

Rescue to Refuge

# Big Cat Chronicles

Fall 2022

Featured Animal

**Mauri**

Female Lion  
(*Panthera leo*)

Born 11/7/16

Rescued 9/18/20

Read more about Mauri on page 8.

**Donate Today!**



An update from Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge: A GFAS Accredited Facility for the Vanishing Breeds of Big Cats.

# Letter from the President

Founder Tanya Smith



This autumn brings us to a crossroads in our 30+ Years of rescue. While the Big Cat Public Safety Act is on the brink of passage due to your advocacy, we are also faced with the dire consequences for animals left behind when roadside zoos and pseudo sanctuaries are shut down. In this issue we'll tell you our part in the rescue of four nameless big cats, the lone survivors of a drive-through safari closed by authorities in 2006. The elderly lioness we brought back to the Refuge, now named Lady, has amazed us with her resilience and courage. This rescue illustrates the importance of AZA Zoos and Accredited Sanctuaries working together to solve the Big Cat Crisis in our country.

The images of those rows of empty cages and filth continue to haunt me daily. How many more situations like this are there right now across our country, with abandoned animals suffering in silence? Sometimes, it is local law enforcement that brings our attention to situations of neglect, as was the case in 2012 that resulted in our rapid construction of Rescue Ridge.

Today's rising inflation could greatly impact our ability to respond quickly to a call for a large-scale rescue. We will explain how rescue is only the beginning of our mission at TCWR. With rising costs affecting everything from habitat construction to grounds maintenance, to feeding and caring for our animals, your recurring gifts mean more now than ever before.

We also want to give you hope, with updates on gorgeous young lioness Mauri, our rehomed serval, Lexi, and those rambunctious tiger cubs DOJ, Jinx and Rosie, whose first birthdays we celebrated on May 20th. Meanwhile, our Campaign to Create a New Generation of Wildlife Advocates is gaining steam! We'll tell you about our progress inside.

None of the progress we've made over the past 30 years would have been possible without our TCWR Family of Supporters. You all give me hope that our Vision is within reach – together, we will end the Big Cat Trade in this lifetime!

Until next time,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tanya Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Tanya Smith, President & Founder



*Tanya Smith and Emily McCormack (left @ center) survey the dire situation in Oklahoma - rows of empty cages and filth. One lone tiger survivor was found waiting in this area.*



Donate Today - a monthly gift can save the lives of animals in need!

# Collaboration Saves Lives

## Welcome Lady

In June, Turpentine Creek joined forces with Lions Tigers and Bears, another globally accredited sanctuary, and the AZA- accredited Oakland Zoo in California. Together, we rescued two tigers, a tiger hybrid and a lioness from a severe case of neglect after a concerned citizen called the zoo. “These big cats were living in small, filthy enclosures. Shelter was provided but was terribly weathered and rotten,” said Tanya Smith. “Aside from some good Samaritans, they were left alone, fed inconsistently, and needed veterinary care. We’re so relieved to provide new homes to these animals and help them thrive.”

The facility, whose owner reportedly had ties to “Joe Exotic,” offered cub petting and photo opportunities before being shut down for safety and animal welfare violations in 2012. The four rescued big cats were the only surviving big cats left at the abandoned facility.

We conducted on-site evaluations for the four female, declawed big cats. It was decided that one of the lean tigers would go to Lions Tigers & Bears, while the other would go to the Oakland Zoo, along with the tiger hybrid that was in poor condition with a facial wound and bowed legs.

All agreed that Turpentine Creek was best equipped to care for the elderly, arthritic lioness. While Lions are naturally social animals, we were told she’d spent the last seven years alone inside a dilapidated metal building missing half its roof, full of empty cages. Her only outdoor access was an 8x10 patch of weeds.

Upon her arrival, we placed the frightened old lioness in a quiet habitat at Rescue Ridge, realizing her adjustment could take months. At first, she would only eat food placed within reach of her den, keeping her back feet anchored inside it for security. By the second evening, the brave old girl was out exploring her new surroundings. By the third morning, she was seen lying in the grass under the shade of a tree for the first time in her life, with a look of serene joy on her face.

That week one of our board members gave her the name “Lady.” Lady is extremely alert, continually observing the other animals and our staff. She has even begun flirting with Detroit, who has been returning the gesture with chuffs and fence rubs!

“We are always ready and willing to collaborate with other accredited facilities when the need for rescue arises. We must fight together to resolve the Big Cat Crisis we are facing in the United States. No animals should suffer in the deplorable conditions these animals had to endure,” Emily McCormack, TCWR Animal Curator, concluded.

Your recurring donations help us be ready to spring into action when a call for rescue comes. It only takes a moment to sign up.

Become a recurring donor today by visiting our donation page:

[TCWR.org/support-us/donate](https://TCWR.org/support-us/donate)



*Lady is extremely alert, continually observing the other animals at Rescue Ridge, and our staff, which she was never able to see in her previous life of isolation. She has even begun flirting with nosy neighbor, Detroit!*

# Donor Spotlight: Bev & Richard

At TCWR, our Vision is to end the U.S. Big Cat Trade within our lifetime through Public Education and Advocacy. We must work to create a New Generation of Wildlife Advocates! Our new Big Cat Education Center & Museum will triple our educational outreach in its first year.

As of July 20th, we have already raised over \$664,275 of the \$3M USD it will cost to complete the Center. Recent foundation and corporate grants totaling \$66,500 have boosted TCWR towards the 40% mark that will unlock major foundational funding! Meanwhile, staunch TCWR supporters have made major donations towards naming rights we have developed within the new building and the exhibits.

One such couple is Bev and Richard of Oklahoma. Ten years ago, a friend invited them to experience our educational tour. Having stayed in safari tents in Africa, they came to relish the overnight experience at TCWR. With each trip they observed positive changes, from the development of all large natural habitats, to the onsite veterinary hospital and staff veterinarian. Their grandson became involved in helping choose which animals to adopt, and brought his mom to meet the animals and see the bench donated in his name.

Bev and Richard had considered sponsoring a habitat, but we explained that the growing Big Cat Crisis must be addressed first, or there will never be 'enough' habitat space. To fund the \$1M USD it will take to develop the infrastructure in the area of the Refuge that will be most economically feasible for new habitat development, TCWR must expand its revenue base.

While attending the TCWR 30th Anniversary gala, they learned how the Big Cat Educational Center & Museum is projected to increase our revenue by 300% through its educational offerings. They decided that was the project for their donation. "As a retired teacher, I was impressed with the planned displays and interactive exhibits, especially the virtual field trips for children around the globe. The exhibits we chose to sponsor are those I think would most appeal to young children."



*As a retired teacher, Bev was impressed with the planned displays and interactive exhibits, and especially the virtual field trips for children around the globe.*



*The Big Cat Educational Center @ Museum will host both permanent and changing exhibits, many of which will be interactive.*

Bev concluded, "We hope to continue our support and bring friends and family to learn about the plight of big cats in the world and see the 'forever' home provided to many of them at Turpentine Creek."

To learn about Naming Rights available for the Big Cat Educational Center & Museum, contact [sandy@tcwr.org](mailto:sandy@tcwr.org).

**Recurring donations secure the future for all the animals that call TCWR home.**

## Chloe Update - Losing Daniel

It's difficult to lose an animal resident. Their presence and unique personalities make an impact on all of us. This year, we said goodbye to Daniel lion. As we all grieved his passing, we now extend our attention onto Chloe.

Chloe was known to be more trusting than Daniel, who was wary of staff and exhibited protective behavior towards her. Though she was curious of the guests passing by, she wasn't always known as the friendliest lioness towards her care team. That is fine with us, because she is a wild animal.

While aloof towards humans, you can be certain that she was loyal to Daniel. When Daniel wasn't doing well, in traditional lion fashion, Chloe did not want to come in for the night because Daniel was too weak to do so himself. She shifted her schedule to remain at his side. "We try not to anthropomorphize, but in some sense, you can tell she knew that Daniel wasn't well. She stuck right by him until the end," says Animal Curator Emily McCormack.

After Daniel passed, Chloe's behavior did shift. She seemed to fall back into her previous routine, including eating and exploring her habitat. While she is still snooty towards staff, she is a wild animal, so that should be the case. She is a little less excited about enrichment without sharing those experiences with her former roommate but continues to join in with the other lions for sing-a-long caroling.



*While contemplating your legacy, please consider TCWR. Contact [amanda@tcwr.org](mailto:amanda@tcwr.org).*

## Tigers Helping Tigers

The Bentonville, Arkansas High School Wrestling Team gives back to the community each summer through volunteer service hours. On June 20th, their dedicated athletes and their Assistant Coach chose to volunteer their time at The Refuge - which makes sense, since their mascot is a tiger! They worked hard to spray-paint in the summer heat, giving a "face lift" to three habitats on our tour loop. Afterwards, the wrestling team took an hour-long Educational Tour to learn about our Mission and the animals we rescue. We look forward to collaborating with them in the future!



If you are interested in doing a group volunteer day with your friends, school, or work please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Carly Hepburn at [carly@tcwr.org](mailto:carly@tcwr.org).



# Let Us Introduce You to Lexi!

Lexi, a six-year-old African Serval, was rehomed to Turpentine Creek this past May. Her Louisiana owners had to move out of state due to illness in their family. Thankfully, they contacted TCWR to ensure that Lexi would receive the best lifelong care possible.

Since arriving, Lexi quickly adapted to sanctuary life. Many of the animals we rescue are afraid to leave their dens at first, due to past trauma. Lexi immediately made it clear by a fearless exploration of her habitat that she had been treated with kindness in her previous life, and likely had access to an outdoor space. At first, she had difficulty navigating the ramps due to being declawed, but we quickly built extra benches and steps that allow Lexi to access all areas of her new home. She has come to love sitting on the perch near the roof of her habitat to observe everyone around her.



While our initial exam showed that Lexi was medically sound, we were informed that her former diet had been constrained to commercial cat food. To help Lexi receive the nutrition predators require, we slowly introduced raw meat into her canned food. In no time, she was leaving the commercial food untouched! We also began supplementing her with glucosamine and chondroitin, while slowly introducing ground raw bone to her food, eventually switching her to the bone-in meat she needs.

This plucky serval has a bright future ahead of her at the Refuge! Her past owner is helping to ensure this by both sponsoring Lexi, and allowing others to sponsor her as well. If you would like to help Lexi get the care she needs for the rest of her life, you can adopt or sponsor her at [TCWR.org/support-us/adoptions-sponsorship/](https://www.tcwr.org/support-us/adoptions-sponsorship/)

  
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## An Update on Sasha, a Cougar from the Bronx

We collaborated with multiple organizations to bring Sasha from a small apartment in the Big Apple (NYC) to TCWR in August of 2021. She spent her first days in quarantine, before moving to Rescue Ridge to acclimate to her new environment.

Cougars are the biggest cat in the small cat family. We have had success introducing members of the small cat family and giving them the joy of companionship. The big cats are rarely candidates for introduction. Tigers are solitary, and lions form strong bonds within their family but do not accept outsiders. We hoped to introduce Sasha to our two other cougars, Marissa and Louisa, in our spacious cougar habitat.

In October 2021, we moved Sasha into a den attached to the expansive cougar habitat to give them a chance to become acquainted, allowing them to alternate access. Things were going reasonably well; there was a lot of curiosity on display. Then, Sasha began instigating battles with Marissa through the fencing. By April, we knew the introduction would not be possible. Sasha was raised in captivity since she was a cub, depriving her of the ability to socialize with other cougars. Now she is happy, living in her private habitat at Rescue Ridge.

We need your help to ensure other cougars don't face the same future. Your financial support allows us to continue doing great work in uncharted territory.



## TCWR Interns Carry TCWR Standards Nationwide

After joining the TCWR Animal Care Internship in fall of 2021, Emily Parish served a second internship and stayed for another six months! She always wanted to work with animals, and fell in love with the TCWR mission. While Emily feels conservation is important, she believes that providing a refuge for the thousands of neglected and abused animals that don't qualify for species conservation programs is also vital. "Turpentine Creek provides a lifelong home where they can just be the wild animals that they were meant to be."

After researching TCWR, Emily was prepared for how high the bar is set in terms of animal care and welfare, along with the scope of work. Now, even on hard days, she goes home rewarded by the difference that she has made in each cat's life. "I am honored to be a part of a true sanctuary that puts the animals first."

Emily's favorite animal is Thurston. Prior to his rescue 2016, Thurston was declawed and defanged for a magic show, and remains aloof with most people. Hence, Emily was thrilled when he first chuffed at her! "I am in awe of how the animals grow in happiness at Turpentine Creek. They are true survivors." Emily's favorite part of her work is watching them enjoy new enrichment.

She also enjoys educating visitors, "Telling their stories, where they came from, and how they are now, is really important for the public to understand. Many people ask if they can pet or interact with our cats. Explaining why we don't allow this is vital. Making people aware of the exotic pet trade, cub petting, fake zoos and pseudo sanctuaries is instrumental in trying to put an end to it all."

If you would like to help support our internship program, so vital to our mission, please contact [sandy@tcwr.org](mailto:sandy@tcwr.org)



# Featured Animal:

## Mauri

Mauri's favorite pastime is stalking her keepers and her animal neighbors, especially Khaleesi and Joey since they moved in across the way.

Mauri was awarded to our care by a federal judge in 2020, along with seven other big cats from the Indiana pseudo-sanctuary "Wildlife in Need." They were confiscated due to owner Tim Stark prematurely removing cubs from their mothers, along with his inhumane declawing practices.

Beautiful Mauri is a good-sized lioness that weighed in at 317 lbs. during her wellness exam last March. Sadly, the horrible declawing she was put through caused her to walk extremely flat-footed. Her front paws are the worst; at times she holds one up after running. At only six years old, she already is part of our pain management program and receives medication twice daily to keep her comfortable. Despite all she's been through, Mauri has become outgoing and playful, often running in circles for the joy of it and falling over to play with her feet!

Mauri is extremely curious, and loves to keep an eye on everything anybody is doing around her. Her favorite pastime is stalking her keepers and her animal neighbors, especially Khaleesi and Joey since they moved in across the way. That said, she would have little success with real prey. Mauri takes much too long before pouncing, and seems convinced that if just one of her eyes is hidden behind a pipe, we can't see her!

At times, this exuberant lioness enjoys soccer-like play with her smaller boomer ball toys, and relishes scratching on the big logs in her habitat. She loves experiencing perfumes and spices, and is very interested in the pumpkins and Christmas trees we give her during fall and winter.

This beautiful young lioness still does not have a sponsor. If you would like to ensure animals like Mauri get the lifelong medical care they need to live their best lives, visit [TCWR.org/support-us/adoptions-sponsorship](https://TCWR.org/support-us/adoptions-sponsorship)



*Despite all she's been through, Mauri is outgoing and playful. She is extremely curious, and loves to keep an eye on everything anybody is doing around her.*

  
**Click for Adoptions  
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# A New Era of Challenge: Inflation

Lady, our newest rescue, lounges in grass for the first time in her life, observing her new world. She sees her Animal Care Team mowing each habitat to keep her safe from ticks and snakes in the hot midday heat. Before her rescue, she never knew a life like this; one with a pool, fresh water to drink every day, or nutritious meals and supplements quite literally delivered on a silver platter.

Lady is unaware of the 400 miles our team traveled to save her. She has no idea that gas is at an all time high or of the costs of her IV fluids and deworming medication. She sees the food on a silver platter, but not the cost of meat and mineral supplements. In the winter, she will experience the Animal Care Team shoveling the night houses, her heated den, and fresh wood chips to lie on. All she will know is that she is safe, and that she is happy.

Our animals have no idea of the current economic climate or the inflation that continues to hit us all. Rescuing and providing for the animals costs \$25,000 per cat - but giving them a second chance at life is priceless. Our Management Team is making every effort and innovating daily to manage the impact of inflation on the Refuge. As a foundation, you have helped us triumph through the financial impacts of the pandemic, and together we can make it through this new era of inflation.

The best thing we can do to ensure the future of our Mission is to focus on our monthly giving program. While we deeply appreciate the generous one-time donations, the monthly contributions lead to greater stability for the animals and easier budgeting for our supporters, in the same way many of us subscribe to Netflix or Spotify.

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You shop. Amazon gives.

Another simple way of helping the refuge right now is to Sign Up with Amazon Smile, where a percentage of EVERY order you make on Amazon is gifted to the Refuge. This is a way of buying what you already need and giving back to the animals.



Each year we design an all-new calendar featuring every resident's birthday, Refuge events, wildlife holidays and U.S Government holidays. Big, vibrant 12-by-9-inch pages featuring Refuge inhabitants will brighten the 12 months ahead and keep your favorite big cats close to your heart.

Turpentine Creek calendars make excellent gifts for the animal lovers in your life! Pre-order yours today using the enclosed form, or through our web store:

[Shop.TurpentineCreek.org](https://Shop.TurpentineCreek.org)



# Letter from the Vet

Kellyn Sweeley, DVM

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Most are familiar with the iconic pink ribbon symbolizing this international health campaign and people's support of it worldwide. The entire month is dedicated to increasing awareness of the disease, promoting self-checks and mammography for early detection, and helping to raise funds towards research for treatment, cures, etc. With more than 200,000 cases diagnosed each year in the United States, many of us have been affected by this disease in some way or another.

Unfortunately, other mammals are not spared from this disease, either. In domestic cats, mammary cancer accounts for nearly one-third of all diagnosed feline tumors and 90% are a very aggressive form of cancer known as mammary carcinoma, or adenocarcinoma. Though little is known about how mammary cancer affects wild exotic felines, several studies over the past two decades have shown that it is one of the most common types of cancer seen in captive exotic felines. Just as it behaves in domestic cats, in exotic species it often is very aggressive, with most cases having spread to other parts of the body at the time of diagnosis. As such, it carries a poor prognosis for survival. It is often found incidentally upon examination, which reinforces the importance of routine exams. However, it is difficult to catch at an early stage, as mammary carcinomas grow so large and spread so fast. Most survive less than one year after diagnosis, regardless of aggressive surgical treatment. Other treatment options such as chemotherapy, radiation and/or hormonal therapy are not routinely recommended in felines, as they do not tend to increase survival time.

With this being said, it is with heavy hearts that we report one of our female ligers, Mani, was recently diagnosed with mammary carcinoma discovered incidentally during a routine exam.



Mani

Mani came to us in May of 2021, rescued from the Tiger King Park in Oklahoma where she was bred to other lions and tigers in an effort to produce hybrid cubs used for cub petting and/or future breeding stock. She was in fairly good health at the time of rescue. Since then, she has been doing quite well adjusting to her new life at TCWR. This past June at almost 14 years of age, we immobilized her and performed her first hands-on full wellness examination. At this time, we found multiple large tumors in her left mammary chain. A biopsy was performed, which revealed that the cancer was growing so fast that the center of the tumor was dying and had leaked what is called necrotic fluid. Histopathology exam confirmed that we were dealing with mammary carcinoma. After consultation with veterinary oncologists, we decided that aggressive surgery to remove her entire left mammary chain with all of the glands was unlikely to increase her survival time, and could add to a decreased quality of life due to how large the incision would need to be, increasing the odds of infection or dehiscence (incision reopening up). However, as the tumors are so large and necrotic in the center, she would benefit from their removal as they are likely to eventually burst open and create large open wounds in the future. Therefore, she



underwent lumpectomy surgery in July to remove the tumors with their surrounding mammary gland tissue. Though this will not increase her survival time, it will likely increase her quality of life by minimizing the pain and the potential secondary effects that ulcerated tumors can cause. On surgical removal, it was discovered that the cancer had spread to the surrounding lymph nodes already. However, other organs on imaging still appear clear of cancer macroscopically putting her at a Stage 2 metastatic cancer diagnosis at the time of writing.

It was such an unexpected finding and we are all devastated by the news. Now all we can do at this point is provide supportive care to keep her as healthy and happy as we possibly can for as long as we can. Though the time we have left with her is likely short, we know she is a fighter and will give it her all. This October, we hope that you keep Mani in your thoughts and prayers as well and remember that this cancer affects us all, human and animal alike. Hopefully with each passing year we get closer to discovering better prevention, treatments, and cures for this devastating disease.

It is only through your support that Mani was able to live this past year to the fullest, and with your help we will continue to give her and every animal at TCWR the care they deserve to live their best lives.

# 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, which include valuable discounts on gift shop inventory and lodging!

**Renew your membership in 2022 to receive your members-only 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary T-shirt!**

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

Exclusive Yearly Membership Perks and Privileges

- The Hilda Jackson Society Membership Card
- Free Year-round entry for cardholder & 4 guests
- TCWR Yearly Calendar
- The Hilda Jackson Society decal
- 20% off of Gift Shop purchases
- Annual subscription to the Big Cat Chronicles
- Recognition on our website
- Exclusive member e-mails
- Exclusive HJS Members-only Facebook group
- Member events
- 50% off of lodging
- Private Tours with Senior Staff
- Recognition in and access to the Annual Report
- Senior Staff Liaison

Signup Gifts:

- Framed 8x10 photo of favorite animal
- The Hilda Jackson Society Shirt
- The Hilda Jackson Society Travel Mug

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

Exclusive Yearly Membership Perks and Privileges

- The Bam Bam Benefactor's Fellowship Membership Card
- Free Year-round entry for cardholder & 4 guests
- TCWR Yearly Calendar
- The Bam Bam Benefactor's decal
- 15% off of Gift Shop purchases
- Annual subscription to the Big Cat Chronicles
- Recognition on our website
- Exclusive member e-mails
- Exclusive BBB Members-only Facebook group
- Member events
- 20% off of lodging
- 20% off on specialty tours for cardholder and up to 4 guests
- Recognition and access to the Annual Report

Signup Gifts:

- Framed 5x7 photograph of Bam Bam
- Bam Bam Travel Mug

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

Exclusive Yearly Membership Perks and Privileges

- The Kenny Fellowship Membership Card
- Free Year-round entry for cardholder & 4 guests
- TCWR Yearly Calendar
- The Kenny Fellowship decal
- 20% off of Gift Shop purchases
- Annual subscription to the Big Cat Chronicles
- Recognition on our website
- Exclusive member e-mails
- Exclusive KF Members-only Facebook group
- Member events
- 30% off of lodging
- Private Tours with Senior Staff
- Recognition and access to the Annual Report
- A Senior Staff Liaison

Signup Gifts:

- Framed 8x10 photograph of Kenny
- The Kenny Fellowship Shirt
- Kenny Travel Mug

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

Exclusive Yearly Membership Perks and Privileges

- The Friends of India Membership Card
- Free Year-round entry for cardholder & 4 guests
- TCWR Yearly Calendar
- The Friends of India decal
- 15% off of Gift Shop purchases
- Annual subscription to the Big Cat Chronicles
- Recognition on our website
- Exclusive member e-mails
- Exclusive FOI Members-only Facebook group
- Member events
- 10% off of lodging
- 10% off on specialty tours for cardholder and up to 4 guests
- Recognition and access to the Annual Report

Signup Gifts:

- Framed 5x7 photograph of India

\*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**



**Order 2023 Calendars:** \$20 each X \_\_\_\_\_ calendars + \$5 S/H = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Choose your Wild About Wildlife 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: \_\_\_\_\_

**\$100 Pride Membership You and 3 guests get a full year of visits to the Refuge.**

**\$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  
 Opt Out of Membership Card

**Adopt or Sponsor an Animal Today!**

**Printed Animal Adoption:**

- \$150/yr - Small Mammal/Bird
- \$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.

- \$700/yr - Small Mammal/Bird
  - \$1,000/yr - Small Cat
  - \$2,200/yr - Cougar/Leopard/Jaguar
  - \$2,500/yr - Lion/Tiger/Bear/Hyena
- Sponsorship includes 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 Curator

Emily McCormack



Recently, a supporter asked me how we assess animal welfare, and whether we follow a model, or certain protocol. This is a very interesting and challenging topic due to TCWR's residents all being rescues. Each animal is assessed individually and all come from a mostly unknown background.

TCWR follows a modern animal welfare concept called the Five Domains Model. This is a science-based structure for assessing animal welfare, which recognizes that animals can experience feelings, ranging from negative to positive. The Model allows us to minimize negative experiences and increase positive experiences to ensure the highest welfare for the remainder of the animals' life. It provides a best-practice framework to assess welfare in all species. High animal welfare is achieved depending on their species-specific needs, but also each individual animal's characteristics and preferences. For example, TCWR has an enrichment program in which we note each individual animal's favorite likes, dislikes, and what's totally ineffective.

The Five Domains Model was developed by Professor David Mellor, former Director of the Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre at Massey University. This animal welfare assessment model has been adopted by most accredited and reputable facilities worldwide. The first four domains (Nutrition, Environment, Health and Behavior) all help inform us about the animal's "various" experiences, which make up the fifth domain, the Mental Domain.

The animals' "various" experiences are the biggest challenge for rescued animals, like those at TCWR. After a rescue, we've "witnessed" their past environment, and can assess their needs but we also understand it can be a huge adjustment. Let's look at our newest rescue, Lady. She was alone and abandoned on the side of a highway in a cubicle enclosure, with no stimulation, except a man feeding her. We were told her nutrition consisted of a thrown, fully feathered chicken or two, maybe daily. She was watered, maybe daily but the water bowl was filthy. She lived in solitude, amongst her own feces and filth. She had received no veterinary care or assessment in at least 7-8 years. When we arrived, she was staring into space, but her behavior changed quickly when she saw us. She jumped off her platform and began eagerly pacing back and forth like she thought we had food.



Lady

Build a stronger foundation for big cats by setting up a monthly recurring donation.



Immediately after her arrival and unload, her behavior indicated that she was scared, but we also noticed that she was truly lost. She had not had this much stimulation from her environment, except negative. Now in her life were humans, lots of them, food, cleaning, fresh water in a sanitized bowl, birds, lions caroling, bugs, sun, trees and shade, grass, neighbors, vitamins and supplements, a hyena whooping, etc. etc.! The list goes on and on, and sounds great to all of us. But now we determine the fifth domain, Mental. This is where the challenge after a rescue is completely individualized. How can they come back from this, is it possible to demolish the negative and create a new, completely positive life for this animal?

My heart melts to report, it only took days for her to adjust. Lady began engaging and exploring her surroundings. She formed trust, knowing people were serving her. She developed a bond with her neighbors and began showing affection towards the other cats. Then the playfulness began. It continues everyday with the staff and her keepers. She loves to stalk and run to the fence, just to run back and do it again. Lady is a new beloved member of the TCWR family and has quite the life ahead of her. We are so pleased she adjusted so fast and we are able to understand her specific needs to provide her with the best animal welfare.

Thank you to all who donated to this rescue effort and collaboration. Thank you to our longtime supporter for providing her with the best name! And thank you for your continued support in saving so many animals in need.

# More Than Rescue

What does it really mean to rescue an animal? To most, it is the excitement of an accredited organization stepping into a situation where an animal has been abandoned, neglected, or abused, and relocating them to an accredited facility. But, to those of us with boots on the ground at the Refuge, this is only the beginning of their story.

Rescuing is a journey to provide animals with an excellent quality of life, for the rest of their lives. Most days at TCWR start off with a large list of things to be done, until a waterline breaks or a shade cloth gets loose. Then the list is added to and rearranged, with constant surprises along the way that build upon the list of work needed to be done. But that is all part of the journey.

Each day, our Animal Care Team cleans the animal's nighthouses, water dishes, food dishes, and habitats. They sort out individual meals and medication for roughly 100 animals, in addition to enrichment. For those of us with pets at home, imagine how difficult it is to give medication or supplements to your dog or cat, then amplify that by all the animals in our care!

In the afternoons, our staff always has projects to work on. From habitat maintenance, to new habitat construction, to repairs and more. The weather isn't always in our favor. In the winter, our team has to shovel all the walkways and enclosures so that animals don't get chapped paws. In the summer, the grass must be kept short to deter snakes, ticks, and other critters from coming into contact with our animals. This is especially important for zoonotic diseases, and this year extra rain and early heat has caused the grass to grow faster than ever!



These are just some of the things that go on every day here at the Refuge to give these animals a forever home. The animals have no concept of holidays, snow days, rainy days, or "time off", which means that caring for them is a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week, 365 day a year job.

It is because of your support and belief in our team that we can continue to rescue, and then provide the animals in our care the long, happy, and healthy lives they deserve.

Donate today to be a positive change for big cats!



# Water is Life

Water is always a priority at the Refuge. From breaking up ice that forms in cold weather to keeping water bowls full in hot weather, and ensuring every water-loving animal has access to a pool to submerge in.

Tigers have not completely acclimated to the warm climates where five of their six subspecies live, having descended from northern Asian just a few thousand years ago. The northernmost tiger, the Siberian, flourishes in cold and snow. The Bengal and other subspecies have adapted to a love of water to keep cool in hotter climates, spending much time there to get rid of excess body heat. The size of the water hole or tank is of little importance to them, so long as they can recline and cool off.

Tigers also need lots of fresh water for drinking so they can stay hydrated. Our interns and staff fill water bowls three times a day! That's a lot of water hauling! The pools are also emptied and cleaned regularly to ensure a healthy environment for our big cats and bears.

To meet our tremendous demand for water, we had a new, additional well drilled in 2019. In 2021, we began a project to provide every habitat with a natural in-ground water feature. We've installed six so far. Supply chain challenges post-pandemic have slowed our progress. Still, we continue to move forward, and the animals that have received the new water features love them! Thank you for helping us to help them!



*In 2021, we began a project to provide every habitat with a natural in-ground water feature. Lakota and Aurora love the easy in and out access on a hot summer day!*

**Schedule your next trip to the Refuge to see these beautiful animals in person!**

# The Three Little Cubs

(not so little now)



Rosie



Priscilla

Tiger cubs Rosie, Jinx, and DOJ, are having a great time being raised by their mom, Priscilla, in their forever home at TCWR. At first, after we moved them from the solitude of Rescue Ridge to their much larger, hilly habitat on our tour loop, they were a bit anxious and overwhelmed to see lots of new faces. Priscilla became a very protective mother and would get upset when anyone unfamiliar came close to their habitat. Since then, they have come a long way! DOJ is the most social of all his siblings, and will run up to the fence to greet visitors. Jinx is a bit shy but will follow his brother wherever he goes. Rosie still tries to avoid the attention of our guests and stays pretty close to her mom unless there's a school group. She loves to stalk the children as they walk by her habitat!

DOJ



Jinx



The cubs are now over a year old. Jinx and DOJ are the same size as their mother, while Rosie is still a bit smaller than her brothers. Tigers and lions will grow in size until they are about five years old.

On hot summer days the cubs can be seen playing with each other in their swimming pool. They love to jump in and out, batting their toys and splashing water around! You can view Priscilla and her cubs on our daily Educational Tours and learn more about their story when you visit TCWR.

# Glacier & Ungowwa

Glacier, a male white tiger, and Ungowwa, a female African lion, were two of the eight cats TCWR rescued from Indiana in 2020. We suspected they were housed together to breed tigers. Lions and tigers don't mate in the wild; they are put together in captivity by unscrupulous breeders to produce hybrids that bring in greater profits for the cub petting industry.

We always strive to reunite pairs of cats that lived together before rescue. For a male and female to share a habitat, one of them must be fixed. We prevent breeding with vasectomies, neutering, spaying, or birth control. Each case is different. Male tigers are neutered. However, neutering a male lion causes mane loss. Mauri, another lioness from Indiana, was given birth control due to her habitat mate Chief's advanced age.

Sterilization procedures require sedation and surgery at our vet hospital and average \$2,500 per cat. After Dr. Kellyn performs the surgery and the cat is returned to their habitat, our animal care staff monitors their recovery. In some cases, they will lock a cat in their nighthouse area while their stitches heal to ensure they don't play too hard and compromise healing.

TCWR is a non-breeding facility per our accreditation standards. Furthermore, we rescue cats with impure genetics, so breeding them would have no conservation value. It could carry a negative genetic impact for cubs. Our goal is always to give our cats the best lives possible, including preventing reproduction.



Glacier



Ungowwa

# Our Legacy Gives Big Cats a Bright Future

We never know what could be in store when a rescue call comes in. In 2012, we received a call from the Crawford County Sheriff's Office to help them orchestrate the relocation of 34 big cats from a facility in Mountainburg, Arkansas. The situation quickly escalated into an urgent large-scale rescue.

The elderly owner's failing health left her unable to care for the cats any longer. By the time we were called by the local Sheriff, the deteriorating situation had become dangerous, with den boxes falling apart and unstable fencing. Due to limited habitat space at the Refuge, we quickly made space for six of the tigers by moving existing animals. Then, we jumped into action, creating the 4.2-acre area now referred to as "Rescue Ridge" in just 128 days to accommodate the rest. Between November 2012 and March 2013, TCWR staff made 15 trips to the dilapidated facility to rescue 27 tigers and one cougar.

Preparation of the area required a massive clean-up before it could be completely enclosed by an 8-foot tall perimeter fence. Then we built twenty 20' X 50' enclosures to accommodate the majority of the new animals. Since all the RTS animals were geriatric, the youngest being 14 years old, the new cats required over \$6,000 in veterinary care to treat infections, abscessed teeth, arthritis, tumor removals, and vitamin supplements.

With the Big Cat Public Safety Act closer to being passed into law than ever before, the need for future large-scale rescues is apparent. By joining the TCWR Legacy Giving program, you help us to continue rescuing animals in desperate situations. Your legacy gift will help ensure that all our current and future animal residents will live out their lives in peace and safety, cared for and respected as wild animals.



*By the time we were called by the local Sheriff, the deteriorating situation had become dangerous, with den boxes falling apart and unstable fencing.*

*Between November 2012 and March 2013, TCWR staff made 15 trips to the dilapidated facility to rescue 27 tigers and one cougar.*



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/)

# Moving Day!



Lakota



Aurora

*Even after some time apart, Aurora remained aggressive to Khaleesi and Joey. Because of this, we moved Khaleesi and Joey to the habitat behind our Siberian Suite.*



Khaleesi



Joey

**W**e promise the animals we rescue that Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge will be a forever home. That doesn't mean they won't experience a moving day now and then! We relocate animals from one habitat to another for various reasons. Our staff spends a lot of time observing our animals, learning their behavioral and mental health needs.

Rescue Ridge is a retirement community at TCWR, which you can visit by purchasing a behind-the-scenes tour. Cats with arthritis, other mobility issues find the more level terrain easier on old joints and a more peaceful atmosphere. We move senior or traumatized residents to this part of the Refuge.

When we rescue cats that lived together previously, we try to keep them together. This usually works out. Female tigers in particular can become intolerant of their companions. Aurora, Khaleesi, Joey, and Lakota lived together when rescued from Colorado in 2016. We continued to house them together, in our Discovery Area. Although raised together, Aurora recently decided that she didn't like Khaleesi and Joey. At first we tried alternating habitat days between the pairs, Aurora and Lakota and then Khaleesi with Joey. We hoped after some time apart they would get along. However, Aurora remained aggressive to Khaleesi and Joey. Because of this, we decided to move Khaleesi and Joey to the habitat behind our Siberian Suite. Now all four can have access to their habitats every day!

Moving can also be a form of enrichment for our residents. The new habitat will be full of tantalizing smells from the former resident. There are new trees, a new view, and new neighbors, all of which relieve boredom. It's hard work, like any significant move, but we will do whatever it takes to let our cats experience the best quality of life possible in captivity.

# Bear Care

Turpentine Creek's focus started with rescuing Big Cats from neglect and abuse. As we became aware that captive bears suffer from equally deplorable conditions, we began to offer Ursidae (bears) lifetime refuge and work to improve their lives.

In 2007, a symposium was held in California, where nearly 100 bear experts came together to exchange ideas and information about bear husbandry and welfare related topics. After the success of this initial gathering, the non-profit Bear Care Group (BCG), was founded. Else Poulson, the founding president of BCG, had a vision of a non-partisan group that welcomes bear caregivers from all disciplines (zoos, sanctuaries, rehab, and field work) in countries across the globe. Its purpose is to share knowledge, network and engage in open communication that will improve the lives of all bears worldwide. Through conferences and workshops, as well as the sharing of knowledge through publications and other resources, the BCG continues with that vision to this day.

Turpentine Creek President & Founder Tanya Smith and Vice President Scott Smith attended the first BCG conference in 2009 and have continued to participate in all of the North American conferences held since. In 2016, TCWR Animal Curator Emily McCormack was asked to speak at the BCG conference in Omaha, Nebraska. This past year, our Assistant Curator Laurie Vanderwal was asked to sit on the BCG Board of Directors.

The communication, cooperation and education provided by the BCG has helped Turpentine Creek become a leader in the field of bear welfare, care and rescue, just as we have been for over 30 years for big cats.



*BCG has helped Turpentine Creek become a leader in the field of bear welfare, care and rescue, just as we have been for over 30 years for big cats.*



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## Rescue to Refuge

Lady



Lady



This female lion was left abandoned in these deplorable conditions for 8 years! Good Samaritans saved her life and called for help. Because of you, we were there to save her.



Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge  
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Read about Lady  
 on page 14.