Letter From The President
Tanya Smith Founder / President

I am delighted to report that on March 8, we successfully completed relocating 28 big cats to their new home at TCWR in 128 days, thanks to your donations and support. One of the biggest rescue operations in our 20+-year history started October 29, 2012 when I received a call from Crawford County Sheriff, Ron Brown requesting our expert advise. On November 1st, the TCWR team made their first visit to the (Riverglen Tiger Sanctuary) site in Mountainburg Arkansas to prepare a plan to help Betty Young, the 72 -year-old owner of 30 tigers, 2 cougars and 2 leopards. Betty explained, due to her failing health, she could no longer properly care for the big cats. All the RTS animals were geriatric, the youngest being 14 years old. In fact, two of the animals passed away at RTS due to old age before they could be relocated.

After our first visit to RTS, we knew immediate action was required. We quickly moved many of our Big Cats around to create immediate space for some RTS animals to alleviate some of Betty’s pressure to care for so many cats by herself. Four cats were moved to another licensed facility. Next we created a 4.2-acre compound in a lower pasture, now referred to as “Rescue Ridge.” Preparation of the area required a massive clean up before it could be completely enclosed by an 8-foot tall perimeter fence. Then we built twenty 20’ X 50’ enclosures to accommodate the majority of the new animals.

All the new mouths to feed, water, and clean up after have forced us to make some real changes. TCWR hired additional temporary labor and recruited volunteers to help the clearing and construction effort. We also hired more interns for general daily animal care. TCWR is now home to 18 students for the 2013 spring/summer intern group. Nine are previous interns and nine new students started February 1st.

Unfortunately, our grizzly bear, BamBam, took a back seat due to the RTS rescue initiative. Our original plan to start building BamBam’s new habitat in early November had to be delayed after Sheriff Brown’s phone call. Our team is excited to now focus their attention on creating the new Grizzly Bear enclosure BamBam deserves, which we hope to open this spring or early summer. Keep watching our Facebook and website blogs for details.

Our goal is to not only save abused and neglected wildlife, but to also provide for all their needs for a longer and happier life. We believe all animals need large natural enclosures to run, exercise and play. Most of the RTS cats can now stretch their legs, but we still have twenty-eight cats in the main compound that do not have that luxury. We need your help to continuing developing the 459 acres available for the animals to enjoy. Sponsor a habitat today. Thanks for all you do!
Meet our 2013 Interns!

**TOP ROW**
1. Hannah Corbin
   - Central College
   - BS Biology
   - December 2012
   - 2nd Internship
2. Katie Robertson
   - University of New Hampshire
   - BS Conservation & Wildlife Management
   - December 2012
   - 2nd Internship
3. Natasha Betz
   - University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
   - BS Animal Science
   - December 2012
   - 3rd Internship
4. Madeline Ronces
   - University of Minnesota
   - BS Animal Science
   - December 2012
   - 3rd Internship
5. Alisandra Harper
   - Shaw College
   - BS Animal Science
   - December 2012
   - 3rd Internship
6. Stan Burnside
   - University of Maine-Lauder
   - BS Animal Science
   - December 2012
   - 3rd Internship
7. Natalie Wizert
   - SUNY ESF
   - BS Wildlife & Fisheries Management
   - December 2012
8. Briana Erglis
   - SUNY College
   - BS Biology
   - June 2012
   - 2nd Internship
9. Brooke Altmayer
   - University of Wisconsin-Madison
   - BS Wildlife & Fisheries Management
   - May 2013
   - 2nd Internship

**BOTTOM ROW**
1. Kelly Farrell
   - George Washington University
   - BS Biology
   - May 2012
   - 2nd Internship
2. Amanda Kinnon
   - Lycoming College
   - BS Biology
   - December 2012
   - 2nd Internship
3. Molly Davis
   - Northern Michigan University
   - BS Biology
   - December 2012
   - 2nd Internship
4. Elena Yarlye
   - University of Wisconsin-Madison
   - BS Biology
   - May 2012
   - 2nd Internship
5. Katie Anderson
   - Georgia Institute of Technology
   - BS Biology
   - May 2012
   - 3rd Internship
6. John Chavez
   - Texas A&M University-Kingsville
   - BS Wildlife
   - May 2012
   - 3rd Internship
7. Marcela Mejia
   - Texas A&M University-Kingsville
   - BS Animal Science
   - December 2012
8. Samantha Beek
   - Cornell University
   - BS Zoology
   - May 2012
   - 2nd Internship
9. Mike Redig
   - Letter College
   - BS Biology
   - May 2012
   - 2nd Internship

Eric Studer Joins Refuge Staff

The refuge welcomes Eric Studer as our most recent staff member who will assist with marketing and fundraising efforts. Over his 20+ year career, Studer has worked with leading hospitality companies, including Holiday Inn and Accor North America. At Accor, his group managed the Motel 6 “We’ll Leave the Light On” campaign featuring Tom Bodett, selected one of the “Top 100 Ad Campaigns in the Last 100 Years,” by Ad Age Magazine. He has also managed wildlife parks, has extensive experience with non-profit organizations and has been on our Board of Directors for over two years.

Studer’s parents are life-time Audubon members and his great-grandfather, Jacob H. Studer, wrote America’s first book for true birding enthusiasts – “Studer’s Book of Ornithology: Birds of North America.”

“I’m delighted to join the excellent team Tanya and Scott have assembled here at TCWR. The refuge has a bright future ahead and I am glad to be a part of it,” said Studer.

**DONATE TO THE HABITAT FUND TODAY!**

tigers@turpentinecreek.org • 479.253.5841 • www.turpentinecreek.org

**If we build it, they can run!**

**Letter From the Curator**

**EMILY MCCORMACK CURATOR**

It was a tremendous feeling of accomplishment on March 8, 2013, as we pulled in the driveway with the last 2 tigers from one of the largest rescue efforts in America’s history. Rescuing 28 big cats brings our current population to 131, not including 8 bears and 11 other animals.

This dramatic increase of refuge “family members” has forced many changes upon us, including:

- All new cat compound for 20 new enclosures with all-new watering system (“Rescue Ridge”)  
- Plans for sourcing an additional 6000 pounds of meat per month
- Increased frequency of vet visits
- New feeding schedule due to processing time for 200 lbs. of additional meat per day
- Hiring 6 more interns to handle new animal husbandry tasks, bringing our current total to 18

The average life span of big cats in captivity is only 12 to 17 years. Currently, 99 of our 131 cats are over 12 years old. This is an incredible testament to the high quality of the animal care provided by TCWR. Unfortunately, the new RTs cats required more than $5000 in veterinarian care for treatment of infections, abscessed teeth, arthritis, tumor removals, and vitamin supplements. This underscores the importance of building an on-site veterinarian clinic for more cost efficient treatment and surgeries.

Funding the proper care for all our animals is our top priority, so please don’t forget we need sponsorships and adoptions for our newest “family members.”

Thank you for helping us save them!

**Where Does All the Meat Come From?**

JARRETT SWELEY STAFF BIOLOGIST

We often get questions concerning feeding and dietary needs of our animals. Here is a general overview of what most of our animals eat and the incredible person power needed to support their special dietary requirements... and what often seems to be, their insatiable appetites.

Most animal food provided is donated from various sources including:

- **Major Corporations:** We are lucky to be near major food suppliers like Tyson and WalMart, who have been long-time and loyal supporters.
- **Food Processors:** Small to mid-size companies who help bring packaged, fresh food to your local supermarket.
- **Individuals:** We get vegetable & meat supplies through local farmers and livestock farms.

Our staff moves the meat by the ton!

Our staff usually picks up food shipments from major suppliers, since our trailer can haul 14,000 lbs. of meat in one trip. Food shipments are delivered to the refuge commissary, most in 40 lb. boxes, for sorting and unloading to pallets for refrigeration or freezing. Occasionally, fresh meat is delivered in unappagaged in huge vats, which must be sorted by hand and put into “keep-fresh” containers. (I can assure you, nobody ever volunteers for this task)! Our most popular food item is poultry, ranging from “unsmorted parts” to whole chickens and turkeys. We currently have 30,000 lbs. of poultry in our freezers, enough to last us about a month... maybe... big cats have big appetites!

Our next step is daily food preparation for more than 130 animals, each with a unique diet designed to maintain healthy weight and proper nutrition requirements appropriate to their age and existing conditions. We use an average of 900 to 1000 lbs. of fresh meat daily, so interns gather at the commissary around 3:00 p.m. seven days a week to start prepping for public feedings, which is a show in itself for our visitors each day. After prepping feeding portions for each animal, interns then transfer frozen boxes of meat to the refrigerator to thaw for tomorrow’s feedings. On a typical day, 4 to 5 food service interns move almost one ton of food.

Many of our guests consider the afternoon public feedings one of the most exciting times to be at the refuge, so I highly recommend including it during your visit. I hope to see you there soon.

Victor Smith
6 year staff member,
Meal Truck driver.

**Feeding Time is 5pm in the Summer**

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BOTTOM ROW
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Baton Rouge

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- Individuals: We get vegetable & meat supplies through local farmers and livestock farms.

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Studer into action

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Feeding Time is 5pm in the summer
On October 28, 2012, TCWR received a call from the Crawford County Sheriff’s Office, in Mountainburg, AR, to assess the situation of 34 Big Cats in critical need of care.

It was apparent that immediate help was required. The enclosures for the cats had fallen into disrepair over the years. The elderly owner, who could walk only with the aid of a crutch, was in failing health and unable to properly care for the animals. Feeding and watering the cats had become very problematic for her and she had virtually no assistance in caring for them.

With her approval, it was decided that we would bring all of her cats to Turpentine Creek. We immediately cleared the area now named “Rescue Ridge,” and over the next 4 ½ months we built safe housing to relocate the cats. Four of her cats went to Kansas and two passed away before we could bring them to TCWR, but we ultimately brought in a total of 28 cats from Riverglen.

As the photo shows, building Rescue Ridge was quite an endeavour but the Riverglen cats now have a safe and happy environment in which to live out the remainder of their lives. Please continue to donate to this mission.

Thank you to our grrreat supporters for all your help!
Caring for the Animals

LAURIE VANDERWAL STAFF ZOOLOGIST

The only thing predictable about rescuing exotic cats is that it will be unpredictable. If the rescued animal is brought to the refuge by the previous owner it is unloaded directly into an enclosure. Otherwise we travel to the rescue site – as was the case with the RTS rescue. Regardless of the situation, our top priorities during rescue operations are always animal/staff safety and minimizing animal stress.

- When we arrive we inspect the enclosure and the animal to determine the best plan for transporting the animal to our travel trailer. This may mean loading the cat into a roll cage to move to our travel trailer or sedating the cat to move them, as with many of the cats from the RTS rescue.
- If tranquilizing is the best plan, we begin by determining the amount of sedative. This depends on various factors, including size and demeanor of the animal, weather conditions, and if the animal has been sedated in the past. While one person keeps the cats attention, the person with the pole syringe (‘jab stick’) makes their way silently and unnoticed to where they have a clean shot. After the injection is administered team members leave the immediate area and allow the sedative to take effect. This takes usually between 10-20 minutes.
- When it is determined the cat is sedated enough, leashers are used to restrain the head and feet and a small blanket is placed over the face to minimize any visual stimuli. The unconscious cat is then carefully moved onto a cloth stretcher and carried to the travel trailer. During this entire time, the breathing and condition of the cat is closely monitored.
- Once the cat is on the trailer, with all restraints maintained, a physical examination of the cat is started. Ophthalmic ointment is placed in the eyes to keep them moist and the teeth and mouth are checked. Claws and feet are also checked and, if needed, veterinary abestis (anesthetic) is used to trim the claws. Any minor cuts or wounds are cleaned and antibiotic ointment is used. Blood is usually taken and analyzed in order to determine the overall condition of the animal. For any more serious conditions the cat may be immediately taken to the veterinary clinic. Subcutaneous fluids are administered to help flush the anesthetic from the body as well as help with any possible dehydration. Again, during this entire procedure the breathing and condition of the cat is closely monitored.
- On the trip home the animal is checked several times to verify condition and by the time we reach the refuge, the cat is generally conscious but often still under the influence of the sedative. With the RTS rescue we unloaded the animals as soon as we arrived back at the refuge. Some of the cats were eager to enter their new enclosures, while others were hesitant and took 20-30 minutes to unload.

Every rescue that Turpentine Creek has been involved in is exciting and important, but with so many cats needing to be relocated, and the geriatric condition and scared disposition of many of these animals, the RTS rescue proved to be one of our most stressful and successful rescues ever.

Volunteering Makes a Difference!

IVY COOPER STAFF BIOLOGIST / VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge is always dependent on donations to keep the mission alive and moving forward, providing a lifelong home for unwanted Big Cats. Every year, hundreds of volunteers help us care for the cats at TCWR, and we are always seeking new dedicated volunteers to help us with our mission.

In 2012, we welcomed over 500 volunteers, who dedicated their time and talents to help us care for the cats. Many of the volunteers who came throughout the rescue were so dedicated; they came in the winter and on some very cold days to help our facility and the animals that soon would be able to call it home. We are so thankful for everyone who donates time to the refuge and to the animals finding sanctuary here.

During the whole month of March, TCWR worked with over 100 volunteers; dedicated college students, families, and Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. Many universities and colleges participate in Alternate Spring Break programs throughout the country and we are privileged to have 4 universities dedicate their spring break to the cats. A group from the University of North Texas and a group from Sam Houston State University came the first part of March and the last week of March. We had a group from the University of Missouri-Columbia and a group from MIT.

The groups helped us with a variety of very large projects; we re-spray painted our existing natural habitats to help maintain them, built platform benches for the new cats, and did other general maintenance projects, such as rock removal in our habitat field. Every task, no matter how seemingly small, makes a huge difference in the lives of the cats. TCWR is always evolving as a facility and improving the lives of the animals that find sanctuary here and all the dedicated volunteers that make it possible.

The Animals Can Count On Me!

Remember the Animals at Tax Time

Need a tax deduction or good reason to spend that refund check? It’s time to think about endangered tigers, leopards, cougars, lions, and bears. We need tax-deductible contributions to feed and care for over 120 big cats and other wildlife, including monkeys, coyotes, exotic birds, and other wildlife.

All cash and in-kind contributions to TCWR are tax deductible. We have a variety of ways to put your donations to work preserving threatened wildlife for future generations. Contributions help finance animal food, habitat construction, labor, and on-going veterinary care for over 140 animals that call Turpentine Creek their lifelong home.

Don’t need a pre-tax write-off? Remember the big cats at Turpentine Creek when calculating that tax refund check…help us help them.
Caring for the Animals

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Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge is always dependent on donations to keep the mission alive and moving forward, providing a lifetime home for unwanted big cats takes a community. Throughout the largest rescue to date we have experienced such an outpouring of generosity, not just monetary, but also volunteer hours. We began clearing the rescue field in November with the help of volunteers and started construction in the weeks that followed. I was amazed at how many people were willing to give of themselves to help 34 big cats that desperately needed a safe home. The volunteers who came throughout the rescue were so dedicated they came in the winter and on some very cold days to help our facility and the animals that soon would be able to call it home. We are so thankful for everyone who donates time to the refuge and to the animals finding sanctuary here.

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34 big cats needed our help. TCWR was able to take 28! Read more inside . . .