

Feline Conservation Federation

January/February 2013 ~ Volume 57, Issue 1





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## JOIN THE FCF IN ITS CONSERVATION EFFORTS

A membership to the FCF entitles you to six issues of the *Journal*, the back-issue DVD, an invitation to FCF husbandry and wildlife education courses and annual convention, and participation in our online discussion group. The FCF works to improve captive feline husbandry and conservation. The FCF supports captive and wild habitat protection, and provides support for captive husbandry, breeding programs, and public education. Send \$35 annual dues (\$40 Canada, \$50 international) to FCF, 141 Polk Road 664, Mena, AR 71953.

[WWW.FELINECONSERVATION.ORG](http://WWW.FELINECONSERVATION.ORG)

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The Feline Conservation Federation publishes the *Journal* bimonthly. The FCF is non-profit, (Federal ID#59-2048618) noncommercial, and international in membership, devoted to the welfare and conservation of exotic felines.

The *Journal* publishes articles on exotic feline conservation and husbandry, management, and regulatory and legislative issues affecting ownership for our members. The author's point of view does not necessarily represent the point of view of the organization. Reproduction of any material in the *Journal* may not be made without the written permission of the original copyright owners and/or copyright owner, FCF.

Letters to the editor and guest editorials are also published.

Display advertisement space is available at the following prices: \$10 business card, \$25.00 quarter page, \$50.00 half page, and \$100 full-page ad.

Submission deadline for articles and advertisements is the 10th of even numbered months. Please submit high resolution photos and articles to the *Journal* Managing Editor. Photos and articles may be emailed to

[lynnculver@hughes.net](mailto:lynnculver@hughes.net), or send by postal service to: 141 Polk 664, Mena, AR 71953.



## Letter from the President

The FCF board just finished our first quarter board meeting. There were a lot of very important items to take care of and this board accomplished it. It is nice to have an active board again. I do believe that the FCF has the right people now to move the organization forward and get us back on a track where everyone can benefit from being a member.

We did repeal the by-law that required all members of the board to be professional members, as well as redefine what constitutes a professional member. This Journal issue contains an important article beginning on page 33, which explains the changes and additions and publishes the amended Professional Membership Policy. In “reinventing” ourselves, we also approved a new mission statement and registered handler policy. You can find these on the FCF website, and the entire minutes of this important first meeting of the 2013 Board of Directors will be published in the next *Journal*.

Since there was not a third director on the ballot in the recent election, we started out the year short that one position. I am proud to announce that Jim Sanderson has been appointed to that position. Welcome aboard, Jim.

We made appointments to chair various committees. These committees are the backbone of the FCF. All of the committee chairs now need to fill out their committees. Please contact the chair or me if you are interested in helping out. Director of Legislation- Amy Flory, Director of Conservation- Pat Callahan, Director of Education- Debi Willoughby, Director of Public Relations- Brande Redfield, Director of Marketing- Kurt Beckelman, Director of Development- Erin Patters, Director of Member Services- Jennifer Kasserman, Wildcat Safety Net Chair- Caroline Alexander, Convention Committee Chair- Bobby Bean, FUR Team Chair- Diane Mask, FCF Journal editor- Lynn Culver. Kurt Beckelman will be in charge of ads for the classified ads on the members-only section of the FCF webpage.

There were two commit-

tees that we did not fill because of the redefining process at this time. Those are the Facility Accreditation Committee and the Professional Member Review Committee. If you are interested in being on these committees, please contact me, now that we do have the new definitions in place.

A \$2,000 Conservation Grant was awarded to Amy Dickman, for Wild Cat Research and Conservation in Tanzania's Ruaha Landscape. FCF members first learned about the Ruaha in an article written by Cathryn Hilker, published in the September 2011 *Journal*. Cathryn relayed her first-hand account of visiting Amy and the horrendous new threat to lions – deliberate poisoning! Then, Amy Dickman wrote more for the FCF in the July 2012 *Journal*. To refresh your memory, the Ruaha landscape in central Tanzania is a vast and largely unexplored wilderness, which is globally important for wildlife, particularly big cats. It is thought to hold around a tenth of the world's remaining lions and is one of only four places in East Africa still thought to support at least 200 cheetahs. In addition, it has globally important populations of leopards and smaller cats, as well as the third biggest population of endangered African wild dogs in the world. The Ruaha Carnivore Project has been developing programs both to provide baseline data on Ruaha's wild cats and to mitigate the serious

human-carnivore conflict that exists in the landscape. The FCF is proud to support this important conservation effort.

The board of directors approved a donation of \$1,000 to the Ohio Animal Owners Association, to financially help them with their appeal lawsuit against the state of Ohio. They are taking an unprecedented move in order to combat unneeded and restrictive legislation that passed in Ohio, as a knee jerk reaction to the Zanesville incident. We feel that OAAO's actions represent a precedence that could be used in other states. That is why we are so supportive of the endeavor. The big drawback is that this is costing tens of thousands of dollars. Last I heard, they still needed around \$30,000. The board also allocated an additional \$1,500 to match donations made by FCF members. I'd like to encourage everyone to make a donation, even if it is just five dollars. The FCF will double that amount, and hopefully we can send OAAO a check for \$5,000. Please make checks out to “FCF” and mail them to our treasurer, Lynn Culver (address is on page three of the *Journal*). You may also use the FCF website “Support Us” page to send a donation by PayPal; just remember to make a note that it is a donation for OAAO. Lynn can also accept credit cards if you'd just like to call her with the information.

Kevin Chambers

### FCF 2013-2014 Board of Directors Election Results

Provided by Hood & Associates, CPAs, P.C., Tulsa, Oklahoma

Eighty-eight eligible ballots were received by December 10, 2012, and counted using the BORDA count method. For this election, the officers on the ballot received one point for each ballot received whether the voter had made a selection or not. The directors on the ballot received two points for every 1st Choice vote cast and one point for each 2nd Choice on a ballot. If the member did not make a choice for a specific director, that director received one point also.

The results of the election are shown in the table below.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>1st Choice</u>	<u>2nd Choice</u>	<u>No Votes</u>	<u>Total Points Received</u>
President	Kevin Chambers	88	N/A	0	88
Vice President	Mindy Stinner	88	N/A	0	88
Secretary	Debi Willoughby	88	N/A	0	88
Treasurer	Lynn Culver	88	N/A	0	88
Director	Pat Callahan	60	17	11	148
Director	Chris Tromborg	30	38	20	118

Based on our count of eligible ballots and information from the Federation indicating the officer positions were uncontested and that there were two directors to fill three positions, all individuals listed on the ballots won their respective positions.



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## From the Executive Director

By Lynn Culver

There's a lot to report going on in the FCF and I'll start with myself. Last year, I believed that this issue would contain my final Executive Director report, as my contract ended on January 31, 2013. I am now doing the bookkeeping and banking for the FCF as its elected treasurer, an all-volunteer position. However, this organization needs someone to take daily responsibility for operations and oversight of our many programs and events. The board of directors, all volunteers, will have their hands full just concentrating on policies, leadership, and guidance.

I have proposed a modified contract for the next ten months and the board has approved by consensus to hire me to act as the FCF Executive Director. This year, I intend to spend more time training FCF members to perform website and office work, and less time doing it myself. The only way we can move forward is to have more people trained and ready to be the next generation for the FCF organization.

The first quarter board meeting resulted in some big developments. First off, the Wildcat Safety Net Committee approved two grants to help tigers in need and is now launching a Matching Fund Challenge to further help cover the costs of moving Riverglenn tigers from Mountainburg, Arkansas, to Turpentine Creek in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. Thirty tigers, two leopards, and two puma were living at Betty Young's facility when health issues forced her to ask Turpentine Creek to take them. In the last Journal, we read Della Jacot's account of moving two tigers and two leopards from Riverglenn to Cedar Cove Sanctuary. This issue, starting on page 26, I reported on my visit to Turpentine Creek to see the facility and accommodations being constructed for Riverglenn tigers. Avoiding a national tragedy is in the best interest of everyone and our big cats. A contribution to the FCF Safety Net is your way of saying you agree with this need, that you support FCF efforts, and that you are willing to help out. Please join me by donating to the Safety Net now. The "Support Us" page on the FCF website makes it easy to donate with PayPal.

The FCF has been talking about feline registries and genetic testing for a while. And going from concept to implementa-

tion is a slow process. While a computer software program is being finished up and readied for use, we have incredible news of a DNA fingerprinting effort underway for the Geoffroy's cat. This is the perfect species to begin with. There is a studbook in existence, and many, but not all, pedigrees are known. By fingerprinting the population, we can discover relatedness and rareness within the population. We will be able to fill the gaps in our knowledge and make recommendations to the breeders and holders of this species. Be sure to read Len Davidson's article starting on page 7 of this Journal.

This year is another legislative session and it's no different than in years past. We have animal rights bills or, more accurately, Humane Society bills being introduced in several states. Texas HB 1015 would make it illegal for anyone to acquire big cats in municipalities or counties with populations of 75,000 or more. There is an exemption however; get accredited by the Humane Society's Global Federation of Sanctuaries. Michigan has reintroduced a bill to extend the allowable age of public contact with baby bears. SB 48 keeps the public contact age for baby cats at 20 weeks, but amends the age for baby bear public contact to 36 weeks. Last year, this bill also contained language that eliminated the exemption that allowed USDA Class C exhibitors to even possess large cats and replaced it with an exemption for ZAA accredited facilities. We will need to watch this bill to see that it doesn't go that same route again. Indiana SB 477 would remove the exemption for USDA-licensed facilities to be regulated by the Division of Fish and Wildlife. If this bill passes, then state caging regulations would apply to hundreds of felines. All open-topped compounds would need recurves, and 2 x 4 welded wire panels would have openings that did not meet the state standards. Lions would need access to shelter that provided temperatures of above 45 degrees. It's one thing to build to that code; it's quite another to build to USDA standards and suddenly be forced to change everything. And speaking of changing everything, Ohio is a truly scary situation. The Department of Agriculture, tasked with writing regulations to implement the new state ban law, arbitrarily added bobcats to the list of species

deemed "dangerous." And cage regulations being finalized want 9-gauge wire for serval, caracal, and lynx. They want 6-foot deep dig barriers for big cats. Six feet! You would think that the Zanesville animals dug out, not were let out, based on this unfounded fear that cats will tunnel to freedom. And finally, I will end with some good news. . . In Oklahoma, SB 178 has been introduced and is working its way through the system. FCF member Kurt Beckelman has been working with his senator, Kim David, to get a bill introduced that would place exotic cats under the regulation of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture. Titled "The Responsible Exotic Cat Owners Act," right off the starting block you know this is a different kind of bill. SB 178 is a bill to regulate private owners, and it exempts USDA-licensed facilities. But even if it did not exempt them, the regulations are reasonable and affordable. By requiring permits that are obtainable, you institutionalize a path to legal ownership and protect that freedom we cherish.

Plans are underway for this year's Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, June 6 to 9. The Basic Wild Feline Husbandry Course and Wildlife Conservation Educator's course will be taught on Wednesday, June 6th. The Convention coincides with the annual Country Music Festival, and hotels are hard to come by. Make your reservation early, because when our room block is sold out, it will be difficult to find lodging anywhere. Nashville is a great family town, with plenty to do before or after convention, so make this a family vacation and spend the week. See you there!





# Geoffroy's Cat Breeders Invited to Participate in Ground Breaking Research

By J. Len Davidson

I am J. Len Davidson, a past breeder of *Leopardus geoffroyi*, otherwise known as Geoffroy's cat. I have 13 years of experience rearing and maintaining as many as 35 Geoffroy's cats over a period of 13 years. I did not raise them for the money; rather, I raised them to understand them. I hold a bachelor's degree in anthropology and a master's degree in education and have taught biology, chemistry, and physical science for ten years. Currently I am in school again to obtain a degree in biotechnology. My hope is to contribute a meaningful study that will benefit *L. geoffroyi* owners and lay the foundation for a successful conservation program for *L. geoffroyi*.

In the 1990s, when I held a Geoffroy's cat colony, I worked with a variety of entities such as the Smithsonian Institution, Cincinnati Zoo, National Cancer Institute, and the Department of Clinical Science at Washington State University. At the Washington State University, Department of Clinical Sciences, I participated in a study that used *L. geoffroyi* as a model animal to continue research on finding a cure for Tay-Sachs's disease. No animal was harmed in this study. And I provided DNA samples for Dr. Warren Johnson at the National Cancer Institute in Washington D.C., to determine if subspecies for *L. geoffroyi* exist, and it found no distinct subspecies within the sample population studied.

I became interested in seasonal reproductive studies and worked with the Cincinnati Zoo and the Smithsonian Institution to better understand the breeding cycle and hormone levels for optimal breeding of this species. Fecal hormone levels were measured to determine the seasonal reproductivity, and gonadotropin was administered to facilitate the release of eggs for artificial insemination (AI) fertilization with wild-caught sperm samples from South America. Moreover, sperm samples were collected to determine the viability of the sperm and to cryopreserve one sperm

sample. We used light timing according to the time zones for South America and had great success breeding Geoffroy's cats in captivity. While some breeders have never experienced a problem breeding Geoffroy's cats, others have. Dr. William Swanson of the Cincinnati Zoo has tried AI (artificial insemination) on some of my Geoffroy's cats without success. However, over the years, the technology has improved greatly. I still have frozen Geoffroy's sperm held at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. We are anxious to try to use that sperm to expand the gene pool. On occasion, Dr. Swanson visited South America and obtained wild-caught Geoffroy's sperm. This is what we used for his first AI attempts. He is there again now. I do not know if he will be able to obtain additional sperm for artificial insemination efforts. Due to its classification as a CITES Appendix I species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will require that importations be for enhancement of the species and that requires a recognized breeding program tied to wild population protection. The FCF should work toward developing its own breeding/management plan that utilizes both DNA and studbook records, and I am excited to offer the DNA research and findings for such use.

Over the years, I have developed a great appreciation for and understanding of the Geoffroy's cat. Even though I currently do not own a Geoffroy's cat, I still want to make a contribution for the benefit of this species. I still can with your



**Spirit the Geoffroy's cat is neutered, but he is still a source of valuable genetic information when his DNA is analyzed as part of a national DNA fingerprinting study to determine the relatedness among the cats we have.**

help. Together, we can do something great! I urge members to come together and forget any differences you may have with other breeders. We all stand to gain in the end.

Today, I am a biotechnology student, studying genetics, bioinformatics, and laboratory protocol. I will graduate this May. I want to use my resources and time to generate a study for this species. If we are to preserve Geoffroy's cats, we must work together for the common good of the cats. As many readers know, the Geoffroy's cat has a limited gene pool in the United States. The banning of imports further complicates conservation efforts. Moreover, it is not known if any breeders have experienced any harmful mutations. If so, I would need to know this. In order to prevent any harmful mutations in the future, I would like to conduct a DNA fingerprinting study in order to determine the relatedness among the cats we have. This means that everyone who has information about other breeders or experience with Geoffroy's cats is urged to participate.

*An example of how increasing genetic diversity can improve captive management of limited gene pools*

Back in the 1980s, I worked with a breed of cat known as



**With a large group of spotted Geoffroy's cats, it make take DNA to tell them apart someday!**

the Egyptian Mau. This breed had a severe limitation of its gene pool. We saw such terrible mutations as lethal cardiomyopathy, abdominal hernias, skin allergies, and respiratory problems, digestive disorders, etc. In order to save this breed, it required obtaining Mau cats from Egypt, to replenish the gene pool. Genetic diversity is key to the survival of any species. So, I set about obtaining cats from Egypt. I succeeded in importing several cats from Egypt, and began a breeding program to strengthen the gene pool. Today, this breed is healthy with no harmful mutations. I accomplished this with money from my own pocket. Again, I did not take on this challenge for money, but rather for the love of the cats. We can accomplish the same effort with the Geoffroy's cat, if we work together.

*Unraveling the genetic diversity of Geoffroy's cats held in U.S. facilities*

What I propose is to test the DNA of all Geoffroy's cats from which I can obtain samples. This would require a simple cheek swab from a kit that I would provide. The swab can be mailed directly to me to process via DNA fingerprinting. This requires an electrophoresis process in which I will look at genetic markers to determine relatedness. We can compare these results with the known pedigree to see how much genetic diversity we have in the population. Participants in this study would be provided with the results. This is a real opportunity, since regular DNA testing can be quite expensive. It will take several weeks to obtain the final results. I am asking for the FCF's help to obtain the cheek swab samples. This will be a win-win situation for breeders and their cats.

I would greatly appreciate hearing from readers and will respond to any questions you may have. Nothing would delight me more than getting to know other individuals who possess Geoffroy's cats.

## Cheek Swab Sample Collection Instructions

Holders of Geoffroy's cats need to call Len Davidson at 330-209-9019 to request a collection kit for each cat being sampled. It is imperative that collectors follow the collection instructions accurately in order to obtain a more meaningful study and to avoid contamination with other sources of DNA. Obviously, for the safety of the handler, collection will most likely be limited to sub adults or tame felines. Non-handleable felines can be sampled while sedated, when another veterinary procedure is being performed. While it is understood that obtaining DNA samples from wild animals can be challenging, do the best possible collection and note any difficulties encountered on the index card.

This procedure is to be used by breeders and holders of *Leopardus geoffroyi*. There are no volatile components in the cheek swab kit, and it is safe to use by the general public. Collectors should use caution so as not to become bitten by the animal before or during the procedure. The product being used to collect cheek swabs is Dukal item #DKL9016:100/box.

Keeping everything sterile is crucial to obtaining a clean sample that will yield the best results.

Prior to collecting the cheek swab, wash hands thoroughly before donning disposable latex gloves to touch the index card and print the owner's name, animal's name, address, and telephone number on the index card. Include the name of the collector if a different individual collected the sample. Print clearly and place the card, along with the sample collected, into the return envelope provided. Remove the gloves only after you have finished the index card and have placed it in the separate return envelope. Remove the gloves and wash hands again, donning a new pair of disposable gloves to obtain DNA sample. Remember, this study will only be as good as the accuracy of the sampling procedure.

The animal to be sampled should not eat or drink for at least one hour before having the sample collected.

The animal should be isolated from the other animals, toys, and other possible sources of oral contamination for at least eight hours prior to collection.

Prior to collection, check the animal's mouth to ensure that no food or other material is present. If so, allow the animal to drink water and wait one more hour. Do not place your fingers in the animal's mouth. This can

contaminate your sample.

The individual collecting the sample should avoid touching the inside of the animal's mouth. Wearing disposable latex gloves will help ensure that no contamination is transmitted to the animal.

Never allow the sterile swab to touch anything except the inside of the animal's mouth or the inside of the packet it came in. Never allow contact between the swabs of different animals.

Prepare a clean surface on which to place the open swab packet and when writing on the index card.

*How to Collect the Cheek Swab Sample:*

Use one sample packet per animal.

Label each swab packet with the animal's name, mark as to male or female, the owner's last name, and the collection date.

Label the standard paper (letter size) envelope with the same information as in #2. Print clearly.

Open the swab packet at the handle end (not the collection end) and carefully peel the package away to within about one inch of the end. Do not touch the collection tip of the swab.

Do not allow the tip of the swab to touch anything other than the inside of the animal's mouth and the inside of the packaging to be returned for processing.

While holding the end of the swab, insert the tip along the inside of the animal's cheek. Rotate the collection tip along the inside of the cheek for about 20 seconds. Pushing on the outside of animal's cheek while rotating the swab will firmly press it between the gum and the cheek, which will enhance the cell collection.

Hold the swab while it air-dries for about 15 seconds. Do not blow on the swab.

Reinsert the tip of the swab into the closed end of the package. Put the swab directly into the labeled container used for the return of the sample.

Place the packaged swab into the labeled envelope (not a plastic bag).

Send the sample and completed information to: J. Len Davidson, 6600 Palmer Drive, Canton, Ohio 44718.

Call 330-209-9019 if you have any questions. Samples will be processed in the Genetics' Laboratory at Stark State College of Technology's Biotechnology Department, under the direction of Dr. Beth Albrect, Genetics Professor. Individual contributors of the samples will be notified of the results.



# Six Tigers Rehomed from Wisconsin to Florida, Safety Net Helps

By Kim Kyle

The Catty Shack Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary is a 501(c)3 nonprofit big cat rescue in Jacksonville, Florida. Curt LoGiudice is the Executive Director of this all-volunteer facility, which he founded in 1985.

Catty Shack began exhibiting to the public nine years ago, and it does educational school tours during the week and is open for tours on weekends. Catty Shack is proud to be listed as the top tourist destination in Jacksonville, according to Tripadvisor. We are blessed to have the support of our community and neighbors. One of the many ways we raise funds to operate the sanctuary is with a thrift store, where all proceeds benefit our animals. We currently care for 46 big cats, including three lions, eight cougars, five leopards, 26 tigers, and a pair of bobcats.

We received a call from a gentleman in the FCF, which we are members of, back in October of last year, about Lakewood Zoo closing. Casey Ludwig opened his zoo in 2007. Each year attendance increased, but in May 2011, the zoo faced serious challenges when the Wisconsin State Department of Natural Resources discovered that the zoo's captive wild animal license had been expired since 2008. The DNR issued eight citations of possessing a live captive animal without a license. Even though by the end of the



**“Blue”, “Pink” and “Red”, temporarily named until winning names are chosen, have permanent homes at Catty Shack. Pictured here they are enjoying their morning bottle, then it will be time for roughhousing in the playground, and sliding and swimming in the pool.**

year Casey did eventually regain his state wildlife license, he had inadvertently let his federal USDA exhibitor license lapse. Without the federal license, the county officials revoked his conditional use permit for the property. Eventually, Casey decided to close the zoo and place out the animals. He asked if we could possibly help them with it.

After discussing all our options with the Board of Directors, we decided we could make more room and help them out. We receive many calls for help, and as hard as it is to say no, our policy is that we do not compromise the animals that we have already committed to care for to make room for new rehomes/rescues. We make sure we have the funds, enclosure space, food

resources, and sufficient help before taking in new animals.

Casey, the owner of the zoo, made a visit in late October, to make sure Catty Shack was where he wanted his three 17-month-old female tigers, Runty, Star, and Sprout, to reside. He also had three six-week-old tiger cubs, one female and two males, that he decided to place at Catty Shack as well. So the adventure began.

Curt and John, two of our long-time volunteers, left Sunday, January 13, 2013, at 3:00am. The trip was close to 3,000 miles, almost to the Canadian border. They drove straight to their destination, stopping only to repair a broken valve stem and to get four hours of sleep in a motel. When they arrived in Wisconsin, it was only five degrees. They actually had to heat the keys to get the locks open on the enclosures. After almost six hours of patient coaxing, the three bigger girls finally loaded on the 20-foot cargo trailer. The babies rode in the cab of the truck with the heater and bottles every four hours.

Back on the road, the trip home included only stops for gas, which was quite frequently, and to get another flat tire



**Kurt and Jim have driven a truck and enclosed trailer 1,500 miles north from sunny Florida, to Lakewood Zoo in upstate Wisconsin, where they find the ground covered in snow and temperatures well below freezing.**





**Curt LoGiudice looks like a cat burglar, bundled up in coat, beanie with face mask, and gloves preparing to load six tigers for their journey to their new home at Catty Shack .**



**Runty, the older female white tiger, checks out an ever-green tree enrichment toy in her new home.**

replaced. They arrived in Jacksonville, Florida, safe and sound on Wednesday, January 15, 2013, at around 5:00pm.

The bigger “fluffy” girls, as we nicknamed them, are adjusting well to their new forever home and the warmer weather. Their thick protective Wisconsin fur is beginning to shed in response to our much

milder winter temperatures. They will all be well loved and well cared for!

All of Catty Shack’s tiger and lion enclosures are designed as open-topped areas measuring 60x80 feet. Wall height for our enclosures has always been 16 feet. When the USDA started enforcing their new policy on fence heights for big cats, we did not have to change anything. We only use galvanized steel and 9-gauge fencing. Each enclosure has its own lockdown to safely secure the cats

while their habitats are cleaned or maintenance is performed. We use lick-its instead of water bowls, so fresh, clean water is always available for them! We will have to build a new enclosure for the new babies, and it will run approximately \$10,000 to \$12,000 for fencing, Kitty Kabins, and platforms.

We wish to thank the FCF Wildcat Safety Net for helping us give these tigers a new life at Catty Shack by approving a \$1,000 grant to cover most of the fuel expenses to drive the round trip from Florida to Wisconsin.



**“Blue” gets his weight recorded for his health chart.**



**Two of the three older females. Star plays with her ball while Runty takes a rest.**



## Fishing Cats at Kapi'yva Exotics

By Justin Dildy

The fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) weighs roughly 30 pounds and stands about 17 inches in height. It is one of the boldest predators among smaller Asian cats, possessing unbelievable audacity, swiftness in action, and predilection for impenetrable swamps, making it a very much feared nocturnal raider.

The male fishing cat is slightly larger than the female and remarkably powerful. Stout, short front legs and an unusually thick neck enable it to carry prey twice its own size through difficult terrain. The coat is somewhat dull. Small, solid brown or black spots are muted against the steel gray background, which is sometimes tinged with rufous brown. The most conspicuous feature of the species is the peculiarly elongated head, which strikes even the attention of the layman. The range of the species is erratically established. Extending eastward from India (where its population inexplicably occurs only in the Southwest coast and Northwest provinces, 900 miles apart) its present distribution includes mountainous Nepal and Bhutan, East Pakistan, Assam, South China, Burma, and Thailand. Habitat conversion to create fish and shrimp farms creates a serious threat to the survival of this specialized feline.

Here at Kapi'yva Exotics, we have been working with fishing cats for a little over a year now. I began this program with the goal of working with the Felid TAG/AZA SSP, as well as creating a fishing cat population in private U.S. facilities. Outside of the current AZA population, this rare species is next to non-existent in the United States; at last count, there were a total of five private facilities currently housing them, and only two successfully breeding them, including us.

Over the last year, I have grown very fond of them, although parent-raised breeders are notably more aggressive than other lesser felines I have worked with. They also have very unique and outgoing

personalities. Their temperaments and behaviors are generally compared to that of the clouded leopard. Their husbandry requirements are similar to that of other lesser felines. They are predominantly a terrestrial cat, capable of climbing, but not incredibly agile, and they can be somewhat clumsy negotiating branches off the ground. They are very fond of water, especially on hot days. The most notable difference between them

and other felines is diet. Last year, Felid TAG released new diet recommendations for fishing cats, which included 75% whole fish along with a small amount of mammalian whole prey and minimal vitamin/mineral supplements (thiamine and vitamin E only). We currently follow these diet guidelines. Growing health concerns prompted this change, most notably the high prevalence of bladder cancer in the AZA fishing cat population thought to potentially be caused by the previous diet recommendations, which



**Dot, one of five female fishing cats in the Kapi'yva Exotics breeding program.**

contained large amounts of poultry with multi-vitamin/multi-mineral supplements, much like those of other wild felids.

Our first two unrelated cats were surplus from the European AZA program and imported from two Czech zoos in December of 2011. Soon after, two more females were moved to our facility on breeding loan from T.I.G.E.R.S. in Myrtle Beach, SC. A few months later, we acquired another two females and an adult male, all originating from EAZA zoos in Belgium, Germany, and the Czech Republic. In

recent months, we have added one young female on breeding loan from a fellow ZAA-accredited facility, the Exotic Feline Breeding Center. The International Studbook Coordinator recommended this pairing. This brings our current breeding program total to eight fishing cats, two males and six females, all 100% pedigreed and listed in the international studbook.

The first successful fishing cat birth at our facility was a male kitten, who is now seven months old. He was left with mom for three days and then pulled to be bottle-raised. Compared to hand-rearing



**Female cub born to Fifi, being hand reared for a future as educational ambassador and founding stock for a breeding program at Carson Springs Wildlife Center.**



other wild felids I have worked with, the first few months of his life was difficult to say the least. To put things bluntly, he likes to eat things that he should not, and, unfortunately, this behavior, along with what we think was intestinal scarring caused by severe lactose intolerance, led to a blockage of his intestines that required exploratory surgery. During his surgery, it became obvious that the scarring had caused a stricture on his ileum, at the top of his large intestine. This narrowing of the intestine most likely caused the blockage. Even though he is now thriving and growing like a weed, he cannot have anything that he can't fully digest, such as whole prey with fur or a lot of bone. He has to be in an appropriate enclosure and have toys that are chew-proof, as well as this special diet. Currently, we have him on three different species of whole fish, ground chicken and turkey, and an occasional pinky mouse. Canned pumpkin and mineral oil are used periodically to keep everything firm and moving smoothly. Unfortunately, this will likely be a permanent condition unless he has surgery to remove the stricture. At this point, my facility vet has opted not to risk another surgery, as he seems totally healthy in every other way, including blood work, and testing on him has been totally normal.

The last litter we had consisted of one female cub, born in December. Using the unique knowledge we obtained raising our first boy, our hand-rearing techniques seem to work very well now. The most significant and beneficial thing we learned was that these hand-reared fishing cats cannot tolerate lactose in their formula; this may or may not be due to the unique genetic makeup of my specific breeding program. I cannot find any other facilities that have had similar experiences, but all of the cubs in the AZA and private populations have been parent reared 99.9% of the time. Therefore, adequate comparative research just does not exist at this point. We add a substantial amount of lactase enzyme to all fishing cat formula now and this serves to almost fully pre-digest the lactose it contains.

We will be sending the little girl we



**Devi, another of the female fishing cats at Kapi'yva Exotics, takes a drink.**

currently have, along with an unrelated male cub from a future litter, to Carson Springs Wildlife Conservation Foundation as a hopeful founder to a new fishing cat program. The parents of these cubs will all be studbook cats, but these bloodlines are already very well represented in the U.S. AZA population. Because of this, they are not needed for the Felid TAG breeding program, but are still very valu-

able as breeding stock for private wildlife exhibitors and educators. Right now, the AZA has a virtual monopoly on the exhibition of this interesting, little known species and rarely utilizes hand-reared fishing cats in outreach education, although the Cincinnati Zoo does have a single performing fishing cat. With our breeding program now stabilized and all cats introduced in compatible pairs/groups, we should have cubs from several future litters available to both public and private facilities. Most of our other females have cycled again and should be pregnant now.

For any licensed facilities interested in exhibition of this rare species, we do currently

have a pair of adult sisters available, born in 2005. They will be excellent display animals; both are very mellow and outgoing. Although still reproductively viable, we have not been successful breeding either of them and have recently been advised against pairing them with either of our males by the studbook coordinator due to genetic similarities.



**Another photo of Devi, an adult fishing cat, shows off her distinctive black spotting, dark, head striping, and a beautiful face.**



## Two New Final Rules Affecting USDA-Licensed Facilities

By Lynn Culver

On Dec. 28, 2012, APHIS published a final rule requiring all dealers, exhibitors, intermediate handlers, carriers, research facilities, and other entities regulated by the agency under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) to take additional steps to be better prepared for potential disaster situations. Facilities must develop plans that respond to and recover from emergencies most likely to happen, as well as train their employees on those plans.

Plans for common emergencies such as animal escape, medical emergency of animal or human, and specific weather related emergencies including tornado, hurricane, flooding, or wildfire should outline specific tasks that the facility staff will undertake in an emergency situation; establish a clear chain of command for all employees to follow; and identify materials and resources for use during an emergency that are available at that facility or elsewhere and affirm that all employees are trained on the contents of the plan.

Plans are not required to be sent to APHIS, but will be reviewed by inspec-

tors who will work with facilities on improving plans, if they identify gaps upon review of those plans.

Another new rule issued by APHIS is the Traveling Exhibitor Rule, which requires submission of itineraries by traveling exhibitors. Traveling exhibitors are those exhibitors who intend to exhibit an animal at any location other than their main facility. Under the final rule, when these animals travel away from their approved site overnight or longer, the exhibitor must provide APHIS with an itinerary no fewer than two days in advance of the trip's start.

The itinerary needs to include the name and license or registration number under the act of the person who will exhibit the animals; if any animals are leased, borrowed, loaned, or under some similar arrangement; and the name of the person who owns the animals. Also, the licensee must provide the name, identification number or identifying characteristics, species (common or scientific name), sex, and age of each animal; and the names, dates, and locations where the animals will travel, be housed, and be exhibited,

including all anticipated dates and locations for any stops and layovers.

Submit itinerary to APHIS by fax, USPS mail, or by e-mail. If submitting the information by e-mail, please place your certificate number, customer number, or business name (not all three, just one) and the word "itinerary" in the subject line of the e-mail. Use the state you are licensed in to determine your local/regional office and send your itinerary in care of the regional director.

Eastern Regional Office  
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care  
920 Main Campus Drive, Suite 200  
Raleigh, NC 27606  
Fax: 919-855-7123 or 919-855-7124  
aceast@aphis.usda.gov

Western Regional Office  
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care  
2150 Centre Ave.  
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# Wild Cat Conservation Needs: An Examination of Public Perception

By Brande Redfield

Wild cats, with their deadly grace, beauty, and mystique, have captivated humanity for generations. Since our first interactions with felids some seven million years ago, cats have been at times our adversaries, our occasional meals, and often our best friends. At present there are 37 species of cats found across the world, from the majestic and ice covered mountain slopes of Tibet to the arid deserts of Africa. Some species of cats, such as mountain lions and bobcats, can even be found in our own backyards in the United States.

Our story takes place at Cosley Zoo, a small AZA-accredited public zoo, opened in the far western Chicago suburb of Wheaton, Illinois, in 1974. Cosley's animal collection focuses upon animals native to the state of Illinois, and domestic farm animals. Over the years, their reputation for excellence in animal care and guest education has garnered a great deal of public support. With 200 animals and over 70 species represented in their collection, however, Cosley was still missing one important component: a cat species. But that was all about to change. After much planning, preparation, and the building of a beautiful new enclosure, Cosley Zoo was ready to add bobcats to its collection! In September of 2012, Cosley proudly acquired two magnificent male bobcat brothers, named Salvatore and Valentino ("Sal" & "Val"), to much fanfare and public excitement.

As a zoology graduate student focusing my thesis work on wild cats, I was delighted to be accepted as an animal care volunteer with the Cosley staff at this exciting time. One component of wild cat conservation that is of particular interest to me is the public's knowledge (or lack thereof) of small wild cat species as opposed to their larger and more "famous" large cat relatives (lion, tiger, jaguar,

leopard, snow leopard, puma, and cheetah). With this lack of knowledge comes a lack of funding for conservation efforts and a lack of public support, even though many smaller cat species desperately need our help. Most of us have heard of the plights facing tigers and amur leopards, but how many of us know how dire the situation is for fishing cats, also endangered? The public will rally behind sad stories of the poaching of lions and tigers, but tales of the Iberian lynx nearing extinction do not make headlines on the news stations. This popularity of large cats over small cats is echoed in the research realm – small cats rarely have been studied in the wild and some species not at all. It was this dynamic that I wished to examine while at Cosley, especially considering the increased local public interest in wild cats due to their new exhibit. So, with Cosley's support and assistance, I set about creating a set of surveys and observations to gauge the pub-

lic's knowledge and support of wild cat needs. I chose to examine not only the difference between their knowledge of small wild cats and large wild cats, but also their knowledge of native versus non-native cat species.

During the fall and winter of 2012, I collected data examining guest knowledge of wild cat species (small and large; native and non-native) and guest attitudes, beliefs, and actions regarding wild cat conservation. Could guests name cat species in each category? What were their thoughts on the importance of cat conservation efforts? Were they aware of any cat conservation groups? Were they actively trying to make a difference in this area? It was hypothesized that zoo-going guests would have a much greater knowledge and support of large wild cat species' conservation needs and efforts. In my own perusal of the subject matter available, it seemed clear that even though small cat species outnumber large cat species more than 2:1, very little is known about, and minimal research effort is done on behalf of, most small cat species. Large cats, however, dominate the news and images on conservation sites. These cats are very beautiful and charismatic, and children grow up knowing and loving cats such as lions and tigers. Public knowledge and support for these animals are very strong. What I did not imagine was just how true this would be!

As predicted, the general public was more aware of large cats than small, with 92.2% of guests being able to name a large cat species while only 86.4% could name a small cat species (and most of those answers as expected were "bobcat," showing that what the public did know was likely learned from Cosley's exhibit). The public was much more aware of foreign cat species than those species found in the U.S. – 100% could name a non-native cat species, but only 79.6% could name a native species. The most interesting



**Valentino pauses to take a refreshing drink from the freshwater pond in his enclosure.**



issue of all, however, was raised by the answers collected for the conservation-based questions, where 66% of respondents answered “No” when asked if they were aware of any wild cat conservation programs. And a shocking 100% of respondents answered, “I am concerned, but uncertain how to help,” when asked what their reaction to the conservation crisis is. Clearly, this demonstrates that word of mouth and marketing campaigns for wild cat conservation programs have not yet effectively reached the general public and there is a need for such education. The public claims to have a strong desire to support such programs, but simply does not know how to do so.

The goal of this study was to bring to light the public’s perceptions of the different cat species and its support for the conservation efforts of these species. The study also serves to highlight shortcomings in the current state of conservation for small cat species, and to demonstrate where we can best increase our efforts to maximize impact for the benefit of felids both small and large. So, what do the findings mean to researchers and conservationists interested in promoting awareness of small felids? There is clearly a lack of knowledge of small cat species as compared to large cats, as anticipated, but the public does desire this information. There appears to be a breakdown between the researchers and conservationists in the field and how this



**In their brand new enclosure, Sal and Val enjoy a large territory to explore, including a waterfall and a variety of cat-safe plants.**

information is then being relayed to the public. The public needs to be further connected to opportunities where they can help, and this in turn will aid in producing

ers, or word of mouth, will make a tremendous difference. If we all work together, we can make a tremendous difference for our feline friends.



**The entry-way to the bobcat habitat includes plenty of educational signage to teach guests more about these beautiful creatures.**

## Court Rules Against Exotic Animal Owners, Appeal Filed

By Lynn Culver

In the November/December 2012 FCF Journal, Polly Britton and Norma Bennett Woolf, on behalf of the Ohio Association of Animal Owners, in their article titled "Ohio Exotic Animal Owners Have Their Day in Court," noted that a lawsuit had been filed for a permanent injunction against the enforcement of the Ohio exotic animal law. On December 20, 2012, the United States District Court Southern District of Ohio Eastern Division issued a ruling in the case of Terry Wilkins, et al, v David T Daniels, et al. The Court denied Plaintiffs' Motion for Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary and Permanent Injunction. Final judgment was entered in favor of Defendants.

The issues raised by the Plaintiffs and ruled on by the Court were:

- A. First Amendment – Freedom of Association
- B. Fourteenth Amendment – Due Process
  - 1. Property Interest Implicated
  - 2. Rational Basis
- C. Fifth Amendment – Taking Without Compensation
  - 1. Invasion of Property as Taking
  - 2. Regulatory Taking
- D. Preliminary/Permanent Injunction Factors

Plaintiffs, which were exotic animal owners, initiated this case against Defendants, enforcers of the Act, seeking to enjoin enforcement of the Act voted into law by the Ohio legislature in 2012, based on the following alleged constitutional violations: (1) violation of the First Amendment right of association by compelling Plaintiffs to join and fund private organizations such as the AZA or ZAA; (2) violation of their procedural due process rights because the Act does not provide a procedure for objecting to or obtaining an exemption from microchipping their animals; and (3) the microchipping requirement is a taking without compensation in violation of the Fifth Amendment.

Plaintiffs desire to avoid seizure and retain possession of their business and animals without (1) threatening their health through microchipping them; (2) being forced to join a private organization whose views they disagree with; (3) paying to the state fees and fines that exceed the value of the animals and business.

The Court addressed each of these claims in its ruling, and below are excerpts from the Court's decision, to help FCF members understand its findings.

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution specifically provides: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." The Court ruled that the Act does not force membership in either the ZAA or the AZA. Rather, one exception to the ban on dangerous wild animals is to meet the accreditation requirements of organizations like the AZA or ZAA. In addition to this exception, there are 13 other exceptions. Just because Plaintiffs may not qualify for any of the other exemptions does not mean that the Act compels Plaintiffs to qualify for the exemption for accredited zoological organizations by joining the

AZA or the ZAA, but to join the AZA or the ZAA rather than submit to the registration of their animals. Accordingly, the Court finds that Plaintiffs have failed to establish that the Act compels speech or association in violation of Plaintiffs' First Amendment rights.

Plaintiffs argue that the Act fails to afford adequate procedural due process in accordance with the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution and Section 16, Article I of the Ohio Constitution. The Court rules that the requirements of procedural due process apply only to the deprivation of interests encompassed by the Fourteenth Amendment's protection of liberty and property. Property interests are not created by the Constitution. "Rather, they are created and their dimensions are defined by existing rules or understandings that stem from an independent source such as state law." Plaintiffs assert primarily that the requirement for microchipping and secondarily, that the sterilization of each male animal to obtain a permit, does not afford adequate due process. Defendants assert, and the Court agrees, that Plaintiffs cannot claim an "entitlement" to possession of a dangerous wild animal where the ownership of such animals is prohibited or otherwise restricted.

Plaintiffs' primary argument is that the

Act requires implantation of a microchip in each animal without any consideration that some animals may not physically be able to withstand the microchipping process, and there is no opportunity to be heard on this issue. There is no dispute that if a violation of the Act occurs, the animal owner is provided notice and an opportunity to be heard at a hearing before an animal may be seized. Therefore, despite Plaintiffs' arguments to the contrary, the Act does have a procedure for objecting to or arguing for an exemption from the microchipping requirement. Or, at the very least, they will have an opportunity to provide an equitable defense to seizure of their property.

A "permanent physical inva-

### Donations

The FCF Board of Directors thanks the following individuals and corporations who have made donations to FCF projects since the last published *Journal*, providing additional funding for educational materials for members and legislators, supporting conservation, and improving captive feline welfare.

We appreciate each donation, no matter the amount, recognizing that it is the many small gifts that, when combined, add up and make a difference in the effectiveness of the FCF. We encourage everyone to follow this example and donate funds for projects that interest you.

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sion, however minimal the economic cost it entails, eviscerates the owner's right to exclude others from entering and using her property—perhaps the most fundamental of all property interests.” Plaintiffs allege that their exclusive right to exclude others as to their possession of dangerous wild animals is compromised by the microchipping requirement. Microchipping is a “permanent physical invasion” that “eviscerates the owner's right to exclude others from entering and using her property.” The Court finds that Microchipping has almost no impact on an animal owner's use, enjoyment, or possessory interests.

The Ohio General Assembly enacted sweeping legislation regulating the possession, transfer, and care of dangerous wild animals and restricted snakes. This regulation of the use of property derives from the state's police power and its “high degree of control over commercial dealings.” It is common knowledge that the animals covered under the Act are inherently dangerous, as they are not normally domesticated and pose unique threats to human life due to their physical and temperamental characteristics, including their strength, speed and unpredictability. As

such, it is within the prerogative and function of the Ohio General Assembly, within constitutional parameters, to decide whether and how best to regulate such matters as the possession, care, and transfer of these animals. Even though operation of the Act undoubtedly will increase the cost of ownership of dangerous wild animals and will devalue businesses or otherwise hinder economic activity to the detriment of certain dangerous wild animal owners, these circumstances do not effectuate a taking under the U.S. Constitution.

I want to thank Polly and OAAO for all the hard work and research, and time and money spent to resist this sweeping ban law, which will have many harmful effects upon private ownership of many species, including bobcats, which were unfairly included in the regulatory process, which followed this Act. The inclusion of bobcats, when they were not even listed on



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**Polly Britton**  
Legislative Agent

the dangerous animal list, is especially troubling to me.

On Valentine's Day, 2013, Attorney Robert Owens filed an appeal in the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. The current legal costs so far are more than \$30,000 and additional funds will need to be raised to cover the expense of taking this case to a higher court. The FCF Board of Directors has issued a Matching Grant Challenge to the FCF members and will double all donations to the FCF Legal Fund in the name of the OAAO Lawsuit up to \$1,500.

## Making Tough Decisions: An Owner's Story of Re-homing Her Beloved Serval

By Kim Barker with Cheri Foster

It is often love at first sight when an animal lover sees a baby of any species for the first time. That is the exact feeling Cheri Foster had when she set eyes on her first baby serval. This tiny serval kitten was only a few days old when it came home with her. Cheri was absolutely smitten with the fuzzy creature, and that emotion overran any thought of how to raise a baby of a species she had no experience with. Young servals are notoriously fragile and any baby of any species presents significant challenges for feeding, cleaning, handling, and all aspects of their life for the first few months. Cheri met those challenges head on with little instruction from the breeder who sold her the new baby whom she named Akai.

One of the first challenges was vet care. Cheri had not thought beforehand about where to take Akai for medical care. The first vet she took Akai to was not attentive and though he said he had experience with

servals, he turned his back on Akai while she was on the exam table. Before anyone could reach her, Akai, at six weeks old, tumbled a few feet off the table, hitting her head. The vet simply shrugged off the incident, saying that she would shake it off. Anyone with any reasonable experience with servals knows that could have been a fatal incident, and at the least could have left Akai with serious and permanent damage. Fortunately, Akai sustained no injuries. This left Cheri nervous about whom she had chosen to provide care, and she chose another practice. During Akai's declawing, the second vet clinic Cheri chose withheld pain medication and food for nearly two days because they were fearful of Akai. Cheri was incensed and removed Akai from their care immediately. This event left Akai traumatized and Cheri furious. She



**Cheri Foster holds her dear little serval kitten, Akai.**

administered pain medication and fed Akai while she was recovering on her own. It took four days of attempts to remove Akai's bandages. Needless to say, neither vet provided any care to Akai from that moment on. Happily, Cheri eventually found a vet who had the experience she was comfortable with for exotic cats. The facility even had a serval as a clinic cat!

Life changed dramatically for Cheri and her husband, Ricky, with a serval in the house. Unfortunately, the breeder only spent a couple of hours training Cheri on feeding and emptying Akai, but otherwise said raising a serval was just like a house cat. When Cheri quickly found out differently and would reach out to the breeder for advice, her calls were rarely returned. She felt like she was on her own, and for all intents and purposes, she was. Granted, they had other animals, but Akai was the center of attention and Akai presented challenges her other pets did not. Furniture, pillows, blankets, general decorations, and basically everything in the home was chosen with caution and placed carefully so that they were neither consumed nor destroyed by a curious and agile 35 pound cat capable of going anywhere she wanted, horizontally or vertically, provided there was not a closed door in her way. Cheri recalled an early morning in her kitchen that perfectly demonstrates what life with a serval is like. She was quietly drinking her coffee and Akai had decided to explore a shelf with glass



**Akai enjoyed soaking up the sun on the family's porch.**

and pottery on it that was hanging seven feet off the floor. Akai jumped, cleared the shelf, and everything (the pottery, glass, shelf, and Akai) came crashing to the floor. Akai looked at Cheri in horror. Cheri simply looked at Akai and calmly said, "Did you have to start this early in the morning?"

Litter training was also a challenge and took the better part of a year. Cheri understood that this would be a difficult process. Though it was eventually successful, Akai ruined the carpet in the house. Cheri and Ricky replaced the carpet with linoleum. With that success, Cheri's vet at the facility with the serval as a clinic cat, enlisted Cheri's help to advise on how to get their serval to litter train.

Vacations were a thing of the past and visitors were fewer as Akai was intimidating to some of their friends. Even Cheri's best friend would not come into the house without Cheri or Ricky because of Akai.

On a lighter side, Akai bonded well to her other animals. Leo, her Bengal, was immediately taken with Akai. At first, Cheri thought Leo was trying to kill Akai, but upon watching closer, she realized Leo was protecting the little serval and lifting her by her scruff to protect her. This behavior continued well after Akai grew bigger than Leo and all he could do was drag her across the floor. But later, Leo exhibited mounting behavior with Akai and the friendship was over. Akai then bonded with Cheri's domestic tabby named Saber, and the two became inseparable. Akai's eventual rehoming has been difficult for them, too, and Cheri has often seen the two cats looking for her.

Cheri and her family had adjusted well to life with a serval, but one behavior was proving hard to break. At age four, Akai started eating blankets, pillows, and furniture. Cheri tried to break the behavior for a year



**Raised as a household pet, Akai was adopted by the family's other feline Leo.**

before considering that she may have to find a new home for Akai. She tried everything, but nothing worked. This behavior wasn't something that necessarily annoyed Cheri, but it was one that if she could not stop, it could kill Akai. Cheri was determined that was not going to happen.

With circumstances as they were, Cheri began looking at making some difficult choices. Although it was a challenge to maintain a full-grown serval as a house pet, Akai was a fixture in her life and brought her tremendous joy. She had rearranged her life to care for her serval child for nearly six years. Any decision she made would be in Akai's best interest and her quality of life was of the utmost importance. The thought of euthanizing Akai was not out of the question for her. She was not going to leave her serval daughter with just anyone and Cheri would not take any chances on Akai being adopted into an abusive home.

She reached out to the Conservators' Center to meet with Mindy Stinner in hopes of finding a home close by for her little girl. Mindy asked me to join the meeting to help reassure Cheri that we had experience with servals and, that if Akai was placed here, she would be cared for by people who loved the residents. Christa Donofrio, our Director of Operations, was asked to consult about enclosure construction and assured Cheri that Akai would be provided a sturdy, safe, and warm home in an environment that



Akai had never been exposed to before, the outdoors. Cheri would still be able to visit Akai almost any time she wanted. As she toured and spoke with us, Cheri immediately felt that the animals at the Conservators' Center were happy. Though not glamorous, the facility was clean, the animals were happy and well fed, and she could tell the staff and volunteers cared immensely about what they were doing. She knew this was the place for Akai.

There is also an interesting family connection between Akai and seven of our other servals that did not escape Cheri's notice. Akai's mother and father are Misha and Oz, who live two enclosures away with Aunt Harriet. Misha and Oz are also the parents of Sammy, William, Mojo, and Obi, also known as the Serval Boys. Akai was born two years before them. The family resemblance is striking!

Akai has now been at the Conservators' Center for eight months. Akai's transition to being an outdoor serval has been a slow one for her and she is quite the diva. She hisses at most everyone who walks by, letting them know she is a princess. She informs us when the weather is unacceptable and makes it clear that we know where her space is. Her relationship with

Cheri has changed as well. Akai does not behave in the same manner she did when living indoors with Cheri, and Cheri is rebuilding bonds with Akai. This has been a tough process and sometimes emotionally painful.

But Cheri has also become a welcomed member of the Center family. She is dedicated to her serval daughter and can be seen at the Center often. She has ensured that the enclosure is well decorated and there is lots of enrichment for playing. She has had to adjust to Akai acting more like a serval and less like a house cat, and Akai often reminds her that she does not always like the outdoor arrangement and the strange boy serval who shares space with her. But this has also given Cheri the opportunity for a



**As an adult, Akai exhibited behaviors that could be dangerous to her health, like eating blankets, pillows and furniture inside the Foster home.**

The FCF board of directors congratulates the following individuals for being accepted into the Registered Exotic Feline Handler Program since the past *Journal* issue.

**Taylor Rogers – Basic**

**Kristen Rohde, DVM – Advanced**

The three levels of FCF Feline Handler registration are: *basic* – at least one year of experience, *intermediate* – at least five years of experience, and *advanced* – more than ten years' experience handling exotic felines.

Be sure to update your registration in the members-only website when you obtain additional handling experience or new species experience. If you believe your experiences qualify you for an upgrade in registration status, make a request with your updates and the secretary will process the registration.

The online registration form can be filled out directly in the members-only section of the FCF website and the \$30.00 registration fee can be made through PayPal. Being a registered handler is the first step to becoming a Professional Member. The Professional Membership application process is online on the Members-Only website.

The board further challenges all FCF facilities to apply for accreditation by the FCF Accreditation Board. The overview, basic standards, and accreditation application are on the FCF members-only website.

Congratulations to all of these members for their dedication to their cats.

Debi Willoughby, FCF Secretary

new-found serval friend. As I wrote in the last FCF Journal, Carson serval is in the enclosure with Akai. Cheri and Carson have become friends. Carson is a huge fan of treats and Cheri consistently brings tasty beef, chicken, and shrimp to build that bridge. He thanks her with head butts! It has given Cheri the opportunity to learn more about the species that she has fallen in love with and exposure to the different personalities that our animal friends exhibit.

When asked if she would ever consider having another serval, Cheri's answer is an unequivocal yes. However, she knows much more now than she did then and would not consider it unless the circumstances were perfect. She wants people who are considering adding a serval to their family to be very clear on what they are getting into. It is not a decision to be made lightly or on a whim. Investigate breeders thoroughly and look inward to decide if this is truly the species for you. It takes an enormous amount of patience, time, money, and unconditional love. She is convinced that if any of these factors are missing, it will NOT work. Remember, this animal could live for 15-20 years, and maybe longer. Cheri is happy that she found the Conservators' Center as a new home for Akai. The process of rehoming her has been difficult, and often heart-breaking, but Cheri knows she did the right thing for her serval. She hopes her story will help others.

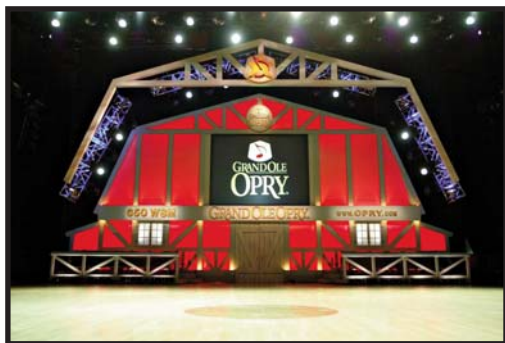
## 42ND ANNUAL FELINE CONSERVATION JUNE 6TH - 8TH, 2013

By Della Jacot

Well, get ready to kick up your heels and have a good time. The 42nd Annual FCF Convention happening in Nashville, Tennessee, is not

the one to miss! That means southern hospitality, country music, fun, and lots of activities for the entire family.

**Hotel** - Let's start with logistics: Make sure you reserve your hotel room FAST! The Country Music Association (CMA) Festival is in town! Don't forget your kitty! Read on for important information regarding your



the courses FCF offers? You are in luck, because, as with each year, we will provide both the Basic Wild Feline Husbandry Course and the Wildlife Conservation Educators course one day before the actual convention begins (Wednesday, June 5th, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.).

**Registration and Ice Breaker** - The convention starts Thursday, June 6, with a board meeting that morning (members are welcome to attend) and then, at 2:00 p.m., registration and auction item drop off, social mixer with kittens, followed by refreshments in the hospitality room at 6:00 p.m. Come mingle with fellow FCF members and catch up on what's going on in the exotic feline world. What would an FCF convention be without exotic felines to interact with? Thursday afternoon and evening you'll probably see bobcat, lynx, Geoffroy's, serval, and caracal kittens, and maybe even a jaguarundi.

**Activity** - Friday, June 7th, we will take a trip to the Nashville Zoo at Grassmere. The 200-acre zoo offers animal shows and keeper talks. Get plenty of ideas viewing the creative natural habitats. Felines include orange and white Bengal tigers, Eurasian lynx, cougar, and clouded leopard.

**Speakers** - Be ready to hear guest speakers who will reignite your passion for exotic cat husbandry. So, you say your passion is already ignited.... Well, this part of the convention never fails to give us a little more than what we came with.

**Banquet** - If you were at last year's Convention, you know what a great time we had at the banquet and auction. Let's make this year another one to remember!

Do you have items to donate for the auction? There is nothing like watching your friends get into a bidding

beautiful ball of fluff.

We will be staying at the Radisson Hotel Nashville Airport, ideally situated just one mile from Nashville International Airport. Enjoy comfortable accommodations and a wealth of on-site amenities, including complimentary airport shuttle service, an indoor pool, and free wireless Internet throughout the hotel. We'll have convenient access to plenty of popular local attractions.

Our FCF special room rate is \$95. Reserve your room by calling 615-889-9090 or Radisson's toll free number, 800-967-9033. The FCF special rate is good until May 21, 2013.

FCF attendees may bring educational animals, nursing baby animals, and felines under 30 pounds. If you are bringing an animal, please make the reservation agent aware when you make your reservation.

**Education** - So you've always wanted to attend one of



war. It will be loads of fun and, yes, it's all for a good cause! Please send items for the auction if you are unable to attend the conference.



# FEDERATION CONVENTION NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

**More Activities** - So, you are bringing the family to the FCF Convention and they don't want to sit and wait while you are attending an educational course or listening to a board meeting? Not to worry. You're in Nashville!

Bringing the kids? Only 7.5 miles away from our hotel, the Adventure Science Center is the place you definitely want to lead them. There are mazes opening in May. And by the time you get there, summer events will be in full swing. Visit the planetarium, see some live science presentations, or just walk through looking at all the fantastic techy gadgets. Look it up on the web at [www.adventursci.com](http://www.adventursci.com) for admission prices, shows, and special events. Note: They have a planetarium!

What do you do Wednesday evening after the Husbandry or Educator course? Who likes murder mystery dinner theatres? Well, there's one in Nashville! Yes! Dinner is included in the price of admission at the Murder Mystery Company, approximately 21 miles from



our hotel. The shows begin and 7:00 p.m. As of this writing, June shows have not been posted. Let's just stay tuned and see at

<http://www.grimprov.com/nashville-chaffins>.

Who likes shopping? There is an amazing place in Nashville, called Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center. Located just 7.5 miles from our hotel, this lovely place is much more than its name says. I had the wonderful opportunity of staying here for a week. I never left the hotel. It's like walking through a small city incased in glass. Be prepared for lots of shopping, eating, and things to see. There are bridges, water features, even boat rides, surrounded by a beautiful botanical garden atmosphere.

For the country music lover, there is a very special event happening in Nashville during the convention. The CMA Country Music Festival is June 6 -9, and from what I heard, it's been sold out for three years straight. Big names like Luke Bryan and Carrie Underwood will be attending this year. Visit <http://www.cma->



[world.com/cma-music-festival/2013/home](http://world.com/cma-music-festival/2013/home).

If you want more country music, there is always the Grand Ole Opry! It is located only 6.6 miles away from our hotel. Check out what's going on here <http://www.opry.com/>. Perhaps one evening you may find a show that you would like to attend.

There are way too many places to go and things to see in Nashville to list here. Come to the FCF Convention and make it a family event you will never forget! A Convention registration form is included with this issue of the *Journal*. Look for more updates on the FCF website under "Upcoming Events."





One of Out of Africa's feline residents is this beautiful serval. Photo by Prayeri Harrison.



Tim Stark took this photo of Glacier taking a dip in his pool at Wildlife In Need, a non-profit refuge.

# Your Best Shots



Beautiful close-up face study of Sinbad the tiger, who came to Pride Rock Wildlife Refuge in 1998. Photo by Gary Holliman.



Nyasha serval is one of the wildlife ambassadors of Zoofari Education. Photo by Michelle McKay.



**Buster the Geoffroy's cat finds Jerry's sneakers to be a cozy bed. Photo by Jerry Smith.**



**This Canada lynx, named Sampson, seems to be saying to Laura Walker, "Don't leave me!"**



**Cindy Backer took this photo of a white tiger cub born at Brown's Zoo.**



**Ungowa is one cute African lion cub. Photo by Tim Stark.**



## The Jewel of India

By Vera Chaples, Cofounder, Mystic Jungle Educational Facility, Inc.

Many know me as the “Leopard Lady.” Leopards are my big cats of choice because of their unique dispositions. Also known as “the world’s biggest liars,” they spend 50 percent of their time trying to find a way out of their enclosure and the other 50 percent trying to find a way to fool their owner. To me, that makes them all the more endearing.

With this endearment came the desire to learn more about them. Everything from the evolution of the species, which included a time period of thousands of years ago where most of them died off, to their status today.

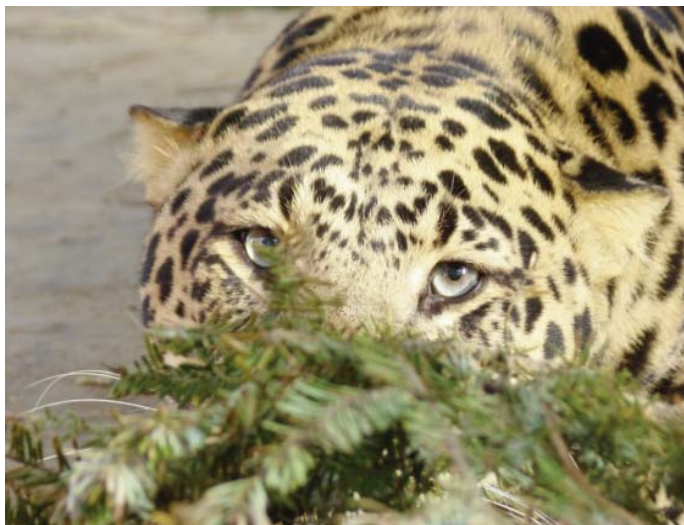
The massive death of all the leopards all those years ago is still not understood. But this created a genetic bottleneck (ref: *Where the Wild Things Were* by William Stolzenburg). Even when faced with such a life hurdle, they managed to come back and flourish. That was, until man stepped in.

For the past decade, poachers in India have harvested an average of four leopards a week, which is two hundred and eight per year. This is just what a study called TRAFFIC in India (ref: NDTV), can account for as part of the illegal trade in leopard parts. This does not account for the leopards that are wandering into villages in search of food and being killed. One cannot even fathom the number this turns out to be at the end of a decade.

India is the second most populated country in the world and is projected by the U.S. Census Bureau to be the most populated by 2025! India had a population in 2002 of 1,045,845,000, with the leopard population at 8,203 (ref: Wildcat.org). A healthy, stable leopard population existed at that time. The last census taken of the Asian leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*) was in 2011, and was down to 1,150; the human population was up to 1,210,193,422 (ref: Indiaonlinepages.com). Through deforestation and human encroachment into their habitat, the leopard now has to

seek alternative food sources other than their normal diet. Leopards are opportunistic cats. They will feed on most anything, whereas other big cats have a tendency to eat a more selective diet.

These very same cats now are wandering into villages, preying upon livestock, pets, and women and children. It is seldom seen where a leopard attacks a fully grown man unless the man has made an aggressive move. This was not the case a decade ago. Once upon a time, a leopard that wandered into a village had done so because it was old, had health issues, or had a problem with its canines. One only has to remember that pound for pound, even though it is the smallest of the big cats, it is the strongest with the ability to take on and kill a victim three times its own weight. Combine that with the fact that cats (ALL CATS) are observational learners (meaning that they learn something merely by watching, whereas most



**Two-year-old spotted male, Keeper, instinctively crouches behind the greenery and stares intently at the photographer. Pound for pound, the leopard is one of the strongest cats, able to take on and kill a victim three times its weight.**

species learn well by doing), and it is the perfect storm. People are creatures of habit. They take the same paths to get water, gather crops, and even to relieve themselves. This makes the pickings easy for a leopard. But, in reality, this has been a forced hand onto the leopard, because one only has to reflect on what has happened during the past ten years. The human population has exploded, and with that comes the need for more resources such as housing, water plants, electrical plants, and fields for growing crops. The leopard has been pushed to the outskirts. With a leopard having to stand its ground against other leopards for territorial space, this can only put man and leopard on a collision course.

What bothers me the most is what happens when these leopards do wander into towns. When the entire village has converged on the leopard, they will either beat it to death with cane poles or machetes, electrocute it, or even burn them alive, as well as lynching (dead or alive) and dismemberment of the leopard. This can only be seen as retaliation by the villagers.

When confronted, a leopard



**Beautiful melanistic male, Sampson, nuzzles the neck of his lady friend, Rosie. Indian leopards are not part of the collection plans for the big zoo association, so it is up to private preserves to protect the captive population.**





**With over a billion people living in India, leopards like Rosie are increasingly threatened by human encroachments and direct killings. Captive felines provide a safeguard against extinction while they help to raise public awareness of the perils leopards face in nature.**

does not back down. Most other species try to avoid man at all costs, but if confronted, a leopard will not run from its antagonist. When attacked, he/she has analyzed every person in the killing party. That leopard will assure that they take out as many as they can before being killed.

My favorite comparison to this is when a hunting party goes out and takes a shot at a tiger or lion and misses; the lion or tiger may charge, but usually goes after just one target and will not break their concentration from that one person. The leopard is oh so different. They have scoped the entire party and share the wealth in injury and/or death.

A leopard takes 18 to 24 months to mature sexually. A leopardess carries her babies an average 91 to 93 days. She will usually have a litter of one to three cubs, with a mortality rate of 50 percent from natural predation. The average of 1.5 cubs that survive will stay with the mother until they are around 18 to 24 months and the leopardess does not generally seek to breed again during this time.

You do the math. At the rate of 208 a

year and a leopardess having 1.5 cubs every 18-24 months, how long can we keep them on this earth? Just listing them as Near Threatened (one has to ask themselves WHEN do they become ENDANGERED!?) and being included on the CITES APPENDIX I is not enough. The figures from Traffic were merely from what smuggling they had intercepted. This does not include what poaching has not been caught, nor the animals that have been killed after clashing with villagers. Even the reports of leopard vs. man cases are merely the ones that are reported, as it is illegal to kill a leopard without permission.

The SSP is not the final answer. WE ARE. AZA zoos simply do not have the space to conserve and exhibit more than one type of leopard. This zoo organization manages a captive breeding program for the Amur leopard. They do the best they can with what they have. But that is not enough. The year 2012 was written into history as being the worst year ever for the poaching of leopards (ref-PresTV)! Private facilities are the last hope for the majestic and intelligent creatures known as Indian leopards, and I, for one, will continue to sound the alarm until someone finally listens.



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## FCF Safety Net Helps Transport Riverglen Tigers to Turpentine Creek

By Lynn Culver

When I watched an “Animal Interventions” trailer on the Internet, I heard the unmistakable voice of Betty Young and I was amazed that she was going to be featured on the program. Bart and I met Betty back in 1988. At that time we only had five cougars and she had about 11 tigers. Over the next dozen years, her collection grew dramatically upwards of 83 tigers, leopards, jaguar, puma, serval, and caracal. We lost touch with her in 2001, after Bart spent three months living at her new property helping to care for 27 tigers and building enclosures so she could move her remaining 60 cats. (Read “Riverglen Tiger Refuge” Nov/Dec 2000, *LIOC Endangered Species Conservation Federation Newsletter*, Volume 44 Issue 6 in the Newsletter archive DVD.) All of these years I have wondered about her, but she drew away from the feline community, dropped her USDA license to exhibit, and maintained her private Riverglen Tigers sanctuary in the mountains.

Just two days before the “Animal Interventions” program aired, a friend called to inform me that Betty Young was in the Little Rock newspaper. Turpentine Creek announced that they had been asked to take in 34 big cats. Anyone who watched the “Animal Interventions” program that aired later that week would have been left with the impression that Betty and her cats would be moving to the National Tiger Sanctuary in Missouri. That episode was filmed in October of 2011, and, apparently, just a few months after the film crew left, the arrangements to move in with Keith and Judy were no longer going to happen.

Betty Young is 72 years old, her health is failing, and she can no longer take care of these cats. On the television program, she was walking with the help of a crutch. Apparently her situation was causing concern with the community. Crawford County Sheriff Ron Brown contacted Tur-



**Princess is the first Riverglen tiger we saw at Turpentine Creek. She is living in the older section of the facility that used concrete flooring. She is probably not the same Princess whose life Bart saved, being definitely larger than the tiny tiger we remembered.**

pentine Creek to ask them to visit the facility and evaluate the situation. Tanya Smith said the vision has haunted her ever since she made the trip. Her immediate reaction was fear – for their lives, and for anyone who came on the property due to the fact that so many caging structures

tiger with the same name. We had to know.

Turpentine Creek was asking for public support to enable them to take in so many cats. The sanctuary had moved several of their tigers, freeing up room for seven of Riverglen’s tigers and a cougar. Taking in

were old and dilapidated and many had no tops on dog cages that had tigers living in them.

As I read the newspaper article on the Internet, I was struck by the photo illustrating the story. It showed a tiger named Princess being sedated for the move. I could not believe what I was reading. Princess was supposed to have been 17 years old when Bart saved her life in 2001. Princess was the tiger that Bart fell in love with. She was a tiny Sumatran and was once a performing circus cat and now a dignified retiree. Could this be the same Princess? With so many tigers and more than a decade of time passing, perhaps it was a different



**Makita was lounging on a fire hose hammock. She was the same beautiful puma with the big, puffy tail that we loved and cared for more than a decade ago.**



any more would require new construction. I spoke to Scott Smith and his wife Tanya by phone several times. I offered help in finding other suitable sanctuaries to take the cats. Several FCF member sanctuaries I contacted were willing to take in a tiger, but Tanya said that Betty wanted them to go to Turpentine Creek, which is only a two-hour drive away. Perhaps she will visit them. Betty did send a pair of tigers and a pair of cougars to Cedar Cover Sanctuary in Kansas, as Della Jacot reported in the November/December 2012 *FCF Journal*.

Turpentine Creek applied for a Wildcat Safety Net Grant from the Feline Conservation Federation. The relocation of so many cats requires many, many trips to the Mountainburg facility. The Safety Net Committee reviewed the application and recommended the maximum allowable support of \$1,000.

Bart and I wanted to see if Princess was indeed the tiger whose life he saved so many years ago. We have a friend, Vincent DeMaggio, who lives just a half hour away from Turpentine Creek, which we have never visited, so this was an opportunity to do both. Vincent met us in Eureka Springs for the tour of the feline sanctuary. Princess was the first tiger we saw at the facility and we both agreed it was not the same Princess Bart knew and loved. This was a Bengal tiger, and Princess was a very small Sumatran tiger with very narrow, high contrast striping. With so many



**In addition to the old style concrete cages, Turpentine Creek has created dozens of hillside habitats that comfortably house lion and tiger. This habitat was the home for this giant liger, as well as a lion. Each habitat provides elevated resting platforms and towers and includes a roofed, concrete floored cage where the big cats are confined for night time, habitat cleaning or maintenance, or severe weather.**

tigers, it is not unlikely that Betty had more than one Princess. In addition to Princess, in the public exhibit was Makita, a delightfully friendly lady puma that was

a favorite with volunteers at Mountainburg when Bart and I were helping.

Turpentine Creek is situated on 459 acres, most of it undeveloped. For the Riverglen tigers, an area that will remain off-exhibit to the public was prepared. A cleared field was perimeter fenced with two x four welded wire panels, enclosing 4.2 acres. Two rows of new enclosures are under construction, with some already occupied by Riverglen tigers, including Turbo, one of three exceptional young males that Bart also cared for. We also saw Mr. Sweetie. When Bart lived at Mountainburg, he named a pair of retired circus tigers Mr. and Mrs. Sweetie because they were so nice. Apparently Mr. Sweetie's mate had passed on, but Mr. Sweetie was lounging in his new 1,000 square foot enclosure. Each enclosure has a 10 x 20 foot concrete floor and another 20 x 40 foot grassy area. Outside each concrete pad is a concrete septic tank, which makes a safe, heavy-duty tiger house protected from summer heat and winter cold. The enclosures are built of 4 x 4 welded panels, 8 feet tall, and topped.



**Another nice big, shady, ten foot high fenced habitat with a three foot recurve, holds a pair of tigers.**





**Vincent DeMaggio receives a warm nuzzle from his puma buddy Simba.**

Future plans include building connecting exercise runs onto every cage. The sanctuary ran underground water lines to this new area. On the drive to the new area, I saw a large stack of metal stock tanks, which will give each tiger their own swimming pool to soak in during the sweltering Arkansas summers.

We left the facility satisfied that Tanya and Scott and their staff would be able to accommodate so many new animals. Turpentine Creek has grown tremendously since I last visited it. Many of the cats now live in spacious fenced-in habitats, with trees for shade, platforms for loafing, and lock-down enclosures for nighttime, and for the extreme wind and tornado threat weather which, unfortunately, is occurring more often these days. Turpentine Creek has on-sight housing for their many interns. It takes 28 people to care for the 127 felines, bears, and other animals at the facility.

We then visited Vincent and Lynn and their cougars and bobcat. Vincent was the first FCF member who was not USDA-licensed to apply for the FCF Facility Accreditation, which was designed for not only public facilities, but also individual owners like Vincent. We met Savior, a friendly male bobcat. Vincent's two

cougars have 1,600 square feet of living space, divided into two enclosures. The pair is bonded, and Bekera delivered her first litter last year. She was in heat when we visited, and Simba was attentive to Bekera, but still displayed affection to Vincent. The big cat is now four years old, and Vincent acknowledges that Simba is becoming more possessive and jealous of Bekera, so Vincent has increased his level of caution around the pair.

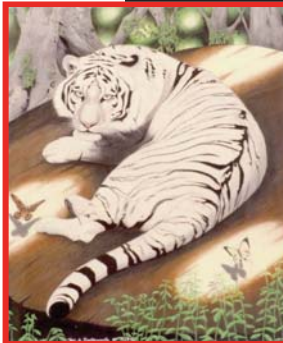
It was great to get away for a couple of days and see other facilities in Arkansas. At one time, Arkansas had many owners and breeders of tigers and other big cats, but, just like so many other states, the changing

USDA regulations, economic hard times,

and the passage of strict state laws have caused most owners and facilities to give up their cats. Vincent and Lynn are the last people in Arkansas to be granted a state license to own cougars. Riverglen Tigers was exempted from the Arkansas state ban law passed by the legislature in 2005, by virtue of being a wildlife humane society. Once it is decommissioned, Turpentine Creek will be the last remaining big cat collection in the state. And it seems this is the trend nationwide. More and more big cats are, sadly, living in fewer and fewer facilities.

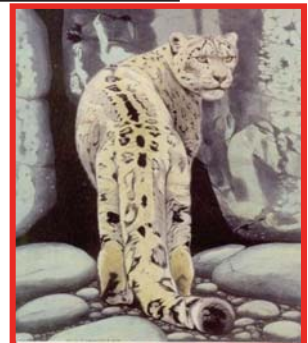
The safe relocation of these tigers is of particular interest to me and should be to FCF members as well. Such a large collection held by someone in failing health had the potential to end badly, on a scale of the Zanesville massacre in October 2011. Bart and I have donated \$500 to be used as a matching grant for the Riverglen Tigers relocation to Turpentine Creek. Every donation by FCF members to the Wildcat Safety Net will be matched up to \$500. For those who have not considered donating to the FCF before, I hope that this commitment by us will inspire you to take advantage of this offer to double your donation dollars. Thank you.

## FCF NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT



### Meet the Wildcat Safety Net Challenge!

A \$500 matching grant  
has been donated  
specifically to help the



Riverglen Tigers reach a new home at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Sanctuary. Your \$10 donation will become \$20. Your \$100 donation will be matched with another \$100. When members support a specific project, these donations will be added on top of the Safety Net Committee-approved grant.

For each donation of \$30 or more, choose one of three thank you prints by artist Teri Zucksworth. These 18" x 24" colored pencil drawings are ready for matting and framing. Pick the black leopard, "Hanging Around," the lounging white tiger, "Paying a Visit," or the snow leopard, "Standing Guard."

Go to the FCF website to make a donation with PayPal today. Or call the treasurer to use your credit card to support this worthy cause at 479-394-5235.

**Do your part to help transport captive felines out of harm's way—support the FCF Wildcat Safety Net with a donation today.**





# A Roaring Good Road Trip

By Debi Willoughby

I was planning a road trip from Massachusetts to Oklahoma, to pick up a baby marmoset monkey for my educational shows. I have made the trip numerous times before and was not looking forward to 26 hours of driving each way, so I decided to make it a bit fun by visiting some animal facilities along the way. I turned my boring 26 hour/4 day trip into a 5 day/16 state trip!

I invited one of my staff to go with me to help with the driving and to keep me company; little did she know what she was getting herself into – she had never taken a road trip before! We started out bright and early at 4am on a bitterly cold, crisp New England winter morning. We made it to our first stop at 9pm, which was the Exotic Feline Rescue Center (EFRC) founded by Joe Taft in Center Point, Indiana. It is the second largest feline sanctuary in the U.S. and houses over 230 cats. Even though we arrived late at night, Joe met us at the gate and showed us to the guest house, where we were to spend the night. Once at the guest house, we were greeted by one of his domestic cats, Long Tail. Long Tail was the perfect host! He talked to us a lot, slept with us, and had us follow him to meet Joe for our tour the next morning! We could not have asked for a better host! The guest house was all decked out in animal print decor and everything in it had to do with wild cats, from the pictures on the walls, to the lamps, to the bedspread. The atmosphere definitely got you excited about getting your private sanctuary tour that was included in the price of the overnight stay! The best part about the guest house is the view outside. There are some cat cages outside the house for you to watch from the window and visit at your leisure. From inside the house, one can hear the lions roaring off in the distance and I even heard a leopard call. The first cage you see once you go outside the house has a black leopard and a cougar in it. The next cage is a white tiger. The other cages house a couple of bobcats and



**This white tiger at the Exotic Feline Rescue Center looks like he belongs in the snow. The Center is home to over 200 wild cats, mostly tigers.**

an ocelot. It was a nice variety of cats to visit with while you are hanging out.

Once Long Tail delivered us to Joe, Joe began the tour with an eye opener. Our first stop was the meat prep building. For animal people, it is not too shocking, but for the general public – I am sure it really opens their eyes! The EFRC gets most of its meat for the cats from cattle farmers in the area. When a cow needs to be put down, Joe and his crew “take care of” the cow and bring it back to the sanctuary to be cut up and either frozen for future use or separated to be fed out that day. Cow is the mainstay of their diet, but they do get deer, horse, chicken, and other livestock. All I can say is I have not looked at cows in a field the same way since I visited Joe’s meat building! I see them as cat food now!

After he explained what they do with the meat, he led us to a part of the sanctuary that is not open to the public, for a behind the scenes tour. We met many tigers, lions, leopards, cougars, bobcats, and servals. As we met them all,

Joe told us about each of their backgrounds, where they came from, and what their story was. I was amazed at how he kept all of the stories straight! I sometimes have a hard time remembering each of my animal’s birth dates, but Joe remembers it all! We were next led to the part of the sanctuary that is open for public tours, where we met more tigers, servals, and other cats.

After seeing all of the cats and learning their stories, I was in awe with how Joe and his staff keep up

with everything day in and day out. Besides the daily feeding and cleaning, there is medical and dental work that needs to be tended to, since some of these animals come to the sanctuary in not the best of health. There is also the fundraising to keep the sanctuary alive, juggling employees, keeping the grounds clean, repairing cages, expanding with more cages, rescue runs, etc., etc. I would be overwhelmed having the responsibility of caring for over 200 wild cats. For those of you who do it – I tip my hat to you!

What I found most amazing was the disposition of the majority of the cats. Joe did not raise all of these cats from birth, as most of them came to him as adults. But

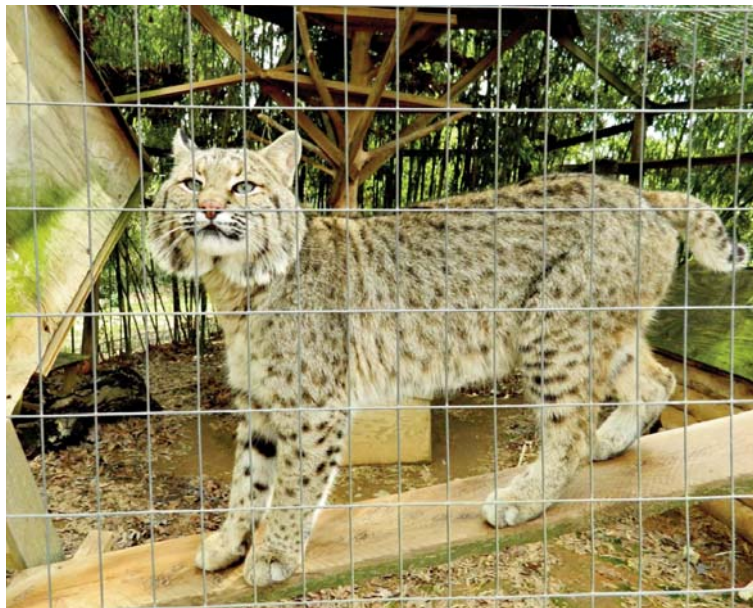


**Male and female lion look menacingly at Debi and her volunteer. Perhaps expecting a morning snack to warm up the body from the cold, Indiana night?**



they treat him like they have known him their whole lives and they truly care for him. Almost all of the tigers were continuously chuffing as we visited them. And all of the cats came over to the edge of the fence to say hi. Their actions speak mountains of praise for Joe and his dedication to them. They all are grateful for what he has done for them and it shows in how they act around him. People can gloat about what they do with their cats, but the cat's actions are the true witness to how they are treated.

After thanking Joe for the amazing tour and hospitality, we were back in our car for a long ride to visit Bart and Lynn



**Little Buzz, Dakota's father. It's pretty obvious where Dakota got his good looks!**

the cages were tree branches for sharpening claws and climbing on and most of the little cats had high-raised planks to walk the perimeter of their cages on. I remember thinking these cats have fun and interesting things to do in their cages, never mind the socializing they all do. My favorite was Little Buzz (father of my Dakota!). He acted very spunky with a spring in his step and always wanting attention! As at Joe's, the cats loved being visited by Bart and Lynn! It is so nice to see such well-kept animals whose psychological and physiological needs are kept busy with things to do in their cages.



**Mariah bobcat is the mother of Debi's Dakota, featured on the cover of this *Journal* issue.**

Culver in Mena, Arkansas. Bart and Lynn have a facility right on their property, where they breed small cats. The last leg of the journey to their house was not so pleasant! After driving for over 10 hours, it was dark, we were exhausted, and my eyes were burning. We found ourselves driving through the mountains on winding roads that went up and down the mountains. Not a fun ride with the physical state we were in. But I am sure it is a beautiful ride during the daylight. Once we arrived, Lynn fed us dinner and

brought us to an RV set up for interns to sleep in for the night. The next morning, I opened the door to the RV and found myself right in front of a cage that houses three servals. They were all by the fence to greet me! What a nice way to start the morning! Bart and Lynn then showed us around their property to meet all of their cats. Their property is nestled in the mountains, surrounded by woods. They have bamboo growing on their land that provides both privacy and a fun place for over 40 cats to play. The cages are

arranged in such a way that you take a nice leisurely walk through the woods and bamboo as you visit each enclosure. We saw cougars, caracals, servals, Canada and Eurasian lynx, bobcats, and Geoffroy's cats. Some of the enclosures had big areas to run and hide in, while others had various interesting nooks to hide in. Inside

After meeting their beautiful cats, Lynn joined us on the road to go to Oklahoma, to pick up my new baby marmoset monkey from a breeder friend of mine. I had placed a few of my show animals at her place and it was nice to have a reunion with them! They were all happy and content, which made me feel good about giving them away! It is always comforting to know you have found a good home for your animals. The baby marmoset, Chiquita, was absolutely beautiful! She is only three inches long right now and has big brown curious eyes! I think we all instantly fell in love with her!



**Aben is one of three Canada lynx at the Culvers. He is an exceptionally sweet cat, and so handsome sporting his winter fur coat.**





**Jasmine the Geoffroy's cat is the mother of Debi's educational ambassador, Spirit. In the middle of her enclosure is a large Magnolia tree that provides plenty of horizontal branches for catwalks.**

The ride back to Lynn's place was much more relaxing than the ride to her place the night before. This was due partly because it was still daylight and partly because Lynn knew where we were going! We arrived back at Lynn's in the late evening and enjoyed a delicious dinner while we talked about all of the animals we had met on our trip. We thanked Bart and Lynn for their generous hospitality and went off to bed so we could get an early start the next morning.

The next day's trip was driving all day to stay at Mike's house, a friend of mine who lived in Tennessee, which was about at the halfway point to home. I worked with Mike at a zoo years ago, then visited him in Tennessee when he worked at Tiger Haven. Now he currently works at a vet clinic, has a side business of pet sitting, assists with feral cat capture, spay, and neutering, and he has nine domestic cats that live with him. All of these cats

were either strays or have health problems that their previous owners could not handle. Only three of his nine cats were too uneasy to visit with us; they stayed in the dark parts of the house where they felt safe. After catching up with Mike, we pulled out the cat toys and, wow, what a reaction! Six of the cats came running over and we had them all playing at the same time! It was a little overwhelming to try to take it all in! Despite their backgrounds, they were all friendly and loved the extra attention! I sat back for a little while to take in all of the action and realized this was not Mike's house - it was the cats' house and they allowed Mike to live with them. Each cat had its own personality and you never felt alone. You always had at least two cats hanging out with you wanting your attention. After sleeping in one of the cats' private bedrooms, we once again hit the road.

It was our last day of our road trip and we were finally on our way home. We went through 16 states in five days, and were completely exhausted by the time we got home. But we have amazing memories that we will always be able to reflect on. We saw a wide range of animal professionals who truly care for their cats and we saw this in the eyes of every cat we met. It is a nice feeling to know that there are so many cat



**Mishi the cougar responds to Lynn by rubbing at the fence in his exercise area. He's in his 15,000-square-foot exercise area attached to his main enclosure. Fencing is 12 feet tall with a three-foot recurve.**

people out there who cherish their cats and provide them with the best homes and lives that they can. We are grateful to all of our friends that we visited and to the excellent hospitality that they showed us, especially Long Tail - we will remember him forever! Who knew that a trip geared around picking up a monkey would end up having us visit with so many cats, thanks to FCF members.



**Chiquita the infant marmoset monkey will be hand raised and conditioned for Debi's wildlife educational shows. The adorable primate is part of the food chain in nature and will represent some of the "cat food" preyed upon by nature's felines in South America.**



**Chubbs in his hillside habitat in front of his plastic barrel cave buried in the hill. This young male co-habits with the mother of Debi's bobcat Dakota.**



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## Mice



Size	Less than 500	500	1000	3000	5000	10000+	Length(inches)	Weight(grams)	Count
X-Small Pinkies:	\$0.25	\$0.24	\$0.23	\$0.22	\$0.21	\$0.20	0.50 - 1.00	1.30 - 1.89	100
Small Pinkies:	\$0.25	\$0.24	\$0.23	\$0.22	\$0.21	\$0.20	0.50 - 1.00	1.90 - 2.49	100
Large Pinkies:	\$0.25	\$0.24	\$0.23	\$0.22	\$0.21	\$0.20	0.50 - 1.00	2.50 - 3.09	100
Peach Fuzzies:**	\$0.30	\$0.29	\$0.28	\$0.27	\$0.26	\$0.25	1.00 - 1.25	3.10 - 4.49	100
Fuzzies:***	\$0.30	\$0.29	\$0.28	\$0.27	\$0.26	\$0.25	1.25 - 1.50	4.50 - 6.99	100
Hoppers:***	\$0.45	\$0.43	\$0.41	\$0.39	\$0.37	\$0.35	1.50 - 2.00	7.00 - 12.99	100
Weanlings:***	\$0.55	\$0.53	\$0.51	\$0.49	\$0.47	\$0.45	2.00 - 2.50	13.00 - 17.99	50
Large Adults:***	\$0.65	\$0.63	\$0.61	\$0.59	\$0.57	\$0.55	2.50 - 3.00	18.00 - 25.99	50
X-Large Adults:***	\$0.95	\$0.93	\$0.91	\$0.89	\$0.87	\$0.85	3.00 - 3.75	26.00 - 45.00+	25

\* We offer combined quantity discount mouse pricing. \* Measurement does not include tail length.

## Rats



Size	Less than 500	500	1000+	Length (inches)	Weight (grams)	Count
Pinkies:	\$0.50	\$0.45	\$0.40	1.50 - 2.00	3.00 - 8.99	100
Fuzzies:	\$0.75	\$0.70	\$0.65	2.00 - 2.50	9.00 - 19.99	100
Pups:	\$1.00	\$0.95	\$0.90	2.50 - 3.50	20.00 - 29.99	25
Weaned:	\$1.25	\$1.20	\$1.15	3.50 - 4.50	30.00 - 44.99	25
Small:	\$1.50	\$1.45	\$1.40	4.50 - 6.00	45.00 - 84.99	20
Medium:	\$1.75	\$1.70	\$1.65	6.00 - 8.00	85.00 - 174.99	10
Large:	\$2.00	\$1.95	\$1.90	8.00 - 9.00	175.00 - 274.99	5
X-Large:	\$2.25	\$2.20	\$2.15	9.00 - 11.00	275.00 - 374.99	3
XX-Large:	\$2.50	\$2.45	\$2.40	11.00 - 13.00	375.00 - 474.99	2
XXX-Large:	\$2.75	\$2.70	\$2.65	11.00 - 13.00	475.00 - 600.00+	2

\* We offer combined quantity discount rat pricing. \* Measurement does not include tail length.

## Quail



Size	Less than 500	500	1000+	Grams	Oz.	Count
1 Day:	\$0.75	\$0.70	\$0.65	7.50 - 10.00	.25	100
1 Week:	\$1.00	\$0.95	\$0.90	30.00 - 49.99	1.0	25
2 Week:	\$1.25	\$1.20	\$1.15	50.00 - 75.00	2.5	10
3 Week:	\$1.50	\$1.45	\$1.40	100.00 - 129.99	4.0	10
6 Week:	\$2.00	\$1.95	\$1.90	130.00 - 154.99	5.0	5
8 Week:	\$2.50	\$2.45	\$2.40	155.00 - 189.99	6.5	5
10 Week:	\$3.00	\$2.95	\$2.90	190.00 - 229.99	8.0	5
Retired Breeder:	\$3.50	\$3.45	\$3.40	230.00 - 260.00+	9.0	5

\* We offer combined quantity discount quail pricing.

## Rabbits

Size	Less Than 100	100	250+	Weight (lbs.)	Count
X-Small:	\$5.00	\$4.75	\$4.50	0.50 - 0.99	1
Small:	\$6.00	\$5.75	\$5.50	1.00 - 1.99	1
Medium:	\$7.00	\$6.75	\$6.50	2.00 - 3.99	1
Large:	\$8.00	\$7.75	\$7.50	4.00 - 5.99	1
X-Large:	\$9.00	\$8.75	\$8.50	6.00 - 7.99	1
XX-Large:	\$10.00	\$9.75	\$9.50	8.00 - 9.99	1
XXX-Large:	\$11.00	\$10.75	\$10.50	10.00 - 12.00+	1

\* We offer combined quantity discount rabbit pricing.

## Chickens



Size	Less than 500	500	1000	3000	5000	10000+	Oz./Lbs.	Count
XSmall:	\$0.30	\$0.28	\$0.26	\$0.24	\$0.22	\$0.20	1.00-1.99 oz.	25
Small:	\$1.00	\$0.95	\$0.90	\$0.85	\$0.80	\$0.75	2.00-5.99 oz.	10
Medium:	\$1.50	\$1.45	\$1.40	\$1.35	\$1.30	\$1.25	6.00-9.99 oz.	5
Large:	\$2.00	\$1.95	\$1.90	\$1.85	\$1.80	\$1.75	10.00-13.99 oz.	4
XLarge:	\$2.50	\$2.45	\$2.40	\$2.35	\$2.30	\$2.25	14.00-17.99 oz.	3
XXLarge:	\$3.00	\$2.95	\$2.90	\$2.85	\$2.80	\$2.75	2.50-4.49 lbs.	1
XXXLarge:	\$3.50	\$3.45	\$3.40	\$3.35	\$3.30	\$3.25	4.50-6.50+ lbs.	1

\* We offer combined quantity discount chicken pricing.

## Guinea Pigs

Size	Less Than 500	500	1000+	Inches	Grams	Count
Medium:	\$1.75	\$1.70	\$1.65	6.00 - 8.00	85.00 - 174.99	10
Large:	\$2.00	\$1.95	\$1.90	8.00 - 9.00	175.00 - 274.99	5
X-Large:	\$2.25	\$2.20	\$2.15	9.00 - 11.00	275.00 - 374.99	3
XX-Large:	\$2.50	\$2.45	\$2.40	11.00 - 13.00	375.00 - 474.99	2
XXX-Large:	\$2.75	\$2.70	\$2.65	11.00 - 13.00	475.00 - 599.99	2
XXXX-Large:	\$3.00	\$2.95	\$2.90	13.00 - 15.00	600.00 - 749.99	1
XXXXX-Large:	\$3.25	\$3.20	\$3.15	13.00 - 15.00	750.00 - 900.00+	1

\* We offer combined quantity discount guinea pig pricing.

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# The Amended FCF Professional Membership Policy

By Lynn Culver

The FCF Board of Directors concluded its first quarter board meeting on February 23, 2013, and amended the existing policy on Professional Membership, based on the experiences and feedback from its first year in operation. The Constitution created this membership category with this language: Any person directly involved in wild feline captive management, or wild feline research, or wild feline education, or wild feline conservation, shall be eligible for professional membership.

During the past year, parts of the policy and the way it was implemented caused some misunderstandings, confusion, and some friction. It became divisive rather than a cohesive addition to the organization. Because of this, several applications have still not been voted upon by the committee, and the program has ground to a halt awaiting clarification and direction from a new board.

This board has just refined the definition, policy, and procedure to implement the Professional Membership so that it may better reflect the original intent of the constitutional amendment adopted August 2011.

The emphasis placed upon being in commerce, or being full-time employed for some undefined length of time, has been replaced with emphasis upon expertise and ethics. Implementation of the Professional Membership policy should identify who among the FCF has what it takes to be a mentor. The new Professional Membership category is for those in the FCF who are experts and have specialized knowledge in their field. Professional members are expected to treat colleagues appropriately and should be willing to mentor those with less experience and a desire to learn.

The entire policy as adopted is published here. Changes include a set experience requirement for

applicants to be registered at either an Intermediate or Advanced handler level, or to be registered as a Feline Educator, Researcher, Conservationist, or Veterinarian. Adding these other statuses to the registration database will be a positive addition to the FCF resource that identifies our experts and mentors and the skills and experience they possess. Standards are more clearly defined. An additional component of the online application process will be a section addressing compliance, with an opportunity for applicants to explain any history of charges, convictions, or judgments. Reasons for denial or revocation are outlined. The Professional Review Committee has been reduced from five to just three persons and approval will require two yes votes. The board believes that with clearer definitions, the process will be less subjective and a fair assessment can be accomplished with fewer committee members.

For the many experienced members who might not have believed they qualified as FCF Professionals under the past year's operation of the professional membership application process, I invite you to study this new policy, and, if you qualify, apply for this membership level. It is very important for the organization to recog-

nize its professional members. Their higher dues will enable the organization to have greater resources to strengthen the FCF's standing and programs, benefiting all our stakeholders. Our stakeholders need the FCF to be perceived, internally and externally, as being an organization with experts who operate legally and ethically.


The Professional Membership Application is located on the members-only website at [www.felineconservation.org/members](http://www.felineconservation.org/members) - log in with your user name and password, then click on "Professional Membership" on the left hand side of the webpage. Follow the instructions, complete the form, pay a nominal processing fee, and do your part to increase the standing and abilities of the FCF today...

## *The Newly Adopted FCF Professional Membership Policy*

**1 Definition:** Professional members possess enough training, experience, and skills to be a mentor to others and are willing to do so. Professional members conduct their businesses, animal husbandry, and public image in an ethical manner. A professional member may either possess substantial experience in the captive husbandry of wild felines, operating with high standards of animal care and facility management, or may be substantially involved in the education, research, veterinary, or conservation fields benefiting wild felines.

**2 Standards:** Professional members with felines have legal standing in their location at the time of their application and do not have a recent history of serious issues in areas related to safety or animal husbandry. Professional animal holders provide sufficient and proper care, maintenance, housing, equipment, display, transportation, veterinary care, and safety for all. Professional member websites and social media presence do not contain images

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or words that indicate poor handling or husbandry skills or behavior that is putting the public at risk, or that contradict the stated mission of the FCF.

**3 Licensing:** Professional members may hold a USDA license to engage in the breeding, brokering, sales, or exhibition of wild felines, or be employed by such facilities, or hold substantial, but unpaid, positions at USDA-licensed or non-profit wild feline facilities, or may be experienced, permitted owners that meet the Professional Membership standards. Professional members who are wildlife educators, researchers, veterinarians, or conservationists are experienced, knowledgeable, and recognized by their peers, and, where applicable, licensed in their field.

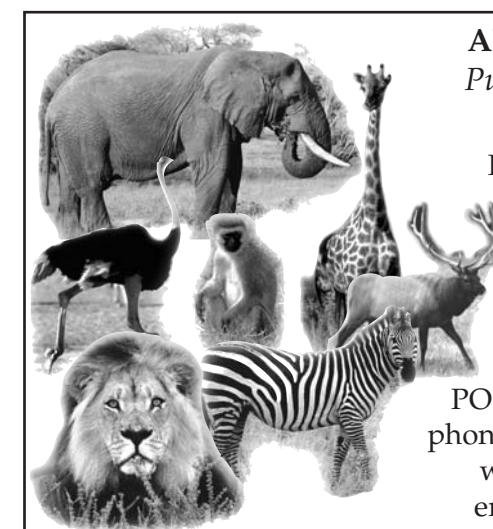
**4 Compliance:** A Professional Member's facility must have an established record of good compliance with applicable state and federal regulations. Professional members must disclose any charges, convictions, or judgments involving animal welfare or public safety related to animal ownership, or serious wildlife violations, having occurred in the past ten years, which may be grounds for denial.

**5 Support:** Professional members must support the goals of the Feline Conservation Federation, which include protecting the rights of qualified individuals to own and to pursue captive husbandry of wild felines, providing the expertise and material support to ensure the continued welfare and viability of captive populations, and funding research and protection programs for felids living in nature.

**6 Denial or Revocation:** Professional membership may be denied or revoked for charges, convictions, or judgments involving animal welfare or public safety related to animal ownership, or serious wildlife violations, or for other reasons deemed applicable by the committee or board.

**7 Process:** To qualify for Professional Membership, the member must:

a) Register their feline handling experience with the FCF Registered Handler Program and have met the standards for registration as either an Inter-



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mediate or Advanced Handler, or be registered under the Research, Conservation, Veterinary, or Education status.

b) Register their wildcats with the FCF Feline Census if they possess wild felines.

c) Sign a commitment to meet the FCF Professional Code of Conduct.

d) Disclose charges, convictions, or judgments involving animal welfare, public safety related to animal ownership, or

serious wildlife violations occurring in the past ten years.

e) Provide a statement outlining their qualifications that meet the definition, standards, licensing, compliance, and support requirements outlined in this Professional Membership Policy.

f) Pay a \$15 non-refundable fee after submitting a truthful and completed online application for Professional Membership upgrade.

**8 Committee Review:** The Professional Member Committee, consisting of three Professional level members, will review the applications to ensure all requirements have been met and will grant or deny the upgrade in a reasonable amount of time using the definition of a professional member as found in the Constitution and this policy. A simple majority of two yes votes from the committee is required to be accepted as a Professional Member.

**9 Privacy:** The results of the Professional Member Committee's vote will be recorded in the Administration section of the website, but will not be made public.

**10 Terms of Service:** The members of the Professional Member Committee will serve two-year terms running concurrently with the term of the appointing board.

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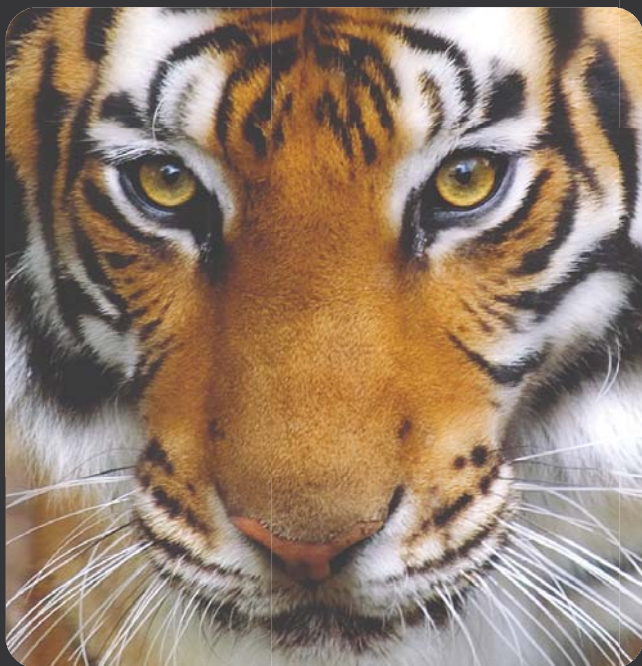
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## Blast From the Past: El Tigre

January/February 1974  
Volume 18 Issue 1

By Mrs. Pat Russell

We would like to share our story with the LIOC members about bringing our margay, El Tigre, from Ecuador, South America, to the United States. We were encouraged several months ago by Mrs. Clara LeBlanc, who was also from New Orleans, to write this and we are just now finding the time to do so.

To begin with, Russ is a commercial oil diver and we were in Ecuador for six months in 1972, on a job. We arrived in January, and saw Tiggy for the first time in March. We estimated his age at around one and a half to two months at that time. He was fairly large and the natives had put him in a cardboard box and brought him out of the jungle with a piece of raw meat thrown in and he was covered with his own feces. We purchased him for \$28 American dollars. He growled loudly and spit every time someone attempted to look in the box. He was a real cutie even in that condition.

Well, to make a long story short, Tiggy was the only thing I had to talk to from four to seven days at a time, as Russ

would be offshore on the pipeline laying barge for that length of time. There were very few American women in the tiny, poor seacoast town we were in, and up until the last two months, I did not meet them. Also, my Spanish was very limited, so you can imagine how attached Tiggy and I became; he was, and still is, my shadow. I felt at times like I would have gone mad except for this delightful, intelligent, playful creature. We had no children then.

We had a small wooden cage built with numerous holes in it, which we covered with cloth in hopes that we could carry him with us on the flight back to the U.S. I do not think either of us has ever worried about anything as much as this. I even went so far as to fly to Quito, the capitol city, and attempt to apply for permission to take him out of the country with the Minister of Production Office. They were very skeptical of success, although they were very accommodating and extremely nice. Then we wrote to the U.S. Fish, Game, and Wildlife Department on how to receive permission to bring the cat into the U.S. Well, we received that permission only by sending proof that we had purchased him before January 21, or there around, which was before the species went on the endangered species list. We received this permission two weeks after we had returned to the U.S.

We took our hearts in our hands the day of departure and, since we had not heard from the Minister of Production, we decided to put him in his cage. I carried him onto the plane and they must have thought he was a carry-on suitcase; I almost cried with joy when we made it onboard without a hitch. We declared Tiggy with Miami Customs and they let us right through, only checking his inoculation record, particularly his rabies shot. We thought he would be impounded immediately according to the information sent to us by the U.S. government, but I guess the whole truth is that we were just two very lucky, lucky people.

Tiggy adjusted well, but then this year, only one year after we returned to the U.S., he escaped

from the house, was out for two nights and one day, and was shot with a .22 caliber rifle (using hollow point bullets) by an unaware man. We had talked to his wife the evening before and shown her a picture of him, but the man had just arrived home from work and had not seen his wife. Tiggy never did leave our block, which has quite a few trees. He was shot twice; one bullet entered under his jaw on the left side, took a tooth and part of his tongue and shattered the left sinus before leaving just above his nose. Fortunately, it did not hit a main blood vessel or his trachea. The other bullet hit in his groin area and lodged under the base of his tail; we were lucky again because it did not hit the intestines. Gratefully, we have excellent veterinarians, Dr. Stone and Dr. Gardner at the Watts Vet Clinic, who repaired him without any cosmetic damage apparent today.

He recovered rapidly, only two days in the hospital, and my being a registered nurse came in handy when I had to give him a series of antibiotic shots, which, surprisingly, he let me do without even having to hold him. You could see the pain in his eyes and his stiffness for a week, but being the tough little nut he is, he did so well that I took him on a trip to Idaho, to visit my parents, putting him in a small cage and carrying him on board without too much trouble. I suggest, however, that anyone carrying a small margay on a flight not show him to anyone. I almost panicked in Denver, when the security check wanted me to take him out of his cage so they could check the cage. I was able to talk them out of it. He would have had a heart attack with all the people milling about.

In retrospect, to end this story adequately, I would like to say this: After knowing how many baby exotics we saw in that one small town we were staying in that died in captivity there, and on hearing how many natives would kill the babies' mothers in order to get them, I would never want to purchase one again in a situation like that, in hopes that the demand would decrease eventually so that our future generations will have the live animal to look at, instead of just reading about them in history books.

We hope to breed Tiggy, as he is very healthy and seems ready to go.



**This isn't Tiggy, but Julian, one of only a handful of modern day margay alive in the USA. Exotic Feline Breeding Center volunteer Nancy Vandermeij shot this photo of the Center's littlest feline.**





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## **The Cougar Almanac: A Complete Natural History of the Mountain Lion by Robert H. Busch**

A Review by Kane Molavi

If anyone is considering reading *The Cougar Almanac: A Complete Natural History of the Mountain Lion* by Robert H. Busch, I would like to point out a few things based on my personal interpretation of this book. On some issues, Busch and I obviously take opposite stances. A number of experienced FCF members are familiar with everything that I am about to discuss, but this review hopefully will enlighten newer members of the FCF who are seeking knowledge about responsible private ownership of exotic cats (particularly cougars in this case) as well as the importance for it.

First let us look at the title. In my opinion it might have been more appropriate to choose a word other than almanac. According to the website [www.dictionary.reference.com](http://www.dictionary.reference.com), the third definition it provides for the word almanac is “an annual reference book of useful and interesting facts relating to countries of the world, sports, entertainment, etc.” While the majority of the book seems to contain facts, *Cougars as Pets* in Chapter Five deviates into mainly the author’s opinions.

The first thing I clearly disagree with is Busch’s position that he takes regarding the private ownership of cougars. He not only opposes it, but also seems to hold a rather hateful attitude for owners as well as for those who are considering becoming owners. Busch expresses his animosity, writing, “Sadly, in the United States it is usually legal to own a pet cougar if you comply with state and local laws.” I think perhaps he has formed this opinion after visiting sanctuaries. He speaks rather highly of Turpentine Creek Exotic Wildlife Ranch, and notes that, “For many of the cats, the ranch is their final home after years of neglect in the hands of unthinking humans who believed that the animals would make cute and interesting pets.” He quotes Don Jackson, Turpentine Creek Ranch founder, “People buy them when they are cute and cuddly little things and then do not know what to do with them when they get to be

great big adults.” What Busch and Jackson fail to acknowledge is that not everyone thinks that cougars are cute and cuddly only when they are kittens and that certain individuals are also looking specifically to own a greater sized cat in the first place.

Busch also pointed out that, “One of [Turpentine’s] biggest problems is that faced by most owners of exotic cats: the sheer cost of feeding the animals. An adult cougar will consume over 2,000 pounds of meat every year.” At the time the book was written, Turpentine Creek Ranch fed over 21,000 pounds of food per month. Busch is sympathetic for Jackson, and he complains about the problems caused by the “unthinking humans” when the “problems” were taken on by Jackson and became those of Turpentine Creek Ranch. What is unfortunate about this situation is that either inexperienced or irresponsible people purchase exotic cats, and the cats do end up suffering because of it. Busch and Jackson both disregard and refuse to mention cases of responsible owners who clearly know what they are doing and provide the best possible life for their cats. It is entirely understandable to consider it inappropriate for financially challenged individuals to be able to own cougars (or other exotic cats), although demonizing the ownership of all private owners of exotic cats is both unreasonable and unacceptable.

In another paragraph, Busch quoted Michael W. Fox, at that time the vice president of the Humane Society of The United States. “Exotic pets are ‘not biologically adapted to live with humans.’” Busch did not include any elaboration by

Fox on this comment, what he meant specifically, or how he came to this opinion. Busch then added, “If the animal gets sick, few veterinarians will touch it.” Hmm! So, I guess that he apparently was not aware that any responsible owner would have already pre-arranged for a local vet who deals specifically with exotic cats, to see his or her cat at any time, should the need arise.

Busch’s objections to pet cougars includes his belief that, “In many cases, the animals are not even treated as living things but rather as objects of amusement.” He even goes so far as to state that, “The cougar has suffered more than other animals as an exotic pet.” Really? I guess he never interviewed any of the hundreds of cougar owners that have been part of this organization the past five decades. Some individuals are unable to own and properly care for exotic animals regardless of what the reason(s) might be. Although, once again, due to the fact that Busch failed to specify that he was only referring exclusively to these individuals, he clearly believes that every single cougar that has ever been kept as a pet has suffered.

This book was probably researched and written prior to the explosion of amateur videos that are today readily accessible on YouTube and other sites, which clearly contradict his allegation. I have noticed that these fully qualified and responsible individuals treat their exotic cats in the same way that any other loving or over-protective parents would treat their “human” children. In many of these videos, we see up close and personal interactions between owners and their cougars. Based on the footage, it is quite clear that the cats are undeniably happy as well as healthy (both physically and psychologically). Many of these videos can be found on several YouTube channels, such as REXANOEXOTICS, Big-CatHaven, wdodgeboy, TheCat-ManDoodz, and mocha5cougar. In addition, as many FCF members know (some may not), the Culvers have an amazing educational DVD on the subject of the private ownership of cougars

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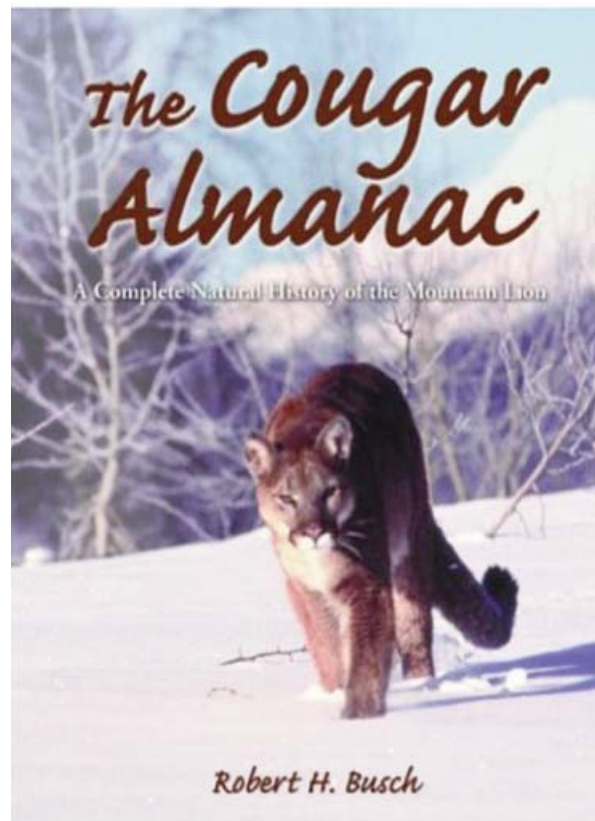
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entitled "Cougar Development," which I purchased from the FCF website.

The final part of Busch's "Cougars as Pets" section that I would like to address is the last paragraph where Busch uses Ron Sellton, a guide and outfitter in Idaho who owned a pet cougar for three years, in order to attempt to persuade the reader further. Busch includes a quote by Sellton, declaring, "I shot its mother and then felt sorry for the little thing," and then adds that Sellton "had troubles right away." Busch again quotes Sellton, stating, "When a house cat sharpens its claws, it can ruin your couch," and "When my cougar did the same thing, it ruined my house," as opposed to just simply his couch. Was Sellton oblivious to the concept of an outdoor enclosure for such a large cat? Another factor that should not be ignored is that Sellton shot the mother of his "beloved pet cougar." If someone thinks that cougars are these dangerous and wild monsters and indulges in killing cougars purely for recreation/entertainment, why would he/she ever have even the slightest interest in owning one as a pet? The fact that Sellton suddenly decided to raise this cougar out of pity means he probably had no knowledge of, or experience with, the private ownership of exotic cats. Busch relays that Sellton was unable to feed the cougar properly and failed to keep the animal well tempered. He quotes Sellton, saying, "It did not want to be a pet; it always wanted to get out." Busch concludes his chapter with Sellton's recommendation on the suitability of cougars as pets, saying, "Forget it. The cat will never be happy and neither will you. Get a dog instead." But in all seriousness, when we consider Ron Sellton's comments on the issue of the private ownership of cougars, let us not forget that they came from an individual who was clearly not a responsible exotic animal owner, but also from someone who did not even have so much as a miniscule fragment of previous knowledge or experience whatsoever with exotic cats. Another thing we know from this is that he has never been the kind of individual who has ever even been interested in owning an exotic cat, thus it comes as no surprise that he had these negative experiences with this cougar that he attempted to raise, not to mention the



fact that this particular one could have had an aggressive personality.

Aside from the "Cougars as Pets" section in Chapter Five, the majority of the information in the book is factual. In the "Evolution" section in Chapter One on page 21, Busch pointed out the fact that:

Best known of all Felids, of course, is the ubiquitous house cat. The common house cat (*Felis catus*) was domesticated somewhere between 3,500 and 7,000 years ago in the Mediterranean area, the descendant of a small prehistoric feline that first appeared in Africa. Actually, we did not domesticate the house cat; more accurately, it adopted us. After humans learned to harvest grain, rodents began to move in after it, and cats moved in after the rodents. To contemporary owners of independent house cats, the fact that the cats made the first move comes as no surprise.

In "The Cougar Today" section of Chapter Eight, Busch writes:

Despite the many problems facing the cougar, recent years have seen a flurry of cougar sightings and cougar reports in the popular media. Part of the explanation for the apparent increase in cougar numbers is the increased number of humans moving into the cats' habitat and observing them for the first time. Today, there

are few wilderness areas in North America that have not been overwhelmed by hikers, hunters, loggers, or mountain bikers. However, it is thought that part of the apparent increase in cougar numbers since the 1960s is real -- a pleasant by-product of improved public attitudes toward the animal in general and predators in particular.

According to Dr. Paul Beier:

Cougar populations throughout the West probably increased during 1965-1980 as [virtually] each state and province changed the legal status of the cougar from bountied predator to game species. In one 1998 survey, a biologist reported increased cougar numbers in British Columbia, California, Colorado, Nevada, Texas, and Wyoming. In fact, in recent years, a number of cougars have even stumbled into urban centers across North America. So now Busch states the "fact" that cougars are making their way into human territory. He also tries to suggest that this is because humans were taking over their area. I would think that he added this statement so that the reader would not suspect what I am about to propose. Could this possibly indicate that, like the cherished family cat, cougars also want to become domesticated? For people (such as myself) who favor this particular species, we would surely hope so. If I understood the author correctly, he is implying that cougars must somehow be attempting to dominate our territory, since we want to take over theirs. I do not know about anyone else, but I do not see how that argument would work, if indeed that is what he was trying to say. That would be beyond preposterous. Regarding mountainous states such as Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado, as humans tend to move in on the cougar's territory (which is clearly situated up in the mountains), if the animals seek to get away from human civilization, would it not be more logical to conclude that perhaps "mountain lions" would want to move further up into the mountains where there would be either less or no human inhabitation? It would only seem sensible if they disliked humans that much and preferred not to coexist with us. Why would they move down into the urban and surrounding areas where more and more people reside? We do know that cougars are

extremely curious. Perhaps they want to get to know us. In the "Common Names for the Cougar" section in Chapter One on page 16, Busch even points out that "In South America they call the great cat Amigo del Christiano, 'Friend of Christian,' a tribute to the gentle and friendly nature of the beast." Did he just say gentle and friendly nature? He did not just use the words "gentle" and "friendly" alone. He said these words in connection with the word nature, indicating to us that it is clearly in their "nature" to be "gentle" and "friendly," as opposed to these behaviors being developed. Then, in the "Cougar Attacks on Humans" section in Chapter Five on page 82, the author also mentions that cougar predation on humans is even more rare and contrary to the cat's nature. He cites Francis Parkman, who wrote in 1892, "The mountain lion shrinks from the face of man." The author notes that even Theodore Roosevelt admitted, in 1901, that instances of the cat having attacked humans are exceedingly rare. And bringing the audience up to the present time, he quotes biologist Alan Rabi-

nowitz, who has studied wild cats from Belize to Bhutan, who describes the cougar as "a very unaggressive cat." In this paragraph, did he just quote an exotic cat biologist confirming the cougar as being "very unaggressive?" He sure did. I like it how each time the author uses the word "nature" when referring to the non-aggressive/non-violent disposition of the cat. It seems like he contradicts his negative opinions with his facts. This is great.

In a section entitled "Kittens" in Chapter Three, Busch says:

The impulse to hunt is innate in cougars, as with all cats. When one young female cougar, which was born in a zoo and had never seen live prey before, was placed in an enclosure in Idaho, and filmed for a recent documentary, she knew just what to do when an injured elk calf was put in her pen. The unfortunate calf was killed within minutes. Another captive cougar in Colorado, that had never hunted sprang against the glass to get at a stuffed deer at the Denver Museum of Natural History. The cat had been born on a fur farm and raised by humans, but its

recognition of prey was instinctive and immediate.

He also writes:

In play, kittens attack a bit of fur or a small stick with vigor, rehearsing the survival skills they will soon depend upon. Chase and tag are perennial favorites among cougar kittens, and "Let's attack Mom" is always good for a laugh or two. In fact, like their domestic cousins, adult cougars will play as well, tossing sticks and chasing imaginary objects and each other just for the fun of it. One observer reported seeing her two year old son throwing sticks to an adult wild cougar, which was jumping out of the way and purring happily.

I did find a lot of the information in this book useful, particularly about cougars born and raised in nature. The author included some interesting cougar history, as well as information regarding the eastern cougar. If you were interested in learning about these cats in nature or about their ancestral lineages, then this book would be an appropriate read.

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Questions? E-mail Erin Patters  
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## Minutes of Board of Directors Special Meeting, August 21-24, 2012

The purpose of the special meeting was to verify that all nominations had been submitted in accordance with the FCF Constitution and By-laws, and for the board to certify an official slate of candidates for the 2013 Board of Director Elections.

On Friday, August 17, the final day to accept or decline nomination, FCF Secretary David Lewis reported to the board that the following slate of candidates accepted their nominations from the membership:

President - Kevin Chambers, Robert Johnson  
Vice President - Patty Perry, Mindy Stinner  
Secretary - Teresa Shaffer, Debi Willoughby  
Treasurer - David Lewis, Lynn Culver  
Directors - Pat Callahan, Jim Sanderson, Marilyn Antle, Heather Grierson, Debi Willoughby, Chris Tromborg

On Monday, August 20, 2012, David

Lewis reported to the board that Robert Johnson, David Lewis, Patty Perry, Marilyn Antle, Teresa Shaffer, Jim Sanderson, and Heather Grierson rescinded their earlier acceptances of their nominations.

David Lewis never provided to the full board copies of the nominations or acceptance letters for David Lewis, Marilyn Antle, Heather Grierson, or Robert Johnson, and the board had not been given the opportunity to certify that these candidates were properly nominated.

During the August 21-24, 2012 Forums Special Meeting, the president asked David Lewis, secretary, to scan and upload the nomination, acceptance, and decline letters for Johnson, Antle, Lewis, and Grierson. Director Robert Johnson posted on the Forum, that per a phone conversation he had with the president the day before, a 2/3 majority of the board, consisting of Teresa Shaffer, Patty Perry, Robert Johnson, David Lewis, and Marilyn Antle, had determined this request by the

president to be unnecessary, and Secretary David Lewis would not comply. No documentation was made available on the Forums for the FCF official record.

President Kevin Chambers posted nomination letters and acceptance letters for Kevin Chambers, Lynn Culver, Debi Willoughby, Mindy Stinner, Chris Tromborg, Jim Sanderson, Patty Perry, Teresa Shaffer, and Pat Callahan on the forums for board review.

The official ballot of candidates for the 2013-2014 Board of Directors will list for voting:

President - Kevin Chambers  
Vice President - Mindy Stinner  
Secretary - Debi Willoughby  
Treasurer - Lynn Culver  
Directors - Pat Callahan, Chris Tromborg

Minutes prepared by Executive Director  
Lynn Culver



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## Minutes of January 2-4, 2013, Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors held a board meeting January 2 to January 4, on the FCF Forums. Purpose of the meeting was to approve minutes from two 2012 board meetings, approve a change of location for the 2013 FCF Convention, and to approve the change of authorized signers of FCF banking accounts. Attending the meeting were President Kevin Chambers, Vice President Mindy Stinner, Secretary Debi Willoughby, Executive Director and Treasurer, Lynn Culver, Director of Conservation Pat Callahan, and Director Chris Tromborg. The 2013 BOD has one empty director seat that will be filled by appointment.

Minutes of the June 7, 2012 Convention Board of Directors Convention Meeting were presented by Lynn Culver and approved by unanimous consent.

Minutes of the special meeting held August 21 - 24, 2012, on the FCF Forums were presented by Lynn Culver and approved by unanimous consent.

Convention Location: Moved by Debi Willoughby, seconded by Pat Callahan; To accept the change of location for our 2013 Convention from Myrtle Beach, SC, to Nashville, TN. Six yes votes, motion passes.

FCF Banking Discussion: Executive Director and Treasurer Lynn Culver reported that the ING savings account currently has only one authorized signer, President Kevin Chambers. A resolution was signed at the June 2012 Convention board meeting to add Lynn Culver, executive director, and Marilyn Antle, treasurer, to the account. Robert Johnson offered to mail the resolution to Patty Perry for her signature, since she was not attending the convention. The resolution was never returned to the ING bank. The new board needs to sign a new resolution to approve the addition of the new vice president, Mindy Stinner, and the new treasurer, Lynn Culver, as signers. Lynn Culver will prepare the ING resolution to be mailed to all board members for their signatures.

The FCF Bank of America checking account (ending in 2519) currently has Marilyn Antle, Kevin Chambers, and Lynn Culver as signers. The signature cards need to be updated by removing Marilyn Antle from the account and adding Mindy Stinner as a signer.

A new Bank of America savings

account (ending in 3505) was opened, without a board meeting or board approval, on August 10, 2012. Marilyn Antle, Robert Johnson, and David Lewis are the signers on this savings account. A \$25,000 check from the FCF checking account was deposited, and another transfer of \$5,000 from the FCF checking account was deposited into this savings account that same day. Lynn Culver discovered this new savings account on September 9, and contacted Bank of America to have the account frozen because it was opened without full board knowledge or approval.

Moved by Debi Willoughby, seconded by Pat Callahan, that Marilyn Antle be removed as a signer of the BOA checking account, and add as signers Mindy Stinner,

vice president, and indicate Lynn Culver as treasurer. (President Kevin Chambers is currently a signer on this account and will remain so.) Secondly, to remove Marilyn Antle, Robert Johnson, and David Lewis as signers from the Bank of America savings account (ending in 3505), and replace them with Kevin Chambers, Lynn Culver, and Mindy Stinner. Thirdly, to approve the addition of Mindy Stinner, vice president, and Lynn Culver, treasurer, as signers of the ING savings account. (President Kevin Chambers is currently a signer on this account and will remain so.) Six yes votes, motion passes.

Minutes prepared by Executive Director Lynn Culver

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Feline Conservation Federation

January/February 2013 Volume 57, Issue 1

The mission of the FCF is to support the conservation of wild felids by advocating for qualified individuals to own and to pursue husbandry of wild felines, providing expertise and material support to ensure the continued welfare and viability of these populations, contributing to research, and funding protection programs that benefit felids living in nature.

**Front Cover:** Debi Willoughby takes Dakota bobcat for a walk in the snow deposited by the historic blizzard Nemo. Dakota is a working wildlife ambassador of Jungle Encounters. Photo by Debi Willoughby.

**Back Cover:** Fishing cat kitten born at Kapi'yva Exotics this winter will be moving to Florida to bring awareness of this threatened species at Carson Springs Wildlife Center. Read more about Kapi'yva Exotics breeding program on page 11 of this *Journal*. Photo by Brandi Chism.

