

Cat Tales

Volume 16

Winter 2003

CALIFORNIA LEOPARDS

As our last newsletter was going to press we were asked to help with a horrible situation in California. We hurriedly printed an insert briefly describing the conditions.

REVIEW

On April 22 California Fish and Game agents raided the home of John Weinhart and Marla Smith (operating a so called sanctuary) and found:

- 30 dead tigers and other big cats scattered around the property in various stages of decomposition
- 61 dead cubs in a freezer
- 13 live tiger and leopard cubs in an attic, dehydrated, malnourished and near death
- 2 alligators in a bathtub
- A young tiger tethered on the patio
- Their 8-year old son living with rotting food, dead cubs, animal tranquilizers and hypodermic needles, mounds of trash and animal feces in all rooms

There were 63 charges filed against them, including 17 felony counts stemming from allegations of child endangerment and animal cruelty. Monday, July 21 a judge issued the order to remove the animals.

ARRIVAL

We agreed to take nine of the adult leopards from this facility. Veterinarians determined that one of the leopards was too ill to make the trip and was euthanized. Arrangements were made to transport the remaining eight and their journey half way across the country began. They arrived here on August 2 at 3:00 A.M. Six were unloaded and transferred to their new enclosure. Two were put into isolation case, one because of his critical condition and one because she

looked as if she would deliver cubs at any moment.

BEAR

(The only male and in the worst condition)

Our first look at the cats told the story of long term neglect and/or abuse. That coupled with the stress of a long drive had taken its toll on their health. Every cat was in horrible condition – Bear, a large black leopard, was the worst. He was totally non responsive, dehydrated, near death. Our veterinarian evaluated him and immediate around the clock care began. For several days he was given liters of IV fluids administered without anesthesia (he was too weak to care).



Bear shortly after arrival

Two weeks after arrival and greatly improved he was taken to the University of Illinois Veterinary School to get an evaluation of his general health and broken teeth. He was sent home to get healthier. The Doctors felt it would be a great risk to his life to anesthetize him. He was brought home nursed for three more weeks when he was again taken for evaluation. This time he was anesthetized and several rotted and broken teeth were removed. Since then he has made tremendous progress. He was later neutered by Dr. Froderman

and after appropriate time reunited with the seven females that arrived with him. He still has more dental work to be done, but the worst is taken care of and he is not in pain.



A healthier Bear

THE GIRLS

The seven girls were not as ill as Bear although they have a wide range of problems needing to be addressed. They were all underweight, two of the girls seem very fragile one with a deformed spine, dental problems exist in most of them, two of them have possible cataracts, and torn ears from old injuries is common. Their medical needs continue to be addressed. We are hoping to be able to do most of the dental work in our new clinic. Spaying the females has been put on hold at the request of the California District Attorney pending the result of Weinheart's criminal trial.



One of the spotted females

Three of them came to us pregnant. One delivered less than 24 hours after arriving – we could not save her cub. Two others, Brumby (black male) and Taaka (spotted female) were born one week later. Their condition was very fragile and their mother refused to care for them. They survived and have become quite ram-

bunctious. Then three weeks after that the leopard we thought would deliver first and put in isolation delivered two spotted female cubs (Suzie and Kemmra). She cared for them for three weeks before we had to pull them.

CATS NEEDING PERMANENT AREAS

While we find it hard to say no to cats in need we turn down probably 40 for every one that we take. One of the limiting factors is an enclosure – even temporary – for us to house the cat. We have several animals currently needing larger permanent area. We have the land (110 acres). We need the funding for materials and labor. Enclosure costs include dozer work, water, and electricity to the area.

We have erected plaques in front of cages funded by individuals. We are wanting to pursue this even further by honoring corporations or individuals who donate \$10,000 or more toward cage construction.

We are currently working on the Munchkin enclosure. We need about \$20,000 to complete this including water and electricity.

NEEDED ENCLOSURES

• Madyson (African Serval)	\$ 5,000
• Achia (Cougar)	\$15,000
• Tasha (Cougar)	\$15,000
• Pesha (Cougar)	\$15,000
• Autum (Cougar)	\$15,000
• Munchkins (3 lions/4 tigers)	\$25,000
• Tony (Tiger)	\$15,000
• Jagger (Tiger)	\$15,000
• Anna and friends (4 tigers)	\$25,000
• Leopard babies	\$15,000

DIRECTIONS:

FROM I-70:

4 1/2 miles south of I-70, exit 23 (Brazil/Linton) on State Road 59. Turn left at the Ashboro Church and go 2 1/2 miles east on Ashboro Road.

FROM BLOOMINGTON:

Take State Road 46 west about 35 miles. Three miles past Bowling Green turn right onto 200 E. Go 1/2 mile and turn right onto Ashboro Road.

Clinic

We plan to do our first procedure in the new clinic within 10 days. Dr. Froderman is working on final preparation of the anesthesia machine so we can spay Elsa, a lioness. While we are still in need of many things and more updated equipment we are pleased to be able to begin procedures on site to provide much needed care of these deserving cats. David Black of Williams Realty and David Snapp of Union Hospital have arranged for the center to acquire a used anesthesia machine, autoclave and other medical and clinical equipment.

Guest Quarters

Come stay and the EFRC. Listen to lions roar, coyotes howl, look for wild turkeys and deer. Experience the center after hours.

The guest quarters accommodate two adults (no children or pets allowed for overnight stays). The room has a private entrance, bath, microwave, refrigerator, coffee pot and includes two all day passes to the center where you will see cats not normally on display and have after hours access.

We have started to rent the guest quarters. Several people have stayed with us – all wanting to return. This makes a nice get away for you or gift for someone special. Call now for reservations. All proceeds from the room goes directly to the support of the center.

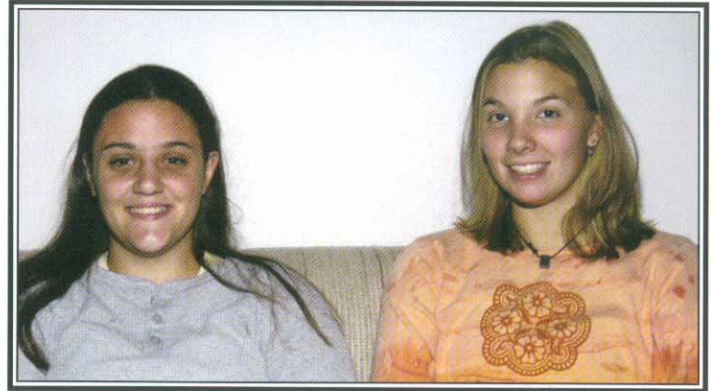


View from guest quarters

We want to assure all of our supporters that we do not share our mailing list including sponsorship and membership information with any other organizations.

NEW STAFF

We are proud to introduce two new full time staff members, Karen Philips and Kathryn Korona. Both are recent graduates from Oswego University with majors in zoology. Karen did an internship at Carnivore Preservation Trust and Kathryn gained experience working at the Buffalo Zoo. Working full time with big cats fulfills life long goals.



Kathryn Korona and Karen Philips

THANK YOU

We want to thank everyone who has given time, material, and money to help care for these deserving cats. Without your help it would not be possible.

A special thank you goes to:

Volunteers Carrie Kanehl, Jennifer Hall, and Cathy Criss for their combined fundraising efforts in November raising about \$4,500. We had a booth at the Indianapolis Gift and Hobby Show and hosted our first annual Fall Fundraiser here at the center. The fall fundraiser included a tour of the facility and a bonfire/weenie roast (see photos on our website). The event was well attended and we hope to do similar activities in the future. Watch our website for announcements.

Our staff of employees and volunteers wish everyone a happy holiday season & new year.