

# Big Cat Chronicles

Summer '19

## Tigger

Species: Tiger (*Panthera tigris*)

Sex: Male

DOB: August 17, 2017

Arrival Date: January 17, 2019



# Letter from the President

## Celebrating 27 Years of Saving Lives

Co-Founder Tanya Smith

I am grateful to each of you who have played a part in keeping our mission at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge alive for the past 27 years. May 1<sup>st</sup> marked the anniversary of the day that we incorporated this wonderful project. I am blessed to have the help of an amazing network of supporters that love and want to continue to improve the lives of the rescued animals that depend on us for a lifetime home. Thank you all!

There is still so much to be done. We continue to work to get laws passed to prevent humans from owning apex predators as pets and to stop the cub petting industry. Your Big Cat Public Safety Act has been re-introduced to Congress as H.R. 1380, which you will be able to read about in this update. A great and FREE way to help is to visit our website at [TCWR.org](http://TCWR.org) and view our advocacy tab. Our team has made it easy to contact your Representatives - with a click of the mouse you can make a difference for the future of animals in the Exotic Pet Trade. I thank you in advance

TCWR'S intern program is going strong with over 500 graduates over the years. Most have gone on to further their careers in the animal care field. Watching this program evolve has been awe inspiring! We continue to train people on the proper way to care for big cats and bears without getting injured. We are a no contact facility which provides respect for the animals in our care and keeps humans safe.

Your new education team has been busy! I am proud of this program and expanding it to include our first formal education department, who teach about animal husbandry, recycling, biodiversity, food webs, and species survival. They ask everyone who will listen to remember: PREDATORS, NOT PETS. Becky, Hannah and Abby are trained interpreters who do a wonderful job sharing our message. Please take time to join them as they provide a fantastic variety of learning experiences for all ages. Our education team told me in March they had already filled every school day with visiting groups or off-site programming through the end May. Great job! Check out our website and social media for updates on programs.

We have also begun furthering our education on how to execute a successful capital campaign, to build our desperately needed New Visitor Education Center. Before kicking off our new capital campaign we need to strengthen our board of directors, create an advisory board, and set up working cabinets (committees). If you feel that you can help with your knowledge, advice, or funds, please contact me directly at [tanya@turpentinecreek.org](mailto:tanya@turpentinecreek.org). To further our mission **this is our next big need - education is the key to change.**

Until next time...  
Tanya Smith, President/Founder



**Turpentine Creek needs your skills, what can you do to help?**

# Your donation dollars making a difference in the animals' lives.

Lakota



Snowball



Lolli

Huggy

Holli

At Turpentine Creek we offer our animals a variety of enrichment year-round, suited to the season. Warmer temperatures mean blood-suckles, watermelons and the reappearance of pools filled with clean water for animal residents to cool off and play. Tigers especially love water and in the wild are excellent swimmers. Providing our animals with enrichment entices them to explore their surroundings, prevents boredom, encourages natural behaviors, and helps them beat the heat during our Arkansas summers.

Lakota loves to use his pool for stalking guests, staff and interns by hiding his body beneath the cool water with just the top of his head and big amber eyes peeking over the edge. Payson seems to use hers for a bit of private relaxation, chilling out while hidden from everyone around her. Peyton will nap in her pool, her chin resting on its edge, lost in tiger dreams. Others, like Snowball and Donner, use theirs to drown their 'prey' - usually a Boomer Ball or spool, which bobs to the top when released, promoting their predatory instincts!

Currently, our tigers and other exotic cats are given large metal stock tanks for this purpose, but we would love to provide all of them with the type of in-ground pools some of our bears enjoy, which would afford actual swimming. As a donor to the Refuge you help us supply our animal residents the enrichment they need to pursue their inherent behaviors, giving them the best lives possible in captivity. Come visit this summer to see our tigers, ligers and servals enjoy lounging and playing in their pools!

# Savannah's Big Move: Retiring to Rescue Ridge



Lioness Savannah turned 18 years old this spring. Once used in the entertainment industry and rumored to have held a role in the film "Secondhand Lions," she had been time-sharing a habitat with liger, Fergie, at the top of our tour loop since her 2016 rescue from a Colorado breeding facility. (Read about the groundbreaking rescue at [TCWR.org/Rescues](https://www.tcwr.org/rescues) "The Colorado Project").

Our animal care team senior staff made the decision to move Savannah to Rescue Ridge in early April to make the aging lioness more comfortable. There, the flat ground is much easier on worn joints than the hilly terrain of our tour loop. An added benefit is that Savannah now has access to her grassy habitat every day, instead of alternating days with Fergie.

It took 8 pounds of meat treats, a lot of gentle coaxing, and 3 ½ hours of patience to finally convince this regal beauty to enter the roll cage for the short trip down to Ridge. The meaty ribs she found waiting for her as a house-warming gift clearly delighted her! She immediately checked out the new neighbors and has been exploring her peaceful, level environment. We are very glad we can provide a quiet retirement for this leading lady.

If you would like to see how Savannah is enjoying her new home you can sign up for one of our exclusive tours at [TCWR.org/Visit-Us/Exclusive-Tours](https://www.tcwr.org/visit-us/exclusive-tours). These behind-the-scenes tours conducted by senior animal care staff not only grant you a visit with our elderly residents at Rescue Ridge, but also include a close-up peek into our new natural bear habitats!



## Letter from the Curator

Emily McCormack

When rescuing big cats, we rarely know the details of their medical histories and only discover many of their health issues as veterinary exams are preformed over time. With our most recent rescue of six tigers from Oklahoma, one medical issue (beyond Diesel's fatal illness) was readily apparent: all of the cats were extremely obese, with Robbie and Tommie being morbidly so.

Obesity is a common issue for privately owned animals. Many owners are told by breeders to keep their exotic cats "fat and happy" with the idea that by keeping them well-fed, they will be less likely to attack them. Obesity in cats - both big and small - is just as detrimental to their health as starvation, posing significant health risks. Like your average house cat, overweight big cats can face high cholesterol, diabetes, fatty liver disease, hypertension, respiratory issues, infections, joint disease, heart disease, and a decreased immune response.

Rescuing large felines doesn't end with giving them a good home; that is only the beginning. Their health and fitness are our top priority, so they can fully enjoy their lives at the Refuge. This often includes managing their weight, whether it needs to increase or decrease.

Knowing we couldn't make an immediate drastic cut to Robbie and Tommie's food intake without risking aggression between habitat mates, we instead gradually reduced it to a reasonable amount that would encourage weight loss without constant hunger. Thankfully, the tapered feedings, exercise (with a little extra enrichment encouragement) and spacious habitats caused the excess weight to drop off the pair. We estimate that Robbie has lost at least 150 lbs. since his arrival in January; he now has a waist and legs that look proportional to his size! Tommie is also making progress towards his ideal weight. Our on-staff veterinarian, Dr. Kellyn Sweeley, is pleased with the results so far.

Tigger, Floyd, Frankie, Tommie and Robbie are adjusting well to their new lives at Turpentine Creek. They love all the enrichment the team is providing and are starting to gain trust in their caregivers. As always, it inspires us to see the progress the five tigers have made since their arrival. We cannot wait to discover what the future will bring for them. It is only with your help that we can continue rescuing big cats and survivors of the Exotic Pet Trade. Thank you!



Robbie's first day in his new habitat at Turpentine Creek. When he arrived he was morbidly obese and struggled to get around his habitat.

Robbie has made a lot of progress towards slimming down thanks to a good diet and plenty of enrichment encouraged exercise.

## Building Connections with Bosco

In January 2016, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge introduced our Behavioral Management Program into our animal care regimen. This type of training serves many purposes: extra enrichment, stress minimization during vaccination time, allowing team members to address specific health issues without sedation, and fostering trust between our animal residents and their caretakers. Only months after the start of this program we began the largest rescue of its kind in North America.

Most of the animals that lived in the miserable conditions at the Colorado breeding/cub petting facility were like-minded when it came to people: they didn't like them. Some were quietly cautious while others loudly vocalized their displeasure, usually with fence charging and swiping for added emphasis. White tiger, Bosco, was one of the primary aggressors, but we couldn't blame him. Documentation shows he was a "magic show cat" until age four. What happens behind-the-scenes to animals forced to work for entertainment is heartbreaking, and the stunts they are made to perform would be traumatizing to anyone. We have even uncovered footage of poor Bosco suspended in a cage with a ring of fire below him.

Bosco arrived at the Refuge in October of 2016 and continued to display aggression stemming from mistrust after years of abuse. It took months of patience, and consistent demonstration of trustworthiness by our team before Bosco began to relax. To this day, he is still a fearful cat, which is why Animal Curator Emily McCormack introduced him to the Behavioral Management Program at the end of March.

Emily explains that the trust Bosco has already gained "can only build" with the training. It is her hope that this program will increase his comfort level with people and diminish his vaccination phobia. Before attaining the overall goal, her primary objective is to get Bosco comfortable enough to respond to a "target," which at the Refuge, is a stick with a brightly colored plastic ball on the end. The ball is moved into a certain position outside the fence as a command, such as "touch," is made. If the animal follows through, the behavior is "captured" with a whistle and a treat.

Currently, Bosco is afraid of the target, so Emily is focusing on the "come" command to coax him up to the fence without it. He's progressing slowly, but Emily explained, "Like people, all animals are different," and each goes at their own pace. Ultimately, how far Bosco progresses depends on how interested he remains. We never force our animal residents to participate, and if Bosco ceases to find the activity enjoyable, we won't make him do it.

"If this is as far as we get with his training - if we can't desensitize him enough to use the target or push syringe pole, then it's still something. Every little bit helps," Emily said.

It is through the support of our donors that we can continue to rescue survivors of big cat abuse. Our dedicated team works hard to create not only trusting connections with our animals but also our supporters. Thank you for all that you do to help us, help them.



**Like many of the cats rescued from Colorado, Bosco is very vocal about his continued distrust of his human care takers.**



**Bosco has been introduced to our Behavioral Management Training to help him gain trust in our team. You can observe our Behavioral Training most days after the final tour of the day.**

## Featured Animal: Tigger

Tigger was one of six tigers rescued from a closing Oklahoma facility in January. He was allegedly used as a cub petting "prop" at a different establishment and set to be euthanized after aging out of the program. The Oklahoma individual TCWR rescued him from obtained him and his five friends before they met the same fate.

The Golden Tabby Tiger is considered a rare, man-made breed produced solely for financial gain. Much like the white tiger, the golden tabby coloration is only a recessive gene that comes out through inbreeding and is not a separate subspecies of tiger.

Tigger currently lives with Floyd, an orange tiger with a grumpy face who surprises everyone with the kindest of chuffs. When the team returned from Oklahoma, Floyd retreated to their new den in a panic. Tigger, however, regarded his new surroundings with cautious curiosity. At one point, the lions began to carol; Floyd quickly retreated while Tigger sat up a bit straighter and perked his ears inquisitively. He continues to hold an inquisitive interest in the daily happenings at the Refuge.

Before Floyd felt safe enough to come out of his den regularly, we discovered that Tigger was taking care of his buddy by bringing his food inside. Aside from being kind-spirited, Tigger is fun-loving and zealous in "killing" enrichment and inciting games of chase with humans through the fence, while Floyd prefers to watch and is more meticulous in enrichment destruction. At TCWR, we value the lives of every animal- the frightened, the excited, the laid-back and the moody. Your support allows us to provide a home for all who have never been cared for properly simply because they deserve it.



## More Ways You Can Help: "Paw" sive Giving

"I wish I could do more," is a common statement we hear from many of our supporters. Once you fall in love with our animal residents, you want to give them everything you can and then some. Sadly, those pesky little things like house payments and fuel expenses can get in the way of buying every Boomer toy on the shelf for your Refuge favorites. Thankfully, you can donate "and then some" without taking a hit to your budget through passive giving.

Passive giving is "the act of donating or giving back in a way that does not require you to deviate from an everyday activity."

Two ways you can amplify your support of TCWR in this manner:

- Make Turpentine Creek your Amazon Smile charity! **Amazon Smile** will donate .5% of your purchase at no extra cost to you! Just go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and choose "Turpentine Creek Foundation, Inc." as your non-profit of choice! Or you can download a browser extension to automatically redirect you to Amazon Smile at <https://couponfollow.com/smilematic>
- If you sell on **eBay**, you can choose to donate 10%-100% of your item's final sell price to Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge through [charity.ebay.com](https://charity.ebay.com). Our Charity I.D. number is 2244340. Turn those spring cleaning toss-outs into support for the animals!

We've earned \$539.17 from Amazon Smile so far this year, which shows you how much impact passive giving can have!



## A Whole New World: Bear Residents Reclaim Their Wild Side



This winter was a wonderful learning experience for the animal care team at Turpentine Creek. After giving a new chance at life to six of our bears in October of 2018, we spent the last few months observing their various behaviors.

Five of the six bears were born in captivity and one, Popper, was born in the wild. The vast difference in behavior between the wild-born bear and the captive-born bears was quickly apparent. From the moment we opened the doors and released Popper into her own little piece of wilderness, she refused the heated den we provided, instead choosing to make her own winter nest in the middle of the habitat. She even rejected our prepared meals, opting to forage for her own food.

Luckily, we built the habitat with foraging in mind. There are plenty of plants, berries, and of course, insects, – the natural diet for bears – located within the 2.5-acre habitat to sustain Popper and company. We anticipated Popper quickly reverting to her wild instincts, but the encouraging surprise came this spring: Xena and Koda G, her young habitat mates, are mimicking her behaviors and learning! We are also observing Huggy, Holli and Lolli spending more time in their habitat learning to forage, albeit at a slower pace than their neighbors.

We are very excited to keep observing these six as they continue to explore their new world and freely experience what it is to be a bear! It is entirely thanks to your support that we could construct these two large, natural spaces for our bears. Thank you.

## Adopt or Sponsor an Animal

### Adoptions - \$150 for any species

- Frameable Adoption Certificate with photo of favorite animal.
- Big Cat Chronicles Subscription
- Letter of Recognition

### Sponsorships – Priced per species, only one sponsor per animal.

- Pride Membership (free entry for cardholder and up to 4 guests annually)
- Frameable Sponsorship Certificate
- 8x10 photo of Sponsored Animal
- Name on Sponsor Wall in Gift Shop
- Big Cat Chronicles Subscription
- Letter of Recognition

#### Sponsorship Amounts:

- \$700 per year - Small Mammal/Bird
- \$1,000 per year - Small Cat/Monkey
- \$2,200 per year - Cougar/Leopard
- \$2,500 per year - Lion/Tiger/Bear

## Cub Club, W.A.Y. and Pride Memberships

### Cub Club - \$50 (Ages 4-12)

You are never too small to make a BIG difference in the Cub Club. Members of the Cub Club get the chance to make a difference in the lives of all the big cats that call Turpentine Creek home.

#### Annual Benefits:

- Free entry for cardholder for an entire year
- Frameable Cub Club Membership Certificate
- Yearly changing Activity Book
- Yearly changing Sticker or Temporary T.C. Tatoo
- Special Cub Club Day at the Refuge (Mom & Dad get in free!)
- Exclusive Cub Club Volunteer Activity (Help make enrichment for the cats, or other fun projects for the animals!)

Signup gift: Plush animal of choice (Tiger, Lion or Leopard!)

### W.A.Y. (Wildcat Ambush for Youth) - \$75 (Ages 13-18)

Today's youth need to band together to put an end to the exotic animal trade. The Wildcat Ambush for Youth gives them the perfect opportunity to make a difference in the world, one big cat at a time.

#### Annual Benefits:

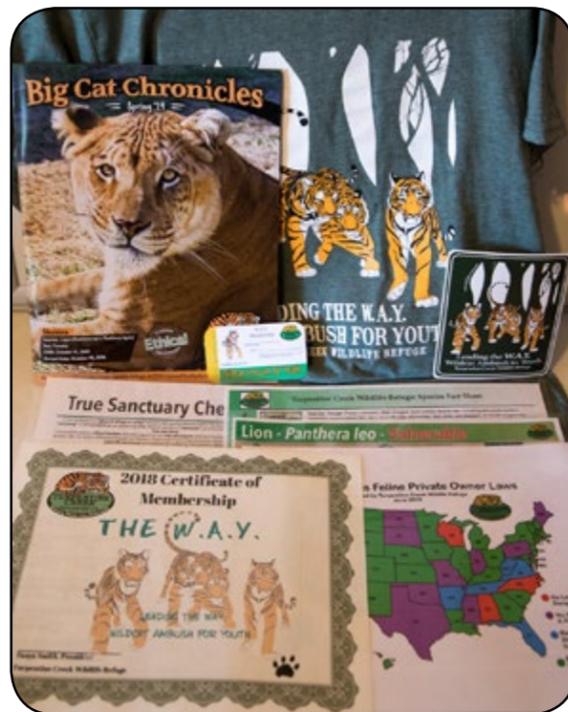
- Free entry for cardholder and 1 guest - unlimited visits throughout the year.
- Frameable W.A.Y. Certificate
- W.A.Y. Members-only page on TCWR Website to view educational webinars geared to them alone - a chance to learn about the inside workings of TCWR, pick up valuable skills to become leaders in animal advocacy and learn about careers in animal care.
- Members-only Facebook group –meet new friends, share ideas and create fundraisers.
- W.A.Y. Volunteer Opportunities - work with our Volunteer Coordinator and earn points for a Special Award!

Signup gift: Exclusive W.A.Y. T-shirt

### Pride Membership - \$100

#### Annual Benefits:

- Free entry for cardholder and 4 guests for unlimited visits throughout the year–increase your effectiveness as an advocate for the animals by bringing family, friends and co-workers to the Refuge to experience our mission and learn how they, too, can help!



W.A.Y. (Wildcat Ambush for Youth) Benefits

# Membership Levels

## The Friends of India

annual donation of \$300+\*

#### Members of the Friends of India will receive the following signup gifts:

- Friends of India Pride Membership
- Complimentary Trolley Tickets
- 15% off on Gift Shop Merchandise
- Big Cat Chronicles subscription
- Recognition on our Website
- Exclusive Member E-mails
- Members Only Facebook Group to meet new advocacy friends and exchange ideas
- Member Only Events
- 10% off Lodging\*\*

#### Signup gifts:

- A Framed 5x7 Photograph of India
- TCWR Calendar
- F.O.I. Decal
- TCWR Species Fact Sheet

## Bam Bam Benefactor

annual donation of \$1,250+\*

#### Annual Benefits:

- Bam Bam Benefactor Pride Membership
- Complimentary Trolley Tickets
- 15% off on Gift Shop merchandise
- Big Cat Chronicles subscription
- Recognition on our Website
- Exclusive Member E-mails
- Members Only Facebook
- Member Only Events
- 20% off Lodging\*\*

#### Signup gifts:

- A Framed 5x7 Photo of Bam Bam in a wood frame
- TCWR Calendar
- B.B.B. Decal
- TCWR Species Fact Sheet
- Bam Bam Travel Mug

## The Kenny Fellowship

annual donation of \$3,000+\*

#### Annual Benefits:

- Kenny Fellowship Pride Membership
- Complimentary Trolley Tickets
- 20% off in Gift Shop
- Big Cat Chronicles subscription
- Recognition on our Website
- Exclusive Member E-mails
- Members Only Facebook Group
- Member Only Events
- 30% off Lodging\*\*
- Private Tours with Senior Staff
- Recognition in and access to the Annual Report

#### Signup gifts:

- A Framed 8x10 Photo of Kenny in engraved wooden frame
- TCWR Calendar
- K.F. Decal
- TCWR Species Fact Sheet
- Kenny Travel Mug
- The Kenny Fellowship Shirt

## The Hilda Jackson Society

annual donation of \$10,000+\*

#### Annual Benefits:

- Hilda Jackson Society Pride Membership
- Complimentary Trolley Tickets
- 20% off on Gift Shop merchandise
- Big Cat Chronicles
- Recognition on our Website
- Exclusive Member E-mails
- Members Only Facebook Group
- Member Only Events
- 50% off Lodging\*\*
- Private Tours with Senior Staff
- Recognition in and access to the Annual Report
- A Staff Liaison

#### Signup gifts:

- A Framed 8x10 Photo of a Favorite Cat in engraved H.J. wooden frame
- TCWR Calendar
- H.J.S. Decal
- TCWR Species Fact Sheet
- Tiger Travel Mug
- The Hilda Jackson Society Shirt

\*To be part of a membership tier you must donate the amount required to be part of that specific tier level. You are not automatically enrolled in membership levels. You must opt-in to become a member of membership tier levels

\*\*Limitations may apply.

# Yes, I will help the animals!

Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of:



- \$25  \$35  \$50  \$100 Other \$\_\_\_\_\_  Repeat monthly.  
**Visitor Education Center Building Fund:**  \$50  \$100 Other \$\_\_\_\_\_  Repeat monthly.  
**2019 Calendars:** \$5 each X \_\_\_ calendars + \$5 S/H = \$\_\_\_\_\_  
**First Edition Coloring Book:** \$5 each X \_\_\_ coloring books + \$5 S/H = \$\_\_\_\_\_

## Choose your Wild About Wildlife Membership Tier

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!

- \$50 The Cub Club, Kid's Membership (Ages 4-12)** Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please circle the plush cat you would like for your signup gift: **LION TIGER LEOPARD**  
 **\$75 Wildcat Ambush for Youth (Ages 13-18)** Name of teen: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please circle the shirt size for your signup gift: (adult size) **S, M, L, XL, XXL**  
 **\$100 Pride Membership** You and 4 guests get a full year of visits to the Refuge.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$300+ Friends of India</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$1,250+ Bam Bam Benefactors</b>    | } <b>Total:</b><br>\$ _____<br><input type="checkbox"/> Opt Out of Membership Signup Gifts<br><input type="checkbox"/> Opt Out of Membership Card |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$3,000+ Kenny Fellowship</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$10,000+ Hilda Jackson Society</b> |   |
- 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!

### Animal Adoption:

- \$150/yr - Small Mammal/Bird  
 \$150/yr - Small Cat/Monkey  
 \$150/yr - Cougar/Leopard  
 \$150/yr - Lion/Tiger/Bear

### Animal Sponsor:

One sponsor per animal. New Sponsors, please check to see if desired animal is available for sponsorship.

- \$700/yr - Small Mammal/Bird  
 \$1,000/yr - Small Cat/Monkey  
 \$2,200/yr - Cougar/Leopard  
 \$2,500/yr - Lion/Tiger/Bear       Membership Opt Out

Sponsorship includes membership. Opt out to make donation 100% tax deductible.

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): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Input Credit Card below or make checks payable to TCWR.

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ CVC Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Tax/EIN: 71-0721742

Please fill out this donation form, detach, fold as needed, and mail with included envelope. Thank You!

## Veterinary Report - Preventive Health Care

Dr. Kellyn Sweeley

My role as an on-staff veterinarian at Turpentine Creek has allowed me to provide medical care for animals that grew close to my heart during my time as an intern and animal care staff member. I'm excited that the regular exams I've had the opportunity to implement let our team provide early intervention for injuries and illnesses that can worsen if not discovered in time. Goober, our 32-year-old Rhesus macaque's, diagnosis of type 2 diabetes mellitus (DM) is just one example of quick detection making a difference.

We discovered Goober's illness through blood and urine tests in January. This chronic metabolic disease means tissues in Goober's body no longer respond to insulin. Insulin is a hormone responsible for closely regulating the metabolism of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats in the body. When carbohydrates are broken down into glucose, insulin drives it into fat, liver and skeletal muscle cells, where it's needed to create energy and function properly. Those diagnosed with type 2 DM most commonly experience increased thirst, increased urination, increased hunger, and weight loss. Had we not discovered Goober's disease in time, it could have lead to retinopathies (damage to the retina of the eye), neuropathies (damage to peripheral nerves), kidney failure and cardiovascular disease.

After a confirmed diagnosis, a treatment plan was devised, which focused on revising Goober's diet. His meals now are set at consistent intervals and contain only low glycemic foods (such as those high in good carbohydrates like whole grains and vegetables), lean proteins, healthy fats and large amounts of fiber. Sometimes, diet change alone can help regulate blood glucose levels in the normal range without the need for oral medications or insulin injections. After retesting Goober's urine, we discovered that unfortunately, diet change alone has not been enough to manage his symptoms.

Further treatment options carry a high risk of hypoglycemia, so close monitoring of Goober's blood glucose levels is essential. Currently, blood draws are highly stressful for our favorite Rhesus. Through our Behavioral Management Program, Animal Curator Emily McCormack is working on training him to tolerate small finger pricks to draw a pinpoint amount of blood for testing on a handheld glucometer. So far, the training steps leading to this end goal are going well but have not yet progressed to the actual poking of a finger. Once this point is reached, Goober will begin oral medications to help keep his glycemic state in the normal range along with his new diet plan and plenty of enrichment exercise. In the meantime, we will continue to watch him closely and keep him comfortable.

Without your support, Goober could not receive the pre-emptive exam and tests to accurately diagnose his condition, nor the medication and special diet needed to keep this beloved senior Rhesus healthy and happy. Thank you, it means the world to us, and to them!



Staff Veterinarian Dr. Kellyn Sweeley completes a visual evaluation of Goober's health. Continued observation allows for Dr. Sweeley to catch health issues early.



**Goober**

Our senior Rhesus Macaque Monkey, Goober was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes mellitus in January. A new diet and treatment plan are helping Goober live life to the fullest at TCWR.

## TCWR's Continuous Fight Against the Exotic Pet Trade



Cubs spend hours a day, when they should be resting, being passed from person to person to make money for cub petting facilities.



Exhausted cubs are shook, bounced, and prodded to become active for photo opportunities and play time.



If they survive, they will eventually grow too big to be handled. At that time they are no longer profitable and their fate is questionable.

At Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge, we work daily to educate our visitors through tours and programming on the truth behind the Exotic Pet Trade and all the negative impacts on wildlife. Sadly, there are many pseudo (fake) sanctuaries and zoos throughout the world that try to attract guests to their facilities simply so they can profit off the suffering of their animals.

Animal lovers are drawn to facilities that claim to be a "sanctuary," "zoo," or "refuge," as they believe these places are genuinely helping animals and providing them with loving care. While these facilities may claim to rescue or care for exotic creatures, in reality they only extort them for profit and do not follow animal safety or welfare guidelines. They hide under the guise of a sanctuary to gain the support and trust of the general public.

Pseudo-sanctuaries relentlessly breed big cats, claiming it helps with conservation by repopulating endangered species. The truth is, big cats born in captivity can never be released into the wild. Unregulated breeding outside of AZA-accredited zoos means that animals are not genetically pure. They have no conservational value within the species. Baby animals simply attract customers; they are forced into cub petting and are frequently killed to make room for more cubs.

Through education, awareness and public advocacy, the government is starting to take notice of the "bad guys" across the country. Recently, one such breeder and exhibitor, "Joe Exotic" Maldonado-Passage, was found guilty of 17 counts of animal cruelty - including violations against the Endangered Species Act and the Lacey Act. The fight is still not over; Joe Exotic is only a single person out of many that are still operating their menageries, but we are hopeful that this is just the first step taken against the many individuals that are exploiting animals for profit nationwide.

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Many cubs suffer from medical conditions, like Metabolic Bone Disease, due to malnutrition, inbreeding, or mishandling.

*Continued from page 14.*

Turpentine Creek is one of many true sanctuaries working hard to put an end to the abuse of big cats in captivity. We encourage all our supporters to research any facility that you are planning to visit. Coming together as a community and not supporting the Exotic Pet Trade is the first step in solving this complex issue. It is crucial to avoid places that add to the problem and promote animal facilities that focus on animal welfare and public safety, such as AZA-accredited zoos and true sanctuaries such as Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge.

The problems with the Exotic Pet Trade cannot be resolved overnight, but as animal lovers we can work together to speak out against abuse and the use of exotics for entertainment through our personal choices. We can make an enormous difference with our actions and can help sway others to make the right choice to save abused and neglected big cats for future generations.



Brittle bones are caused by lack of calcium in bottled, watered-down milk that many cub petting schemes give their cubs to extend how many people can pay to feed them.



Those that survive to adulthood languish away in inadequate cages until they die or are rescued.

## You Can Put an End to the Abuse H.R. 1380 The Big Cat Public Safety Act

At Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR) our mission is saving survivors of the Exotic Pet Trade. The best execution is to ultimately stop the Trade at its root, through national legislation.

Currently, our country has a conglomeration of state laws that do little to put an end to the suffering of big cats across the nation. Only four states in the U.S. completely ban the private ownership of these animals; many states only require a basic permit or license, which can cost as little as \$25! A few states ban non-native big cats but allow indigenous species to be privately owned.

TCWR is advocating for this to change. The Big Cat Public Safety Act is a federal bill that would put an end to cub-petting and private ownership at a federal level.

The Big Cat Public Safety Act has been introduced to the House of Representatives as H.R. 1380 and was assigned to the Federal Lands Committee and the Water, Oceans, and Wildlife Subcommittee. On March 26, 2019, the subcommittee held an informational hearing about H.R. 1380; in late spring they will make their changes to the bill before voting on it. If passed, it will then be presented to the Federal Lands Committee. If it can pass through this House Committee, it will be put on the calendar to be voted on by Congress. The 116th congress session runs until January 3, 2021, so there is still time to get this vital bill passed!

**With your help, we can put an end to the Exotic Pet Trade.** Please visit our website at [TCWR.org/advocacy](https://TCWR.org/advocacy) to contact your representatives and tell them to support the Big Cat Public Safety Act. It only takes a minute of your time to help big cats across our country!

# Heroes Around Me - Hosting The Arkansas PTA at TCWR



In early April, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge hosted the Annual *Reflections: Heroes Around Me* awards luncheon for the Arkansas Parent Teacher Association (Arkansas PTA), an organization founded in 1897 with a mission "To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children." The PTA's *Reflections* initiative is a nationally acclaimed student recognition program to encourage artistic creativity in the classroom and at home. We were excited to connect with over 350 students and educators during the event!

*The Heroes Around Me* theme fit perfectly with our education team's presentation. Beckie Moore, our Education Coordinator, encouraged attendees to be "heroes" for animals in need. After the awards ceremony, our team accommodated the PTA group with tours of the Refuge, where they learned how to be knowledgeable and vocal animal advocates.

An important aspect of our mission is to inform the general public about the harmful nature of the Exotic Animal Trade, and developing a relationship with the Arkansas PTA enhances our ability to connect – at a classroom level – with students and regional educators.

By connecting with younger generations, we can encourage understanding and stronger protections for exotic and native animals in need. So please consider learning more about our advocacy programs and enrolling your child in one of our great summer day camps or educational workshops today!



## Building A New Home For Our Servals

Projects at Turpentine Creek can become shifted and delayed, usually due to a rescue. Then, we must drop everything non-essential to animal care and shift gears to save lives. This has happened a few times over the years; the most recent delay affected the rebuild of our older habitats.

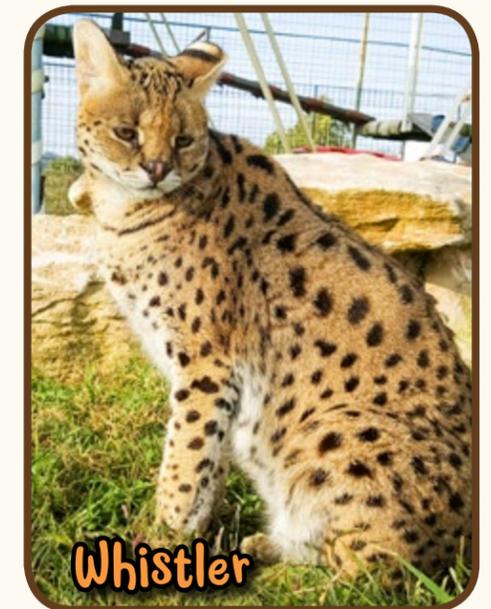
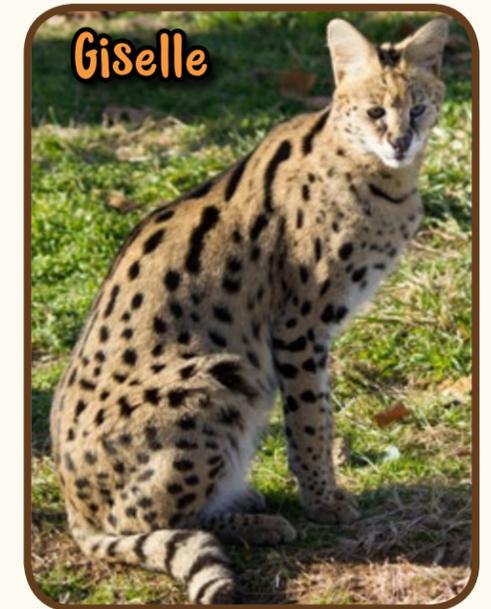
In 2015 we began rebuilding and refurbishing our habitats. This was due in part to an update in Arkansas habitat code, but also because we discovered better and safer ways to construct enclosures as we continued to build new ones. Most required only minor changes, such as raising the fence height from 10' with a 2' jump guard to 12' with a 3' jump guard. However, some of our oldest ones needed a complete rebuild. Two of the three rebuilds were completed before our 2016 Colorado Project began. Then, a rebuild of our old cougar habitat had to be put on hold.

For three years we completed other more pressing projects: Two new habitats where our old compound had stood, the largest two natural habitats built to date for the new Colorado Project bears, and raising all fence heights. Finally, in late 2018, we were able to begin construction on what has evolved to be a serval habitat, sponsored by the Roop family.

This space is being built to handle multi-introduction of any size exotic cat from small servals to leopards; it could also accommodate a single tiger. Many cats, including servals, require a roofed habitat because they can climb or jump. This roofed habitat will feature a large heated building, natural benches, nooks for privacy, and even a small pool. At 6,500 sq. ft. it is large enough to offer our five servals plenty of space to call their own.

We invite all our supporters to mark their calendars and join us on June 12 at 9:45am for the grand opening of our newest habitat. It will be a fun day to watch our smaller exotic cats explore their new home!

As we continue to rescue and provide lifelong homes for survivors of the Exotic Pet Trade we must also keep improving and expanding our habitat space. Out of the 459 acres of property available to Turpentine Creek, roughly 100 acres is currently occupied, leaving ample room to continue to grow as needed. It is only with your continued support that we can do so.



Giselle and Whistler are only two of the six animals that will be calling the new serval habitat home. Construction of the habitat is nearly complete. The habitat includes a heated building, plenty of built in enrichment features, and space to run. The habitat opening is June 12 at 9:45 am.

# The Dark Side of White Tiger Breeding

Despite information perpetuated by individuals out to make a profit across the country, white tigers are not a separate subspecies of tiger. They are the result of a double-recessive gene found in Bengal tigers. As the gene to produce the rare white coloring is recessive, the **ONLY** way to guarantee a white cub is to breed known carriers of it. The easiest way to do this is to inbreed – father to daughter, mother to son, or sister to brother. This severe inbreeding causes a number of debilitating internal and external defects, which can be lethal. The same gene that causes their white coat causes the optic nerve to be wired to the wrong side of the brain, thus all white tigers are cross-eyed, even if their eyes appear normal. They often suffer from clubfeet, cleft palates, spinal deformities and defective organs.

Most cubs born through improper breeding suffer genetic defects and are referred to in the Exotic Animal Trade as “throw-away tigers.” They are often killed at birth because only white tigers without visible deformities are the big money makers. Since none of these cats are purebred, they serve no conservational purpose. The American Zoological Association (AZA) admonishes AZA accredited zoos to no longer breed them. **The ONLY reason people breed white tigers, is because buyers continue to pay high prices to see them in entertainment venues and roadside attractions.**

White tiger brothers, Donner and Roman, were 2 ½ years old when we rescued them during the 2016 Colorado Project. Both had dental issues and were put on vitamin supplements. Roman suffered an abscess under his chin from infected teeth, which required surgery to remove his bottom right canine. He is currently having issues with the left and will be one of our first patients to benefit from our new dental machine/x-ray machine.

While Donner’s eyes appear almost normal, Roman is severely cross-eyed, affecting his depth perception. Sometimes he bumps the fence while running along the side of their habitat and will move his head side to side while doing his daily stalking. The brothers stick close to one another and are very playful. They love destroying enrichment and chuffing to anyone nearby. Both enjoy their pool and playing in water sprayed from the hose. The boys are on a combined boneless chicken diet to minimize trauma to their teeth, mixed with AAA; while pricey, it offers extra nutrients and a higher fat content.

With 17 white tigers requiring special care, your support allows us to provide each of them the best quality of life possible. YOU are the reason they can live happy, full lives in captivity. Thank you.



Roman is the product of extensive inbreeding. His white coloration is a recessive genetic mutation. Roman has many deformities including being severely cross eyed. Facilities that breed or encourage the breeding of white tigers are not true sanctuaries.

# Education Internship Recap

Abby Hickam

As Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR) has continued to grow, it has become apparent that educating the public about the plight of big cats in captivity is critical if we want to put an end to the Exotic Pet Trade. Since we created our Education Department in January 2018, it has grown exponentially. By having a dedicated education department, we are able to reach more people through off-site presentations, who may not be able to physically visit the Refuge. Reaching more people helps us raise awareness of the Exotic Pet Trade and builds a community of advocates that can work together and be the voice for wildlife everywhere.

I have been the Education intern for nine months and over that time span, have been given the opportunity to meet a variety of people who love animals. One of the most rewarding parts of the internship, for me, is talking to school groups and children who come and visit. Many children have never seen a tiger or lion before and most do not know what we do at Turpentine Creek or why rescuing animals is important. Children are the next generation to help save these animals, not only in the United States, but also in the wild. Talking with the students creates a light bulb effect, and it is my mission to create more wildlife advocates. They may even realize they want to pursue a career in this field. I want to show them that they can accomplish anything they put their mind to and make a difference.

Education interns are a vital part of the Education Department in creating a great experience for every supporter and visitor, whether it is through special programs, tours, presentations or open communication. We hope that when visitors leave TCWR, they not only had a memorable experience but have become aware of the issues surrounding each animal here. The abuse of these amazing animals will not stop until more people are educated about the sad reality of the Exotic Pet Trade and choose to advocate for animal welfare. Being a part of Turpentine Creek and the Education Department allows me to spread awareness and hope for a better future for these exotic animals.





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Learn more about the  
dark side of breeding  
white tigers like Roman  
and Donner on page 18.



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