Letter From The President
Tanya Smith Founder / President

Great things happen here everyday thanks to our loyal supporters and devoted staff. First time visitors are always amazed at being able to see so many tigers and other animals the way our animals can be seen at such close proximity. Everyone usually leaves with a favorite or two in mind.

One of our recent success stories is about Max, the tiger, as noted in our Curator’s article. We are all really pleased with Max’s progress.

A few items of interest about our animals for first time visitors are listed here.

- The typical age for big cats in the wild is 10 to 14 years – our 120+ cats have an average age between 15 & 16 and our oldest tiger is an unbelievable 22!
- We specialize in adopting abused & neglected animals; so many of our wildlife ambassadors are in need of immediate professional care or already have ongoing health issues.
- Some animals are the result of ill-advised cross breeding, which often creates an assortment of long term health issues, from dwarfism to scoliosis to bone density issues.
- We employ over 12 college senior interns majoring in animal related sciences ranging from zoology to microbiology. Each one spends at least five days a week caring for our diverse wildlife family. They know each animal’s unique story, so ask them anything you like, they’re happy to answer any questions or concerns.

With more than 30,000 visitors per year, we welcome feedback that helps us do a better job in caring for all of our Big Cats and other animals. So if you are planning a first time visit or coming back again, be sure to plan time to enjoy all we offer, including:

- Guided Walking Tours: Led by our interns (16 new interns are trained every 6.5 months), you’ll see the largest natural habitats and hear the story behind our big cats. Guided trolley tours are also available.
- Education Station: Located in the Gift Shop, this education area provides a variety of wildlife information and presents an award-winning video about the history of TCWR.
- Spend the Night: We offer a variety of overnight accommodations, including the Safari Lodge, campgrounds, and RV Park. Enjoy the outdoor Safari Lodge hot tub while listening to the chorus of roaring tigers & lions.
- Tour the Memorial Park: Watch the koi in our reflecting pond and read the memorial wall.
- Visit the refuge web site, Facebook page and YouTube Channel: Enjoy photos, videos and interesting details about our mission, animals and staff.

We look forward to your visit and hope you have the time to enjoy all we offer at Eureka Springs’ most unique and popular attraction. Better yet, budget some time to volunteer or make a donation to help us help them. We appreciate your support.
After completing the RTS rescue of almost 30 big cats in early March, one of our biggest rescue operations to date, we put their habitat expansions on hold. Since relocation is very stressful for any wild animal, we wanted to provide time for these long neglected cats to settle into their new surroundings and feeding schedules as peacefully as possible. Plus, at $7,000 per enclosure, we needed time to raise additional funds to enlarge every new habitat we had built.

I am glad to announce the cats have shown tremendous improvement so we are now in the process of building each one of the Rescue Ridge cats a larger natural habitat where they can run in the grass, play in their pool, or just nap under a shade tree. More than 5 cats are now enjoying their larger natural enclosures while others patiently wait their turn.

Multiple habitats expansions are under construction simultaneously so we can finish as soon as possible. While our welders construct the fencing on one habitat, our staff is busy preparing another enclosure with landscaping or installing drainage systems. It is a synchronized dance that ends with a healthier environment and a very happy big cat.

Our long-term goal is to replace all concrete enclosures with large natural areas for each animal we adopt into our growing family. You can help us achieve this goal by donating to our habitat fund. Cash donations are always needed, but volunteering your time or an-kind donation is equally valuable to us.
Being the curator at a wildlife refuge is a roller-coaster ride of emotions — some days are wonderful and exhilarating, while others are can be downright depressing. One of the most recent rides was a great success story.

Max arrived on a rainy September night in 2012 after we rescued him and two female tigers from a private owner in Sperry, Oklahoma. Max displayed symptoms of a very bad declaw surgery with visible regrowth of claw tissue sticking up through the top all 4 paws of his. We immediately arranged for corrective surgery with refuge veterinarian, Dr. Ron Eby.

After an examination by Dr. Eby within four days of arriving, Max was also diagnosed with testicular cancer. During his first surgery, Dr. Eby removed the cancerous growth and operated on two of Max’s paws. Required surgery for his other paws had to be delayed to allow proper healing time from these two very invasive operations.

We returned Max to the vet for a second round of surgery to address symptoms of the botched declaw by prior owners. Max did not exhibit signs of great improvement and continued to limp, so we moved him to an enlarged Rescue Ridge habitat to provide a pool and grassy area to hasten his recovery. He responded very well and loved his pool.

After several months, I noticed massive swelling in Max’s knee joint, requiring yet another visit to the vet. After reviewing x-rays with Dr. Anne Brenneke, it was clear he had osteosarcoma (bone cancer). I had to make the decision to amputate his back left leg to extend his life.

At 450 lbs., a leg amputation is a very difficult recovery for an 11-year tiger. Since we don’t have an on-site vet clinic (yet), a perimeter fence was built at my on-site residence so I could monitor Max’s recovery 24/7 to prevent him from biting the stitches, administer medications, and ensure the enclosure was kept pristine to prevent infections.

It is a difficult task to provide supportive care to a wild animal since you can’t explain you are trying to help them. Fortunately, Max has made a tremendous recovery. The incision is completely healed and he loves his new pool.

At first, I doubted the decision to amputate Max’s leg, but watching him now, I’m confident I made the right decision. We fought the battle together, and came out on top!

We need donations for an on-site vet clinic, so more success stories like Max can transpire. Recovery for the animals and caregivers can be made much easier with your support.

Educational Note: Onychectomy is the medical term for “declawing” a cat. Declawing requires amputation of the third or last bone of each toe. If the nail bed is not completely removed, “re-growth” of claw tissue will occur. Declawing causes extreme pain and often, long-term mobility problems.
We’ve made a lot of progress over the past 2 months on the all-new habitat for Bam Bam, our ever-popular grizzly bear. The concrete pad for his lockdown/building has been poured and a metal building erected. There are plenty of windows set low to provide proper ventilation and guest viewing when Bam Bam is inside. A garage door opening will provide additional airflow and viewing opportunities into Bam Bam’s new home. A separate room to house our new drain system has also been completed. The new system will be capable of handling all the water from Bam Bam’s pool and lockdown, along with 3 other sections that house cats.

Bam Bam’s den has been installed and we are in the process of installing special wire in the ground to prevent digging and damage to the display. A new walkway is almost finished and will anchor one side of the habitat and connect to our walking tour route. There will also be a viewing area where you can view the habitat from above, a good vantage point when Bam Bam enjoys his huge new pool. We hope to announce a grand opening date for this long awaited habitat within the next 60 days. Keep watching our Facebook page for details.

MARY SCHLIEVE  STAFF BIOLOGIST

Bam Bam is preparing to move into his new habitat, complete with a real pool! Make sure to allow some extra time for Bam Bam during your next visit. He will certainly entertain you for hours.
If you grew up in the 70’s, you’ll remember Barry Williams, the actor who played the role of Greg Brady in the popular Brady Bunch TV series. When the series ended, Williams turned his energies toward a variety of creative endeavors including hosting satellite radio programs, performing in Broadway productions, and producing his own variety show.

Barry moved to the Branson Missouri area (about an hour and a half drive from Eureka Springs) in 2011 to write, produce and perform in his popular music variety show, the “70’s Music Celebration,” where he and his cast perform major hits from artists like the Eagles, Elton John and many others at the RFD TV Theatre.

Barry and his son, Brandon, recently spent the weekend at our Safari Lodge for a little “bonding” time with the big cats. After a guided tour, Barry and Brandon discussed the mission of the refuge and the problems created through private ownership of wildlife in the US with refuge co-founder and president, Tanya Smith.

“I first visited Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge last year. I was so impressed by the remarkable work being done here, I knew I had to plan a longer stay and bring Brandon,” said Williams. “Brandon watches almost every wildlife show on TV. He loves animals and surprised quite a few refuge staff members with his depth of knowledge. I’m very proud of him,” added Williams.

When asked about the highlights of his stay, Brandon remarked, “I really enjoyed the white tigers and unique markings on the ligers. I can’t believe how active the animals are and how close you can get to them.” He added, “I loved the Safari Lodge, we felt like we were in the ‘lap of luxury’ while listening to the big cats late into the night.”

We look forward to Brandon and Barry’s next visit. For details on live performances of the “70’s Music Celebration,” visit www.70smusiccelebration.com.
We’d like to welcome our newest group of interns who started work at the refuge August 15. This is one of the largest intern groups we have ever hosted, with a total of 17. It’s hard to believe this will be our 32nd intern class since we started the program in 1998. Since then we have “graduated” more than 300 biologists and zoologists who now work at zoos, sanctuaries and vet clinics around the world.

I want to extend a heartfelt “thank you, congratulations, and farewell” to our graduating class of 16 interns who arrived Feb. 15 for one of the busiest times I’ve ever experienced. They did an outstanding job of helping us complete the RTS rescue of 28 big cats, building over 10 enclosures at Rescue Ridge and initiating the construction of Bam Bam’s new habitat. Good luck to each of you, I know you will do well.

**EMILY MCCORMACK CURATOR**
**Local Youth Gains Eagle Scout Honors Through Volunteer Work at Refuge**

**IVY COOPER  VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**

(Eureka Springs, AR) When it came to fulfilling his final requirements to become an Eagle Scout for Boy Scout Troop 122 in Rogers Arkansas, Thomas Jandebeur knew exactly what he wanted to do. Jandebeur, a Heritage High School senior, decided to lead a troop community support project at his favorite campground in NW Arkansas, Turpentine Creek. “I’ve been coming here since I was 12 on our annual troop camping trips. Where else in the US can you fall asleep in a tent to the sounds of roaring tigers and lions?” asked 16-year old Jandebeur. “One of the requirements to become an Eagle Scout is to provide leadership for a community improvement project or non-profit organization. The refuge is a non-profit and cares for abused wildlife, something the Boy Scout’s teach us to appreciate. It was an easy decision,” added Jandebeur.

On July 27, Jandebeur, Troop 122 leader, Howard Ward, and 20 other Boy Scouts and family members gathered here to volunteer their efforts in building habitat expansions for the tigers in the new Rescue Ridge area of the refuge. Jandebeur and Troop 122 spent the day clearing enclosure areas and constructing fencing for more than 2 acres of expanded habitat space dedicated to recently rescued tigers. Thomas did a wonderful job of leading troop members throughout the day. He was involved in everything from removing rocks to building fences.

All the refuge staff, interns and board members extend a heartfelt “thank you” to Thomas and Troop 122 members for their hard work and support.

**Writers Note:** Turpentine Creek staff members are now building additional playgrounds for the recently rescued RTS cats, as well as a new habitat for our grizzly bear, Bam Bam. Please consider inviting your group to the refuge for a day of volunteer work as we need help to finish these projects before winter. For more information about volunteering, email me at ivy@turpentinecreek.org.
Rest in peace Loretta. Read more on page 5.

Your Donations allow Turpentine Creek to drastically change the lives of big cats and bears.

Donate today at www.turpentinecreek.org