

# Big Cat Chronicles

— Summer 2023 —

Featured Animal  
**Chief**

Male Lion  
(*Panthera Leo*)  
Born 10/3/06  
Rescued 9/18/20





# Letter from the President

Founder Tanya Smith



2022 was the Year of the Tiger and 2023 begins an amazing future for big cats! Since the passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act last December, our Freedom Field habitat expansion plans had taken on a new urgency. Then came the game-changing request from Big Cat Rescue to rehome 34 of their cats to TCWR early this year. We immediately shifted our plans to accommodate these new cats and build Freedom Field sooner than originally planned.

Since 2021, we have been working on expanding our facility to accommodate not only more visitors, but more animals as well. The Big Cat Education Center & Museum, Phase 2 of our campaign, is still on schedule to open in 2024. This expansion will increase our revenue by nearly 300% so that we can ensure each animal has the life-long care it deserves. It will also allow us to expand our educational outreach, to help protect all wild cats. Phase 3, our Freedom Field habitat development, is now forecast to be operational by fall of this year.

Since we launched our capital campaign two years ago, your generous support has allowed us to completely pay for and build out Phase I, and as of early April has raised over 40% for Phase 2 and 3 completion. A number of our major campaign supporters joined us on April 29th for our first “Feast with the Beasts” in our Discovery Area! I want to extend a special thanks to every one of you who joined us for this very special evening, where we celebrated our 31st Anniversary and the passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act into law. Due to your advocacy, the end of the Big Cat Trade in this country is finally in sight!

Inside this issue we will tell you about some of the animals we care for, to illustrate how an animal’s transformation only begins at rescue. Most of the wild cats and bears that come to us require a lifetime of medical care and specialized diet to combat the neglect and abuse they’ve endured in their past lives. Even when we rehome animals from a respected facility, we encounter everything from digestive issues (like tiger Payson) to the myriad of health issues that come with old age. When you become a habitat sponsor or sponsor an animal’s initial care, you will help us give our new cats, and those waiting for rescue, the life they deserve. The habitats we are building in Freedom Field are our biggest habitats ever.

Please contact Sandy Ames at **479-372-3278** or **sandy@tcwr.org** if you have any questions on Freedom Field naming rights. These can be broken down to be shared with up to three other supporters! By investing in our expansion, you ensure that TCWR will continue to lead the nation in Rescue to Refuge for decades to come, as we work together to create a new generation of wildlife advocates through our educational offerings.

Sincerely,

Tanya Smith, President & Founder



# Featured Animal: Chief

Of the eight big cats we rescued from Tim Stark's Wildlife In Need in September of 2020, male lion Chief was most certainly in the most dire need of rescue. The noise, crowds and machinery that had invaded this pseudo-sanctuary for the past week to remove over 200 animals to new homes and accredited sanctuaries had caused the 14-year-old lion to completely shut down. We were informed that Chief had not eaten or drank for the past seven days and nights.

By the time we arrived, the stunningly handsome lion lie curled in a fetal position, dehydrated and weak, with evident muscle atrophy. While the other big cats were alert, due to fear or curiosity, Chief didn't even lift his head as we approached. We noted his dark mane stretching down his belly, a sign of virility and dominance in wild lions. As President Tanya Smith and Animal Curator Emily McCormack began speaking softly to him, and quickly began to administer IV fluids, Chief suddenly stood up! He gave a big stretch, sniffed at Emily and accepted treats. A short time later Chief easily loaded into our transport cage. From that day on, his trust in our team was sealed.

Chief had some serious obstacles to overcome. Dr. Kellyn treated him for a severe case of worms and administered pain management for his joint issues. However, it was his mental health that most concerned us, after years in a small gravel floored cage. We quickly released him into his new habitat, holding our breath as he set his paws on grass for the first time. The lion that was too weak to stand just days prior began to run! He then discovered the joy of sharpening his claws on a fallen tree, and proudly began marking on grass, trees, and toys, finally allowed to use his natural instincts!

With proper diet, medical care and the room to build muscle, Chief has flourished. He's found his voice caroling with the other TCWR lions and acts much younger than his 16 years.



*Chief was in dire need of rescue.*

*Shortly after Chief set his paws on grass for the first time, the state-ly lion discovered the joy of sharpening his claws on a fallen tree.*



Recurring donors are the foundation of the refuge. thank you!



# You Can Give Small Wild Cats a Brighter Future

**B**obcats Tony and Prince were taken from the wilderness as kittens. They ended up spending their formative months in pet carriers on a family's front porch, with no freedom and no quality of life.

That all changed during the Arkansas flooding in 2019. Their owners left for safe ground, abandoning the young bobcats. Rescuers arrived just in time, with flood waters already reaching the cats' chests, and brought them to a woman known to take in animals in need. Luckily, this woman knew she was not equipped to care for wild bobcats and reached out to Turpentine Creek.

Due to the trauma Tony and Prince endured from severe confinement and separation from one another, followed by near drowning, it took months for them to gain trust in humans. Our releasing them as quickly as possible into their spacious grassy habitat filled with hiding spots and places to climb was vastly therapeutic in itself. The brothers now love playing with enrichment and snuggling together in their dens.

Unfortunately, bobcats and other small wild cats are not protected by national legislation. They can still be taken from the wild, exploited in photo ops, or sold as pets. Even though bobcats are small, their genetics dispose them to be strong wild hunters, able to take down small deer. No wild cat can ever be a safe pet, or be happy in confinement.

Until new laws are passed to protect their freedom in the wild, we can give small cats a brighter future at the Refuge with your help.



***Bobcats like Tony can still be taken from the wild and exploited for profit. We can give small wild cats a brighter future with your help.***





# Letter from the Curator

Emily McCormack

## Lady's Lesson



It is with great sadness that I announce the passing of our beloved Lady. It was a short journey, but an amazing eight months getting to know a true survivor. Lady the lioness was able to overcome loneliness, and was allowed to live a social life amongst new friends at TCWR. Her story will forever be a reminder of Rescue to Refuge mission.

From the barren barn with a torn off roof, right next to the loud highway, Lady waited. There was a row of empty cages in a line like a prison. The ripped tin on the roof clanged loudly in the wind, though the hole did allow some sunshine in. Multiple animals had been abandoned, Lady included, and she was witness to many others' suffering ending in their deaths. Still, this unbelievable lion and her resilience survived. Lady waited for that day of rescue and her freedom.

After 24 years, I thought I had witnessed some of the most horrific animal situations. This one struck my heart in a way that left me gasping for air. How could this animal still be coping in such a lonely world? Tanya and I knew we had to rescue her. We were working alongside the Oakland Zoo and another sanctuary, which would be transporting three other survivors to their facilities. Lady needed to only travel a short distance and find sanctuary at TCWR. She could not endure a trip across the country.



Lady transformed in such a short period of time. Everyone from TCWR staff, interns and supporters fell in love with her. I truly believe she taught everyone many lessons. We can all be resilient, make connections, maintain a routine and create a positive outlook on life. Most importantly, move towards our goals and have a mission. Lady's lessons align with the mission of TCWR. We have more animals to rescue, transform their lives, and bring them lifelong refuge.

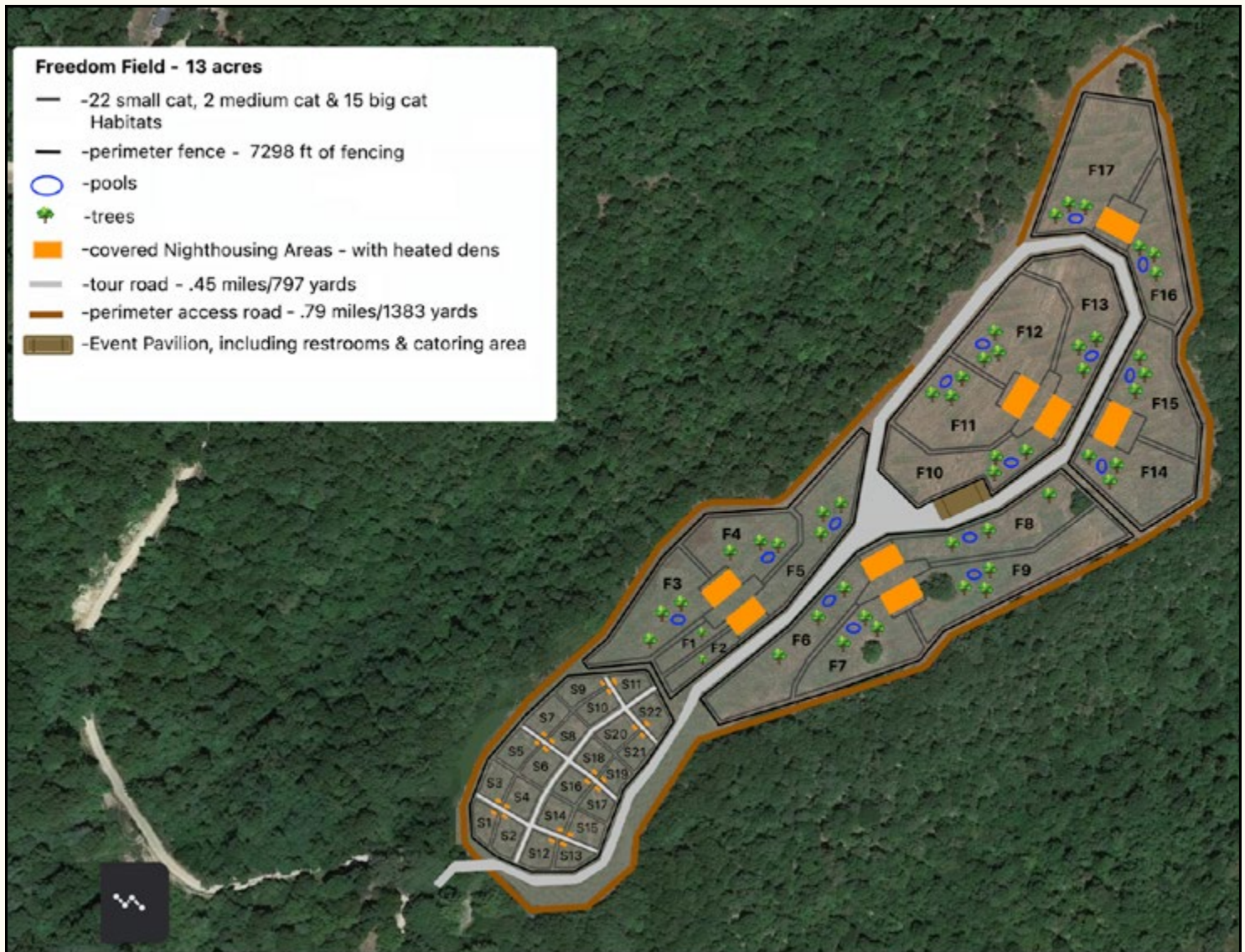
Thank you to all of our donors who support every effort TCWR makes. Let's continue our journey together, which we began over 30 years ago, always remembering our Lady.

**Your advocacy made a difference!**



# Freedom Field

We began 2023 celebrating the passage of the Big Cat Safety Act, signed into law December of 2022 by President Biden. We realized that hundreds of big cats will need rescue over the coming years, as the new national protection for big cats is enforced. With all 11 accredited big cat sanctuaries in North America close to capacity, our Freedom Field habitat expansion had taken on a new urgency. Then, in the first quarter of this year Turpentine Creek was asked to rehome 34 wild cats from Big Cat Rescue in Tampa, Florida, as they will no longer operate as a sanctuary but plan to further species preservation in the wild.



Over the months of summer 2023, those cats (which include tigers, bobcats and caracals) will be transported to the Refuge as construction on their new habitats is completed. Your generosity will make their transition into their new lives in our Freedom Field as smooth as possible, and help us provide them with the necessary medical care, proper diets and weekly changing enrichment that all TCWR animals enjoy.





**HEATED NIGHT HOUSES**

“We are honored that Big Cat Rescue has chosen Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge as the new home for these beautiful animals,” said Tanya Smith, the refuge’s President and Founder. “Our team is working tirelessly to construct the best possible habitats for these cats so that they can thrive in their new environment.”



**PROGRESS THIS APRIL: WE NEED YOUR HELP! Let’s build a brighter future for all wild cats.**

Since beginning our capital campaign two years ago, your generous support has allowed us to completely pay for and build out Phase I, the construction of our multi-use Pavilion and expansive cement walkway within our Discovery Area. Phase 2, the Big Cat Education Center and Museum is still on schedule to open in 2024. Phase 3, our Freedom Field Habitat Expansion will be completed by fall of 2023. As of this writing in early April of 2023, your generosity has allowed us to raise over 40% of what is needed to complete both phases 2 and 3!



**BIG CAT EDUCATION CENTER AND MUSEUM**



Please contact Sandy Ames at 479-372-3278 or [sandy@tcwr.org](mailto:sandy@tcwr.org) if you have any questions on Freedom Field naming rights opportunities. These can be broken down into quarters to be shared with up to three other supporters!



# Meet Your New Friends!

## Bobcats:



**Ariel**

A woman surrendered Ariel as a kitten that had been dragged in by her dog. She failed wild reintegration by consistently walking up to people.



**Dryden**

Dryden and his sibling were found near a farmer's barn in Wyoming at only a few weeks old; he was too used to humans to be released into the wild.



**Flint**

Flint was found injured with a broken neck as a kitten, after being attacked by dogs that were hunting wild boar, and had difficulty walking.



**Frankie**

Frankie was rescued from an unaccredited pseudo-sanctuary that needed to rehome their animals during a change in management.



**Kewlona**

Kewlona and her sibling were found near a farmer's barn in Wyoming at only a few weeks old. Her mother and other siblings were found dead close by.



**Lakota**

Lakota and another bobcat were rescued when the owner of a mobile zoo, housing 75 animals, was arrested on 38 counts of animal cruelty.



**Lovey**

Lovey was privately owned in Kansas and lived in a 5'x13' enclosure with a small plastic dog house for shelter to escape the cold weather. She was declawed on all 4 of her paws.



**MaryAnn**

MaryAnn was privately owned in Kansas and lived in a 5'x13' enclosure with a small plastic dog house for shelter to escape the cold weather. Her cage was filled with feces and meat scraps.



**Mrs Claws**

Mrs Claws was rescued by a Florida rehabber after she was bitten in the head by an unknown animal as a tiny kitten. The initial head wound may have caused brain damage in her cognitive processing, so Mrs Claw became a resident of the sanctuary.





**Nabisco**

Nabisco, previously kept as a pet, was dropped off at Big Cat Rescue during the 2016 Crow Peak forest fire.



**Philmo**

Philmo was rescued in 2019 from a failing pseudo-sanctuary in Los Angeles called the Wildlife Waystation. The “sanctuary” notoriously houses commercial animals used in the entertainment industry.



**Shiloh**

Shiloh was rescued in 2019 from a failing pseudo sanctuary in California called the Wildlife Waystation. The facility had ties to notorious exotic animal owners that used animals for the entertainment industry.



**Sioux**

Sioux was rescued from a Mobile Zoo in Alabama that had more than 75 animals including lions, tigers, bears, monkeys, and birds. USDA cited the zoo, and eventually confiscated the animals.



**Smalls**

Smalls was dropped off at another facility after nearly drowning in a creek. Big Cat Rescue stepped in to rescue many of the animals from this facility, including Smalls.

## Lynx:



**Gilligan**

Gilligan and another lynx were purchased at an exotic animal auction by a private owner who tried to keep the animals as pets. They were rescued by BCR from small 5x7 cages with floors of mud, feces, and animal meat leftover from their meals.

## Caracals:



**Chaos**

Chaos was rescued by BCR when the Department of Agriculture learned about the illegal possession of several exotic animals in a breeding facility in Ohio. He was declawed and lived in a room in a basement.



**Cyrus**

Cyrus was rescued by BCR when the Department of Agriculture learned about the illegal possession of several exotic animals in a breeding facility in Ohio.





## Savannah Cats:



**Beacher**

Beacher was purchased as a 7 year old kitten from a breeder in Pasco County, FL. When she surrendered the cat to BCR, the owner was covered in scars, scraps, and scabs from her efforts to tame this small hybrid.



**Diablo**

Diablo was privately owned as a house pet, and was surrendered to BCR due to his unfriendly temperament. He is territorial over her toys, trees, and everything that he considers his.



**Mouser**

Mouser was rescued along with three bobcats from a failed California facility called the Wildlife Waystation where he was handled by the public.

## Servals:



**Des**

Des was found in 2009 limping along the Arizona desert until he collapsed along the road. He was likely a pet or part of a breeding operation before being rescued by BCR.



**Ginger**

Ginger was privately owned and kept in a small cage next to two cougars in Kansas before being rescued by BCR. Ginger and the other animals were kept in horrible conditions.



**Hutch**

Hutch was rescued from a pseudo-sanctuary that needed to rehome their animals during a change in management. It was believed that before that he was privately owned and he was rescued by BCR alongside two bobcat kittens.



**Illithia**

Illithia was declawed on all four paws and came from a breeder in Missouri.



**Nala**

When the owner's health failed, his son called BCR to rehome Nala under the conditions of a contract that the family would no longer own an African Serval as a pet. It was a battle, but eventually the son surrendered Nala to BCR.



**Zucari**

Zucari was privately owned in Ohio and was surrendered to BCR in connection to another rescue involving an exotic animal breed.



## Tigers:



Aria was likely cast-off from a cub petting scheme in the backyard of a private owner who for years refused to comply with state rules requiring private owners to provide proper vet care. Aria suffered horrific injuries in silence for over four years.



Dutchess was seized by the Ohio Department of Agriculture and temporarily housed at BCR along with 3 other tigers and a black leopard for the duration of a four-year-long court battle before being awarded to BCR.



Jasmine 2 was seized by the Ohio Department of Agriculture and temporarily housed at BCR along with 3 other tigers and a black leopard for the duration of a four-year-long court battle before being awarded to BCR.



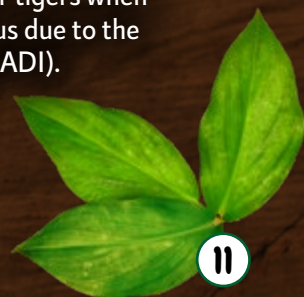
Kimba was rescued by BCR with two other tigers when Guatemala passed a law banning the circus, due to the work of Animal Defenders International (ADI). During the official handover, ADI caught the circus workers beating Kimba until he bled.



Max was rescued by BCR with two other tigers when Guatemala passed a law banning the circus, due to the work of Animal Defenders International (ADI). In total, 6 lions and 15 tigers were rescued from the rogue circuses and brought to the US.



Simba was rescued by BCR with two other tigers when Guatemala passed a law banning the circus due to the work of Animal Defenders International (ADI).

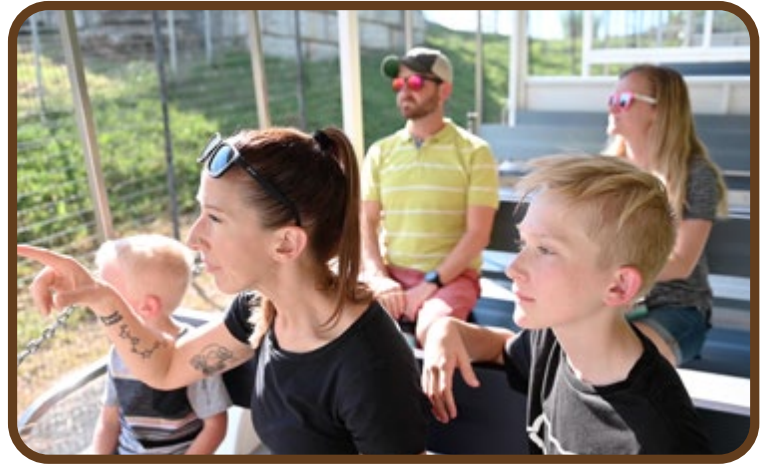




# Are you a Member of Turpentine Creek?

Imagine being able to bring your friends and family to the Refuge to introduce them to your favorite animal. Is it Spyke? Is it Shakira II? You can help your close circle learn about the cats' individual stories and connect with them too. As a member, you get free entry to TCWR for you and 3-4 guests all year long. Not to mention higher levels of memberships include discounts for lodging, the gift shop, specialty tours, and more. Become a Turpentine Creek Member today and be the voice of the animals, bringing your friends and family into our world together.

[TCWR.org/support/memberships/](https://TCWR.org/support/memberships/)



## Wild About Wildlife Membership Program

Help the animals that call Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge home and make it easy to visit them often with friends and family by signing up for one of our membership options. Members may bring up to four guests each time they visit, and receive valuable discounts on lodging, specialty tours and our gift shop inventory!

### All Members Receive:

Free year-round entry for cardholder & 4 guests, TCWR yearly calendar, an annual subscription to the Big Cat Chronicles, recognition in our annual report and website, and exclusive member e-mails & events.

### Friends of India \$300- \$1,249\*

- Friends of India membership card & decal
- 15% off of Gift Shop purchases
- 10% off lodging
- 10% off on specialty tours for cardholder and up to 4 guests
- Framed 5x7 photograph of India

### Bam Bam Benefactors \$1,250 - \$2,999\*

- Bam Bam Benefactor's membership card & decal
- 15% off of Gift Shop purchases
- 20% off of lodging
- 20% off on specialty tours for cardholder and up to 4 guests
- Framed 5x7 photograph of Bam Bam
- Bam Bam Travel Mug

### The Kenny Fellowship \$3,000 - \$9,999\*

- Kenny Fellowship membership card & decal
- 20% off of Gift Shop purchases
- 30% off of lodging
- Private Tours with Senior Staff
- A Senior Staff Liaison
- Framed 8x10 photograph of Kenny
- The Kenny Fellowship Shirt
- Kenny Travel Mug

### The Hilda Jackson Society \$10,000+ \*

- Hilda Jackson Society membership card & decal
- 20% off of Gift Shop purchases
- 50% off of lodging
- Private Tours with Senior Staff
- Senior Staff Liaison
- Framed 8x10 photo of favorite animal
- The Hilda Jackson Society Shirt
- The Hilda Jackson Society Travel Mug

\*To be part of a membership level you must sign up for that level, donate the amount required to be part of that specific level and are encouraged to pledge to make a similar donation the following year.

\*\*Limitations on lodging dates may apply.



Yes, I will help the animals!  
Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of:

100% of my donation goes to help the animals!

Your Contribution: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make my loving donation recurring:

☐ Repeat Monthly



**NEW**

## Roar Box

Subscribe with a CC and you will receive a box of surprise TCWR gifts on your doorstep each month!

Shirt size (circle one): **S**, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL

☐ \$35/month  
☐ \$385/year

### Choose Your Membership

A membership with TCWR is the perfect opportunity to help support the amazing work that the Refuge does every single day and also gives the opportunity to visit multiple times a year!

☐ \$45 The P.A.W. Club, Kid's Membership (Ages 6-13) Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

See TCWR.org/kidsclub for more info. Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \$150 Pride Membership - You and 3 guests get a full year of visits to the Refuge. **BEST ADMISSION VALUE!**

☐ \$300+ Friends of India

☐ \$1,250+ Bam Bam Benefactors

☐ \$3,000+ Kenny Fellowship

☐ \$10,000+ Hilda Jackson Society

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

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

Total:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Opt Out of Membership Signup Gifts

## Adopt or Sponsor an Animal Today!

### Printed Animal Adoption:

- ☐ \$150/yr - Small Cat
- ☐ \$150/yr - Cougar/Leopard/Jaguar
- ☐ \$150/yr - Lion/Tiger/Bear/Hyena

### Animal Sponsor:

TCWR no longer limits the number of sponsors per animal because sponsorships help all rescues.

- ☐ \$1,000/yr - Small Cat
- ☐ \$2,200/yr - Cougar/Leopard/Jaguar
- ☐ \$2,500/yr - Lion/Tiger/Bear/Hyena
- Sponsorship includes Pride membership. Opt out to make donation 100% tax deductible.
- ☐ Membership Opt Out

Monthly payments available for sponsorships, See website: TCWR.org

Adopted/Sponsored Animal's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Contribution Today: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipient Name (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Input Credit Card below or make checks payable to TCWR.

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

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

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



# Letter from the Vet: Tsavo the Lion

Dr Kellyn Sweeley, DVM

In March 2010, Turpentine Creek rescued eight animals from a roadside zoo in Branson, MO. The zoo was 'downsizing' after three tigers attacked and paralyzed a young worker who went into the enclosure with them. The one lion rescued was a five-year-old male named Tsavo. We were told by his previous keepers that he especially liked McDonald's hamburgers, definitely not an ideal food choice for a big cat.



From the get-go, Tsavo was a goofball. He loved lounging with his tongue sticking out, playing with his toys, starting up a caroling chorus among the other lions, and marking his territory everywhere. Tsavo quickly became a favorite among his caretakers and our supporters. He had a full life, over 13 years, at TCWR. He lived in many different habitats, exploring when he wasn't busy snoozing in the grass. This beloved lion received loads of enrichment, which he always had a blast destroying. We provided Tsavo with a proper diet to keep him as fit as possible (no fast-food burgers!) and good medical care, which he required throughout his life.

A few years after his arrival, his tongue that he so loved to stick out became chronically inflamed. Over time, the irritation eventually grew into a mass on his tongue. This was surgically removed, and pathology revealed it to be a large inflammatory polyp due to chronic inflammation. Over the years, the polyp would start to reappear, he would then be placed on anti-inflammatories and the polyp would shrink up. It continued to wax and wane until 2021 when the inflammation turned into cancer, an aggressive form known as hemangiosarcoma. The cancer along with a large portion of his tongue was surgically removed to slow its spread. Tsavo was not a good candidate for further treatments such as chemotherapy. He survived for another year and a half after his surgery before the cancer did spread and became too much for the playful lion. Though it was with heavy hearts that we said goodbye to this boy, his time at the Refuge will always be remembered with love and a smile.

Your support allows us to give all the animals at Turpentine Creek the best care possible, for their lifetime.



*Tsavo showing off his goofball personality, even when he is lounging on his bench. In classic Tsavo fashion, this lion will always be remembered for his personality and how loved he was by the people that knew him.*



# Big Moves for Small Cats



***Dillian has lived at the Refuge for 17 years after being rescued as a 1-year-old kitten in 2006 from a family who owned him as a pet.***

expanding, continuing lifelong care, and preparing for more rescues. In the meantime, we are working to make room where we can. Over the last few months, we have been focused on introducing two bobcats, Dillian and Santana.

Dillian has lived at the Refuge for 17 years. We rescued him in 2006 from a family who'd purchased him from a breeder. The breeder had claimed the wild kitten would become docile if fed commercial cat food. In reality, this starved Dillian of vital nutrients. After the young bobcat bit their little boy in the shoulder, the family contacted TCWR. At the Refuge, Dillian made a great recovery once given proper nutrition and has spent most of his life sharing his habitat with another bobcat named Sadie. We lost Sadie in 2021.

In the wild, bobcats are solitary animals, but a male bobcat's territory often overlaps with that of several females. In rare cases and under the right circumstances, bobcats can share the same habitat in captivity.

In 2022, TCWR rescued a 12-year-old pet bobcat named Santana, who had spent most of her life living in a small backyard enclosure with a domestic cat for company. Tragedy hit Santana's family, and they were no longer able to take care of her. It is our hope that given Santana and Dillian's social history, we can introduce the two of them. In doing so, we can help both cats feel more comfortable, keep them cognitively enriched, and make room for new rescues in need. But this is a temporary solution to the big problems and challenges ahead of us. This is why it is so important to create a more sustainable future through the development of Freedom Field and the Big Cat Education Center and Museum.



***Santana was rescued after tragedy struck her owner in 2022; she had lived most of her life in a small backyard enclosure with a domestic cat for company.***

During his time in office, president Franklin D. Roosevelt would host "Fireside Chats" to answer questions and create a more intimate relationship with Americans. Likewise, Turpentine Creek's Fireside Chats are a relaxed experience where supporters can have questions answered directly by our leadership team. We host these online events quarterly following the release of our physical newsletters or in response to big news or changes at the Refuge. If you haven't attended one yet, we encourage you to come get to know us! For more information, click the button:



# Cats on Canvas

## The Art of Animal Survivors

On May 18th we hosted our first Rescue Awareness Exhibition at the 21C hotel in Bentonville, AR, *Cats on Canvas*. The paintings in this exhibit were created by the rescued animals at TCWR who have survived neglect and abuse. Art-making is used as a voluntary form of enrichment for tigers, lions, ligers, and bears that enjoy this activity. With their paws, claws, muzzles, and fur, the animals use non-toxic paints to create beautiful abstract art. The original paintings featured in this exhibition are available for sale, along with a limited number of prints. All proceeds go towards supporting Turpentine Creek's vital work to protect captive wildlife from exploitation. We hope this will be the first of many such exhibits throughout our region, and eventually in other areas as a way to spread awareness of our mission and to expand our family of supporters.



Paw Painting by Lyla



We want to extend a special thanks to all our co-hosts for their help in making this evening a success for the animals! If you would like to host an exhibition in your area, or inquire whether your favorite TCWR animal has art available for purchase, please contact [sandy@tcwr.org](mailto:sandy@tcwr.org)

Lyla



# Big Cats Will Always Need Your Help!

Roman

White tigers Donner and Roman were 2 ½ years old when we rescued them, along with 115 other animals, during our 2016-2017 Colorado Project. Both brothers suffered from untreated dental issues and vitamin deficiencies. Roman had an angry looking abscess under his chin from infected bottom canines, which we surgically removed to ease his suffering. One of the pockets of infection was difficult to clear, and became chronic. We've had to open the pocket and flush it out occasionally, doing a bacterial culture to determine the correct antibiotics for treatment. Roman did very well for 18 months. Then, last summer, the infection returned and again, we treated him successfully.

Meanwhile, Donner fractured his bottom left canine. That tooth needs to be surgically removed at some point, as its root repeatedly becomes infected. Dr. Kellyn is securing a visit from a big cat dental surgeon, to either perform the surgery for Donner or instruct her on how to perform a root canal to try and save his canine. Meanwhile, both boys are on a combined diet of boneless chicken to minimize trauma to their teeth, mixed with a scientifically-formulated diet for carnivores that we purchase from Triple A Meat Co. While pricey, it offers extra nutrients and a higher fat content. When you sponsor these brothers, you help us give them the lifelong care they need, and deserve!

Passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act will end the breeding of white tigers and the suffering of all big cats eventually. Meanwhile, hundreds of these majestic animals still live in misery, lacking veterinary care and proper diet. The big cats we must help rescue over the next two years will require lifelong specialized care for at least the next two decades.

When you donate towards our Freedom Field project, you help us make room for more big cats like Roman and Donner to live out their lives with the best care possible in captivity!

Donner



*Over the years, Donner has required specialized veterinary care to give him the life he deserves. Other big cats awaiting our rescue will also require lifelong specialized care.*

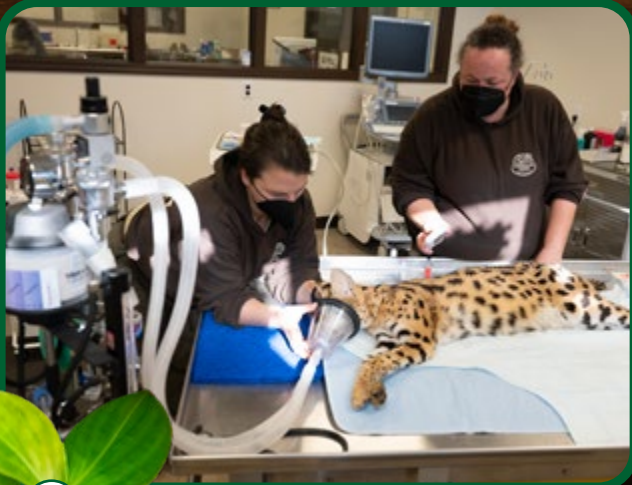


# Spring Rescue: Mondo Update



In the spring issue of Big Cat Chronicles, we introduced you to our newest rescue, a young female African serval caught in a farmer's live trap near Ava, Missouri. A generous supporter stepped up and committed to sponsoring her for life and was given the honor of naming her. They chose Mondo, which means serval in Swahili.

At the end of February, Mondo had recovered sufficiently from her original injuries that we could sedate her and do a complete wellness exam. While under sedation, Dr. Kellyn also spayed her. In early March, she was ready to come out of quarantine and into her habitat. She is now in one of the habitats in our Discovery Area.



One of the most surprising aspects of Mondo's rescue was the number of calls from people who thought she was theirs. Proving ownership is only possible with a chip, and Mondo was never chipped. She is fortunate she was rescued when she was. A major ice storm hit the same area two weeks following her rescue, and with her injuries, she probably would not have survived. African servals are not equipped to deal with North American weather extremes.

The wild cat crisis in America continues... the cat breeds involved just aren't quite as large. But don't be fooled! An African serval can be just as deadly as a larger cat. In fact, African servals have a higher kill rate than their larger cousins. They have phenomenal leaping powers and are quite adept at problem-solving and escaping.

Meanwhile, Mondo has found her forever home. Her habitat has a unique feature. She has a bridge that spans the public walkway where guests board the open-air tram. Mondo has discovered it's a fun perch looking down at everyone. If you don't see her in the grassy habitat, look up and see if she's stalking you from above!



# You Help us Keep the Wild in Them

The best part about being a sanctuary is seeing the physical and mental transformations of the animals. Even in situations of extreme abuse, we work hard to give the animals we rescue the opportunity to feel safe and free. Simply taking them out of situations of abuse and forced interactions can lower their stress. Their playfulness increases as they experience life in a large habitat with nothing on their daily schedule except what they choose to do.

In 2010, TCWR received a call from a Roadside Zoo in Branson, MO, that needed to find homes for five tigers, a lion, a black bear, a leopard, and a coatimundi. This followed an incident where three of the tigers (Chuff, Abigail, and Athena) mauled a young employee in 2008 leaving him paralyzed. GFAS (Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries) accredited sanctuaries like TCWR do not allow humans to enter enclosures with big cats, or interact with them physically. You can never predict the behavior of a wild animal. The Branson Roadside Zoo, like many others, did not respect the wild nature of these natural predators.

Chuff, Abigail, and Athena were extremely aggressive tigers when they first arrived at the Refuge. Over time, their demeanor shifted. Chuff and Athena began to calm down and elicit less signs of stress and aggression. Abigail did not experience as much of a transformation, and we were forced to separate the three due to her continued aggression. To help Abigail become calmer, we moved her to Rescue Ridge so she could enjoy a more quiet life. We also used the opportunity to give her a full medical and dental exam.

Abigail loves her privacy and having a habitat all to herself at Rescue Ridge. As we look at the progress we are making in continued rescue, along with optimizing the experiences for animals at our sanctuary, we could not have done it without you. Together, we can continue to build a sustainable future through our Freedom Field/ Education Center Development Plan.







YOU MADE OUR  
**31<sup>ST</sup>**  
memorable!

Simba

We want to thank every one of you who joined us in our Discovery Area on April 29th to Feast with the Beasts! Whether you were able to attend this special evening or had generously donated your ticket value, you helped make this milestone event a success. Some of our attendees enjoyed a very special tram tour conducted by our Curator Emily McCormack, while the rest of us enjoyed appetizers and drinks to the Folk Music of “Brick Fields.”

That evening we celebrated the passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act and our 31st Anniversary with our special guests Howard and Carol Baskin. There was special Rescue to Refuge footage shown, looking back on some of the lives we’ve changed along the way, along with unique artwork and gift packages that raised money for our animal residents in a silent and live auction. It was a night of delicious food and wonderful company, including our Discovery Area animal residents, who found our nighttime presence and the soothing live music a new form of enrichment! Feast with the Beasts is our annual springtime event, so mark your calendars for **April 27, 2024** now!



# Your Support Enriches Animals Lives

A major way in which we improve quality of life for our animal residents is through their surroundings. As animals age, their needs change. Sometimes this means a move from a hilly habitat, which encourages our young big cats to exercise, to the flatter ground of Rescue Ridge. Tigress Abigail benefited from such a move this past winter and is thriving in her new private habitat and quiet surroundings. Chuff and Athena also benefited from the enrichment of moving to a new habitat. In the case of tigress Priscilla and her cubs DOJ, Jinx and Rosie, this family of growing tigers will need more space if they are to continue to live together. While wild tigers are solitary animals, in captivity we often see siblings grow old together, enjoying each other's company. BB King and Mack are an excellent example of this.

Since the habitat next door to our growing family is now vacant due to Abigail's move, we are planning on joining the two with a walkway, basically doubling their space. This summer we also plan to provide them with their own in-ground pool. Your support allows our team to continually better the lifelong care we provide to the animals that depend on us. Setting up a monthly donation gives us the ability to plan for their needs!

**Jinx**



Jinx and his siblings Rosie and DOJ are bigger than their mom Priscilla; the growing family will need more space if they are to remain together.



PLANNED  
WALKWAY



# Small Wild Cats Are Predators, Not Pets



As big cats gain protections under the Big Cat Public Safety Act, smaller, more vulnerable animals enter the spotlight. We see a common pattern - irresponsible pet owners are influenced by what they see on social media or in the entertainment industry. We've seen this with the mass purchasing of clown fish after *Finding Nemo*, and even the increase in Belgian Shepherds following the movie "Dog" with Channing Tatum. Servals are continually portrayed as glamorous pets on social media.

Sammy and Enzo were rescued in July of 2018 at just two months old. Their story illustrates what the exotic pet trade looks like in the US. A man living in Upstate New York was illegally buying and shipping servals from the wild in Africa. He had sold 32 exotic animals to private owners before being brought to justice by the New York Department of Conservation and World Animal Protection.

Four servals, including Sammy and Enzo, and two caracals were seized. They were infested with worms, and suffered from severe metabolic bone disease, which is caused by malnutrition. Exotic pet trade breeders and dealers are only concerned about profits. They do not invest in the substantial cost of early veterinary care, vaccinations, proper diet, and enrichment - all initiatives that would reduce profits. Luckily, Sammy and Enzo now call Turpentine Creek their forever home, where their medical conditions will be monitored for the rest of their lives. The other cats were placed at an affiliate Big Cat Sanctuary Alliance sanctuary.

Sammy and Enzo were able to be introduced into our large serval habitat, visible on the tour loop, with Giselle, Whistler, Tigger, and Lexi. Enzo loves napping on his fire hose bench and is known for engaging his keepers with meows as they approach the habitat. Sammy, who is much bigger than Enzo, enjoys running up to the fence and following his keepers as they walk by. Sammy and Enzo are two of the few lucky ones to end up in a true sanctuary. They will get to live out their lives with their own species in natural surroundings, on their own terms, rather than be forced to meet the needs of people as a 'pet.'

Ruthless individuals will continue to exploit animals as long as pet owners continue to fuel the demand for exotic pets. The need to expand our Public Education is more critical than ever! You can help end their exploitation by supporting our habitat expansion and new education center here:

**[TurpentineCreek.org/support/](https://TurpentineCreek.org/support/)**





# Debunking the Myth!

Speculation and misinformation about the white tiger Kenny is circulating again online. Kenny was one of our most famous tigers. He has become a role model for the disfigurements many white tigers suffer from due to several generations of inbreeding.

A common trope circulating on the internet is that Kenny had Down Syndrome. Quite simply, this is not possible. Down syndrome is a congenital disability affecting approximately 1 in every 700 children born in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). It results from an extra copy of chromosome 21, or Trisomy 21. Tigers like Kenny do not possess identical chromosomes as humans; cats have only 19 chromosomes, so they cannot develop Trisomy 21. Therefore, the notion that Kenny has Down Syndrome is scientifically implausible.

Kenny's pug nose and crooked teeth are among the many possible physical deformities white tigers can carry, along with the recessive gene that gives them white coloring. Almost all white tigers are cross-eyed. Other defects can include club feet, cleft palates, organ deformities, spinal deformities, and others. Kenny passed away at the young age of 8 1/2 years from malignant melanoma - another common outcome white tigers can face. The Big Cat Public Safety Act prohibits further breeding of white tigers for the high profits they generate in entertainment and cub-petting, but many adult cats will need sanctuary.

Most of the white tigers we rescue require lifelong medical treatment, including pain management. Your support helps us give them the best lives possible at TCWR.







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## Your Legacy Ensures Their Future!

With the passage of the Big Cat Safety Act into law, hundreds of big cats will need rescue over the next three years, and lifelong sanctuary for the next two decades. Already this year, we have been asked to rehome 34 wild cats from a closing Florida sanctuary. Other species of small wild cats will also need our help in the coming years. By joining the TCWR Legacy Giving program, you can continue to help Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge rescue animals and provide them with the best quality of life possible in captivity. Your legacy gift will help ensure that from Rescue to Refuge, animals will live out their lives in peace and safety at TCWR, cared for and respected as wild animals.

To learn more about leaving a Legacy of Giving to ensure a brighter future for all the animals we love, visit:  
[TCWR.org/support-us/legacy-giving/](https://TCWR.org/support-us/legacy-giving/)



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