendar says. This is a great time to support the Refuge. Your help keeps our cats warm, comfortable, and safe as winter winds down and spring gets busier.

The cats might be enjoying the sunshine but, thanks to you, their homes stay warm when it matters most.

TCWR Welcomes Your 2026 Spring Interns!



BACK ROW

Catherine Geerdes² Colorado State U BS Zoology December 2024	Emily Cossey³ Arizona State U BS Biology May 2023	Colin Sezen² Missouri S&T BS Biology December 2024	Stephanie Morine¹ U of Minnesota Duluth BS Biology May 2025	Anna Walters¹ U of Arkansas BS Animal Science December 2024	Adam Stallings¹ Northwest Nazarene U BS Wildlife Biology & Ecology May 2025	Ian Gourdin¹ Southern Wesleyan U BS Env. Science & Biology May 2025	Ashley Landau¹ Kansas State U BS Conservation Biology May 2025
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FRONT ROW

Bri Hinchliffe² Colorado State U BS Zoology August 2023	Carly Nelson² Washington State U BS Biology General Education December 2024	Alliyah Marquez³ U of Texas, El Paso BS Ecology & Evol. Biology December 2023	Kenna Dunahoo¹ Oklahoma State U BS Zoology May 2025	Chara Larson¹ Gordon College BS Biology May 2025	Ashley Best² Charleston Southern U BS Wildlife Biology December 2024	Noah Hughes¹ Lees Mc-Rae College BS Wildlife Biology December 2024
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¹First internship at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge. ²Second internship. ³Third internship.

FREE FAMILY EVENT

Kite Fest

AT THE REFUGE
MARCH 28



The weather is warming up, and you can feel the energy shift all across the Refuge—our cats are becoming more active, more playful, and ready to soak up the sunshine. There’s no better time to visit than spring, when the sanctuary comes alive with movement, personality, and unforgettable moments around every corner. **Spring into the Ozarks** and book your stay at Turpentine Creek today for a once-in-a-lifetime experience you’ll never forget.

Lodging Packages:

Movie



Birthday



Romance



S'mores





Sebastian

Walking Beside Sebastian Through Every Chapter

When Sebastian arrived at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR) in October 2025, his journey felt like a full-circle moment. In 2021, when our habitats were full, TCWR orchestrated his placement at Crown Ridge Tiger Sanctuary, a GFAS-accredited facility, after rescuing him from Tiger King Park in Oklahoma. Four years later, his return reunited him with the sanctuary that first helped secure his rescue. As Sebastian settled into his new home in Freedom Field, our veterinary team was also preparing to address a serious medical concern.

Earlier in 2025, caretakers at Crown Ridge noticed a growth along Sebastian's upper jaw. At first, it appeared slow-growing, but by late summer, it had enlarged, begun covering parts of his teeth, and affected his ability to eat. A procedure was performed to reduce the mass and collect samples for testing. The initial biopsy indicated a benign mass, which was surprising but hopeful. However, the growth quickly returned and continued to enlarge.

During a recent dental procedure at TCWR, our veterinary team collaborated with the Dental Coalition for Conservation (DCC) to closely examine the tumor. Based on its appearance, growth pattern, and specialized pathology review, the tumor is now considered highly suspicious for an aggressive form of oral cancer with a poor prognosis due to its rapid spread. While additional testing could further refine the diagnosis, the tumor's behavior, location, and fast growth make one thing clear: extensive surgery or repeated procedures would not be in Sebastian's best interest. His care has shifted to a palliative approach, focused on comfort, pain management, and quality of life.

Sebastian is currently eating well, remains engaged with his caretakers, and continues to enjoy his days. Our veterinary team has implemented a comprehensive pain management plan and is monitoring him closely for changes in behavior, appetite, or comfort. Because tigers can mask discomfort remarkably well, we treat pain proactively rather than wait for visible distress.

This is not the outcome anyone hopes for, but it reflects the reality of lifelong sanctuary care: being present through every chapter, including the hardest ones. Sebastian is surrounded by familiar caregivers, steady routines, and the dignity he has always deserved. As long as he remains comfortable, he will continue to enjoy his time at Freedom Field—supported, loved, and never alone. Your monthly donations ensure that we can continue to give animals like Sebastian the care they deserve, no matter what medical issues arise.



Sebastian

Sebastian's life has had some unexpected challenges but also joy at the Refuge.



Sebastian

Your Peek into Animal Relationships

The arrival of Thor, a striking white lion from Canada, may be the most exciting change li-liger Kyro and lioness Samira have experienced since settling into their hilly habitats along the tour loop.

From the moment Thor arrived, Kyro nearly lost his composure. He spent those first days stalking the fence line from a distance, carefully sizing up the much larger newcomer. Thor—confident and impossible to miss—quickly made his presence known, moving steadily along his habitat and marking his territory as he adjusted to his new surroundings.

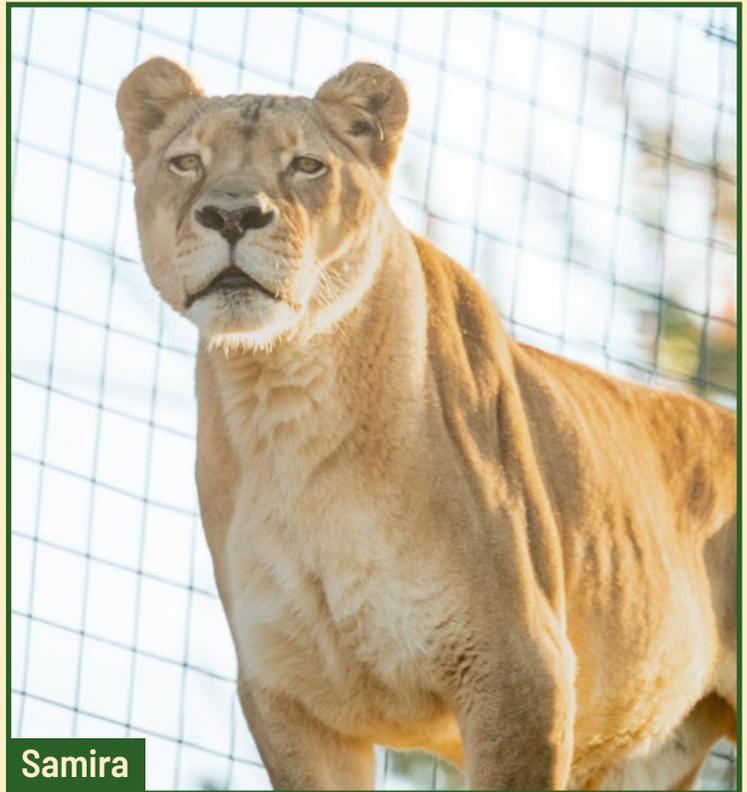


Kyro

The arrival of Thor, a striking white lion from Canada, may be the most exciting change li-liger Kyro and lioness Samira have experienced since settling into their hill habitats along the tour loop.

Samira, however, was instantly intrigued. Known among our staff as a particularly nosy neighbor, she positioned herself near the shared fence, quietly observing. Soon, watching turned into action. Samira and Thor began running up and down the hillside together, stopping often to rub along the barrier that separated them. Kyro watched her every move with focused attention, making it clear he was keeping a close eye on his new neighbor.

As the days went on, the tension eased. Kyro gradually returned to his familiar rhythm with Samira, and the two could once again be seen resting and grooming each other through their shared fence. Even now, all three often choose the same corner of their habitats—near their access doors and night houses—lying close, pacing, and clearly aware of one another's presence.



Samira



Thor

New Pavilions

We're excited to share some big upgrades at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge—designed with *you* in mind.

Our **glamping bathrooms have been thoughtfully improved**, offering cleaner, more comfortable, and more convenient amenities so guests can relax and enjoy their stay while staying connected to nature.



Just steps away, we've also built a **brand new covered pavilion**, creating a welcoming space to gather, rain or shine. This pavilion provides a beautiful setting for **small events, educational programs, group experiences, and special moments at the Refuge**—all surrounded by the sounds and spirit of sanctuary life.

SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 19 & 20



Keeping Cool in the Summer Heat

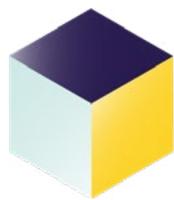
Summers in Northwest Arkansas are becoming hotter, making it more important to keep our animals safe, hydrated, and engaged. At Turpentine Creek (TCWR), water isn't just a necessity—it's an enrichment. Pools help our cats and bears stay cool, reduce stress, and engage in natural behaviors that are crucial to their well-being.

This winter, we completed building a new tank house to hold a large water tank and plumbing system, providing fresh water for all habitats and pools year-round. The 12x14-foot structure, with 12-foot walls and a pitched roof, is designed to last.

The project cost **\$50,500**, which included the tank, plumbing, building materials, roof, labor, electrical work, and landscaping. The concrete work was finished early to prevent delays.

This new water source is more than just a structure—it's an investment in the well-being of every animal at the Refuge. You can help us recover these costs so we can keep providing the care and enrichment our residents need.

Support the Water Tank Project today—because every splash matters. Donate to our general fund!



The Giving Block

New Way to Give: The Giving Block

At Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge, every rescue is powered by compassion – and by people who refuse to look away. Now, we're making it even easier for you to support lifelong sanctuary care with a new giving option.

Turpentine Creek has partnered with The Giving Block (thegivingblock.com) so you can continue protecting rescued animals using a giving method that works best for you.

WAYS YOU CAN GIVE THROUGH THE GIVING BLOCK

- Cryptocurrency Donations like Bitcoin, Ethereum, and more
- Stock Donations
- Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs)
- Matching Gifts
- International Giving

Available through our **Support the Animals** page on our website, or through the QR Code.

Turpentine Creek Foundation, Inc.
239 Turpentine Creek Lane
Eureka Springs, AR 72632
479-253-5841

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Poncho's Story

Poncho was rescued in 2016 as part of the Colorado Project, a large-scale rescue involving 115 animals from a failing roadside zoo. After years of inadequate care, he was transferred to Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge, where he now receives lifelong sanctuary.

Today, at 16, Poncho is a confident and social tiger known for greeting caregivers with friendly chuffs. He enjoys enrichment, carrying his boomer ball through his habitat, watching his neighbors, and cooling off in his pool during the summer. Calm and unbothered by daily activity, Poncho has thrived in the stability and care sanctuary provides.

Your monthly support helps ensure Poncho—and animals like him—receive the daily care, enrichment, and medical attention they depend on for life.

TCWR.org/Adoptions



Turpentine Creek Foundation, Inc. Federal Tax/EIN: 71-0721742
239 Turpentine Creek Lane, Eureka Springs, Arkansas 72632

Poncho