Letter from the President
President Tanya Smith

TCWR has experienced a beautiful summer. No 100+ degrees heat but even 90+ degrees feels hot. Our Team and the animals enjoyed the break from the 6 weeks of extreme heat we normally experience in the summer in the Ozarks.

Looking at the refuge I feel like we are at a standstill due to the eagerness of everyone wanting a new entrance area, gift shop, education center, café, veterinarian clinic, every animal being able to go out every day, etc. but, actually, we are not at a standstill; we are as busy as ever.

Due to us moving so many of the animals around we are excited to let you know of some changes. TCWR summer hours are 9AM-6PM. For your convenience, we have added additional tour times of our habitat loop. From 10:00AM-4:00PM hourly you can take the guided walking tour, and from 10:30AM-3:30PM hourly you can take the trolley tour. We start feeding the animals down the habitat tunnel at 4:20 PM. Remember that when daylight savings time hits we will be closing at 5:00 PM and the tours and feeding times will end an hour earlier.

As I watch the refuge grow and evolve it makes me think back to when it started.

I came to Eureka Springs in 1992 at the age of 25 with my parents and my two small children. My eyes were opened to the fact that these animals need homes, a safe haven. All these beautiful, innocent, desperate large cats are not here by choice and need help. Endangered Species are declining in their native land. Here in the states they are overpopulated due to breeding facilities; and, after being purchased by private owners, many are being discarded and abandoned by those owners for a variety of reasons. I knew that if we don’t save them they are going to die.

My family sold everything and moved to Northwest Arkansas knowing that this part of the country has many benefits. Tyson Food’s, Incorporated (the poultry, beef, and pork capital of the world) along with Wal-Mart, the largest retailer in the world, plus all of the freezer plants in the surrounding area could benefit our large carnivore sanctuary. These companies and institutions have been very good to our organization. With the University of Arkansas being based out of Fayetteville, AR, and four seasons of weather without extreme temperatures for long periods of time made this part of the country attractive. My family had also made a friend named Joyce Harvey on our annual family vacations to Eureka Springs. Joyce owned 459 acres with a home and a farm that she desperately wanted to sell. The rest is history.

The large carnivore rescue business has not been easy, but I can truly say that I have not been bored. Time is going by way too fast. In the fall 2014 my grandson started Kindergarten. My son Victor was his age when we moved here. Victor and his family have become a vital part of the refuge. I appreciate each of you that donate to help our mission. TCWR is a true non-profit organization that you can be proud to donate to knowing that 100% of your donation is going into the extremely great care of these Big Cats and bears.

With our new donor software we are able to track the donations, gifts in kind, and other ways in which our supporters help us. I want to say thank you to the 20% of you who receive our newsletter who have made donations. To everyone else I ask for any help you may be able to provide. Together we can make a change in every life we save, but we do need your help.

I hope all of you enjoy the rest of the information filled articles and photos in this latest newsletter. And I hope that you can come to visit us soon.

Until next time.

In July, 2011, Turpentine Creek received a call from a man in Kansas who had spent 17 years trying to start a sanctuary for big cats. He was unable to continue his life-long dream for financial reasons and decided it was time to find new homes for the 11 animals in his care. Crystal was one of five big cats, four tigers, and a t-liger, rescued by Turpentine Creek.

At 22 years old, Crystal is one of the oldest animals at TCWR. When we convert ‘cat years’ to ‘human years’ this makes Crystal equivalent to a 104 year old human! Tigers typically live 10-12 years in the wild, and average 15-20 years in captivity. Since Crystal arrived at the refuge when she was already 19 years old, she was moved quickly into a habitat so that she could enjoy the grass for as long as possible.

Crystal loves to play around in her habitat with her friend, Little Tony. She can often be found splashing in her pool or rubbing up against one particular evergreen tree in her habitat.
There are more than 5,000 tigers in the United States and only 3,200 exist in the wild. This is a shocking statistic. It is a result of unrestricted tiger breeding and the extremely relaxed buying market. Breeders have been profiting for more than 30 years selling tigers and other big cats to private individuals. The lack of laws has also allowed the number of unwanted tigers to increase. Sanctuaries were formed to take in these unwanted or abused big cats; and sanctuaries including Turpentine Creek stay full due to the high demand of rescues.

Tigers in America is a non-profit organization that started in 2011. The goals and mission of this foundation are to identify the best tiger sanctuaries in the country and support their rescue efforts. They also help support the construction of new enclosures so that these sanctuaries can rescue more tigers in need. They are focused on raising awareness of the general public about the big cat crisis in America.

Tigers in America formed after a crisis when a sanctuary in Texas went bankrupt and over 100 animals were in need of a new home. At that time there was more than 130 organizations listed as sanctuaries for tigers in the United States. While trying to finds homes for these tigers, the people at Tigers in America sadly and quickly realized there is no restriction on the use of the word ‘sanctuary.’ They started their own investigation to find true sanctuaries and compiled a list of the top 12 sanctuaries based on strict guidelines. Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge is proud to be one of those 12 best sanctuaries in the United States.

On January 1, 2014, Tigers in America started a matching campaign to fund habitats for TCWR. The target was $22,000. Twelve days after the campaign started the goal was exceeded. Due to your support we were able to raise $66,181 to fund three habitats for our cats! The first one built was for Zeus and Ava, which we opened on May 31st. We are pleased to announce that we broke ground on the second habitat and that it will be a new forever home for Rayn! Thank you to Tigers in America for all of your support helping build a piece of tiger freedom!

TCWR is home to 74 tigers, most of which love the water, and we provide stock tanks as pools for them to play in. We have many geriatric animals and as they get older we have to modify the care that we provide. They get extra medical attention by receiving supplements to ease any joint discomfort they may be feeling; we build lower platforms on their existing benches for easier access; and, with the addition of Rescue Ridge, we now have more flat habitats.

The stock tanks that we commonly use are 2 feet tall and with some of our older cats, stepping in to these tanks has become challenging. It took many phone calls, but finally I spoke with Sarah from the Farmers Co-op in Van Buren, Arkansas, and she said, “Yes, I will get something figured out for your tigers.” About an hour later she called me and we were able to order the pools that we needed for our older tigers. Sarah and Josh drove about 2 hours each way to deliver the pools so that our cats in their late teens, and a couple that are in their 20’s, can have a pool to play in too.

The 5 tigers that we gave the short walled pools to absolutely love them. The pools are only 1 foot tall, which makes getting in and out of them much easier. Pib, a male tiger rescued from RTS, immediately stepped into the pool and began to play with the bowling pin that was floating by him. Tigers can’t say thank you in human words but his chuff and eyes said it all - he couldn’t have been happier and more thankful.
The phone keeps ringing, our animals are getting older, and we need to be ready for the future. Please help.

Since 1998 Turpentine Creek Supporters have provided large natural habitats for over 90% of the animals at the sanctuary.

Last year Turpentine Creek Supporters stepped up to the plate and built Rescue Ridge, 4.7 acres which houses 22 big cats.

Turpentine Creek’s land is secure and offers the opportunity to expand our habitats at least ten-fold. We can grow as future needs dictate.

A new Giftshop and Eatery will elevate income, providing security to the refuge, along with our 8 lodging choices.

This map of our Master Plan provides a birds eye view of TCWR’s supporters accomplishments. The animals need long term security. This requires your help, both by volunteering and financial support. We have come a long way through your loving care. Please help us continue to move forward.
Elusive Bobcats Experience Habitat Freedom

On 4th of July weekend, Tiger and L’il Miss were able to experience a little bit of their own independence in a brand new habitat area.

On the big day, we had a great turn-out including Dave and Sharon Holladay, the “bobcat angels,” whose generous donation made these habitats possible. To show our gratitude for their generosity, they were given the honor of opening the doors to release these cats into their natural habitat areas but the cats had their own ideas. Neither Tiger nor L’il Miss were quick to venture out into their habitats, but after a little time, when much of the crowd had dispersed, Tiger did a little exploring and comfortably planted himself in grass under one of his logs. L’il Miss, being originally born in the wild, was more cautious and did not leave the safety of her den until the next day when she was spotted laying atop one of her perches.

At the refuge, the goal is to provide all of our rescues with great areas to live in but allow them to choose when they want to be adventurous and when they want to be shy. Bobcats are naturally nocturnal; and even though both Tiger and L’il Miss have been quite elusive during the day, we have found plenty of evidence of them all over the habitats and know they have ventured out on their own terms in the privacy of the night.

Wanoka (another bobcat) and Bowden (an African Serval) are the last small cats still living in small concrete cages. Help us to raise the needed funds to build habitats for these 2 deserving cats and to continue providing amazing natural areas for all of the cats at the refuge.

It’s always a sad time saying good-bye to the interns who have been a part of our team just after six months, but it’s even harder when they have been a part of the team for four and a half years. Kyle Jorgensen has been a part of Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge’s team since February, 2010, when he first arrived here for his first internship working with the big cats. Kyle is originally from California where he graduated in 2009 with a Zoology degree from Humboldt State University. He completed a second internship here at Turpentine Creek in then in 2011 he was offered a staff position and has been here ever since.

Kyle has been an integral part of the team here at the refuge and has helped out a lot in the office. He has helped update/revamp our website, worked on our Facebook page, has been out in our habitat field helping take all the pictures of our cats that go in the yearly calendar, as well as the pictures we sell in the gift shop on magnets or matted prints, helped process and get ready all the adoption/sponsorships that all of you supporters send in to us, and the list goes on and on.

On top of the office work, he’s re-vamped our pond in our memorial garden with the Koi fish, has driven our trolley on occasion, and has even been out helping the rest of the Animal Care Staff and interns build down in our Rescue Ridge area when we were in the midst of rescuing.

As you can see, Kyle has played a very versatile position here at Turpentine Creek and we are all saddened that he will be moving on in October to new adventures. A couple of Kyle’s favorite cats are Sammy and Heather, two tigers that live out in our habitats. Kyle has always been available and ready to help out any way he could. All of us here at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge want to wish Kyle all the best in his new adventure.

We all hope that he will always think of TCWR as his second home and realize that he can come back and visit whenever he wishes to. We’ll miss you Kyle!
The care of over 100 big cats is a 7 day/week, 365 day/year endeavor and includes looking after healthy cats as well as a significant amount of geriatric animals. This care includes cleaning and maintaining exhibits, assuring proper nutrition and providing enrichment and psychological stimulus for the animals, but just like with domestic pets, veterinary care is a vital part of keeping our cats happy and healthy. There is of course preventive care done on a regular schedule such as de-worming for internal parasites ($4/dose), control of external parasites through pest control and administering vaccinations (about $8/dose). Being a rescue facility, many of our cats come in with existing conditions which require daily medications and supplements, including enzymes, thyroid medication, pain relieving and anti-inflammatory medications and other vitamins and supplements, including Vitamin B, glucosamine/chondroitin or cod liver oil. We have been very fortunate to currently have some of these donated such as enzymes from National Enzyme Company and glucosamine/chondroitin from Carlson Labs, but with so many animals and such large doses required, the expense for the other medications adds up quickly.

In addition to these regular preventative treatments, with so many animals there are inevitably other illnesses and emergencies that are also addressed. This includes administering antibiotics, running blood work or urinalysis, taking x-rays or in some cases surgery if necessary. All these expenses have added up to close to $20,000 in vet and medication bills this year so far.

To help us keep our cats healthy, please donate to the refuge today.

Donor Spotlight: The Bobcat Angels

Fall 2014’s donor spotlight is on Dave and Sharon Holladay. The Holladays are originally from St. Louis, Missouri, but have called Rogers, Arkansas, their home for the past 17 years. They first heard about Turpentine Creek on a trip to Eureka Springs when they moved here. They have been long time lovers of animals and nature and decided to come check us out.

This summer the Holladays were kind enough to sponsor a habitat for Tiger and Lil Miss Priss. The Holladays had decided years ago that they no longer wanted to exchange gifts for each other on the holidays as they felt they had everything they needed, but instead wanted to donate to a worthy cause or person. While reading the paper one morning, they came across an article on the River Glen rescue and decided Turpentine Creek would be a great recipient.

After reading our newsletter, they agreed to specifically sponsor a bobcat. They had seen several in the wild and have always been drawn to them. They chose Tiger, a male bobcat, as the recipient of their donation. After talking it over with Emily McCormack, TCWR Curator, it was decided to make it a double enclosure and Lil Miss Priss, a female, would be moved as well. The Holladays are very pleased with the bobcats' new home and said it was everything they hoped for and more. The Holladays hope this will inspire others to donate, as the work is not done.

They have pledged another donation to help Wanoka, a bobcat, and Bowden, a serval, get a habitat as well. They hope for others to join in seeing them take their first steps on grass! Help us; help them by donating to the habitat fund today!

Tree House Renovation

Turpentine Creek’s supporters spoke and Turpentine Creek’s staff listened. For 15 years you have chosen to stay in our Tree House and we just completed a full restoration. Nestled adjacent to one of our handicapped animal areas, the tree house provides beautiful views of the surrounding mountains and tigers! The photo shows the loft with beds for two children. There is also a really nice sleeper sofa on the main floor. Come on out to spend the night in the trees listening to the sounds of Africa just outside.
Learn about our featured animal, Crystal, on page 3.

Crystal is our featured animal! see page 3

Crystal is our featured animal!