Rescuers had Faith that Bobcat Release Would Be Successful

Exciting news from the field! There has been confirmed sightings of Faith the Bobcat; she is alive and doing well. Since her release in April of 2005, Jamie Veronica and Big Cat Rescue Interns and Volunteers have visited the release site twice a month in search of any sign that the Bobcat was surviving on her own. The staff at Starkey’s Flatwoods Adventures, including Rhonda Robinson, has been very accommodating in allowing the BCR group to track through more than 200 acres every other week. Home to a variety of species including bobcat, fox, coyote, pig, deer, raccoon, opossum, fox squirrel, alligators, and turkeys to name a few; Starkey’s is a trackers paradise. With each visit, BCR trackers find loads of tracks and always see something new and exciting. Some of the more recent expeditions even brought forth Bobcat tracks, which the crew measured, photographed and then cast with plaster to compare against impressions that were made of Faith’s paws before she was released.

Just a few months ago, Veronica received a call from Robinson with some very good news. During one of the guided nature tours of Starkey’s, one of the staff and their group of guests actually witnessed Faith taking down her very own turkey. The guide had immediately been able to identify Faith by her tipped ear. Before her release, BCR staff sedated the Bobcat to collect blood samples, take weights and measurements, microchip and tip her ear (the tip of her left ear was cropped to identify her as a rehabilitated and released Bobcat in the event that she be found dead or became a nuisance,) and to make impressions of all four paws as well as her teeth. This revelation brought a great sense of relief as well as a swell of pride to Veronica. Faith was making it out there on her own.
With a new location to scout, BCR trackers went out in search of proof positive. Sure enough the area where she had been spotted was absolutely littered with tracks that looked as though they were female because of their relative size. Now that a highly trafficked area had been found, the crew set up a camera trap with the hopes of capturing a glimpse of Faith to see with their own eyes that this was indeed her.

The first attempts were unsuccessful in capturing an image of a Bobcat. They did however capture numerous curious Turkeys! Disheartened the crew moved the location of the trap to another hotspot for Bobcat tracks. Here the camera sat for an entire month. On May 11th, the tracking crew revisited the trap, laptop in tow. Picture after picture downloaded, turkey, turkey, coyote, turkey, raccoon, pig, dear, turkey, bobcat...BOBCAT! Not just any Bobcat, it was definitely Faith. The curious cat had put her face right up into the camera filling the entire frame with a cheek, one eye, and one prominently tipped left ear, as if to say “Ok you got me...” The crew filled with emotion, all these months of tracking, and hiking, and camera trapping have finally paid off with one single image. Following this image was a second of her walking away. “Spending every single day looking at these animals in enclosures, knowing in your heart that they don’t belong there, that they were dealt a bad hand. To be able to give just one a second chance to claim their birthright to freedom is the ultimate aspiration of anyone working in this field. I feel truly blessed to have been given this experience.”

Faith Backstory

Faith, a female Florida bobcat was orphaned as a cub and rescued by BCR in December of 2003, she was just a few weeks old. Over the next 16 months, she was rehabilitated and taught all of the skills that she would need in order to thrive in the wild. Faith was a quick study and proved herself as an optimal release candidate at every pivotal moment throughout her rehabilitation. She learned how to recognize and successfully hunt live prey, how to masterfully conceal herself in the bush, and developed social skills by visiting with Bailey, a Southern Bobcat and permanent resident of Big Cat Rescue. Ready for a second chance, she was released on April 21, 2005 at Starkey’s Flatwoods Adventures, a 200 acre nature park that borders 19,000 acres of protected conservation wetlands owned by the state of Florida.

JB STARKEY’S FLATWOODS ADVENTURES
Local 813.926.1133 Toll Free 1.877.734.WILD
WWW.FLATWOODSADVENTURES.COM

Clockwise from left: Faith the Bobcat, identified by cropped ear, captured 4.21; Racoon, captured 4.13; female Bobcat, captured 5.27; Turkeys, captured 5.28
LEGACY SOCIETY WELCOMES FIRST FOUR MEMBERS

Last issue we announced the beginning of our Legacy Society to honor those supporters who have kindly made provisions for the cats in their wills or other estate planning mechanisms. We are very excited in this issue to announce the first four supporters who have advised that they made such a provision. They are:

Ebe Bower
Patricia Francis
Nancy Rodgers
Carol Wettersten

Estate planning often involves providing for family and loved ones in a way that reflects the relations they had when they were alive. Similarly, people often want to help ensure that those charitable causes that were important to them receive support after they are gone. It’s a nice thing to imagine that even though we have passed on, the animals for whom we cared so much before will still receive the benefits of our lifelong work and enduring compassion. It is also humbling and very moving to us at Big Cat Rescue when these kinds of gifts are made. They are strong statement about the giver’s values and aspirations as well as an affirmation of their commitment to animals and their confidence that we will reliably continue to carry out that commitment as we translate their posthumous support into hands-on animal care. Thank you for remembering wildlife as you prepare your will and for thinking about Big Cat Rescue as the continuing vehicle for that memory. Please let us know if you have made arrangements for the cats and we will add your name to our Legacy Society.

ADOPT A WILD CHILD

All of Big Cat Rescue’s animals are available for sponsorship. Sponsorship fees go directly to the care of all the animals to provide them with food, toys, enrichment, a large natural Cat-a-tat, medical and preventative care, and overall a higher standard of living. The Sponsorship Kit includes an 8x10 glossy photograph of your chosen species, a 4-page color newsletter filled with interesting facts about the habitat, social system, hunting and diet, and colorful photos of your chosen species, a financial breakdown of how your donation is used, a list of all the animals we have that are the species you chose, with a black and white photo and personal history of each one so that you can choose which one you would like to sponsor and have appear on your personalized Certificate, and most importantly your registration card that when returned will entitle you to personalized address labels and your Sponsor Certificate.

Sponsorship Kit $25 Donation!

Choose Your Species!

Lion, Tiger, Cougar, Black Leopard, Bobcat, Golden Leopard, Ocelot, Jaguar, Snow Leopard, Canadian Lynx, Siberian Lynx, Serval, White Serval, Caracal, Sand Cat, Fishing Cat, Jungle Cat, Leopard Cat, Geoffroy Cat

Fill out the order form on page 8

GIVE THE GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP!

Join Big Cat Rescue’s Membership Program today and start enjoying your exclusive Membership benefits. Invites to all Big Cat Rescue events, 10% off your Trading Post purchases, Tour Passes, Photos, and more are all part of the welcome package that you will receive. The Membership kit also makes a great gift.

Each kit includes an 8x10 color photo, personalized address labels, membership welcome newsletter, and the following gifts:

Animal Lover $30 - 1 Tour Pass
Forest Friend $50 - 2 Tour Passes
WildLife Protector $150 - 6 Tour Passes & BCR Tee
Habitat Defender $500 - 10 Tour Passes, Tee, & NightTour

Order your kit using the order form on page 8.

For details on the Membership levels below request information using the order form, call (813) 920-4130 or visit www.BigCatRescue.org

TIJUANA TILE

If you ever get to Tijuana Flats Restaurant on N. Dale Mabry in Tampa, make sure you look up on the ceiling. You’ll see that they have individualized ceiling tiles sort of as their “theme.” They recently expanded their restaurant and were looking for more tiles to be painted. When Senior Keeper Julie Hanan broke her leg skiing on vacation, BCR staff and volunteers, Scott, Cathy, Liz, and Barbara filled her freezer with meals they had prepared for her. As if that wasn’t sweet enough, Volunteer Veterinarian, Liz also brought over a ceiling tile from Tijuana Flats and asked if Julie would like to paint it on behalf of BCR. She thought it would help keep her spirits up while she was recuperating. The tile is now prominently displayed in the restaurant and two more tiles are currently in the works and will be added soon. What a great way to promote the rescue!

REGIONS BANK, JAGUAR OF TAMPA and LOKEY MERCEDES HELP DISTRIBUTE INK RECYCLE BAGS

Our program to recycle your empty inkjet printer cartridges, toners, cell phones and laptops to both save the environment and generate donations to the cats is growing rapidly. Hundreds of people are now participating and last month the program generated over $2500 to support the cats!

This past month we began to roll out a program for corporate sponsors with retail locations. We created a stand that holds the bags and can be displayed in a table or counter. Regions Bank is our largest participant, with the stands now displayed in five Tampa area branches. Pictured below are Nikki Smartt, Connie Archey, Freda Whipple, Jennifer Carroll, Laura Ritchie & Louise Slemp from the Carrollwood Regions Bank branch holding the ink bag stand.

In addition to Regions Bank putting them in the branches, two luxury car dealers who are supporters of Big Cat Rescue, Jaguar of Tampa and Lokey Mercedes, have kindly put them in the customer lounges in the service department. The dealership lounges are a great location because people are waiting, not rushing, and very likely to see them.

To obtain postage paid bags or Fedex labels to recycle your cartridges, etc. just email ink@BigCatRescue.org. If you have a retail location and would like to display the bags, please email your logo or the company name to the same address and send your mailing address. The text on the stand is customized to say your business is a proud supporter of Big Cat Rescue.

For more information on the recycle program, see www.BigCatRescue.org/ink.htm. Many thanks to these first three participants in our corporate program and to all of the people who are individually participating in this program!
Entry Date: March 22, 2006
Just after 11:00 PM BCR Founder, Carole Baskin’s phone rang. The voice on the other end was shaky, female and began to tell of an animal that she had captured using a humane trap in her garage. From the description that the woman gave it seemed that she may have trapped someone’s pet Cougar. She described a large feline, tan with some darker markings around the tail and face with a lighter underbelly, about ninety pounds... Moments later Baskin and BCR President Jamie Veronica were on their way to Apollo Beach to rescue the animal. With so many bogus calls that come in to the sanctuary’s main line of “Cougar” sightings, usually a stray dog slightly resembling the same size and shape, it is never guaranteed that the goose chase is not wild. During the drive the two made wagers as to whether the mystery animal was a large domestic cat or just an odd looking dog. Upon their arrival at nearly one in the morning they were led into the dimly lit garage. The captured beast a Jungle Cat: A large one at that, approximately thirty five pounds. Veronica collected the cat while Baskin collected a statement from the woman addressing the situation. The Jungle Cat was brought back to the sanctuary grounds and housed in a quarantine area for the night.

Entry Date: March 23, 2006
BCR staff notified FL Fish and Game Officials of the newly rescued Jungle Cat as is protocol in such a situation. At the conclusion of their inspection the staff was informed that the cat was more than likely some kind of hybrid, due to the size and polydactyl paws, and was therefore technically not under their jurisdiction. Meaning that if no one claimed the cat it was going to become a permanent resident of Big Cat Rescue.

Entry Date: Late March, 2006
During the time of the rescue, Baskin had been in the midst of working with a videographer filming a documentary portraying the small cat and hybrid cat pet trade. Realizing that this rescue would be the perfect subject, Baskin invited the producer out to film the new resident. The minute she saw the cat she identified it as a Stone Cougar and told of a hybrid dealer a couple hours away who breeds Chaussies (Jungle Cat / Domestic Cat cross) that looks like a cougar. Purposely inbreeding causes traits such as the polydactyl feet to make the paws bigger and the stunted, dwarf like legs to make the cats’ body style more closely resemble a cougar. This cat’s escape, or release, sums up the hybrid issue. The first generations are large, mentally confused, and often exhibit the worst of both species rather than the best. They are often relegated to lonely lives in back yard cages.

Entry Date: Mid April, 2006
Baskin forwarded an email to BCR Operations Manager, Scott Lope from a gentleman who described the Jungle Cat and wanted to re-claim him. Angry and relieved, Lope soon realized from their phone conversation how the cat got loose accidentally and had started to roam the neighborhood. The cat, who is actually named Spartacus, had been micro-chipped and the numbers matched when he was scanned. A reunion was scheduled and soon Spartacus would be on his way back home.

Entry Date: April 27, 2006
Lope escorted Spartacus’ owner to the quarantine area where the cat was housed. The owner described the cat’s behaviors and normal activities. As they neared the cage and Spartacus could hear his friends voice he was transformed from the sullen, sometimes aggressive cat that BCR staff had come to know, to a chirping, purring, and very excited kitten. According to his owner, they had been vacationing and their home broken into. All of their pets had been set free and they had been unable to find Sparticus. Someone saw his story on our site and alerted the owner who was able to identify the cat by his microchip number.

Entry Date: April, 2006
Thanks to BCR Senior Keeper Brian Czarnik’s vision and the help of all of you who donated, Nini can live on in the wild through her namesake that lives in Way Kambas Park. Photographed by remote camera living freely in her natural habitat on Way Kambas National Park, Sumatra. 100% of money raised finances tiger monitoring, habitat preservation, community development, anti-poaching patrols, park ranger training and the purchase of essential field equipment. (Activities managed under the Sumatran Tiger Conservation Programme, a collaborative conservation partnership with the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHKA) of the Indonesian Department of Forestry.) It is this field equipment - notably remote cameras that have provided us with these magnificent rare shots of these otherwise elusive wild, free animals going about their daily lives within Sumatra’s National Parks. Every penny of your donation to this project goes directly to the tiger projects we are supporting and helps us secure a WILD future for WILD tigers. You can help us renew this program each year by visiting www.BigCatRescue.org
I only had a sense I must go; an urge that would not be quiet. It would be more than a month before I had the opportunity to visit Big Cat Rescue. I went to the sanctuary with an open mind and no expectations. From the very moment I passed through the gates, I felt a magnificent power and presence that could not be expressed in words. Wisdom had I long forgotten echoed in my mind as I waited to be introduced to the cats. St. Francis of Assisi described the mystery and power that lives within every human being when he said, “There are beautiful and wild forces within us.” I knew there was something special that was unfolding.

It was in the heat of the day, a time when most cats are asleep; however, to my amazement I was thrilled to see the big cats coming to meet us. I quickly found that word had spread fast within the community. As I walked with Carole Baskin, founder of Big Cat Rescue, the animals were more than excited to share their stories with me. Some of the shy and rarely seen cats appeared and patiently waited their turn. Carole and I laughed as we heard others begging to be next. Some tried to get our attention by climbing trees to get a better view of where we were. They knew someone who understood them was present. I am an animal communicator, and I was listening to what their hearts were saying.

During the next several hours, stories were shared that brought tears to our eyes, joy to our hearts, and questions to our minds. We were surrounded by what most people would see as victims. From one perspective, that was true. From another perspective, I saw animals that had been abused, abandoned, neglected, and used for economic gain survive and heal from their experiences. They were not trapped by their past as their hearts were filled with love. I realized I was looking at “living” history because the only reason the cats were residing at the sanctuary was a direct result of our lack of remembering our connection with all life forms. At a very deep level, we were trying to remember that connection, but in a primitive way that resulted in domination and control instead of respect and honor.

Ancient wisdom teaches us that in order to understand, you have to be one with what you want to understand. The French language has a word, comprendre, which means to understand, to know, to comprehend. Com means to be one, to be together and prendre means to take or to grasp. To understand something is to take that thing up and be one with it. Another example can be found in Mayan tradition. They have a greeting, In Lak’ech. In Lak’ech means “I am another yourself” (A modern day interpretation) and also means “I am you, and You are me” (A traditional Mayan interpretation). We have come to understand that this Mayan greeting is an honoring for each other and a statement of unity. In Lak’ech goes beyond unity statements and is more than an honorable Maya greeting. It is a moral code. It is a responsible way to live as co-creative partners, not only with human beings, but ALL forms of life.

When one lives the Mayan code of In Lak’ech, we understand that everything we do in this world affects all life and spirit in the universe, either in a positive or negative way, depending on our actions and motivations. In Lak’ech is honoring and acknowledging our intimate connection and unity with all life. When we live the code of In Lak’ech, we send essential energy filled with love and respect to other life forms. When we solely focus on the avoidance of causing harm, it is a neutral action. One is not harmed, but no one benefits from the connection either. When we practice In Lak’ech, we are producing and sending positive and vital energy to all other forms of life. When we live In Lak’ech, we quit being neutral and take action in a positive way by adding to the experience of being connected with all life. Grasping this concept, you understand when you give your energy to any other life form you are also giving to yourself. You do not give your energy away to something separate from yourself. You are giving to another part of yourself. The illusion of being separate from any form of life is dissolved.

Everything we see around us is a reflection of our evolution of consciousness. Our biggest challenge is understanding there is nothing that happens anywhere that doesn’t affect everything everywhere. The fate of these magnificent spirits will be determined by our understanding and positive action. Big Cat Rescue came into existence because of the needs of the animals that we didn’t understand. Only by knowing our past, do we understand the present, thereby giving us the wisdom to create the future.

Laura Lluellyn-Lassiter
The cubs new home. We are currently building a large enclosure that will be the permanent home for the three cougar cubs who were rescued last October after their mother was shot by a hunter when they were about two weeks old. We want to keep them together so they can share their life and give them room to run, but also be able to separate them when/if necessary for medical or other reasons. To accomplish this, we are building a long open area with three smaller enclosures attached to it by tunnels. The entire structure will be one of our largest to date, and therefore one of the most expensive.

Donor names on sign at enclosure. In honor of their mother, who died defending them, we would like to ask you to donate to their enclosure and future support. Donations under $100 will be recognized on our website by amount and in our newsletter. Donations of $100 and above, in addition to the newsletter and website, will be recognized on a large 4x4 foot sign by the new enclosure, with plaques on the sign based on the donation amount.

The chart at right shows the plaque size. Donors can have their own names on the plaque, or can make the donation a gift to or in memory of their mother, another person, or a pet. If your donation is a gift, please provide their address so we can send them an acknowledgement.

20% added to your donation and you can win $1000 certificate to Sweet Bay Supermarket. The Chrysler Championship golf tournament has a wonderful program to assist local charities, including Big Cat Rescue. For a limited time, any donation made with the enclosed form filled out will be matched with an additional 20%. So, if you donate $100, the sanctuary receives another $20 from the tournament for a total donation of $120. This is a great way for you to leverage your donation to have more impact for the cats.

To have a chance to win the $1000 shopping spree, simply make a guess on the form at how many birdies will be made during the tournament. One winner will be chosen from those guessing the correct number of birdies.

Thank you for whatever help you can be in our efforts to give these cubs a permanent home. We cannot bring their mother back or give them the life in the wild that she could have given them. But with your help we can build them an enclosure that will allow us to keep them together and provide the best life we can for them.

The Cubs are doing great. They are really enjoying their temporary home on the lake, especially the swimming pool. The construction of their permanent enclosure is well underway and will definitely have a pool for them to play in. Completion of their Cat.a.tat is thought to be within the next two to three months.
NOTABLE VISITS AND QUOTES

Among the many visitors this past quarter were two prominent business leaders and one of our candidates for School Board. Below are photos and their comments about their visits.

Jeff and Brigitte Ajluni
Jeff is Director of Marketing and Business Development for our great Buccaneers and he and Brigitte have been wonderful supporters of the sanctuary. They have even donated their own Bucs seats for raffle and auction items to help raise funds for the cats. Here Reno the spotted leopard looks down on them lazily on a warm afternoon. Brigitte’s email after the visit said “Jeff and I love visiting Big Cat Rescue. It is a relaxing, enjoyable experience and it feels good knowing our donations go to the betterment of the lives of the cats. We encourage everyone to come to the Fur Ball and bid on our great Tampa Bay Buccaneer club seats. We take great pride in supporting Big Cat Rescue.”

The Kevin Gartland Family
Kevin became acquainted with Big Cat Rescue in his former life as Executive Director of the Upper Tampa Bay Chamber, which he shepherded through enormous growth. Recently he became the Florida Chamber of Commerce Regional Advocate for our area. Pictured left to right are Will, Aimee, Jessica, Snorkel (the tiger), Debbie and Kevin. Kevin’s quote: “Our tour of the sanctuary was a lot of fun, and a real eye-opener for all of us. Initially the kids were a bit skeptical, feeling sorry for the cats ‘cause they weren’t running free in the wild ... that sort of thing. But after hearing their stories and seeing firsthand how much Carole, Howard and the crew truly care for the cats, we all came to realize that Big Cat Rescue is the best thing that could ever have happened to these magnificent animals. I’ve heard my older kids singing the praises of the sanctuary to their friends on the phone, and Jessie wants to know ... do you need any volunteers???”

Stephanie Georgiades and family
Stephanie is a school teacher running for Hillsborough County School Board County-wide District 6. In the photo are husband Mark and son Jack, the latter doing his very convincing tiger imitation. We have over 50 school groups visit the sanctuary each year. Educating the next generation to be sensitive to the environment and the need to respect and protect the animals we share the world with is one of our top priorities. So we were particularly pleased to see a teacher and possible future School Board member show interest in the sanctuary. After the visit, Stephanie wrote: “We thoroughly enjoyed meeting all of your majestic cats and are grateful that you have not only been able to save these beautiful animals, but that you have also given them the quality of life that they so deserve. I am very impressed with the facility you have created and maintain so beautifully with the help of your team of trained volunteers. The value of the educational programs that you are able to provide to the public through your on-site tours and collaborative efforts with our school district are priceless. We too believe that these big cats, although amazing to meet up close, should remain in their natural habitats to live their lives fully. Thank you for a truly enlightening experience!”

The Big Cat Trading Post presents - Big Cat Gift Items
Order these gift items using the order form on page 8. S & H within the United States as well as tax has already been included in the price. Remember the proceeds go to help care for the felines at Big Cat Rescue.

Big Cat Rescue Mug
White ceramic mug with wrap around design showcasing photos of the Big Cats including Shere Khan, Cameron, Zabu, Sarabi, Hercules, Sugar, & Adonis. BCR logo and web address in black. $13.70 each

Tiger Shot Glass
White ceramic shot glass with wrap around photo of Shere Khan swimming and BCR logo in white. $6.62 each

Crazy Cat Lady Action Figure
Every family & neighborhood has one, this hilarious lady comes with 6 separate cats and has movable arms and legs. This is a Purrfect addition to any true feline lovers collection. The crazy cat lady action figure was also one of BCR’s top selling items this holiday season. $12.63 each

Youth Big Cat Tees
Toddler Blue w/ Lion, 2T, 3T, 4T $9.63 Toddler Yellow w/ 3 Cats, 6M, 12M, 18M, $8.56 Child Blue w/ 3 Tigers or Pink w/ 1 Tiger 2-4, 6-8, 10-12, 14-16 $10.70 Youth Green Snow Leopard or Rust Tiger Size S, M, L $12.84 each

Haunting Eyes Tees
Black w/ Bengal Tiger, Siberian Tiger, Snow Leopard, w/ BCR logo on sleeve. Adult S, M, L, XL $24.40

The Big Cat Picture
60 min. DVD or VHS featuring 19 Species of BCR’s cats. $24.40 each

Remember the proceeds go to help care for the felines at Big Cat Rescue.
Big Cat Rescue meets Standards for Charity Accountability

In 2004 the IRS reported that there are 964,000 registered charities in the U.S. Only 81 of them qualify for and display this seal. **Big Cat Rescue is one of them.** This seal confirms that the organization meets all 23 of the Standards for Charity Accountability.

The BBB Wise Giving Alliance is a national charity watchdog affiliated with the Better Business Bureau system. The Alliance has over a century of experience and recognition in charity evaluation. Unlike other charity monitoring groups that focus solely on a review of charity finances, the Alliance completes comprehensive, in-depth evaluations of the charity’s governance, fund raising practices, solicitations and informational materials, as well as how it spends its money. You knew we were doing things right; now the rest of the world does too!

**Legislative Action Step:** June 11th was such a wonderful event! BCR was able to raise $1,087 for the “Leave No Pet Behind Fund” and send 44 letters to our Senators asking that they support the bill to include our pets in disaster planning. If you haven’t written your Senator yet please do so at www.CatLaws.com

### THE BIG CAT TIMES ORDER FORM  June 2006

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**Yes, I would like a receipt for tax purposes**

**Yes! I would like a free magnet with my order totalling more than $50**

**Method of Payment**

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**Yes! I want to make a donation towards the new enclosure for the cubs**

**Date:** ___________

**A Big Cat Adventure**

This is the most exclusive and up close program that we offer. Your all day adventure includes, the Morning Tour of the refuge, Big Cat Training observation, Enrichment (making natural toys and food puzzles for the cats), and Feeding (follow along as Keepers feed the big cats and learn about their nutritional needs).

$100.00 per person. Call for reservations.

**Photo Safaris**

Photo Safaris are one of the most up close and personal tours that we offer. A qualified guide will help you get great pictures of our animals without any fence or wire in the way. You can tour the entire sanctuary and get great pics along the way, or you can spend the entire time photographing your favorite feline. Call for prices and reservations.

**Kids Tour**

Big Cat Rescue now offers regularly scheduled, guided, kids tours. This is a complete guided tour where children of all ages, and their parents can get up-close and learn about exotic cats and other animals.

- Tour Time is 9:00 a.m. Saturday
- $12.00 per person (price subject to change)
Children must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian.

**Day Tours**

Monday - Friday 9AM & at 3PM
Saturday 9:30, 11:30, & 1:30
Tours are guided and take 1 1/2 - 2 hrs. Admission is $22.00 per person (price subject to change).
Reservations are not required. No children under 10 years of age. Casual attire is recommended.

**Ultimate Expedition - A Big Cat Adventure**

This is an adventure that’s sure to please! $22.00 per person.

**Night Tours**

Night Tours are the only way to see the animals at from the shadows! No worries though, all the animals will be safely in their enclosures. $100.00 per person. Call for reservations.
Big Cat Rescue would like to thank - Lyon and Carole Cameron for donating $2,000 towards the construction of new dens for Leopards Jade, Armani, and Nyla in loving memory of their daughter Susie. The Gasparilla Horse Show for donating their proceeds again this year, $2,000. Jaguar of Tampa for their continued support in the amount of $1,500.

Donations $500-$1,000
Beth Parker $1,000
Nick Nolle $1,000
Sara Varsames $775
Timothy Muskalik $650
Chuck Keats $624
Ed Roeder $600
Bay Area Concierge $500
Greater Greenville $500
Bay Area Concierge $500
Ed Roeder $600
Nicklaus of FL $1,000
Donations $500-$1,000
donating their proceeds
daughter Susie. The Gas-
loving memory of their
donating $2,000 towards
Big Cat Rescue would

HEROES - DONORS - MEMBERS - NEW PARENTS - SPECIAL PROJECT SUPPORTERS

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Project Guyana

Guyana – A History in the Trade of Animals

The country of Guyana, famously rich in bio-diversity, is one of the least populated tropical countries in the world with a population of only 850,000 inhabitants. With only three percent of its 80,000 square miles inhabited, it is, unfortunately, one of the only two countries in South America that still legally exports wildlife for the pet trade. In fact, Guyana has been one of the top exporters of wild parrots in the world and remains active in trapping wildcats, primates, reptiles, sea turtles and various other land and sea animals.

Trapping and exportation of native species has been, for generations, one of Guyana’s only means of generating income for the indigenous people. However, closer examination of the trade in wildlife reveals grim realities of the animal export trade; dissemination of native wildlife species and habitat is leading to irreversible elimination of the very source of income. The native people, who are essential in harvesting of these resources, earn an abysmal fraction of the value of the exported animals. In a country where the average annual income is little more than $1,000, the income derived through the capture of wildlife and habitat destruction remains attractive.

The native Amerindian tribes of Guyana, now becoming aware of the need to protect their forests and wildlife, are expressing the desire to take control of the ecological destiny of their country rather than bow down to the exploitation of animal trades, miners and loggers currently at liberty to devastate Guyana’s natural heritage.

South America – Guyana Project

Big Cat Rescue founder, Carole Baskin, met Foster Parrots founder, Marc Johnson at an animal legislative conference in the fall of 2005. Foster Parrots, founded in 1999, is a non-profit rescue and adoption center for languishing, abused or unwanted parrots that is based out of Massachusetts.

During their brief time together, Johnson and Baskin discussed a very exciting project that Foster Parrots had started in South America, Project Guyana.

Johnson and FP Board Chairman, Brian Cullity first visited the Amerindian tribes of Guyana in December of 2002. There they found a friendly, culturally rich people with a great respect for the natural bounty of their land and an eagerness to share the beauty of this world with travelers. Although parrot protection and conservation were the primary motivations for becoming involved in Guyana, Johnson and Cullity soon became acutely aware of the need to preserve the ecosystem as well as the cultural heritage of a truly remarkable and inspiring people. In the spring of 2004 Johnson and Cullity returned to Guyana and began talks with the Amerindian people about the need for a parrot/wildlife protection initiative and the possibility of addressing the issue through the development of an eco-tourism project. Traveling to the Rupununi district of southern Guyana they met with the elders of several Amerindian tribes. It was during this time that they met Guyana Member of Parliament Shirley Melville.

An Arawak Amerindain and a strong advocate for Amerindian rights, M.P. Melville had also been highly active in conservation and environmental protection issues. It was the perfect meeting of minds and motivations. The resulting relationship between Foster Parrots and Melville created the platform that would support the similar interests of each party, offering an economic alternative to Amerindian tribes while helping to protect thousands of acres of pristine habitat.

Melville was appointed to the Board of Foster Parrots and assumed responsibility as on-site Director of Foster Parrots’ Project Guyana. Melville’s tireless efforts on behalf of Project Guyana have won the interest and support of several additional tribes including that of the friendly village of Nappi, located at the base of the Kanuku Mountains. Embracing the project with tremendous enthusiasm, Nappi has dedicated 250 square miles of tribal territory as protected conservation land and was chosen as the site for the first eco-tour lodge complex.

For sometime now, Big Cat Rescue founder, Baskin and President Jamie Veronica have been researching several in situ conservation programs in search of one that would benefit the greatest from the sanctuary’s time and resources. Project Guyana seemed to be a perfect fit and so the decision was made for Veronica to join Johnson on FP’s first officially led eco-tour to the Mai Paima Lodge.

FIELD NOTES: The Journey to the Mai Paima Lodge

We arrived in Georgetown yesterday morning. Today we took a paddle hopper for an hour and a half flight to Letham. The scenery was beautiful, untouched pristine jungle and vast savannahs stretched out as far as the eye could see. I have never been so in awe of a single sight in my entire life, thinking of the hundreds of thousands of animals living a life of complete freedom just below me. This trip is going to be an amazing adventure... We landed on a small dirt airstrip in Letham and then we packed up into two jeeps and began our two-hour journey across scrubby savannah to the lodge. Huge termite mounds littered the roadsides and we kept a watchful eye out for Giant Anteaters! Upon reaching the base of the Kanuku Mountain range we were met with a solid wall of wild jungle so thick that once we entered you could barely see sunlight. Seven miles into the thick of it we arrived at the lodge. About three acres of land had been cleared out and was opened to the heavens. In the center, among the lushness of banana and papaya trees, sat the Mai Paima Eco Lodge, built completely by the locals using native materials and workmanship. Several of the villagers had gathered awaiting our arrival and welcomed us with open arms.

I spent the afternoon preparing two camera traps that I will set up to document the presence of Jaguars and Ocelots in the area. As I sat making adjustments, Marc rushed to my cabin and told me some great news. Jaguar tracks had been discovered going directly through our site the morning before our arrival! As the darkness fell, stars began to light the sky. It grew darker but the sky grew brighter, with more stars than I had ever seen. I fell asleep in a hammock under the stars lulled by howlers in the distance.

Aquarium Lake Hike

Last night I was awakened at first I thought it was just the wind, but soon realized that it was much more. Three troops of Howler Monkeys had surrounded our site calling to each other from the canopy. The sound hypnotic soon sent me back into my dreams. At first light the other campers and I congregated for a breakfast, like the rest of our meals throughout the trip, that was specially prepared by the villagers that run the lodge.

Today’s agenda was a hike to a place called Aquarium Lake. Our walk was guided by a half dozen villagers three miles through lush jungle, over rock beds and the occasional fallen tree, up the side of a mountain, and across shallow streams to our final destination, the lake. Aquarium Lake was actually more of a lagoon at the base of a small waterfall of a river that twisted through the forest. Hot and tired we leapt from the cliffs into the lagoon for a refreshing swim in the cool waters followed by lunch atop a huge rock formation overlooking the falls. What a perfect day.

Jungle Hike

This morning our site was visited by a troop of very curious and mischievous Spider Monkeys. Today we ventured out on a four-mile hike to another waterfall. Our three guides, Dexter, Alphie, and Alan, were extremely knowledgeable in the plant life and would frequently point out different trees, vines, flowers and other plants telling us what they were called, how they were used as resources to the tribes, and even folklore that surrounded each specimen. The people who live here are completely cut off from the outside world, no
cars, no phones, no electricity. They rely solely on their surroundings for food, shelter, and medicines. About half way into our hike we discovered fresh scratchings on a tree and came upon a recent Jaguar kill. As we walked by, feathers of a Currassow which is bird about the size of a turkey, were strewn about. You couldn’t help but feel completely vulnerable on foot in the land of this extreme hunter. This newest find only fueled my fire to get out and set up the camera traps. After lunch we hiked back to camp and had a short rest before returning to the jungles to set up the camera traps. Dexter was familiar with the areas frequented by Jaguars and so led me on a twenty minute trek through extremely rough jungle to the Mai Paima River. At the embankment we took off our shoes and rolled up our pants because the remainder of the journey would be on foot upstream, this would ensure that our scent and tracks would be minimal and go unnoticed by the elusive animals that we were trying to capture on film. Within moments we found tracks, first of a Tapir, then an Ocelot, then finally Jaguar! When I saw these tracks I swelled with emotion. With a life’s work of dealing in the captive animal realm, daily being witness to the horrid trade of exotics, to see first hand evidence of a wild and free big cat was a dream come true. This is where they are meant to be, roaming free, not constrained with a leash or fenced in a backyard. After a moment of silent gratitude for this gift, we pushed on to a trail highly trafficked by Jaguars. Here I set up the camera traps, demonstrating step by step how the units worked. My plan is to leave these two traps here with Dexter so that he can relocate and maintain the cameras on his own once I leave. I hope to establish an approximation of how many species of wildcats as well as individual cats, through spot patterns, live in the vicinity of the lodge. With these numbers and photographic documentation, I will solicit investors for the construction of additional lodges in neighboring villages as well as promote these lodges to eco-tourists.

Yupi Kari and Rupununi River expedition led by Researcher Peter Taylor

We set out in the jeep at day break. Today we will visit the village of Yupi Cari, home to an expert and researcher of the Black Caimen, Peter Taylor and his wife Alice. Upon our arrival Alice took us on a brief tour of the village, which was slightly more advanced than that of Nappi, with the Caimen house having solar power and internet access. This afternoon Peter led us on an unforgettable trip up the Rupununi River. The main objective of this trip was to release forty five day-old Black Caimen, that had been collected for the purpose of gathering data, back into their nest sites. What an honor to be able to be a part of this important research project as well as to see the tiny little creatures swimming vigorously back to their moms. During our trip up the river we saw Scarlet Macaws, Iguanas, Giant River Otters, and numerous other birds. We made our way to a very special place, home to Diane McTurk, the Karanambu Ranch. Diane has spent her life deeply involved with the conservation of the Giant River Otter and established the Ranch to involve the general public in her efforts through eco-tourism. Diane is a kind and gentle soul and could easily be thought of as the Jane Goodall of the Giant River Otter. Here we got to see first hand the work that she is doing as well as meet some of the Otters that she is rehabilitating for release back into the river. As the sun began to set we were off again, this time seeing Saki and Squirrel Monkeys. Once it was dark we began to see entirely different animals, Black Caimen, Tree Pythons, Pirana, and Capybara. This trip was grand, the river was beautiful and teeming with wildlife.

Night Hike

We returned to the lodge today and I was happy to have my hammock accommodations back. Everyone was more laid back and easy going. We set out on a few short hikes in search of birds and monkeys. We found Toucans, Amazons, Macaws, Spider Monkeys and Howlers. After an early dinner and a short nap we regrouped for a night hike. Nearly eight villagers led us on a hike through the pitch black jungle in search of Tapirs. Armed with only flashlights we braved the eerie trek. This was an experience to remember. What a rush to be in the jungle at night surrounded by its nocturnal inhabitants.

Cave Hike

Today we ventured out in search of a nearby cave. The hike to the cave site again was spectacular. Upon finding the cave we all took a rest at its entrance before going in to have a look at the hundreds of bats that call it home. We had lunch at a perfect little spot, a high cliff in the middle of the river. The hundred of bats that call it home. We had lunch at a perfect little spot, a high cliff in the middle of the river. The hundred of bats that call it home. We had lunch at a perfect little spot, a high cliff in the middle of the river. The hundred of bats that call it home. We had lunch at a perfect little spot, a high cliff in the middle of the river. The hundred of bats that call it home. We had lunch at a perfect little spot, a high cliff in the middle of the river. The hundred of bats that call it home. We had lunch at a perfect little spot, a high cliff in the middle of the river. The hundred of bats that call it home. We had lunch at a perfect little spot, a high cliff in the middle of the river. The hundred of bats that call it home. We had lunch at a perfect little spot, a high cliff in the middle of the river. The hundred of bats that call it home.
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