A MESSAGE FROM BCR
PRESIDENT & EDITOR
Jamie Veronica

I am so excited to bring to you the completely redesigned Big Cat Times! We have come such a long way since our very first issue 19 years ago.

Our newsletter launched in the summer of 1996. It was titled Cat-Tales and was a 6-page black and white leaflet.

In 2004 we upgraded the publication to a newspaper format and renamed it The Big Cat Times. This was a very exciting step forward as we were able to bring to you color photographs for the first time ever.

Now here we go again. The Big Cat Times has received a major upgrade to this beautiful glossy color magazine...but at what cost?

Actually, very little more than the cost of the previous newspaper format.

For the mere pennies extra per issue we feel that this sturdier version of The Big Cat Times will have a longer shelf life and will turn get passed around between family and friends.

You can help spread the word about the plight of captive big cats as well as their wild counterparts by sharing your copy of The Big Cat Times. Every person touched by one of these stories is another voice for the voiceless.

So go on, dive in, and enjoy the stories in this issue including the latest bobcat rescues, our federal bill, an important notice regarding the Florida Panther, and more!

Check out Big Cat Rescue on all your favorite sites!

Scan QR Codes, in this issue, with your smart phone to get more info.

Big Cat Rescue is accredited by the Global Federation of Sanctuaries, certified by Independent Charities of America as a “Best in America Charity”, a member of the World Society for Protection of Animals, rated 4 Stars by Charity Navigator, and is part of a global coalition including HSUS, IFAW, WWF, GFAS, Born Free and other animal protection groups working together to end big cat abuse.

Read more about Big Cat Rescue and the cats who call it home at: BigCatRescue.org

Tour Info: Zerve.com/BigCatRescue
Big Cat Rescue is excited to announce the recent rescue of four orphaned Florida bobcat kittens! This group of wild babies will be raised here at the sanctuary in our rehabilitation area until they have purrr-fected their survival skills. Then they will be released back into the wild from which they came.

Phoenix managed to survive a forest fire in Lee County, FL in May. Officials hoped to reunite the kitten with his mother by leaving him near where he was found after an initial assessment that he seemed ok. In the meantime his story spread like wildfire via local media. Three days later, the kitten was dehydrated and still calling frantically for his mother, so he was sent to the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW). Staff at CROW evaluated Phoenix and treated his burns. We think there could be no more appropriate name than Phoenix, the mythological symbol who rises from the ashes to be reborn.

Shortly before Phoenix’s arrival CROW received another orphaned kitten. Captiva’s story is every bit as heart rending, but didn’t make the news. She was the one Big Cat Rescue agreed to take first. Gareth Johnson, the CROW Hospital Manager, worked with us a few years ago when we rehabbed and released bobcat Copter. Gareth called Big Cat Rescue on June 1st to report that some people had trapped a bobcat kitten and then left it in the trap without food or water for a couple of days before deciding...
CROW has state of the art medical facilities, but is not set up for long term bobcat rehab. Raising and rehabilitation of a bobcat requires a lot of space and infrastructure. Because these two kittens would need long term care CROW contacted the wildlife rehabbers at Big Cat Rescue to see if we had room for the duo. Both kittens were transported to Big Cat Rescue on June 25, 2015 for the next phase of their rehabilitation. Upon their arrival Phoenix was estimated to be 9 weeks old and Captiva 11 weeks.

Unfortunately due to the extensive hands on care Phoenix initially received to treat his injuries, he is not as wild as we would like. He seems unafraid of humans and will usually approach keepers when they are cleaning his water dish. On a positive note however, his wild instincts when it comes to hunting are right on track. We hope that housing him with Captiva, who is much more wild and extremely leery of humans, will teach him how to appropriately respond when approached by people (run and hide).

Pairing Phoenix and Captiva will ensure a greater chance at survival once released. The two will most likely stay with one another for a period of time while they both adjust to life in the wild.

Three weeks after the arrival of Phoenix and Captiva we received another call to action. Two bobcat kittens were found playing near...
the side of a busy highway. A passerby stopped and captured the kittens and then took them to a nearby veterinary clinic. A knowledgeable technician at the practice took the kittens back to where they had been found in search of the mother. When a mother bobcat gets separated from her kittens she will call out to them for days. Sadly the tech heard no such calls and had no other choice but to bring them back to the clinic.

Big Cat Rescuers made the 5 hour round trip to Lake Placid, FL to collect the kittens. At just 9 weeks old this brother and sister had a lot of growing up to do before they would be able to survive on their own. In the wild bobcat kittens will stay with their mother for up to a year before disbanding in search of their own territory. Their arrival came in the wake of a difficult loss at the sanctuary. Raindance, one of the founding bobcats of Big Cat Rescue, had recently passed at the age of 22. Her loss was felt deeply as she had become an icon at the sanctuary and was admired and loved by all that met her. In honor of Raindance we decided to carry on her spirit with the lives of these two wild ones. And so they were affectionately named Rain and Dancer.

All four rehab kittens are doing great. Phoenix and Captiva have become efficient and successful hunters. Phoenix is still approaching his keepers at times, however he occasionally follows Captiva’s lead and runs off to hide. Rain and Dancer have just recently moved to the outdoor rehab enclosures and have transitioned to a whole prey diet. They will move on to live prey (rats) in the coming weeks.

So what’s next? Securing a release site for Rain and Dancer. The law calls for a release site to be a minimum of 40 acres of privately owned land near where the bobcats were originally found. We typically release our rehab bobcats on several hundred or even thousands of acres. If you or anyone you know live in the area and would be willing to help Rain and Dancer by providing a release site please email jamie.veronica@bigcatrescue.org

Thanks to CROW’s connections a site has already been secured for Phoenix and Captiva.
Sad Farewell

Taking care of 87 exotic animals is a roller coaster ride of emotions as we try to provide the best possible life for them and yet deal with the gut wrenching decisions of life and death. Of our 87 animals, 69 of them are over the age of 12, which is about as long as they live in zoos or in the wild. An amazing 60 are over the age of 15 (90+ in human years). Even more incredible, 22 are 20 years or older. It is with heavy hearts we must say good bye to these beautiful cats who have touched our hearts forever.

Raindance came to Big Cat Rescue from a fur farm in Minnesota. She was 1 of 56 kittens that were purchased in order to save them from being slaughtered for their fur. This rescue was in our early days and soon after we stopped paying to rescue animals because it does not solve the bigger problem.

Raindance got her name because she loved to splash around in the rain. She would run and pounce into any muddy puddle she could. By the time she was done, you couldn’t even tell who she was, other than her bright, happy eyes gleaming behind a mud soaked coat.

She was a huge favorite at the sanctuary, probably because no matter who you were or what you were doing near Raindance, she would stop whatever she was doing to come over and see what was going on. Once she got your attention she would rub her cheeks on the side of the enclosure with a blustery purr.

In the end it was kidney failure that took Raindance away from us. She was 22 years old.

Arizona has reigned as the oldest serval at Big Cat Rescue since her arrival in 1997. Upon her passing she was 24 years old. Despite having lived her entire life being confined to a cage and dominated by humans, Arizona’s spirit was truly wild until the very end. Arizona passed away due to kidney failure, a common cause of death in elderly felines.

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Tonga’s story of recovery was recently featured on The Dodo.

The enrichment team made this awesome tiki bar for Tonga to enjoy. The Tonga faces are uncanny. Photo by: Michael Heap

Tonga, an 18-year-old white serval, is not a rare breed, but rather shares the same genetic mutation as does the white tiger. In 2012 Tonga was diagnosed with squamous cell carcinoma. A CT scan confirmed surgical removal of the nose was the best option. His prognosis after surgery was 1 year. We are so happy to report that Tonga is happy and healthy!

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Give Day Tampa Bay was established by The Community Foundation of Tampa Bay and Florida Next Foundation as a means to raise the profile of charitable giving in the Tampa Bay area. This is accomplished by awarding charities prize money in several fundraising categories. We are so grateful to the over 500 supporters (more than any other nonprofit) who made winning this prize money possible, including the donors of $100 and above listed below. This year we won $30k as follows: Most Dollars Raised $12,500, Single Largest Donation $10,000, Most Dollars Raised in Animals Category $5000, and Most Individual Donors in Animal Category $2500. Our $30k in prize money was twice as much as any other nonprofit. We would like to give a roaring thanks to all of the donors!

| Estate of Lona Feingersh | Barbara Wenicz $500 | Estate of Lona Feingersh | Barbara Wenicz $500 |
| Tigers in America | Andrea DeCapua $300 | Tigers in America | Andrea DeCapua $300 |
| Reitzel Foundation | Jon Ohman $300 | Reitzel Foundation | Jon Ohman $300 |
| Matt Burghoff | Lynn Baumeister $250 | Matt Burghoff | Lynn Baumeister $250 |
| Jefferson Bank | Laura Martin $250 | Jefferson Bank | Laura Martin $250 |
| Gillian McPhee | Lyndsey Hewitt $250 | Gillian McPhee | Lyndsey Hewitt $250 |
| Dan Edenfield | Robert Campbell $100 | Dan Edenfield | Robert Campbell $100 |
| Daria Kiselica | Vicki Dizney $100 | Daria Kiselica | Vicki Dizney $100 |
| Lynn & Stuart Lang | Don Eyres $100 | Lynn & Stuart Lang | Don Eyres $100 |
| Joseph Sokolosky | Assana Fard $100 | Joseph Sokolosky | Assana Fard $100 |
| Suzanne Spantidos | Leonard Fehskens $100 | Suzanne Spantidos | Leonard Fehskens $100 |
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| | Janice Fischer $100 | | Janice Fischer $100 |
| | Deepak Gangadharam $100 | | Deepak Gangadharam $100 |
| | James Grant $100 | | James Grant $100 |
| | Michelle Haast $100 | | Michelle Haast $100 |
| | Melinda Harris $100 | | Melinda Harris $100 |
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| | Jan McIlhenny $100 | | Jan McIlhenny $100 |
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| | Barbra Scheer $100 | | Barbra Scheer $100 |
| | Timothy Smith $100 | | Timothy Smith $100 |
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Volunteers Awarded for Outstanding Dedication

Congratulations to the following Big Cat Rescuers who have been recognized for their outstanding commitment to the mission of Big Cat Rescue. In honor of this service they were each presented with an award called the S.A.V.E. and allotted $500 to spend on their favorite feline friends.

S.A.V.E stands for Scratch’s Award for Volunteer Excellence. Named for an outstanding cougar, Scratch, whose lifespan reached 30 years, the SAVE Award is presented to one outstanding volunteer or intern each month. Please join us in congratulating the following S.A.V.E. winners!

Some volunteers truly shine and Rebecca Williams is one of the brightest. She started out as an intern and after progressing through all of the levels she decided she could not live without the big cats and moved to the area so that she could continue to help them by becoming a volunteer. You deserve it Rebecca!

We are so excited to present this award to Matt Ruszczyk! Matt has been a dedicated and hard working volunteer for more than 15 years! Throughout his career as a volunteer his passion for caring for the animals has been passed on to hundreds of volunteers and interns.

Kristen Dawley first became a volunteer a little over 4 years ago. Since she first started she has been a dependable and dedicated member of the team. Thank you for your service Kristen!

Big Cat Rescue is so lucky to have outstanding volunteers and interns who give not only their time to help the big cats, but also go above and beyond.

Do you want to help the big cats and make new friends? Big Cat Rescue is always looking for volunteers. Keepers clean enclosures, feed the animals, and landscape. Partners work in the gift shop and guide tours of the sanctuary. Get all the details at: BigCatRescue.org/volunteer
ADVO-CATS IN ACTION!

We use the term AdvoCat to describe people who care enough about the plight of big cats to add their voice to help stop abuse of big cats. AdvoCats help in a variety of ways from assisting with projects and programs to participating in action alerts by writing letters and calling their legislators.

One such AdvoCat, Kristina S., brought Big Cat Rescue’s message to her community by tabling on our behalf at Concord Market Days in New Hampshire. “We were successfully able to bring awareness to hundreds of people. As the event was three days long, some came back and said they had found Big Cat Rescue’s page and posted on their personal pages the reality behind cub petting and white tigers.”

Displaying home made posters and educational materials supplied by Big Cat Rescue, Kristina, along with her family and boyfriend Victor, were successful in getting over 400 signatures on a petition aimed at New Hampshire Senators and Representatives to support big cat safety and protection laws. They also raised funds for the cats and were highlighted in an article about the event in the Union Leader on NewHampshire.com.

“It was an amazing experience and something that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. If my actions helped big cats and prevented people from going to roadside zoos and participating in cub petting in any way, I am so humbled and grateful. Thank you for letting me help!” We say, thanks to you Kristina for being a valuable voice for the cats!

To learn more about the AdvoCat program and how you can be part of this paw-some team, visit: bigcatrescue.org/advocats

Already an AdvoCat? Be sure to join our new AdvoCat Facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/BCRAAdvoCats/

YOUNG NOT POWERLESS

We love when young people advocate for big cats! It gives us great hope for the future of our planet and for the preservation of exotic cats!

Teenager Makenna from Florida was inspired by our May AdvoCat newsletter to write a blog post in June entitled “The Irony Kills Me” about the new CBS show Zoo, which sadly is using live animals rather than computer-generated images (CGI). Way to go Makenna! Read her post and great tips for taking action for animals here at: www.greenfirefox.com

Would you also join us in politely asking CBS to stop using real wild animals on Zoo? Email David Stapf, President of CBS Television Studios, at dstapf@cbs.com.
Charters School in Berkshire, England is organized into four houses, one of which is called Pankhurst Panthers, and of course they have a panther mascot. The students of Pankhurst House selected Big Cat Rescue as the beneficiary of a series of fundraisers they held during their academic year. The events included a Valentine’s Day bake sale, a teachers’ karaoke and an ‘Hour Challenge’ in which the Pankhurst students were sponsored to do as many laps of the school field in an hour as possible.

The result of their efforts was an impressive 1346.27 British Pounds, or $1980 donated to Big Cat Rescue. Many thanks Pankhurst House!

A big cat “roar” to Reese W. and his friends from Madeira Beach Fundamental K-8. The kids raised funds as part of a 5th grade service project by selling Tampa Bay Times newspapers at a Rays game. Reese chose to support Big Cat Rescue! We are so grateful for our young supporters!

The cats are so grr-ateful to Madeline O., Elle G., and Isabella K. for donating the earnings from their crafts business! Over this past year the girls sold crafts with animal print or animal designs to their friends and family. The group visited on a Kids Tour and were excited to see how their donation helps the cats.
Cecil Lion CHANGED the World

Centuries of humans destroying the planet and everything that is beautiful and magnificent, to pursue personal wealth and status has brought on the sixth mass extinction, with lives being extinguished at rates that are 10,000 times the norm. The mounting evidence of the destruction being caused, hasn’t been enough to make the masses stop and take notice, but Cecil did.

When Cecil the lion was lured from a protected area onto private land to be brutally shot with a bow and arrow, caused to suffer for 40 hours as he ran for his life, only to be gunned down by a rich American, so that his head and skin could be stolen as a trophy, it was an act so egregious millions across the globe were outraged.

For days his plight made every media outlet even though animal abuse is rarely discussed in mainstream media, for fear of offending industries that profit from animal suffering who also happen to bring in big advertising dollars to networks.

Social media first broke the news of Cecil’s torture and slaying, and the public outcry was so enormous that mainstream media couldn’t ignore it. Jane Velez-Mitchell from CNN passionately spoke about how we have finally reached a tipping point in our attitudes toward animal protection at the Animal Rights Conference 2015 in Washington, DC on August 1st.

“The evolution revolution is a process, not an event, and we are headlong into that process.” said Jane Velez-Mitchell

What is it about Cecil’s story that so moved everyone? What made this lion different from the hundreds of thousands of lions who have been massacred since the 1940’s when there were estimated to be 450,000 of them in the wild?

The drop in wild lion populations to 30,000 by 2011 was enough to prompt many large wild animal protection groups to petition the US Fish and Wildlife Service to list lions as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Four years later lion numbers have dropped to as low as 20,000, and yet the USFWS has failed to implement this much needed change in status with little public outcry…until Cecil.

Thanks to Cecil a bright light is shining on not only the issue of trophy hunting, but also what is happening in our own back yard.

So what are we going to do about it? What can we do? We can save big cats in the wild and in captivity with our voice. Some may think that just one voice doesn’t matter, but it does. Sometimes one voice can make all the difference. The voice of just one lion, Cecil, has brought about more awareness in the past few weeks than in all the decades of slaughter.
Let your VOICE be heard.  
Roar for Cecil!

Here is how you can help Cecil and the many like him that lose their lives each and every day:

Thank the airlines who have banned the transportation of animal trophies, sign petitions and call your legislators to voice your support of laws to protect big cats, donate to conservation efforts focused on preserving habitat and protecting wild animals.

While the tragic demise of Cecil has captivated the world there is a more sinister market exploiting lions and tigers that is thriving right here in our own back yard.

- An estimated 200 lion and tiger cubs are being bred by a handful of Americans each year for the pay to play schemes where people pay to see or pose with a cute cub.

- These cubs are stolen from their mothers when they are just a few days old, never to return to her comfort again.

- Lion and tiger cubs can only be handled by the public for a few months. During this time frame they are not fully vaccinated to protect them as well as the public. After this window expires their profitability is depleted.

- The vast majority of those now useless cubs just disappear off the radar.

- It is believed that these cubs end up in slaughterhouses to supply the exotic meat trade in the U.S.

96% of Americans care about protecting animals from cruelty and every year that number grows as older generations and their outdated beliefs die out.

In recent times when celebrities ignorantly chose to pose with these wild animal cubs they have been reprimanded via mainstream and social media for doing so.

But why isn’t the outrage as strong yet against those who perpetuate the exploitation of cubs as it was against the dentist who poached Cecil the lion this summer?

Cecil had the benefit of being raised by his own mother and living free for 13 years. Big cat cubs who are born into the trade at the hands of greedy breeders for the sole purpose of public interaction have never had the benefit of being raised by their mothers or living wild and free.

Maybe the difference is that their ultimate plight is hidden from view? Being shot with an arrow and then with a gun are a pretty gruesome way to die, but the public isn’t privy to the suffering, neglect and disposal of captive cubs when they grow up. They quietly disappear behind closed gates and doors.

Maybe it is because we didn’t know their name?

The killing of Cecil has brought to the forefront a long fought battle to protect wild lions. His name has put a face on the issue that the public can identify with and champion for.

Unfortunately there is not a clear name and face aligning the masses in support of protection for big cats in captivity. But that can change right now. YOU can be that name, YOU can be that face. Each and every one of YOU matter, can make a difference, and can change the world.

Roar for all of the big cats! Contact your member of congress and ask them to champion the Big Cats & Public Safety Act.
FEDERAL BILL

If you take just ONE action for big cats this year, this should be IT!

Congress operates in two year sessions. At the end of each session, any bills that did not get signed into law “die” and have to be re-introduced in the next session.

Once a bill is introduced, legislators can “co-sponsor” the bill by calling the legislator who introduced it. The co-sponsor names are published online.

Being a co-sponsor shows support and basically means you are going to vote for the bill if it comes to the floor of the House or Senate for a vote.

We are part of a coalition of animal welfare groups that in February 2012 introduced a federal bill to ban private breeding and ownership of big cats with limited exemptions. The bill would put an end to the rampant breeding of cubs for pay to pet schemes and tens of thousands of big cats living in miserable conditions in back yards and roadside zoos like those pictured here.

In the ten months we had left in the 2011-12 session we got up to 60 cosponsors in the House, which was great. We re-introduced the bill in 2013 and by the end of the 2013-14 session we were up to 119 cosponsors out of the 435 members of the House, more than 25%!

At the end of 2014 our primary Republican sponsor retired. So in 2015 we have been working on finding a suitable new main Republican sponsor to join our Democratic main sponsor Loretta Sanchez of California. At this writing we have a great new Republican main sponsor in the House who has not yet been announced and we are working on lining up what are called “initial cosponsors” whose names are submitted at the same time the bill is “dropped” or “introduced.” In the Senate, our past champion Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut will be re-introducing the bill.

Tiger kept in a concrete floored cage inside of a shed, deprived of the outdoors for years in a backyard in FL
By the time you read this, or shortly after, we expect the bill to have been introduced and have bill numbers in both the House and Senate. Then, what we need is your help in urging your Representatives in the House and your Senators to co-sponsor the bill.

When you get this, please check the status of the bill at: StopBigCatAbuse.com.

In addition to sending the email, even more effective is to also make a phone call to the legislator’s office and ask for the staff person who handles animal welfare issues. To find your legislators and their phone numbers visit https://www.opencongress.org/people/zipcodelookup

All you need to say is that you would like the Congressman or Senator to “co-sponsor the Big Cat Public Safety Act.”

If you cannot call during business hours, or simply if you are shy, call at night or on the weekend and leave a recorded message. It is helpful to include the bill number, which we do not have yet but will be at www.StopBigCatAbuse.com by the time you read this hopefully.

If you have any questions about the bill or making the call, just email Howard Baskin at: Howard.Baskin@BigCatRescue.org

2 Tigers and 2 lions kept together in cramped filthy conditions after being abandoned by their owner in OH.
### Gift Shop Purchases Directly Benefit the Big Cats

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<td>Fidel Cap BCR &amp; Tiger Black or Tan</td>
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<td>White Baseball Cap with BCR Logo</td>
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<td>Choose Shorty Tiger made with recycled materials, White Lion w/BCR Logo, Black Tiger w/ BCR Logo, or Lion March</td>
<td>S, M, L, XL</td>
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Animal-opoly Themed Monopoly Game $28.54

Bengali Tiger Mouse Pad $15.84

BCR Tumbler 16 oz $17.05

Tigers 15 oz Mug $15.84

Big Cats 15 oz Mug $15.84

Bobcats 15 oz Mug $15.84

Little Cats 15 oz Mug $15.84

Crazy Cat Lady Toy 5.25” comes with 6 cats $15.84

Kids Neck Pillow $13.70

Choose Tiger or Lion

Luggage Tag Choose White Tiger, 3 Cougars, Bobcat, Black Leopard, Tiger, or Lion $6.74 each

Wool Snow Leopards (save wild snow leopards) $13.70

Leopard Cicky Pen Rotating message w/ each click $4.00

BCR Supporter Bracelet $3.68

BCR Ribbon Magnet Gold or Silver $8.35

Collapsible Purse Hook
Keep your purse off the floor hang from table. Choose any species at BCR $29.75

BCR Collage License Plate Frame features 18 resident big and little cats of Big Cat Rescue. Standard size and four holes make easy installation. $15.84

Lion & Lioness Bumper Sticker $6.21

2-sided acrylic key chain is 2” x 3” Choose Tiger, Leopard, Bobcat, Sand Cat, Black Leopard, or Lion $6.21 each

2015 BIG CAT TIMES - BIG CAT RESCUE
SUMMER FUN

ARTHUR THE TIGER GOES FOR A DIP IN A POND
Florida can get quite steamy in the summer months. Thanks to our awesome enrichment team our cats have lots of fun ways to beat the heat and celebrate summer!

Clockwise from left: Zabu the white tiger plays with a dolphin, Pharaoh the white serval drools over his jelly fish, Aspen the cougar puts the finishing touches on her sand castle, Armani & Jade the leopard sisters take turns putting their favorite toys in their pool, Joseph the lion munches on an ice cold watermelon, Ares and Orion the cougar brothers decide they prefer their pool on the other side of their enclosure.
WAYS TO HELP
bigcatrescue.org/get-involved/

AMAZON SMILE
Select Big Cat Rescue as your designated charity at:
smile.amazon.com/
For every purchase you make using this portal a donation will be made to the big cats. It’s a free and easy way to give without any extra cost!

SPONSOR A CAT
All kits include: 4-page color fact sheet about the species, Big Cat Rescue logo window decal, Registration Card to select the cat of your choice, 8x10 color photo of the cat you choose to sponsor with the cat name and your name as sponsor printed on it. The sponsor levels below include these additional benefits and donor recognition:

$25 BIG CAT BUDDY - KIDS:
Wildcat coloring pages, 1 Kid Tour Pass

$25 BIG CAT SUPPORTER: 10% off card
$50 BIG CAT FRIEND:
10% off card, 1 Day Tour Pass

$100 BIG CAT PROTECTOR: 10% off card, 2 Day Tour Pass, 30 mailing labels

$250 BIG CAT CONSERVATOR: 10% off card, 2 Day Tour Pass, 60 mailing labels

$500 BIG CAT WARRIOR: Conservator benefits plus 4”x4” photo donor plaque displayed at gift shop and 6”x12” engraved sign displayed on tour path, Private Tour for 10

$1,000 BIG CAT HERO: Conservator benefits plus 6”x6” photo donor plaque displayed at gift shop and 9”x12” engraved sign displayed on tour path, Private Tour for 10

$2,500 BIG CAT CHAMPION: Conservator benefits plus 8”x8” photo donor plaque displayed at gift shop and 12”x12” photo donor sign displayed on tour path, Private Founder Tour for 10

$5,000 KING OF BEASTS: Conservator benefits plus 12”x12” photo donor plaque displayed at gift shop and 18”x24” photo donor sign displayed on tour path, Private Founder Tour for 10

PAVE THE WAY
Receive recognition for your support or honor or memorialize someone else with a custom engraved pathway brick. The bricks will make a lasting impression on visitors year round as they line the path entering and exiting the gift shop. Laser engraving changes the brick color to create the letters deep into the brick so they will never wear off or fade away. Great gift for any occasion!

PROJECT CATER-WALL
The perimeter of the sanctuary is 7,200 feet. We have completed construction on 2/3 of this project, and need your help to finish the remaining 2,300 feet. You can sponsor 1 linear foot of wall for $100. For your donation you will receive a BCR screensaver, 2-for-1 Tour Pass, and name listed on donor sign.

BIG CAT WISHLIST
Donate a new or used item from our wishlist online at: http://tinyurl.com/n42yjmh
**THE BIG CAT TIMES ORDER FORM**

**Fall 2015**

**BILLING ADDRESS** (please print)

Name: ___________________ Email: ___________________
Address: ___________________ City: ________________ State: ___ Zip: _______

**RECIPIENT ADDRESS** (if different than above)

Name: ___________________ Email: ___________________
Address: ___________________ City: ________________ State: ___ Zip: _______

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**PERSONALIZATIONS** (inscription to appear on the brick or wall fund sign, or brief note to be included on a card sent with order to recipient)

_____________________________________________________________
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**CREDIT CARD INFO:**

Card #: __ __ __ __ / __ __ __ __ / __ __ __ __ / __ __ __ __

Exp. Date (MMYY): __ __ / _____

CCV# (back of card) ____

Signature: ____________________________

**GRAND TOTAL**

**AUTOMATIC GIVING PROGRAM - JOIN THE SUSTAINING DONOR SOCIETY**:

Big Cat Rescue makes it easy and convenient to donate monthly with no worry. You can do this either by credit card or by direct debit to a checking account for as little as $5/month. For credit card donations, just fill in the highlighted line on the order form above and provide your credit card information. For checking account direct debit email finance@bigcatrescue.org, or leave a message for Howard at 813-920-4130. This is a G-R-R-eat way to spread out your donations and provide steady support that is so meaningful for the cats.

**PAVE THE WAY BRICK**:

Laser engraved bricks line the paths leading to our Trading Post Gift Shop and to the entrance of the tour path. 4" x 8" Brick: 29 characters per line, total of 5 lines OR heart or paw print symbol, 14 characters, total of 5 lines. 8" x 8" Brick: 14 characters per line, total of 6 lines OR With heart or paw print symbol, 14 characters, total of 4 lines.

**PERIMETER WALL FUND**:

To best protect our big cats we have constructed a solid perimeter wall surrounding the property. While the construction is complete we are still below our fundraising goal. $100 funds 1 linear foot of wall. Donors will be recognized on a permanent sign at the sanctuary.

Big Cat Rescue is a 501(c)(3) non profit organization, FEID 59-3330495. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR BIG CAT RESCUE CORP., A FL-BASED NONPROFIT CORPORATION (REGISTRATION NO. CH 11409), MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE 1-800-435-7352 WITHIN THE STATE OR BY VISITING www.800helpfla.com. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. Big Cat Rescue does not utilize the services of professional solicitors, 100% of all contributions go directly to Big Cat Rescue Corp. The Big Cat Times is published quarterly Tampa, FL at no charge to our donors. If you have any questions, please email info@BigCatRescue.org or call 813-920-4130.
Donations Received
Apr 1st - Jun 30th

Estate of Margerie Rhodes $25,000
Piper Morgan Properties $10,000
Lawrence & Pamela Rissel $10,000
Greg & Sue Taylor $5,000
Milo Bartolucci $3,000
SB3 &Alias Trust $3,000
Zach & Natalie Zgabay $2,555
Saint Pete MI $2,500
Broadmeadow
Elementary School $2,571
Linda LaMaire $2,500
The Many & Busy
Cohen Foundation $1,500
Sole Riley Munnity $1,500
Cerrett Preparatory
School of IGS $1,234
Styx &Rock to the Rescue $1,250
Verena Oltman $1,030
Roderick & Shelly Barbanica $1,000
Estate of Margerie Rhodes $25,000
Lawrence & Pamela Trissel $10,000
Donations Received
Zach & Natalie Zgabay $2,555
The Kutch Family Fund of The
Kristina Weingartner $1,000
Greg & Sue Taylor $5,000
Jacqueline Fazekas $500
Elizabeth Watts $1,000
Verena Oltman $1,030
Diana Brookes $1,000
Betsy Coville $1,000
Jacqueline Fazekas $500
Britteny Zeher $625
The Manny & Ruthy
Brian Rush $1,000
Aspen Community
Geoff Blades $500
Lisa Jaroske $500
Jill Stevens &
Daniel Pursel & Lisa Minich $300
Jeffrey & Roberta Newton $400
J M Smith Foundation $400
Jerome & Susan Burch $271
Aladdin Oil & Gas Ltd $400
Sherry & Chris Sutton $350
Michele DeVincentz $400
Michele Vaughn $330
Michele Young $144
John Sevos $190
John Blackwood $130
John Barden $144
ECHOage $130

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Thank you for your support! If your donation came toward the end of the quarter, it may not have been entered into our database in time for this newsletter and will appear in the next. Donations are subject to manual and subject to occasional errors, so if your donation should appear and does not, please email Chelsea.feeny@BigCatRescue.org so we can investigate and correct our records if there is an omission.
THE INTERN EXPERIENCE

By Ellie Richardson

While on a family vacation, I came across a leaflet for “Big Cat Rescue”. I had always loved and admired big cats so I persuaded my family to visit this sanctuary. Most people on the tour were there to see a big cat up close, as was I. However by the end of the tour, I realized that this sanctuary was very different than most other animal facilities – their ethics included no breeding, and no contact. This seemed strange at first, as most other animal exhibitors, such as zoos frequently promote these aspects. I learned a great deal on the tour that ended up affecting how I looked at the animal industry. I discovered the major problem of private ownership of exotic animals in the U.S., and I wanted to help stop this. My experience influenced what I wanted to do as a career, and so after high school I began studying for a degree in animal science at a local university in Edinburgh.

Five years later, I applied to become an intern at Big Cat Rescue, and was accepted! I arrived in Tampa in June. After approximately 20 hours of traveling I was tired, and slightly jet lagged but excited to start a new adventure.

During the 12 week internship I will learn how to clean and maintain enclosures, and be trained in diet preparation, feeding techniques, operant training, and enrichment. Housing is provided as well as a grocery stipend.

At orientation I was given an overall briefing on the sanctuary, its goals, and what I could expect as an intern. My first week was reasonably calm, easing me into the internship, so I could get an idea of how the sanctuary operated on a day to day basis.

Over the next few weeks daily activities fell into a routine. In the morning we feed & clean, then we break for lunch. The afternoons are spent working on projects and guiding tours.

Prior to arriving at Big Cat Rescue I had worked in jobs that required interaction with members of the public, and so I enjoy speaking with and educating guests. I found tours to be really rewarding - it was a great feeling knowing that I had the power to teach people about various aspects of animal care, and issues we at BCR are fighting to change.

As an intern I also take part in the sanctuary’s ‘Kitten Foster Programme’, that is organized with the Humane Society of Tampa Bay. We are responsible for litters of orphaned kittens or young families that are not quite ready to be adopted. These cats are reared and socialized increasing their chances of being adopted later on.

I am often asked which cat is my favourite. After 6 weeks of being here, I have managed to narrow it down to a few. Narla the cougar is a sweetheart, she is blind and mostly deaf, but is very talkative and happily greets keepers. I found Sabre, a 23 year old black Asian leopard, acting particularly silly during one of my tours on afternoons. He sprinted around his enclosure and pounced on his toy ball, it was a special moment to witness this old man having such genuine fun. Finally my favourite cats include the ‘Texas Tigers’ – Amanda, Andre, and Arthur. These cats to me, represent ‘unbroken’ animals. At feeding time their roaring is especially unrelenting, and though I have been scared by them on many occasions, I admire their will power to remain true to their wild nature behaving how tigers should.

The work here is hard, but it is also very rewarding. Big Cat Rescue is an excellent example of how far people can get with determination. BCR and it’s huge support base are at the forefront of supporting legislation to better protect big cats in captivity. I am honoured to be able to say I have been a part of this sanctuary’s journey.

TIGER SELFIE CHALLENGE

Public opinion is evolving when it comes to using wild animals as photo props. Once thought to be a thrilling experience resulting in a cute photo, is now widely known to be CRUEL not COOL.

Wild animals are pulled away from their mothers and forced to interact with the public for hours on end for the sole purpose of profiting the breeders and dealers. Once these cubs age out of the window in which the public is permitted to have contact with them they are discarded, ending up in canned hunts and the black market.

Get the Tiger Selfie app for iphone and help spread the word about posing with wild animals by posting your cruelty free tiger selfies on social media sites. TigerSelfieApp.com
On Father’s day a sell out crowd of 550 people joined us for our first annual Wildcat Walkabout. The event was a roaring success and raised over $6,000. This year’s Walkabout was in support of lion conservation. All of the proceeds from the event as well as pre and post event tee sales were donated to two worthy causes; Build a Boma project led by National Geographic and Lion Guardians. You can read more about these projects at: buildaboma.org and lionguardians.org

A limited supply of event tees are still available. Order yours today before they are sold out.

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**PLEDGE TO BE CIRCUS FREE**

12,054 PEOPLE HAVE MADE THE PLEDGE. HAVE YOU? PLEDGE TO BE CIRCUS FREE!

If you love lions and tigers and elephants, please show them you care by making a pledge to not attend circuses with wild animal acts.

The circus makes big cats and elephants do unnatural tricks. We believe the animals perform because they are afraid of the circus trainers, who use painful bull hooks, electric prods and whips. Tigers and lions should not live in tiny circus cages with barely any room to move. And elephants should not be tied up with ropes and chains so short they can’t even walk.

Big Cat Rescue would like to see ONE MILLION kids and adults pledge to be CIRCUS FREE! We promise to make sure the politicians in Washington know that all of us who LOVE wild animals want the circus to stop exploiting them! Big cats and elephants belong in the wild… not in circus cages and wagons.

You can make the Circus Free pledge when you visit Big Cat Rescue or by going online to:

NoCircusTigers.com

Please make the pledge today
And tell your friends!
Population: Just over 100 years ago, there were as many as 100,000 wild tigers living in Asia. Today, there are fewer than 3,200. There are 6 existing subspecies of tigers; three have gone extinct in the last century. Existing: Bengal, Indochinese, Sumatran, Siberian, Malayan, South-China (No signs of the South-China subspecies have been found in the wild in the last decade). Extinct: Javan (lost in the 1970’s), Caspian (lost in the 1950’s), Bali (lost in the 1930’s). Tigers are listed as “Endangered” on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.

Size and Appearance: The largest of all the living cats, the tiger is immediately recognizable by its unique reddish orange coat with black stripes. Stripe patterns differ among individuals and are as unique to the animal as are fingerprints to humans. Body size of the tiger varies with latitude, the smallest occurring at low latitudes in Indonesia and the largest at high altitudes in Manchuria and Siberia. The largest, the Siberian tiger can reach weights exceeding 700 pounds and lengths of 10+ feet.

Habitat: The tiger requires dense vegetative cover and sufficient large prey. Range size is based on the habitat conditions and availability of prey. Indian tigers generally have a range of 8-60 square miles, Sumatran tigers 150 square miles, and Siberian tigers 400 square miles. Tigers have lost more than 40% of their habitat in the past decade.

Distribution: Tigers exist in 13 Asian countries and are extinct in 11 countries. Tigers no longer live in 93% of their historic range.

Reproduction and Offspring: Tigers will mate throughout the year, but most frequently between the end of November to early April. After a gestation of 103 days an average litter of 3 cubs are born. Cubs will leave their mothers between the ages of 18 - 28 months. During the first year, mortality can be as high as 35%, and of that 73% of the time it is the entire litter that is lost. The leading cause of mortality is attacks from other animals, although fire and floods are other contributors as well.

Social System: Tigers are solitary, however, they are not anti-social. Males not only come together with females for breeding, but will feed with or rest with females and cubs. Females with cubs have also been seen coming together to share meals. Most likely, in all of these cases they are somehow related. Males will kill cubs from other males, so it is likely that the offspring in question is his own.

Hunting and Diet: Tigers hunt primarily between dusk and dawn. Once prey is killed, the tiger either drags or carries its meal into cover. A tiger can drag or carry an animal twice its body weight and will consume anywhere from 35 – 90 pounds of meat at one sitting. Tigers are not the most successful of hunters. Only 1 in every 10-20 attempts will be successful. The most common prey items are various species of deer and pig.

Threats: Wild tigers are being hunted to meet the demands of the illegal wildlife trade market, a $20 billion a year industry. Tiger parts are consumed for traditional medicinal purposes across Asia, with a heavy demand in China. Wild tigers are persecuted when villagers take retaliatory measures to protect their livestock. Tiger habitat is increasingly under threat from agricultural developments, like palm oil plantations.

TJ was rescued along with 3 other tigers from a breeding facility in central FL that was shut down by the USDA following numerous violations of the Animal Welfare Act.
WHY is the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission Giving up on the Florida Panther?

In the 1930’s scientists reported that no more than 30 Florida Panthers remained in the wild and that many of them suffered from birth defects due to inbreeding.

In 1958 the state made its first stride in protecting the Florida Panther and put an end to hunting the big cat.

In 1967 the Florida Panther was listed as Endangered. For 30+ years the federal government has maintained that for panthers to be taken off of the endangered list their South Florida population must be increased to 240 individuals as well as two additional populations of a minimum of 240 be established elsewhere in the state. This goal, most recently reviewed in 2008, is based on scientific research supporting these numbers will ensure the panther survives another 100 years.

Throughout the past several decades conservation efforts have increased the panther population to an estimated 100-180 individuals as well as restored genetic diversity through the brief introduction of Texas cougars.

On June 23rd, Nick Wiley, executive director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), proposed a plan that would weaken protections for the endangered Florida Panther. The policy proposal which was co-authored by FWC commissioner and cattle rancher Aliese Priddy appears to be the first step towards legalizing the hunting of Florida panthers.

Separately Priddy is among a group of land developers that are seeking a special federal permit to kill a certain number of panthers should they get in the way of their development plans. These developers include; two major sugar companies, Alico and King Ranch; the Half Circle L Ranch; Pacific Tomato Growers; English Brothers; and the Barron Collier Partnership and Collier Enterprises. The group intends to turn 45,000 acres of their 177,000 acres of prime panther habitat in Colier County into a town that would be home to mining, oil exploration, agriculture, and 10,000 residential homes.

Proposal to weaken Florida Panther protections submitted without expert input from the states’ panther biologists.

Over 600,000 acres of traditional panther habitat have been mostly abandoned by panthers due to impacts of periodic high water events since the 1970’s. Clearly a town in the middle of current panther habitat is not in the best interest of the species.
Wiley and Priddy’s policy proposal suggests that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife’s goals are not realistic so it is time to change them. The policy included language that would give the wildlife agency more flexibility when dealing with panthers that are considered a nuisance by allowing for the killing of them as is currently permitted with alligators and bears. Current federal law protects panthers from being hunted, while Florida law makes killing a panther a third-degree felony.

On a side note, Wiley and Priddy submitted their policy proposal regarding the Florida Panthers at the June 23rd meeting where the FWC voted in favor of removing protections for the black bear that had been in place for 21 years. Despite public outcry the FWC has opened up the first black bear hunting season since 1994. Current population estimates are unknown, but thought to be around 3,000 bears. The cost to kill a black bear $100-$300.

Reasons cited in Wiley and Priddy’s proposal for weakening the protection of Florida panthers were: the growing panther population, estimated between 100-180, has led to an increase in predation of domestic pets and livestock (estimated 20-30 annually), human-panther conflicts (20-25 road kills annually), and the hindrance of land development. “Panther populations are straining and currently exceed the tolerance of landowners, residents and recreationists in the region,” according to the proposal.

The proposal would also change
how the FWC protects the endangered cat by focusing the agency’s resources on controlling the growth of the South Florida population, addressing lost live stock, and putting the responsibility of establishing the two additional panther populations on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Removing protections for the Florida Panther would be a big step in the wrong direction for the future of the state’s big cat.

Instead the focus should be on protecting habitat and establishing wildlife corridors that would contribute to the success of the panther throughout Florida and into Georgia and Alabama.

The state pays nearly $1 million a year to biologists to study the Florida panther. Yet these panther biologists were not consulted during the drafting of this policy proposal regarding the protection of the panther. Wiley and Priddy (who claims to have lost 10 cattle to panthers) appear to have an alternate agenda.

The proposal stated that panthers have outgrown their “carrying capacity” in their habitat south of the Caloosahatchee River, claiming there are too many for the area to support naturally. When the wildlife commission’s panther biologists did get to see this proposal, after it was drafted, they strongly disagreed.

“There is no science supporting the statement about ‘exceeding carrying capacity,’ ” panther biologist Darrell Land, who has been studying the big cats since 1985, said in a May email to his bosses. “I am unaware of any analysis … that reached that conclusion. … It is an opinion, not a fact.”

After hours of public comments regarding the proposal and a strong backlash from the public and the media the FWC delayed their vote until September so that more data could be collected. The delay gives Floridians a chance to speak out for the Florida Panther and demand that preservation of the species continue.

In response to the uproar caused by the first draft of Wiley and Priddy’s proposal, a second draft which includes input from the agency’s biologists, the public, and the other 6 commissioners has been made public.

The new version, posted in its entirety on the FWC’s website has removed language stating the primary focus will be on protecting livestock, and has also made clear that there are no intentions of removing the Florida Panther from the Endangered Species List any time soon. However, it still calls for federal officials to lessen their criteria for taking panthers off the endangered list. The current criteria set a goal too high to be achieved, the draft says. Also still included is language regarding the need to deal with human-panther conflict. Which may, in turn, open the door to hunting the endangered cat.

FWC commissioners will vote on adopting the new policy on September 2nd. Big Cat Rescue will be present at the meeting to speak out in support of the continued preservation of the Florida Panther. For an update regarding the outcome of this meeting visit: BigCatRescue.org/FLPanther
COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN (CFC) DONATES OVER $100,000!

Each autumn generous federal government employees, including the armed forces, have an opportunity to make a pledge to have a portion of each paycheck donated to their chosen charities. These donations come to us from federal employees all over the world. About 80% of the CFC donors do so anonymously, which means we do not get their names to thank them individually. In some cases we get their names but not the amount of the pledge. The cats at Big Cat Rescue have been blessed to have been selected by so many of them that collectively the donations we receive through the CFC total over $100,000 each year! We would like to take this opportunity to thank those listed below whose names we do have, listing them by pledge amount where we have it. At the same time we would like to thank the estimated 1,500 others who have donated anonymously. Your contributions cover a significant portion of our annual budget and truly make a difference in allowing us to give the best possible care to the cats. THANK YOU ALL!

Sandra Barnes $3,250
Charles Graham $1,200
Rachael Myers-Ward $1,131
Debra Bailey $1,040
Sandra Shull $1,040
Laurence Miller $1,040
Scott Hill $1,000
Vivienne Halpemr $1,000
Joelle Starefas $780
David Ellis $700
Gillian Cohen-Boyer $554
Daniel Morris $540
Richard Perry $520
Christine Athey $520
Anne Lloyd $520
Paula Gray $520
Christina Anderson-Plimpton $500
Sarah Hoffman $450
John Newman $442
Stacie Blizzard $400
Janice Burke $390
Kelly Hays $390
Kasimra Kolden $390
John Lesczynski $390
Nicole Faust $390
Anastasia Hetman $360
Elizabeth Gannaway $360
Laura Cooksey $351

Karen Maskew $325
Erin Mettee $325
Denise Nicholas $312
Jonathan Richard $312
Nat Weaver $300
Robert Vaughn $300
Michael Manning $300
James Smith $300
Katheryn Hoke $300
November Stonely $300
Alanna Youngblood $300
Melissa Miller $300
Christopher Bunyea $286
Sawas Sawasorn $286
Brenda Marinke $260
Marlee Smalley $260
Robert Rhodes $260
Siobhan Feliciano $260
Megan Edel $260
Gretchen Persohn $260
Christine Curley $260
Kim Ann Gerwer $260
Arianda Sugar $260
Paul Stabile $260
Lucia Wakenak $260
Julie Wilkinson $260
Michael Young $260
Roxanne Ferry $260
Joseph Spencer $260
Stephen Nickerson $260
Michele Poulos $260
Rene Coughenour $260
Kurt Brown $260
Catherine Parker $260
Terri Diehl $260
Rainer Brown $260

Theresa Ogden $260
Dana Cook $260
Travis Webb $252
Edward Gow $251
Ilse Pereja $250
Deborah Gilliam $247
Carol Trite $247
Michael Creed $240
Barr Derch $240
Anne Cook $240
Lynn Isaak $240
Reena Schaffer $240
Derrick Thorson $240
Cinda Lautenschleg $234
Christine Birkenmaier $234
Amy Pryor $221
Bruce Lady $208
Angela Huss $208
Abbie Nestler $207
Deborah Gunnaugsson $200
Christine Curley $200
Kim Ann Gerwer $200
Arianda Sugar $200
Paul Stabile $200
Lucia Wakenak $200
Julie Wilkinson $200
Michael Young $200
Roxanne Ferry $200
Joseph Spencer $200
Stephen Nickerson $200
Michele Poulos $200
Rene Coughenour $200
Kurt Brown $200
Catherine Parker $200
Terri Diehl $200
Rainer Brown $200

Louis Baralot $150
Jocelyn Winslow $143
Maegan Evanisko $132
Janet Briggs $130
Homer Jansens $130
Sandra Carlson $130
Barry Goldsmith $130
Linday Dahlstrom $130
James McDonald $130
Mark Altier $130
Jennifer Howard $130
Yvonne Thorne $130
Stacey Wilson $130
Jeanne Ruski $130
Michael McElroy $130
Doreen Sears $130
Natalie Dalessandro $130
Donna Rauhl $130
Elizabeth Lee $130
Rosemary Hazard $130
Carl Wescott $130
Phillip Canterbury $130
Crystal Buffet $130
Joane Holmes $130
Joel Strawser $130
Shannon Thompson $130
Dorothy Retallack $130
Renae Voelk $130
Jeff Carlile $130
Joanne Otten $130
Charles Speth $125
Jill Murphy $125
Tricia Van Den $120
Kristen Pacheco $120
Rachel Schafied $120
Jamie Fiddlerman $120

Kenneth Bowling $120
Joseph Iy $120
Kody Sessions $120
Rebecca Waddington $120
Samuel Fry $120
Kathy Verduzco $120
Cassandra Kaiser $120
Jonathan Conner $120
Trisha Brockoff $120
Suzanne Tenorio $120
Debra Taylor $115
Hermine Vaughn $114
Fred Nichols $108
Christine Resch $108
Jenifer Sancho $104
Erika Nieves $104
Jeffrey Swank $104
Julie Zambrana $104
Jessica Sallyers $100
Kimberly Gates $100
Jody Hughes $100
Stephen Bernard $100
Tracy Gieg $100
Forrest Williamson $100
Jillian Andrews $100
Susan Matchett $100
Kathleen Maupin $100
Thomas Thomas $100
Rick Mitchell $100
**VET REPORTS:**

**AMANDA TIGER GETS SPAYED AT 19**

Amanda was rescued along with Andre and Arthur from a sanctuary that went bankrupt in Texas. The trio had lived with several other big cats. All of the males had been neutered to prevent breeding. Unfortunately it is not uncommon for female cats to have complications later in life if they are not spayed.

Keepers noticed something was wrong right away when Amanda was not interested in food. She along with her siblings are always very excited when it’s feeding time. Instead she lay quiet in her den.

Because this was so unusual for her it was decided that an exam was critical. Amanda was sedated and examined. During the exam it was discovered that her uterus had become infected. In the veterinary field this is referred to as pyometra. Pyometra is considered a serious and life threatening condition that must be treated quickly. Treatment involves entire removal of the reproductive tract, in other words spay.

Dr. Helga Blaeyart performed the surgery along with the assistance of Dr. Sami Peterson, Dr. Tammy Miller Michau, and Dr. Wynn. This normally routine procedure was anything but. Because of the severity of the infection there was a very real risk of the uterus rupturing which could flood Amanda’s abdominal cavity with bacteria laden pus.

Thankfully the surgery went smoothly and after a short time recovering in our hospital cage she was returned to her permanent enclosure and reunited with her brothers.

**GROOMING BIG CATS**

Some of our cats are very old and with age comes arthritis. A few of our cats have very bad arthritis that inhibits their ability to move freely in all directions so they can groom those hard to reach areas. While on medications to help their joints and ease their pains, they require assistance with regular grooming.

One way we help these cats is by using extendable back scratchers. These scratchers allow a trained keeper to brush out loose or matted fur, while maintaining a safe distance from the cat. However, some cats need more than a little brushing.

Sassyfras the cougar and Angie the bobcat must be sedated periodically and completely shaved. Sassyfras is new to the back scratcher and will only allow for a few brushes here and there. Hopefully with time and patience we will be able to groom him completely using this method so that he does not have to be sedated. Angie on the other paw is very distrusting and will not come anywhere near her Dr. Blaeyart & Dr. Peterson operate on Amanda

![Dr. Blaeyart & Dr. Peterson operate on Amanda](image)

Little Feather allows keepers to remove mats from her fur using a back scratcher

![Little Feather allows keepers to remove mats from her fur using a back scratcher](image)

Angie being shaved by Dr. Wynn

![Angie being shaved by Dr. Wynn](image)
keepers so unfortunately she will require routine sedation for grooming.

**MYSTERY ILLNESS AFFECTS KING TUT**

One morning in April King Tut was found in his enclosure shivering and laying in a crouched position. He seemed very uncomfortable and unable to pick his head up to a normal resting position. His keepers had just seen him an hour earlier and he was acting completely normal, following them around the enclosure looking for his morning meal.

He was sedated and examined by Dr. Boorstein. Nothing obvious was found during his exam, so blood was drawn and sent to the lab for testing. In the meantime he was started on a course of steroids in case he had injured himself. This seemed to fit given the fact that he was seen earlier in the day acting normal.

The results came in and were unremarkable. The steroids seemed to help a little, however King Tut was losing his appetite and still exhibiting the same symptoms.

King Tut was taken to the Animal Care Institute for an MRI to see if there was an injury to his back or tumor in his brain. The specialist who examined the images noted that there was a slight swelling along the spinal cord which could be caused by injury or disease. It was recommended that a spinal tap be performed in order to narrow down the cause of the swelling. The bad news is King Tut had to be taken off the steroids that were making him feel better in order to obtain an accurate reading from the test.

After weaning him from the medication he was sedated a third time so that Dr. Boorstein could collect a sample of the fluid that surrounded the spinal cord.

The results from the CSF (cerebral spinal fluid) were inconclusive. The cause of King Tut’s condition could have been due to injury or any one of dozens of diseases including disc disease, FIP, meningitis, or even cancer.

Some of the listed causes would respond to steroids and so King Tut was put back on this medication at an increased dose.

Throughout King Tut’s ordeal we thought many times that he would not make it. He would refuse food and in turn not take his meds. He was so sick he allowed the veterinarians to inject him with medications to increase his appetite and decrease nausea and fluids to keep him hydrated.

His keepers tried every kind of meat you could imagine to get him interested in eating again. King Tut spent several weeks under intensive care in our onsite Cat Hospital.

Suddenly he turned the corner. King Tut began eating small meals and drinking on his own.
As the steroids started to do their job his shaking went away all together and he seemed much more comfortable.

Once he was back to normal King Tut was returned to his outdoor enclosure. He will remain on steroids indefinitely and will be monitored closely by the vet team.

We are so grateful for each and every one of you who donate towards the care of these great cats. Without your help we would not be able to provide them with such excellent veterinary care. King Tut definitely thanks you!

JOSEPH’S LION EYES

Joseph is probably one of the grumpiest cats here at the sanctuary. He has a right to be. He was rescued along with 3 others from a facility that chained and drugged their big cats so the public could pet them. Enduring a lifetime of being forced to do something you do not want to is bound to make anyone grumpy.

Needless to say when he had to be sedated for eye surgery the keepers were not looking forward to his reaction. It took two people to dart Joseph, one to distract and another to deploy the dart. Joseph roared in retaliation. It was over in seconds, but Joseph will unfortunately remember it forever.

Meanwhile, Dr. Wynn and Dr. Boorstein drew blood, collected samples, and monitored his anesthesia.

Post surgery Joseph required eye drops several times a day for 5 weeks. Surprisingly he was a compliant patient and allowed his keepers to do this as long as there were treats involved. His eye has healed well and he will still have vision in it, although it will be farsighted.

Joseph’s right eye had developed a luxated lens. This means the lens which is responsible for focusing and is suspended just behind the pupil becomes detached and floats into the front of the eye. Dr. Tammy Miller Michau (eye specialist) and her team carefully removed the lens.