

BIG CAT CHRONICLES

FALL 2025



Lucy

Female Lion (*Panthera leo*)

Born 6/26/2016

Rescued 5/22/2025

Learn about me on page 6.



Turpentine Creek
FOUNDATION, INC.

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

As summer fades into fall, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge is fully living our New ERA—one marked by a bold, expanded mission: **to rescue and provide lifetime sanctuary for captive wild animals**. Thanks to your steadfast support, that mission is reaching farther than ever before.



As we finalize this issue, we are preparing for two of the most complex rescues in our history. In Canada, we're partnering with Humane World Canada, Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, the Toronto Zoo, and The Wildcat Sanctuary in Minnesota to save nine lions from a defunct roadside zoo with a troubling history of animal welfare violations. In Honduras, we're working with multiple international partners, including the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council and Carolina Tiger Rescue in North Carolina, to bring three lions and five tigers to safety, offering them the kind of lifetime care and dignity that's rarely available in that part of the world.

International rescues bring immense logistical and financial challenges. While we continue to prioritize U.S. cases, our growing experience, expanded infrastructure, and aging resident population uniquely position us to answer these urgent global calls when others cannot.

This critical work is only possible because of you. When you become a monthly supporter, you provide dependable funding that allows us to say yes to every animal who cannot wait. Your generosity fuels emergency rescues, expert veterinary care, lifelong enrichment, and safe refuge. Together, we live our mission, one life at a time.

Fall is also the perfect time to visit Turpentine Creek. The stunning Ozark foliage paints our sanctuary in vibrant colors, and the cooler weather brings out the playful energy of our animal residents. Our lodging fills quickly, so be sure to book your stay soon and experience firsthand the sanctuary your support makes possible.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Tanya Smith".

Tanya Smith, Founder and President
Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge

**P.S. Don't forget to pre-order your
2026 TCWR Calendar on page 14 or through the
online store, they make excellent holiday gifts!**



More to Come in the Winter Big Cat Chronicles!

TCWR is currently engaged in two critical international rescues — one involving lions in Canada.



These lions are waiting for someone to stand by them. Will it be you? Check out our weekly e-newsletter to learn their names and how to adopt or sponsor them.

Letter from the Curator

Emily McCormack



At Turpentine Creek, our mission is grounded in compassion, respect, and the unwavering belief that every animal deserves a life free from suffering, fear, and exploitation. We hold this promise sacred, and it encompasses how our residents live and how they leave this world when that time comes.

One of the most challenging responsibilities we carry as caretakers is the decision to euthanize an animal humanely. It's a subject that brings great sadness, and understandably, a lot of questions. I wanted to take a moment to share what this process looks like behind the scenes and why it's one of the most compassionate choices we can make.

Every animal in our care is seen as an individual, with a unique personality and history. Many of them come to us with deep trauma or chronic health issues stemming from their past lives in exploitative settings. We work tirelessly to offer them healing, comfort, and the freedom to express their natural behaviors, sometimes for the first time.

Then comes the time when medical intervention can no longer offer a meaningful quality of life. When an animal's body begins to fail despite every treatment, therapy, or ounce of hope, the team gathers to assess the medical picture and the animal's behavior. Are they still engaged with their environment, playing with enrichment and toys? Are they eating a complete diet, moving about the habitat, interacting with the staff and interns? Are we prolonging life, or prolonging suffering? Is this decision about us or them? We never decide to euthanize lightly. It is always an extremely compassionate process. And when that final moment comes, it is as peaceful, gentle, and respectful as the entirety of life they were given at TCWR. Familiar voices of staff and scents surround them. They are told how much we love them right to the very end. As Dr. Kellyn always says, this is the last gift we genuinely get to give.

We mourn every loss deeply. Our residents are family. But we take comfort in knowing that their final years were spent in a place where they were understood, valued, and free. Thank you for standing with us through the hardest moments. Your belief in our mission and your generous support allow us to give every rescued animal safety and a life of freedom, dignity, and the highest quality of care. And when the time comes, you help us ensure their final chapter is written with compassion, respect, and love.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Emily McCormack". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Emily McCormack, Animal Curator
Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge

Your Witness Protection Support Funds Freedom



Bob was found abandoned and emaciated by a compassionate woman, but as Bob regained strength, his wild nature returned. Upon arrival, Dr. Kellyn diagnosed a hernia, and Bob underwent surgery. While in recovery, Bob's hernia returned, requiring a second surgery.



Hernia repairs are notoriously difficult in wild animals because they don't understand the need to rest. Once healed, he'll move into his habitat, where he can run, climb, and be wild.

What About Bob?

In April 2025, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR) received a call about a young bobcat needing a permanent home. Bob had been found abandoned and emaciated under a sign in the woods. A compassionate woman took him in, feeding him small pieces of meat and caring for him in her home for six months. But as Bob regained strength, his wild nature returned, and she realized he needed expert care and a sanctuary equipped for his needs.

Upon arrival, our veterinarian, Dr. Kellyn, conducted a complete exam on Bob, during which she administered dewormer and vaccines, and completed his initial medical assessment. During the exam, she found a large mass near his spine that frequently changed in size—a visual indication of a hernia. She also noted damage to his eye, likely caused by a traumatic injury in the wild. Bob underwent surgery. While in recovery, Bob's hernia returned, requiring a second surgery.

Hernia repairs are notoriously difficult to heal in wild animals. Unlike domestic pets, they don't understand the need to rest. Bob—young, full of energy, and endlessly playful—was no exception. He's quickly become a favorite among the animal care team for his lively spirit and gentle interactions.

Though he's spent his early days at the Refuge recovering behind the scenes, Bob's journey is just beginning. Once fully healed, he'll move into his habitat, where he can run, climb, and be exactly who he is: **wild at heart and finally, home.**

Lucy's Journey Forward: A Legacy in the Making



Lucy

In May 2025, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR) partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to assist in the rescue of eight animals after a California facility lost its license due to animal welfare violations. Among them was Lucy, a young lioness whose journey was shaped by years of neglect—and whose future now holds hope.

From a young age, Lucy endured confinement, likely housed on bare earth and cold concrete that offered no comfort or space for her growing body to run. Deprived of proper nutrition, she developed Metabolic Bone Disease during her adolescent years, resulting in permanent bowing in her limbs and an unsteady stride.

Since Lucy required sedation for transport, Dr. Kellyn used the opportunity to perform an initial exam, which revealed roundworms and overgrown claws. She was promptly treated, microchipped, and thoroughly evaluated. Despite her condition, Lucy was at a healthy weight, and her innate curiosity was clear from the start.

Because of her special needs, Lucy was placed in a medium-sized cat habitat in Freedom Field, where soft grass and open sky offer comfort and stimulation she had never known. Within days, her initial caution gave way to trust, shown through soft vocalizations and gentle interactions with her care team. Though her physical scars remain, Lucy's resilience is unmistakable. She runs, plays, and explores with joyful energy, utterly unaware of her deformities.



From a young age, Lucy endured confinement and was deprived of proper nutrition. She developed Metabolic Bone Disease, resulting in permanent bowing in her limbs and an unsteady stride.



Because of her special needs, Lucy was placed in a medium-sized cat habitat in Freedom Field. Here, soft grass and an open sky offer comfort and stimulation she has never known.



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Unfortunately, we have witnessed stories like Lucy's multiple times. In 1998, TCWR rescued Sierra, a malnourished tiger who had been fed only dog food as a cub. She also suffered from Metabolic Bone Disease and endured lifelong complications, including intestinal blockages that required enemas and a specialized boneless diet. Yet thanks to dedicated care, Sierra lived over two decades at the Refuge, full of life and spirit.

Likewise, Hercules, a tiger rescued that same year, arrived with severely underdeveloped limbs after spending years in a cage barely large enough to stand in. Once given space and freedom, he began to move and play, rediscovering what it meant to be a tiger. He was known for his famously loud greetings and charming balancing act as he eased into his pool, which had lower walls to accommodate his shortened limbs.

Like Hercules and Sierra, Lucy now has the care, safety, and peace she was long denied. Her journey is just beginning, and she still needs adopters and sponsors to help secure a future shaped by compassion and second chances. We invite you to be part of what comes next.

California Rescue: Eight Big Cats Find Sanctuary

In May 2025, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR) answered a critical call for help. After a California facility lost its permit due to repeated animal welfare violations, TCWR partnered with the USDA and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to rescue and relocate eight exotic cats to a lifelong sanctuary.

Initially placed in temporary holding, the animals needed urgent, specialized care. TCWR stepped in to provide a permanent solution built on experience, compassion, and commitment to lifelong care.

Now safe at the Refuge, these eight animals—three female lions, one male lion, a leopard, a serval, a caracal, and a fishing cat—are beginning their new lives. Several suffer from lasting health issues, including deformities likely caused by Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD), a painful condition caused by poor nutrition. Each animal now receives a custom care plan tailored to their unique medical and behavioral needs.

These rescues are never easy, but they are always worth it. With your support, these wild cats are no longer trapped in a cycle of neglect—they're finally surrounded by expert care, proper diets, enrichment, and the freedom to just be.



Lucy

Lucy is playful and social by nature, and can be very comical in her interactions with the world. Her legs are bowed and shortened from Metabolic Bone Disease, likely caused by early malnutrition, but she runs and explores with joyful energy, unaware of her limitations.

Species: African Lion (*Panthera leo*)

DOB: June 26, 2016

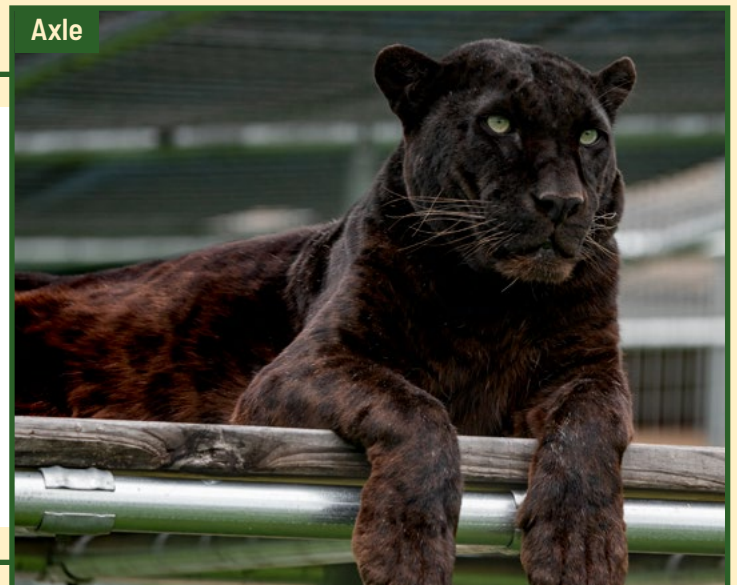
Sex: Female

Axle is active in his new enclosure, especially enjoying the tall grass for hiding. He's selective about which staff he trusts and requires a special diet and medication to manage kidney disease and a heart murmur.

Species: Leopard (*Panthera pardus*)

DOB: September 25, 2011

Sex: Male



Axle



Kaia

Kaia can be found confidently perched on top of her den, surveying her new world and the neighboring animals. She arrived with hair loss on her tail and rear legs, which we have been treating with medication for stress, fleas, and mites.

Species: Fishing Cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*)

DOB: February 25, 2014

Sex: Female

Leyah arrived, believed to be blind and deaf. Although she has trouble seeing, she has found her way throughout the enclosure and can be seen playing with her toys or relaxing on her bench.

Species: African Lion (*Panthera leo*)

DOB: September 25, 2010

Sex: Female



Leyah

Samson arrived with deformities in his front legs and Metabolic Bone Disease. We immediately began a pain management plan, and we've already seen improvements in his mobility and activity. He is infatuated by his neighbor, a lioness named Mauri.

Species: African Lion (*Panthera leo*)

DOB: October 25, 2011

Sex: Male



Samson

Continued . . .



Zeus

Zeus enjoys his mornings and is always waiting for his breakfast. Likely struck by a car, Zeus lives with neurological issues, limb deformities, and past surgical repairs that make walking a challenge. With pain management and expert care, he's reclaiming the comfort and dignity he was once denied.

Species: Caracal (*Caracal caracal*)

DOB: July 25, 2015

Sex: Male

Amari has facial paralysis on her left side, allegedly caused by an untreated ear infection, but is resilient, expressive, and curious by nature. She enjoys exploring her new enrichment each week, and often pauses to observe her neighbors.

Species: African Lion (*Panthera leo*)

DOB: September 25, 2011

Sex: Female

Amari



Chapman



Chapman arrived underweight and distrustful, the result of years of inadequate care—thin, reactive, and quick to hiss when approached. Today, he's one of the most vocal cats at Rescue Ridge, often greeting the Animal Care Team each morning with enthusiastic meows.

Species: African Serval (*Leptailurus serval*)

DOB: September 25, 2018

Sex: Male

Please help us give them the lifelong care they deserve - adopt or sponsor a California cat here!

A black bear is the central focus of the image, standing in a forest. The background is filled with trees and foliage in various shades of yellow, orange, and brown, indicating an autumn setting. The bear is looking slightly to the left of the camera.

Create a Lasting Impact of Compassion

Your will, trust, or life insurance policy, can help ensure that animals in need receive lifelong care. We've partnered with FreeWill to guide you through estate planning and eliminate standard legal and filing fees, allowing you to plan your future easily.

Join us in building a legacy of care and compassion. Visit our website today to start your estate plan and leave a lasting impact on the lives of animals who need you most: TurbentineCreek.org/Legacy.

Koda G

Letter from the Veterinarian

Dr. Kellyn Sweeley, DVM



Last year, Dr. Kara Amstutz, a board-certified veterinarian of the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation, came to perform joint injections on Shiloh bobcat and Hutch serval. It has helped to improve the boys' overall quality of life. This year, Dr. Kara, who is the CEO and owner of the Canine Rehabilitation Institute and runs a specialty practice, Momentum Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation, out of Springfield, Missouri, was brought in to perform specialty treatments on Luna the tiger, including joint injections and shockwave therapy. She provides these treatments pro bono to our animal residents, where we only need to cover the costs for the materials used.

Luna is a 10-year-old white female tiger with a history of physical abuse by the previous facility that raised her as a cub. She came to us with advanced Osteoarthritis (OA) in her left hip joint and developing OA in her right knee, where her tibia had previously been fractured and surgically repaired using plates. It was obvious at the time of rescue in 2020 that she had difficulty with mobility despite only being around 4 years of age.



Due to her history of physical abuse, Luna came to us with advanced Osteoarthritis (OA) in her left hip joint and developing OA in her right knee. Dr. Kara returned to perform specialty treatments and Luna is already showing increased activity and smoother mobility.

This past June, Dr. Kara was able to perform a joint injection into Luna's right knee, as well as a joint injection and shockwave therapy on her left hip. The joint injections will last around one year, providing pain relief and helping to slow down the progression of OA. The shockwave therapy uses high-energy sound waves to relieve pain and promote healing in the treated area. It does take a little bit of time before the effects of the treatment are seen. Still, at the time of writing, Luna is a little over three weeks out from treatment and is already showing overall increased activity and smoother mobility!

We hope to provide these advanced treatments annually as part of Luna's long-term pain management plan to help extend her overall quality of life. We cannot thank Dr. Kara enough for her continued advanced care for the animals at the Refuge. We have more future patients lined up for her as we continue progressing the veterinary care standard at TCWR.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kellyn Sweeley, Veterinarian, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge

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 Joey? Is it Shakira II? You can help your close circle learn about the cats' individual stories and connect with them too. With all the memberships on this page, you get free entry to TCWR for you and four guests all year long. **These memberships also include discounts for lodging, the gift shop, specialty tours, and more.** Become a member today and be the voice of the animals, bringing your friends and family into our world together. 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 help spread our mission by bringing friends and family to visit TCWR!

All Members Receive: Free year-round entry for cardholder & four 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.

NEW Exclusive Insider Access! All Wild About Wildlife members will have access to our live streaming quarterly Happy Hour with exclusive videos and Q&A with TCWR senior team members.

Friends of India \$375- \$1,249*

- Friends of India membership card & decal
- 15% off of Gift Shop purchases
- 10% off of 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



☐ Go Paperless: You can opt to receive this newsletter by email. Enter your address here: _____@_____

☐ \$25 X _____ quantity + \$5 shipping. Pre-order **2026 TCWR Calendars!** Featuring Refuge residents, makes a great gift!

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: _____

☐ \$175 Pride Membership - You and 3 guests get a full year of visits to the Refuge. **BEST VALUE!**

☐ \$375+ 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:

- ☐ \$175 annually (printed certificate)
☐ \$150 annually (digital certificate)

Animal Sponsor:

- ☐ \$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): _____

Email Address: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Input Credit Card below or make checks payable to TCWR.

Credit Card #: _____

Exp. Date: ____/____/____ CVC Code: _____

A Goodbye to Mack and a Tribute to Bill & Nancy Plummer

When Mack the tiger passed away at age 17, we also said goodbye to a chapter in TCWR history—one written with love, loyalty, and leadership by longtime supporter and former Board Chair Bill Plummer.

Bill and his wife Nancy first discovered TCWR during a spring break detour. While picking up show tickets in Branson, a clerk spotted them looking at our brochure and said, “If you only do one thing, visit Turpentine Creek.” They did—and meeting Hercules the tiger moved them so profoundly, they returned that afternoon to ask how they could help. That conversation with Animal Curator Emily McCormack led to their first major gift: funding Hercules’ habitat. Years later, when we began installing in-ground pools, they were among the first to donate, adding one to that very habitat, now home to Blackfire, Rocklyn, and Peyton. The triplets, who live with lifelong mobility challenges caused by Metabolic Bone Disease from their cubhood, make full use of the pool’s easy access, joyfully splashing and cooling off in the water—an enrichment activity they relish.



In 2008, Mack and his brother, BB King, were born unexpectedly six weeks after their mother’s rescue.



Bill and Nancy named Mack in honor of Emily and began sponsoring him immediately—an act they repeated every year of his life.



When you commit to a lifetime sponsorship, you provide rescued animals with the highest level of care—every day of their lives.

In 2008, Mack and his brother, BB King, were born unexpectedly six weeks after their mother’s rescue. Bill and Nancy named Mack in honor of Emily and began sponsoring him immediately—an act they repeated every year of his life. Quietly, they often added \$500 more, so Mack could receive new enrichment, medications, or special care.

A lifetime sponsorship like theirs ensures that each animal receives the best care possible for the rest of its life and allows donors to stay closely connected through annual updates and photos.

Unlike many animals who suffer for years before rescue, Mack knew only safety. In his final years at Rescue Ridge, he enjoyed daily care, summer pool time, and a calm routine that reflected the love he was raised with.

As Board Chair from 2009 to 2014, Bill helped grow TCWR’s budget, championed professionalism, and set the board standards we still follow. Though health issues now limit their travels, Bill and Nancy remain deeply committed.

Bill once said, “I’m so proud to see TCWR grow.” Because of him, it has, and it will.

Sponsor an Animal for Life

When you commit to a lifetime sponsorship, you provide rescued animals with the highest level of care – every day of their lives.

Your support ensures their needs are met, from medical care to personalized enrichment. You’ll receive an annual update with an 8x10 photo and the peace of knowing that you’re part of their journey, year after year.

Honor a life. Change a life. Become a lifetime sponsor today.

Visit TCWR.org/sponsor



Rayn

This summer, the TCWR Animal Care team witnessed a remarkable bond develop between Rambo, a rescued hyena, and his tiger neighbor, Rayn.

Unexpected Friendship

This summer, the TCWR Animal Care team witnessed a remarkable bond develop between Rambo, a rescued hyena, and his tiger neighbor, Rayn. In the wild, hyenas live in tight-knit, matriarchal clans and rely on complex relationships for survival. But many hyenas in captivity arrive alone, often victims of roadside zoos or private ownership, where few laws protect them. Without access to a clan, these intelligent animals must adapt. Amazingly, many form cross-species bonds. Rambo has done just that.

Rambo came to TCWR in 2021 after being rescued from private ownership. Since then, he's lived across from Rayn, a 19-year-old tiger rescued in 2008. They developed a close and unusual friendship, though separated by fencing and a bit of distance. During a recent veterinary exam, Rayn was sedated so the team could assist with her care. As they entered her enclosure, Rambo immediately became agitated, pacing, vocalizing, and clearly distressed. When Rayn began holding her breath and had to be intubated, Rambo let out cries the team had never heard before. His concern for her was unmistakable. An intern was sent to comfort him as the procedure continued. This connection surprised everyone.



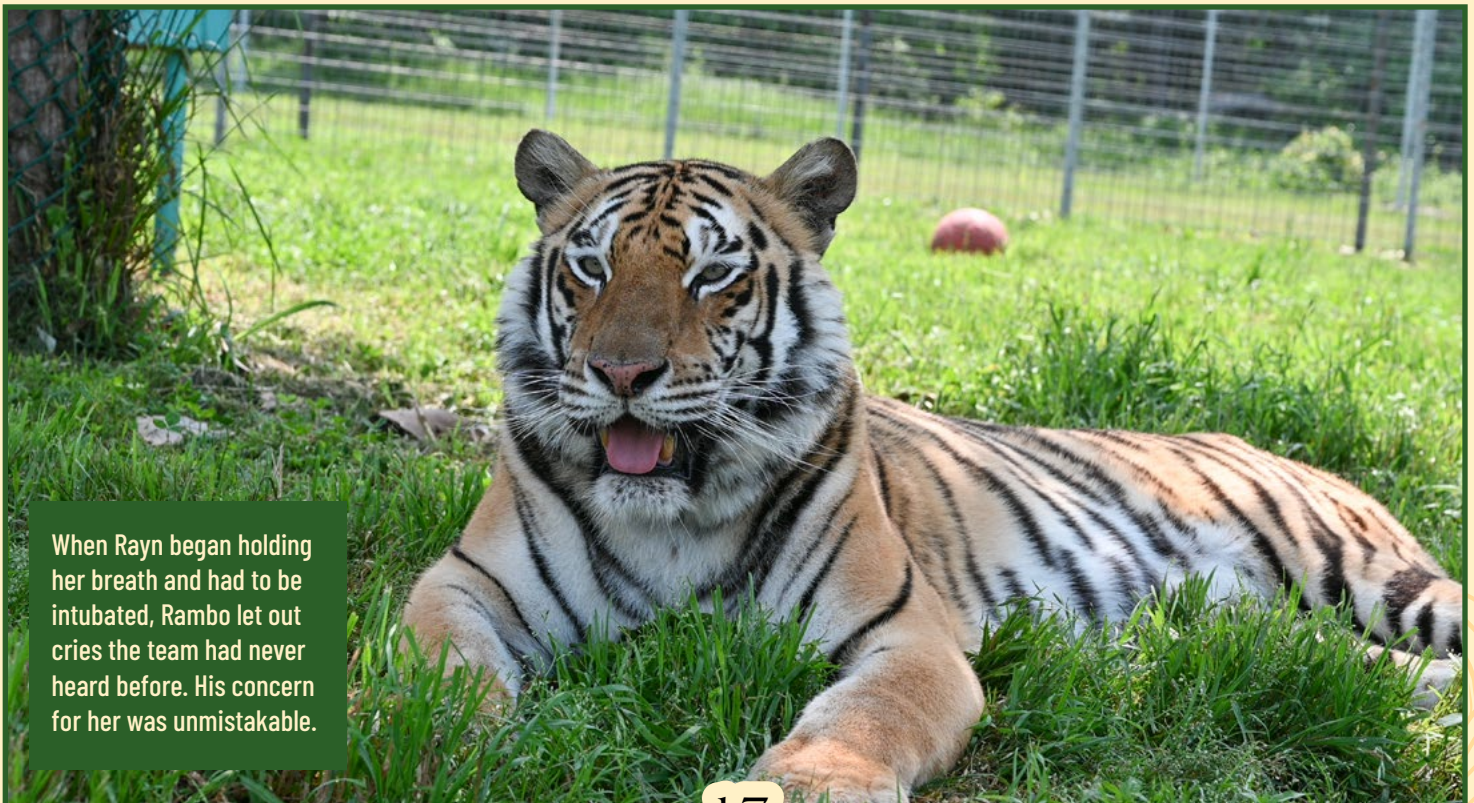
Rambo



Rambo

They developed a close and unusual friendship, though separated by fencing and a bit of distance.

Though we don't fully understand how they communicate, it's clear that Rambo and Rayn share a bond. Their story is a symbol of healing and coexistence at the sanctuary. It reminds us that animals can have deep emotional connections, even beyond their species. Rambo's friendship with Rayn highlights the hyena's adaptability, intelligence, and capacity for love. May their story serve as a reminder that when given patience, safety, and compassion, all animals are capable of connection, healing, and unexpected friendship.



When Rayn began holding her breath and had to be intubated, Rambo let out cries the team had never heard before. His concern for her was unmistakable.



In Loving Memory of Fred Sieber 1939–2025

In January, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge lost a dear friend, devoted supporter, and lifelong animal advocate. Fred Sieber of Rogers, Arkansas, passed away at 85, leaving a legacy of compassion, service, and unwavering commitment to our mission.

Since 2011, Fred and his beloved wife of 61 years, Sherry, have been an essential part of our sanctuary family. Fred and Sherry's generosity funded two expansive habitats—L2 on the tour loop and C7 in the Discovery Area—that marked key milestones in our growth, including removing the last section of the old compound. These spaces now offer rescued animals the freedom to roam, rest, and heal. Later, they funded the construction of in-ground pools in these habitats, giving big cats the joy of cooling off and playing as nature intended.



In addition to generously funding two expansive habitats and in-ground pools, Fred donated his beloved Skidsteer to support construction and daily care, believing it would be more valuable helping the animals at the Refuge.



After years of sponsoring many TCWR animals, Fred and Sherry made a lasting commitment in 2023, becoming lifelong sponsors of a rescued tiger cub they named Fred.

Fred's love for the Refuge extended beyond philanthropy to practical support. He donated his beloved Skidsteer to help with construction and daily operations, believing it would be more valuable serving the animals. Every time Fred visited, he looked for it working, proud to see it contributing to the mission he cared so deeply about.

Over the years, Fred and Sherry generously sponsored many animals who call Turpentine Creek home. In 2023, they took one of their most heartfelt steps—becoming lifelong sponsors of a tiger cub rescued under the Big Cat Public Safety Act, whom they named Fred. That young tiger now carries forward a name filled with hope, love, and second chances.

Their compassion extended far beyond the habitats. Fred and Sherry generously contributed to constructing our on-site veterinary hospital and our upcoming Education & Visitor Center, which is designed to inspire and inform future generations. In 2018, they became founding members of the Hilda Jackson Society, honoring those whose extraordinary generosity helps secure the long-term vision of the Refuge.

Fred lived a life of service—first as a firefighter in Illinois, then as a volunteer in Arkansas, and always as a protector of those without a voice. He loved to travel, scuba diving, camping, and above all, time with his family and the animals he helped save.

Fred's passing leaves a profound absence, but his legacy is written into every rescued life he helped transform. To honor Fred's legacy, consider becoming a lifelong sponsor. Contact philanthropy@tcwr.org to learn more.

The Rise and Repercussions of the Exotic Cat Trade in America

The exotic animal trade in the U.S. surged in the 1970s and '80s after the first white tiger, named Mohini, was born in captivity in India in 1958 and arrived at the National Zoo in Washington D.C. in 1960. As the public's fascination with rare and wild animals grew, celebrities like Michael Jackson, Mike Tyson, and Siegfried and Roy glamorized big cat ownership, fueling a cultural craze. Their influence helped normalize the private ownership and entertainment use of tigers, especially white ones.

With rising demand came increased breeding. Basic economics tells us that prices drop when demand increases and supply floods the market. By the 1990s, tiger cubs that once cost \$10,000–\$20,000 were being sold for as little as \$300—cheaper than a new iPhone. Many animals we've rescued were purchased at these low prices, often from unregulated backyard breeders.

This affordability led to a 'boom' in cub petting and pay-to-play attractions, where the public paid to bottle-feed, cuddle, or take photos with tiger cubs. However, as cubs grew too dangerous to handle, they were discarded, and new cubs were bred to maintain profits. This created a vicious, profit-driven cycle of exploitation and abandonment.

Over the past 33 years, we've rescued many survivors of this industry. The passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act marks real progress—but now, the same vicious cycle occurs with servals, caracals, and hybrid cats like Savannahs.

That's one reason we've expanded our mission:
To rescue and provide lifetime sanctuary for captive wild animals.

With our updated logo honoring our Ozark Mountain roots and your continued support, we're ready for the next chapter in rescue. Together, we're ending this cycle of exploitation and cruelty for big cats and beyond.

Bosco



Shakira II



Due to their unique fur coloration, white tigers like Bosco and Shakira II were used for breeding to supply the cub-petting industry before gaining sanctuary at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge.

TIMELINE: The Rise, Exploitation, and Regulation of Big Cats in the U.S.



How You Can Help: Partnerships, Enrichment, and Everyday Needs

The Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR), team is incredibly grateful for how our supporters and partners help us care for the animals who call the Refuge home.

One example of this continued support comes from the previous animal keepers at Big Cat Rescue. Looking for a meaningful way to stay involved, they raised funds to purchase a shipping container for Freedom Field. This container now holds essential tools and enrichment items—things we use every day to help maintain habitats and keep the animals mentally stimulated.

Enrichment is a vital part of our animal care program, and supporters can contribute directly by donating items through BoomerBall.com. These toys and challenges keep our animals engaged, active, and happy.

There are also other practical ways to help. Storage is always a need on property, and gifts like shipping containers or similar infrastructure donations go a long way in helping us stay organized and efficient.

Every gift, big or small, helps us provide a safe, enriching forever home.

Tigger



Former Big Cat Rescue keepers raised funds for this storage container, which is now vital to Freedom Field's daily care. It holds tools and enrichment items that help us keep the animals safe, healthy, and engaged.

Inspiring a Lifelong Commitment to Protecting the Vulnerable



While visiting Arkansas, Cher Bench and her family reunited with Tanya, years after a TCWR school visit first inspired Cher's lifelong dedication to animals.

Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge's mission extends far beyond our fences. Sometimes, a visit to a classroom can spark a lifetime of purpose. That was the case for Cher Bench, who recently reconnected with Tanya after many years and shared how a school visit in the late 1990s changed her life.

As a middle school student in Ms. Vaughn's gifted and talented Mountain Home, Arkansas class, Cher met Tanya and was struck by her passion for protecting animals. That early impression would stay with her. Now living in Texas, Cher has devoted her life to helping the vulnerable, founding a non-profit that provides critical resources—beds, clothing, home repair, pest control—for children in Child Protective Services. She has also spent the last 13 years teaching child sexual abuse prevention classes.

"I don't know if I would have done these things anyway," Cher wrote, "but I wanted you to know that seeing an example of your passion for protecting the vulnerable certainly made an impression on me that has lasted a lifetime."

Cher recently brought her own family to the Refuge, where they were moved by the progress being made, noting that with the Big Cat Public Safety Act, "you're working your way out of a job," a true mark of mission success.

We're honored that our mission inspires others like Cher to stand up for those who cannot protect themselves. If our work has made an impact on your life, we'd love to hear your story.

Please reach out to us at philanthropy@tcwr.org.

Say Farewell to your 2025 Spring Interns



3RD ROW: Haven Voorhees, Colin Sezen

2ND ROW: Kaitlyn Stump, Catherine Geerdes, Emily Cossey, David Scherrer, Kimberly Villeda, Juan Montenegro

FRONT ROW: Alliyah Marquez, Carly Nelson, Bri Hinchliffe, Grace Sutton, Ashley Best, Allison Schaeffer, Makenna Smith



At Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge, growth means transformation, and after 33 years of rescuing animals in need, we're embracing a bold new chapter. While our heart remains with big cats, our mission has evolved: **To rescue and provide lifetime sanctuary for captive wild animals.** This shift allows us to expand our efforts beyond big cats, responding swiftly to the growing needs of animals in crisis nationwide and beyond.

You may also notice our new logo, which features the mountains surrounding us—an intentional tribute to our roots here in Northwest Arkansas. These mountains are more than just scenery; they reflect our local community's strength, resilience, and close-knit spirit. As the only accredited big cat sanctuary nestled in the mountains, we're proud to represent this region and the people who support our mission. The heart of our work remains the same: animals first, always.

WE HAVE A SECRET!

In honor of our new mission, which allows us to save animals in need outside the United States, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge is working on several international witness protection cases. Tune in to our social media and weekly emails for more updates as we set out to rescue captive wild animals and provide them with a forever home.





Support that Sustains: The Power of Recurring Giving

Recurring donors are the quiet heroes behind every rescue and each animal's journey to healing at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR). Their steady support allows us to budget more effectively and ensure our animals receive consistent, high-quality care. One of the most critical ways this impacts the Refuge is by funding daily medications, essential vitamins, and supplements that many residents rely on for their health and well-being.

Take Chief, for example—one of our male lions, whose life depends on the trust and generosity of recurring donations. In 2023, Chief was diagnosed with Addison's disease, a rare condition in which the adrenal glands fail to produce enough vital hormones like cortisol and aldosterone. These hormones regulate essential body functions, including metabolism, blood pressure, and stress response.

To manage this condition, Chief requires a carefully compounded daily medication for the rest of his life. Thanks to recurring donations, we're able to provide this treatment without interruption, ensuring that Chief remains stable, comfortable, and well-cared for.

Chief's story is just one of many. Whether it's joint supplements for aging tigers or vitamins to support healing after rescue, your ongoing commitment makes it all possible.

Becoming a recurring donor isn't just a gift—it's a lifeline. Thank you for being part of our mission to provide lifelong care for survivors of the captive wildlife trade.

Become a monthly donor today! TCWR.org/donate

With fall, the holiday season is just around the corner. Consider one of the most unique gifts you can give: a Big Cat Call Out at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge. Create your personalized message, and we will paint that message on the cardboard enrichment. Then, we will let an animal of your choice play with the enrichment. This is a unique way to celebrate someone special while supporting rescued big cats. It's heartfelt, unforgettable, and directly supports lifelong sanctuary for rescued animals. As the holidays approach, skip the ordinary and choose a meaningful gift that brings joy to your loved one, while also caring for a big cat.



Experience the Ozarks' Autumn Majesty at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge



Discover a unique sanctuary where rescued big cats and bears thrive as the **Ozark Mountains** transform into a vibrant tapestry of fall colors. In the crisp, cool air of autumn, our magnificent residents, from powerful tigers to majestic lions, become even more active. Witness their innate behaviors and the dignity they've found in their lifelong refuge.

Your stay in our unique lodging options, nestled amidst this stunning natural beauty, directly supports our mission of **rescue, lifelong care, and public education**. Immerse yourself in the breathtaking landscapes and connect with these incredible animals. Book your fall escape to Turpentine Creek and be part of their journey to a life of compassion and freedom.

TCWR.org/Lodging



Sip for Sanctuary

A Special Evening Benefiting
Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge

Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025

Time: 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Venue: Urban Cellar Winery,
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Introducing Two Exclusive Labels:

Big Cat Cabernet

Bam Bam Blanc

Crafted in honor of TCWR's rescued residents.

Featured Experiences:

6:00 PM — Bottle your own wine on-site!

Sip & Shop — A portion of all TCWR wine sales
from **Oct. 16 to Nov. 16** will benefit the animals
at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge.

Tickets On Sale Now!

Scan below to purchase yours today.



Turpentine Creek Foundation, Inc.
239 Turpentine Creek Lane
Eureka Springs, AR 72632
479-253-5841

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Tigger Should Never Have Existed – But He Deserves Everything Now

Tigger's story begins with exploitation. Bred for his unusual coloring and kept in a cage in a front yard, he's **one** of only about **30 Golden Tabby Tigers** in the world – a rare coat that exists only because of generations of intentional inbreeding by roadside zoos and cub-petting operations. Now safe at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge, Tigger is finally free to heal, grow, and just be a tiger. Adopt or sponsor him today to learn more about this rare tiger's remarkable personality and powerful journey.

TCWR.org/Adoptions



Turpentine Creek Foundation, Inc. Federal Tax/EIN: 71-0721742
239 Turpentine Creek Lane, Eureka Springs, Arkansas 72632

Tigger