



Feline Conservation Federation

March/April 2016 • Volume 60 Issue 2



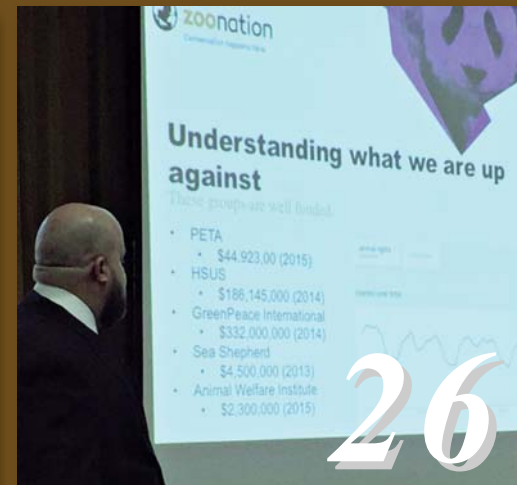
TABLE OF

contents

MARCH/APRIL 2016 | VOLUME 60, ISSUE 2

Features

- 6 **Where Will You Be This June?**
Join the FCF in Fort Lauderdale, and experience all the fun of the Annual Convention!
- 8 **The Confiscation Nightmare is Over!**
Melanie Boynes is reunited with Lepa and Bo tigers.
- 10 **Wildcat Safety Net United Two Tigers with Their Owners**
This time the fund helps tigers and their owners become whole again.
- 10 **Working Together**
Vera Chaples shares her views on "rescues."
- 20 **Encounter with a Wild Bobcat**
Fred Hood hits camera gold with a bobcat at Yosemite.
- 24 **The Back-Up Plan**
Lynette Lyon advises on the need for proper planning to achieve smooth transitions.
- 26 **It's Time We Take Back the Conversation**
Mindy Stinner fills in FCF members on the speaker presentations at this two day seminar.





JOIN THE FCF IN ITS CONSERVATION EFFORTS

WWW.FELINECONSERVATION.ORG

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.

Contact Us

Species

- 14 Observation of a Margay Birth
Shirley Wagner accounts the details in this 1974 LIOC reprint of the delivery of Tuffy Margay's kitten.

Conservation

- 16 Laurie Marker's Cheetah Conservation
Debi Willoughby attended the Cheetah Conservation Fund lecture by founder Laurie Marker.
- 23 Virtual Educational Show is Making an Impact on Human/Wildlife Co-Existence
Debi Willoughby teaches kids in Texas about their backyard wildlife neighbors.
- 33 2016 Spring Wildlife Conservation Expo
Chris Tromborg represents FCF at this first ever spring Wildlife Conservation Network Expo.

Pictorials

- 18 Your Best Shots
Lena Tran, Tammy Schrader, Julie McNamara, Richard Bunyan, Jennifer Kasserman, Kevin Burgess, Jr., Noel Cowell, Stephanie Wells.

FOUNDER:
Catherine Cisin

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
Lynn Culver
executivedirector@felineconservation.org

OFFICERS:
President
Kevin Chambers
7816 N CR 75 W
Shelburn, IN 47879
812-397-2302
president@felineconservation.org

Vice President
Mindy Stinner
P.O. Box 882
Mebane, NC 27302
336-421-0065
vicepresident@felineconservation.org

Secretary
Debi Willoughby
281 Albee Road
Uxbridge, MA 01569
508-380-4722
secretary@felineconservation.org

Treasurer
Lynn Culver
141 Polk Road 664
Mena, AR 71953
479-394-5235
treasurer@felineconservation.org

DIRECTORS:
Conservation
Pat Callahan
1961 Connecticut Ave
Cincinnati, OH 45224
513-304-7155
conservation@felineconservation.org

Chris Tromborg
217 Baja Avenue
Davis, CA 95616
530-753-2763
director@felineconservation.org

Robert Bean
4633 Chandler Road
Hermitage, TN 37076
615-889-4633
RBeandirector@felineconservation.org

JOURNAL STAFF:
Managing Editor:
Lynn Culver

Layout/Copy Editor:
Eden Burgess, edenburgessfcf@gmail.com

Associate Editor:
Judith Hoffman

Membership Services:
Jennifer Kasserman
816-674-7277
membershipservices@felineconservation.org

Organization

- 4 Letter from the President
Info on Convention and BOD Elections
- 5 From the Executive Director
No More Generic Tiger Exemption
- 16 Registered Handlers
- 17 Donations

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

lynnculver57@gmail.com, or send by postal service to: 141 Polk 664, Mena, AR 71953.



Feline Conservation Federation

Letter from the President

FCF CONVENTION IN FORT LAUDERDALE

The annual convention in Ft. Lauderdale/Miami is almost here! This year's is shaping up to be the best one we have had in years. Starting out with our accommodations, these are the best ever. A fabulous Double Tree Hilton located right on the beach with tons of things to see and do. Normally, you will pay twice the amount for a room there.

The events kick off Thursday with a board meeting in the morning, open to all members. Registration begins at 2 pm with the chance to play with the young felines in attendance. That is always a fan favorite. We will have an icebreaker dinner that evening, followed by the annual general membership meeting and a presentation by Dr. Brian Davis, on the essential role of genomics for the effective conservation of animals under human care.



Then we have the fabulous field trips on Friday. It will be a long day, but it will be packed full of things you just aren't going to see anywhere else. First we will be going to the Zoological Wildlife Foundation, owned by FCF members Mario and Maria Tabrau. We will see all kinds of cats there that just aren't seen much anymore...clouded leopards, white lions, and Amur leopards, in addition to more common tigers, cougars, caracals, servals, and more. We will be given a guided tour of this facility which is ranked as the #2 tourist attraction in all of Miami by Trip Advisor. After the tour, we will be given special hands-on and photo opportunities with young feline (and other) ambassador animals. The cost of this VIP tour and treatment is normally more than you will

be paying for the entire convention package!

Following the ZWF, we are heading over to the Miami Zoo for a catered lunch and to view their fabulous collection. Later in the afternoon, we can take in a wildlife show. Immediately after that, a special presentation for only FCF members will be getting to meet their ambassador cheetah up close and personal. Once we get back to the hotel, you can either relax at the pool or beach or step out for some Ft. Lauderdale night life.

Saturday will be our day for speakers in the morning. We have planned free time from noon until 6 pm for you to be able to get out and enjoy the beautiful Florida weather and surroundings. That evening will be our banquet with the silent auction ending and the select live auction items going up for bids. Be sure to bring something for the auction and bid often and high.

Sunday brings an optional day of activities to conclude the convention. There will be the Basic Husbandry Course that lasts 8 am to 5 pm. Other attendees may want to take in the optional field trip up to Wellington, to see FCF member Judy Berens' Panther Ridge facility. Here you will see even more amazing cats and a beautiful facility. Meet Charlie the cheetah, Bella the

jaguar, as well as ocelots, caracals, servals, clouded leopards, and more. After the tour, you will return to the hotel in time for lunch and then maybe take the Advanced Husbandry Workshop.

The entire convention is based on accessibility and friendship. We want everyone to greet old friends and make as many new ones as possible. We don't believe in cliques. If you ever have a question for a board member or speaker, just step right up and say hi. Even the banquet is a rather informal affair. Yes, we might have someone there in a tuxedo or elegant evening gown, but you will find someone in shorts and a t-shirt just as often. Underneath, we are all just crazy cat people.

Get your convention registration in

soon and see you there!!!

ELECTION OF THE FCF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2016 is an election year for the FCF. Nominations open May 1st and close August 10th. The election is in September, and the winning candidates take office on January 1, 2017.

I encourage everyone to consider running for office. You can help guide the FCF into the future, which is going to need all the help it can get. The FCF needs people willing to help keep the right to own animals alive and to help teach future generations the wonder of wildcats.

The offices up for election are president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and three director positions. The term lasts for two years. For details on what each office involves, you may go to the website and look under the members' only section at the bylaws. The duties are listed there.

Any member may be nominated for any of the offices, except that nominees for president must have been elected and served at least one term on the board of directors or must have been a member of the FCF for a minimum of two years. To be properly nominated for any of the offices, the nominee must have the signatures of two members on a document or documents nominating them for that office. The signatures must be mailed or emailed to the secretary before August 10th. If emailed, the signatures must be scans of a physical signature. Electronic signatures are not acceptable, nor are emails that do not include a signature attached. A member may nominate themselves as long as they also have another member's signature nominating them.

All members properly nominated for office will be contacted to notify them that they have been nominated. Once the nominee has confirmed that they accept the nomination and will serve if elected, their name will be added to the ballot.

A member may be nominated to any number of the offices, but may only serve in one capacity if elected to more than one office.

I encourage all members to consider running and be a part of keeping the FCF the leader in the realm of captive wildcat husbandry and conservation.

Kevin Chambers

From the Executive Director

By Lynn Culver

On March 24, 2016, the F & W Service announced their final rule ending the special exemption granted on September 11, 1998, that amended the CBW regulations to delete the requirement to obtain a CBW registration for holders of sub-specific crossed or generic tigers bred and sold in interstate commerce. This March's final decision concludes more than four years of consideration by the Service following their August 4, 2011 draft proposal published in the Federal Register copied below:

We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), propose to amend the regulations that implement the Endangered Species Act (Act) by removing inter-sub-specific crossed or generic tiger (Panthera tigris) (i.e., specimens not identified or identifiable as members of Bengal, Sumatran, Siberian, or Indochinese subspecies from the list of species that are exempt from registration under the Captive-Bred Wildlife (CBW) regulations. The exemption currently allows those individuals or breeding operations who want to conduct otherwise prohibited activities, such as take, interstate commerce, and export, under the Act with U.S. captive-bred, live inter-sub-specific crossed or generic tigers to do so without becoming registered. We are proposing this change to the regulations to strengthen control over captive breeding of tigers in the United States to ensure that such breeding supports the conservation of the species in the wild consistent with the purposes of the Act.

When the 2011 proposal was published, it was not unexpected, as concerns by the World Wildlife Fund and TRAFFIC North America about the potential role U.S. captive tigers may play, or could potentially play, in the trade in tiger parts had been brewing for years. A July 2008 TRAFFIC report, titled "Paper Tigers? The Role of the U.S. Captive Tiger Population in the Trade in Tiger Parts," failed to find any evidence that U.S. tigers are entering domestic or international trade as live animals or as parts and products. However, TRAFFIC made several recommendations to the Service to close potential loopholes in current Federal and State regulations to

avoid the use of captive U.S. tigers in trade. In particular, TRAFFIC wanted the Service to eliminate the exemption given holders of sub-specific crossed or generic tigers from the requirements to register and submit annual reports under the CBW regulations.

In its March decision, the Service acknowledged that after years of speculation and investigation, it is still unaware of any evidence that tiger parts are entering into trade from the captive U.S. population of tigers. The Service justified its action out of an abundance of caution given the precarious status of tigers in the wild. The tiger was once abundant



throughout Asia. At the end of the 19th century, an estimated 100,000 tigers occurred in the wild, but by the late 1990s, the estimated population had declined to 5,000-7,000 animals. Today's population in the wild is thought to be 3,000-5,000 individuals, according to the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List estimate, with no more than 2,500 mature breeding adults. The once-abundant tiger now lives in small, fragmented groups, mostly in protected forests, refuges, and national parks. The species occupies only about seven percent of its original range, and in the past decade, the species' range has decreased by as much as 41 percent.

By rescinding the generic tiger ruling, the government has reversed a 17-year history of unhindered interstate transfer of tiger genetics. One of the most notable results of the generic tiger rule was the ability of tiger breeders to freely exchange bloodlines across state lines, greatly increasing the genetic health of the rare colors of tigers. Before the exemption rule, breeders had to choose between complying with the burdensome registration

process to gain a CBW permit to be able to buy and sell across state lines, or stick to in-state purchase and sales only, or look for ways to acquire donated tigers. But with the exemption granted generic tigers in 1998 (and all white tigers are by Service definition, "generic"), suddenly out-crossing possibilities were not limited by state boundaries and heterozygous tigers became abundant. It didn't take more than one or two out-crossings to undo the deleterious genetic flaws such as strabismus, hip dysplasia, and spinal deformities that had been set by the early days of AZA zoo inbreeding. Today, the exhibit world is full of flawless white tigers made healthy through the influx of unrelated orange tigers.

Another result of the generic tiger rule has been an increase in the number of tigers. The U.S. population has been wildly estimated as high as 10,000, but the latest 2016 FCF census reveals that it has been declining from historic levels and is closer to 2,500. Less than 300 tigers are part of AZA-managed sub-species specific breeding programs, about half being Amur tigers and the other half split between Sumatran and Malayan tigers. The remaining tigers in America are a mix of Bengal, Amur, and Bengal with Amur genes. Whether these "mixed breed" tigers have conservation value is debatable, as science delves deeper into the DNA history of tigers, uncovering evidence that Amur and Bengal are not really distinct sub-species.

The Service believes that breeding sub-specific crossed or generic tigers does not provide a conservation benefit for the long-term survival of the species. It will be up to licensed tiger breeding operations to prove otherwise to the Service, that is, provide pedigree histories, and DNA results to show that their bloodlines are not highly inbred, that their sub-species is pure, or close to pure. This will mean DNA testing, pedigree tracking, and tying breeding operations to the survival of tigers in nature. This kind of ex-situ – in-situ link is usually established through monetary funding of protection and conservation efforts of the animals in their natural habitat. The amount of financial support required to meet Service expectations is normally on a sliding scale based upon the operating budget of the facility applying for registration.

Where Will You Be This June?

Where – Bahia Mar Double Tree Hilton, 810 Sea Breeze Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, Florida
When – Thursday, June 16, through Saturday, June 18, 2016

Other Events on Sunday, June 19

FCF Basic Wild Feline Husbandry Course
Advanced Wild Feline Husbandry Education Workshop
Tour of Panther Ridge Conservation Center



Registration Information –

The three-day Convention fee is \$200 per person. Children rates and single day registration fees are available; see the online registration form on the FCF website or the form included in this Journal. Early registration ends June 1st; after that, the fee increases to \$235 and the FCF room guarantee is closed, so be sure to reserve your room before June 1st. At the conclusion of Convention, there are three optional events planned for Sunday, June 19th. Each has a separate fee to participate. The FCF Basic Wild/Exotic Feline Husbandry Course will be taught in the Clipper Room at the Bahia Mar Hotel from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. And new this year, an Advanced Feline Husbandry Workshop will be taught in the Mariner Room from 2:00 to 6:00 pm. We have also arranged for a special tour of the Panther Ridge Conservation Center in Wellington, Florida, from 9:30 to 11:30 am. Leave the hotel by 8:00 am in your car or carpool with others going, and you will arrive back at the Bahia Mar around 12:30 pm; in time for lunch and then to take the 2:00 pm Advanced Husbandry Workshop. So take advantage of the options and stay an extra day or two. Use the Online Registration Form on the FCF website to sign up and pay with PayPal. You may also use the registration form enclosed and include credit card information or a check and mail to FCF Treasurer, 141 Polk Road 664, Mena, AR 71953.

Hotel Information –

Bahia Mar Double Tree Hilton is located on the beach and the intercostal waterway. The FCF room price is \$99 double occupancy, \$109 triple occupancy, \$119 for 4 people. Our special rate is available until June 1st. The FCF rate will be honored from Sunday, June 12, through Wednesday, June 22, so come early, stay late, and enjoy the Florida sunshine, breezes, ocean, and all the vacation activities that abound. Our room fee includes wireless internet access, refrigerators and microwaves in our rooms, and reduced hotel parking fee of \$10 daily. Exotic kittens under 30 pounds are allowed. FCF members pay a \$25 per kitten fee, maximum two per room. Breakfast is not included. There is a convenient online Registration Form for the Bahia Mar on the FCF website located on the Upcoming Events Convention Details page. You can also call 855-610-8733 to reserve a room.



Schedule of Events -

Thursday, June 16

9:00 am	Board of Directors Meeting
2:00 pm	Registration, meet & greet, exotic kittens on display, silent auction
6:00 pm	Cash bar, dinner, membership meeting, talk by Brian Davis

Friday, June 17

9:00 am – noon	Tour Zoological Wildlife Foundation, Miami
12:30 – 5:00 pm	Tour Miami Metro Zoo, Miami
6:00 pm	Dinner on your own and free time

Saturday, June 18

9:00 am – noon	Speakers (Chris Tromborg, Mindy Stinner, Kathy Stearns, Jim Sanderson, Judy Berens)
Noon – 6:00 pm	Lunch on your own and free time
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm	Cash bar, banquet dinner, live auction

Sunday, June 19

8:00 am to 5:00 pm	FCF Wild/Exotic Feline Husbandry Course, Mariner Room, Bahia Mar Hotel
9:30 am – 11:30 am	Tour of Panther Ridge Conservation Center, Wellington, Florida
2:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Advanced Feline Husbandry Workshop, Clipper Room, Bahia Mar Hotel



Exotic Kittens at Convention

Florida Freshwater Fish and Wildlife regulates exotic cats, and you must have a current state license to bring cats to Convention, even if you live out of state. You can apply for a personal pet license or an exhibitor license on the Florida FF&W website. These licenses take several weeks to process and in addition, if you live out of state, you will need an import permit. Allow six weeks for

2016 FCF Convention Details

processing license and permit.

Field Trips

Friday

9:00 am to noon: Zoological Wildlife Foundation, Miami, has an impressive assortment of birds and mammals, including colored tigers, white lions, spotted and melanistic jaguars, Amur leopards, snow leopards, clouded leopards, cougars, and caracals. There will be photo opportunities and hands-on with baby ambassadors!

12:30 – 5:00 pm: Miami Metro Zoo, Miami, features 900 animals on 280 acres, including their new Sumatran tiger cub, Satu. We'll enjoy a deli lunch in air-conditioned comfort, tour the zoo on our own, and then watch their wildlife show, followed by a Q & A and photo session with their ambassador cheetah.

Sunday

9:30 – 11:30 am: Panther Ridge Conservation Center, Wellington, Florida, is about a 75-minute drive north. PRCC houses ambassador cheetah, jaguar, black panther, cougar, ocelot, clouded leopard, serval, and caracal in beautifully landscaped habitats.

Meal Information –

Thursday Icebreaker Buffet

Chicken Tortilla Soup

Seasonal Greens, Jicama, Cucumbers, Seasoned Croutons, Served With Jalapeño Ranch Dressing

Roasted Corn and Black Bean Salad

Fajita Style Chicken and Beef Strips with Sautéed Bell Peppers and Onions

Black Beans and Rice

Shredded Lettuce, Cheese, Diced Tomato and Onions, Guacamole, Sour Cream, Fresh Tomato Salsa, Served With Taco Shells and Warm Tortillas

Cinnamon Twists, Traditional Flan

Freshly Brewed Colombian Coffee and Iced Tea

Friday Miami Zoo Deli Lunch Buffet

Rustic Breads and Rolls

Smoked Turkey

Grilled Chicken Salad

Virginia Maple Ham

Assorted Cheese Board

Roasted Pita Bread with Hummus Dip

Seasonal Fruit Salad

Red Bliss Potato Salad

Fresh Condiment Platter

Fresh Baked Cookies

Sodas and Bottled Waters



Saturday Night Banquet Caribbean Buffet

Conch Chowder

Cold Yucca Salad, Cilantro Vinaigrette

Three Bean Salad

Mojo Roasted Pork

Jerk Spiced Chicken, Pineapple Mango Salsa

Pigeon Peas and Rice

Fried Plantains

Passion Fruit Cake, Pineapple Upside-Down Cake and Coconut Cake

Freshly Brewed Colombian Coffee and Iced Tea

Airports and Shuttle Information –

Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport (FLL), 320 Terminal Dr., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315– just 6.5 miles from the hotel.

Transportation to the hotel – approximately \$12.65 roundtrip through GO Airport Shuttle

Alternative airport - Miami International Airport, 2100 NW 42nd Ave, Miami, FL 33142.

Rent a car and it's approximately a 50-minute drive.



You know you wanna cuddle with a baby like this at Convention! What are you waiting for?!

The Confiscation Nightmare is Over!

By Melanie Boynes

Four years have gone by since the nightmare began. Lepa and Bo were released into the custody of Sue Pearce of Animal Adventures, in Okeechobee, June of 2013. At first, things were fine. But over the next two and a half years, things got progressively worse.

I drove to the facility on weekends and cleaned all cat enclosures and fed all cats on Saturdays. On Sundays, I cleaned all tubs and again fed all cats. Whatever time remained, I visited with Lepa and Bo.

Then there was a USDA inspection September 21, 2015, which did not go well. According to the facility owner, this was my fault because I spoke out. As a result, I was informed that I was no longer allowed on the property. Now I had to endure emotional abuse at the



Lepa photobombs Bo in their new enclosures at Mystic Jungle Educational Facility in Live Oak, Florida.

hands of an exotic animal person, after years of suffering at the hands of state and federal agencies.

I reached out to Vera Chaples of Mystic Jungle. She agreed, as did her mother-in-law who visited this facility in Okeechobee, that Lepa and Bo needed to be removed as soon as possible. Vera called Sue to arrange to have our tigers relocated to Mystic Jungle and was informed that she had already made plans to send them to an undisclosed facility in six weeks. That is when Vera Chaples of Mystic Jungle stepped up and said that a line had been crossed. Vera informed Sue that what she was doing was immoral and unethical and apparently her words had an effect. Sue changed her mind and agreed to let Lepa and Bo be moved to Mystic Jungle.

Hence, "Operation Save Tarzan's Tigers" was launched online. Mark Chaples, Robert Chaples, Robert Mullen, Marygay Chaples, and Josh traveled to Okeechobee, and literally rescued two tigers that had suffered more than any of God's creatures should suffer.

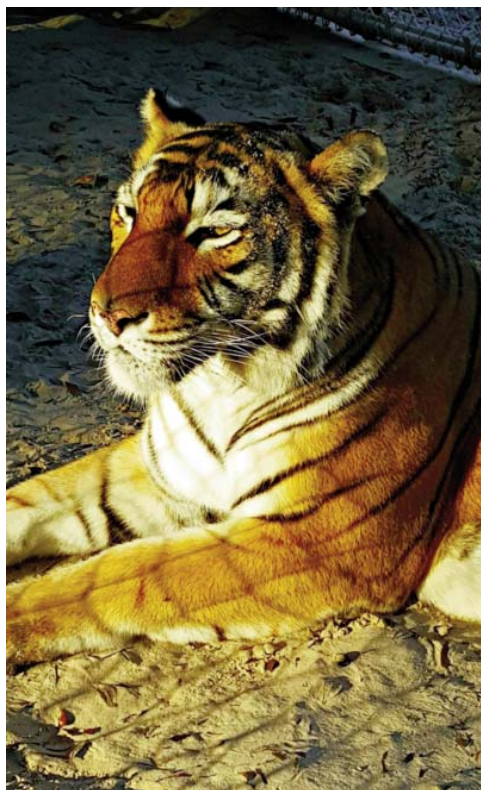
Lepa and Bo unfortunately had to be sedated again. Thank you, Robert Mullen, for your ability and the care that was given to Lepa and Bo. Once it was certain that Lepa and Bo were okay, the crew made the five-hour trek from Okeechobee to Live Oak. All I could do was wait for them in Live Oak, at Mystic Jungle. Finally, the truck pulled in at around 1:30 am. Mark and Vera were warned that Lepa and Bo were aggressive tigers. This

was the same description that Vernon Yates had given three years ago. When Lepa and Bo were unloaded, as soon as Lepa heard my voice, she chuffed and came to the end of the transport. Bo has suffered so much. But after arriving at the Jungle, they have both settled in.

Mark Chaples is in disbelief. The cats he picked up in Okeechobee are NOT the cats that have arrived at the Jungle. I spent the week with them to make sure that they settled in. We had to erect the caging from Okeechobee that was the original caging from Loxahatchee, so Lepa and Bo

remained in transports in a shed. For that first week, I slept in the shed with them on the floor to reassure them that everything was going to be alright.

Bo reportedly used to cry all the time in



Lepa enjoys the warm, evening sun and all the time she gets to spend with her owners. They are all making up for lost time.



Sensitive, gentle Bo has settled in well at Mystic Jungle. He is definitely not the vicious tiger he was portrayed as in the past.



Lepa was at ease in the transport with Melanie by her side.

Okeechobee at Animal Adventures, and Lepa joined with him towards the end, but since arriving at Mystic Jungle, neither cat has “called.” Vera has witnessed this.

Steve made the trip to be reunited with Bo and Lepa. Mark Chaples was in awe at the reunion. To keep animals and owners separated from each other is detrimental to both the animal and the owner.

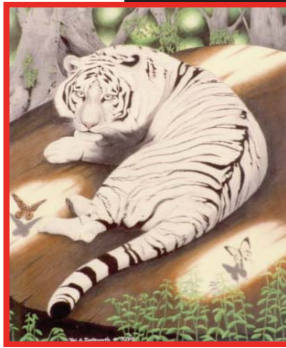
I thank God that Vera Chaples, a respected exotic animal owner, believed what I had been saying for almost two years. With the help of Mark, Robert, Robert, Josh, Gay, and countless Jungle fans and friends, we have raised over \$6,000 for this transfer, but still have more

to raise.

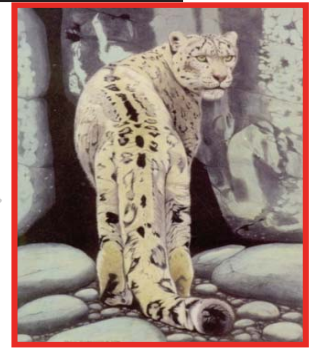
Steve has moved up permanently, and I am looking forward to being at the Jungle every day in the near future and once again being in the lives of Lepa and Bo. With the help and dedication of Mystic Jungle, I have regained my precious Lepa and my boy Bo.

The nightmare began February 27, 2012, and ended February 21, 2016. God bless us all.

FCF NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT



Meet the Wildcat Safety Net Challenge!



The FCF Safety Net Fund awards grants to transport felines in need to available facilities with the space and staff ready to provide lifetime care.

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 at 479-394-5235 to use your credit card and support this worthy cause.

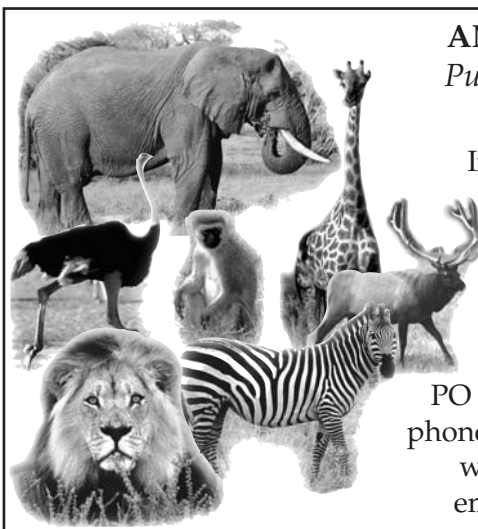
Do your part to help transport captive felines out of harm’s way—support the FCF Wildcat Safety Net with a donation today.



{A special thanks to James and Jeremiah for the work on the lockouts, platforms, and den boxes.}



Melanie now gets almost daily updates from Vera, like this recent picture of her two very settled in tigers. Everyone is visibly at peace with the new arrangements. Photo by Vera Chaples.



ANIMAL FINDERS' GUIDE

Published the first of each month
12 issues – only \$24

Informative articles on exotic animal husbandry and what is happening in the industry.

Exotic animals, related products & services, auctions & shows advertised.

PO Box 99, Prairie Creek, IN 47869
phone: 812-898-2678, fax: 812-989-2013
www.animalfindersguide.com
email: animalfinder@thnet.com

Wildcat Safety Net Unites Two Tigers with their Owners

By Lynn Culver

The Wildcat Safety Net Fund was set up to extend financial assistance for the emergency relocation of exotic felines in need. The fund has a \$1,000 cap on grants awarded, though members can add to a specific project and all additional donations will be forwarded to the facility named by the donor.

The fund was created in part after the FCF awarded \$2,000 to the Exotic Feline Rescue Center to move two tigers and a cougar from Ohio to the Indiana facility. The need for other emergency transports set in motion the Wildcat Safety Net Fund purpose and objectives, and created a committee to review applications and, when approved, award funds.

The fund fills an important need in the captive feline community because it helps stabilize individual situations spiraling out of control. In the years since the fund was created, several fundraisers, special grants, and income from the sale of items on the FCF website have helped finance the fund so that the FCF is ready when called on for help.

The most recent call for help was by Mystic Jungle, which had agreed

to take in two tigers from another Florida facility. The tigers, Lepa and Bo, belonged to a Florida couple, Steve Sipek and Melanie Boynes, but the couple had been denied their Florida Class I license renewal and their big cats had to move to a licensed facility. Melanie wrote in the *July/August 2015 Journal* that her relationship with the sanctuary owner had deteriorated, and she was no longer wel-

come to visit her cats, which were showing signs of emotional suffering. In February of this year, Vera Chaples, who operates Mystic Jungle, agreed to give the two tigers a new home and allow the couple to visit whenever they wish.

Vera applied for a \$1,000 grant to help defray the transportation costs of picking up cage panels and the two tigers and transporting the materials and cats to the Live Oak facility. The grant committee approved the request. Steve put his home up for sale and has permanently moved just ten miles from the Chaples' property to be near his tigers. Melanie commutes the five hours each way on the weekends to visit her cats and will relocate as well, as soon as school is out for the year.

It's a great feeling to not only help move two tigers out of a situation where they were deteriorating, but this time the move united the cats with their owners, instead of separating them, as has happened in previous Safety Net grants.

The Wildcat Safety Net now needs FCF member support so that it holds emergency funds for future needs. Make your tax-deductible donation on the FCF website under the Support FCF page. Thank you.



Steve Sipek and Melanie Boynes with tiger Lepa at the "Jungle." Steve dresses up in his Tarzan persona for this happy reunion photo. Steve began his decades-long love affair with big cats when he was introduced to these charismatic felines in the movies where he was cast as Tarzan.

Working Together

By Vera Chaples

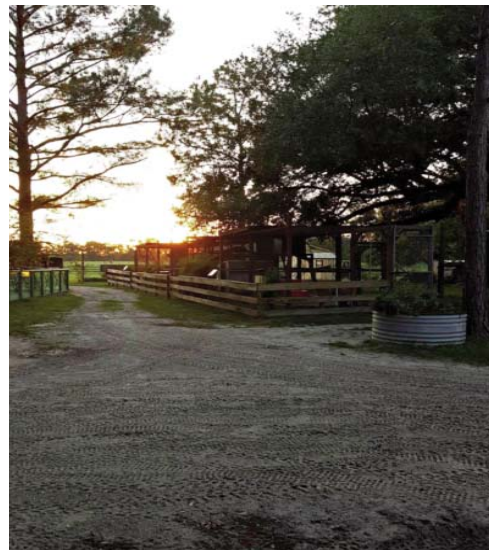
We see it almost daily now. Facility after facility, no matter if it is accredited or not, is under attack. The most favored method now is for ALDF (Animal Legal Defense Fund) to sue the owners of a facility on behalf of a visitor that suffered "mental anguish" after seeing the animal(s). The ALDF has unlimited funding, thus running the facility owner financially down until they can no longer afford to fight. Every victory the ALDF has is a big hit in our community and makes the next facility an easy target.

If this is not an awakening for all, then look at March's headlines. SeaWorld has partnered up with HSUS (Humane Society of the United States). Now add on the Captive Primate Safety Act (H.R. 2920),

which has a section tucked inside to ban the public contact with big cat cubs of any age, and the Big Cat Safety Act (H.R. 3546), which bans breeding of the seven large cat species, and we are getting slammed from all sides. As a friend put it, it is like playing "whack a mole" in D.C., trying to nip all these attacks in the bud.

So why is it so easy to pick us off? Simple! We are easy pickings. We fight amongst ourselves. The furs do not like the scales, the feathers do not like the furs, and the list goes on. Backstabbing, gossiping, and thinking oneself of more worth than anyone else fuels the ARA (Animal Rights Agenda) attack. Well, news flash... We are not going to have anyone to argue with soon.

We can no longer expect everyone else



Sunset at Mystic Jungle Educational Facility in Live Oak, Florida.



Robert Chaples welding guillotine doors in the new enclosures.

to fight the fight for us. Stop fighting. Stop attacking other facilities. Stop making assumptions from a photo or video you saw on the internet, and please do not join in on social media in attacking a community member, or for that matter, ANY exotic owner. Keep in mind that a photo or video is merely a moment in time and can be slanted towards whoever has the agenda. Did you see it for yourself? Did you hear it for yourself? If you did not see it with your own two eyes, hear it with your own two ears, then please do not let it pass from your own two lips!

Instead of jumping in on someone being ridiculed about their feeding, cleaning, or overall care, lend a hand up instead of kicking them when they are down. We are all human and no one is perfect. How trouble for the humans and the animals in human care often begins, is that a crisis is happening (lack of funding, a death in the family, sickness, etc.) and, with society as it is today, help is not sought for fear of having it thrown back in their face (I have seen that happen), fear of being accused as an abuser, or being made to feel like a sub-human.

I have been on the end where another facility owner “visited” our facility. We

are a small place, but the animals have the best of care, both mentally and physically. We clean twice daily. If you research us, you will find a five star review committed to the animals first. Yet this one person’s disdain for our facility was quite obvious. To this day I have no idea why. What I do know is that this type of behavior has got to stop. We all have a vested interest in each and every private owner or facility out there.

I just concluded working on our second animal reassignment/relocation. Those who know me know that I do not get involved in all the internet drama or even the real life drama. My concern is those animals. First, foremost, and above all, exotic cats belong with their owners. Sure. Some can adjust to re-homing, but for most it is extremely stressful. And, as we all know, stress can kill. Cortisol levels rise, immune systems weaken, and then real physical ailments present themselves at a time when the cat is most vulnerable.

The ultimate goal should be to either keep the cat where they are and help the owner if they are willing to accept the help (not a hand-out, but a help-out), or at the very least get the cat(s) to a neutral facility that meets federal and state regulations where the owner may at least visit them.

This cannot be accomplished by fighting. Mystic Jungle Educational Facility’s (MJEF) most recent case was of Steve Sipek and Melanie Boynes’ tigers, Lepa and Bo.

For those unaware of this case, Steve and Melanie’s three cats, Oko, an aged leopardess, and Lepa and Bo, both tigers, were seized February 27, 2012, in Operation Greystoke, by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. Steve and Melanie continued to fight for the return of their cats, finally winning custody, but not possession, in June 2013.

Oko, Lepa, and Bo were then sent to another facility of Melanie and Steve’s choosing. The decision was based on the close proximity to their Loxahatchee home.

During their time at the facility, Oko passed away due to having surgery on an injury that occurred via fence fighting with another leopard. Personalities began to clash and bad blood grew between Melanie and the facility owner. Steve

was allowed on the property with special permission only. Melanie was banned from visiting her cats for four months in 2015.

I watched as this all unfolded. I had spoken with Melanie and Steve in 2015, regarding relocation to here, but the one drawback was the distance for them to drive to visit. The project was placed on the backburner for the time being. That was until February 14, 2016.

I was notified by Melanie that she was only allowed to see her cats from the public sidewalk viewing area, from 11 am until noon. I then knew that the cats and the humans involved needed help. I made the call. After lengthy discussion, Mystic Jungle was granted permission to remove Lepa, Bo, their caging, and their tubs. We were feet on the ground in exactly one week. MJEF had immobilized our hauler and three big cat handlers in short order.

The hardest hurdle we had to deal with was the financial end. We were not totally prepared to move two tigers and incur hauling fees, vet fees, buying additional caging material, lock-down material, post



Volunteers James and Jeremiah building the 15-foot lockout extensions for Bo and Lepa.



Lepa looks over at her friend Renegade the horse in the neighboring pasture from the comfort of her new enclosure.

boundaries. I told Melanie, “It is like watching a docudrama unfolding in real life. The changes that you, Lepa, and Bo have undergone are nothing short of amazing and truthfully it is all you, Mel. You NEVER gave up.” Melanie is with the cats all the time now. She is relocating up here. Steve just got the house sold, and now he also is able to spend time with the cats. And the difference from photos I saw before is like night and day in the cats. They run and play, chuffing all the time. It will bring a tear to your eye, watching a family that has fought so many battles finally



Bo chills in his new round tub. Everyone at the Jungle has round and now Bo and Lepa do, too!!

buckets, winches, etc. So how could I raise funds without bashing the other facility? After all, the words “rescue from abusive” or “rescue from deplorable conditions” always seem to make people reach into that pocket. But truthfully, at what expense?

It does take some thought. If you notice I NEVER use the word *rescue*. All of our animals that were not born here are described as “victims of legislation and relocated/rehomed to Mystic Jungle.” The ones that were sent here as part of the prior owner’s contingency plan is honestly displayed as such, as well as the ones that were donated to us as wildlife ambassadors. Thus, it was an “Emergency Relocation of Tarzan’s Tigers” on our GoFundMe page.

The end result was we relocated/rehomed two very special tigers and helped two humans who needed to be with their cats. Even to the point that the humans have relocated to my town. Love knows no



Steve now has the chance to make new friendships at the Jungle, like young tiger Zar.

reunite, to never be torn apart again.

Using the term “rescue” has far-reaching ramifications. It may make you feel good when people give you accolades for having done so. But how many animals has this effected? MANY. That little word right there gives fodder to ARAs that there are all these abandoned and abused exotic cats out there that need homes. We are shooting ourselves in the gut (so as to die a slow death) by using this word. Sure, you will get more donations. But how many other animals have you affected by doing that? Silently, all across the country, city, county, and state laws are being implemented based on research. Research, which we are inadvertently providing.

In order to save our cats, we must all start working together. Put aside our own feelings. Help each other. And for the love of all that is holy, please stop using the word *RESCUE*. Ask yourself, “Was death imminent?” If not, just stop it. Please.

Purrs, chuffs, and saws from the Jungle.



ENJOY \$10 OFF

Your next order
of \$50 or more.

When ordering online
or by telephone,
Enter code ZZ-F3.

Limit 1 per customer.
Excludes Zupreme Products.



**Ear Mite Killer
With Aloe. Contains
0.15% Pyrethrins & 1%
Piperonyl Butoxide.
6 oz liquid.**

Egge® Toy
13"L. Super-tough, indestructible
design. Assorted colors.



The Best Ball™
Non-toxic, gorilla tough, polyethylene plastic balls.
Assorted colors. Sizes: 4½"D, 6"D or 10"D.



**Heavy-Weight
20-Gauge Stainless Steel Bowls**
Sizes: 8 oz, 16 oz, 30 oz, 48 oz, 72 oz or 128 oz.

Chase 'n Pull Toy
32"L handle with
36"L extra-strong solid braid
rope. Squeaky. Assorted colors.



Safe-Guard® Paste with Fenbendazole

JEFFERSPET.com

Call for a FREE Catalog.

1-800-JEFFERS

(1-800-533-3377)

Observation of a Margay Birth

Long Island Ocelot Club
September/October 1974
Volume 18 Issue 5

By Shirley Wagner

Tuffy went into labor at 8:45 pm on the 77th day of her pregnancy. We were about to leave to go to a movie when Danny suggested a last minute check of her might be warranted. It was discovered that she was trying to use the litter box with no success and followed the performance with a short spell of hard breathing. Since it was close enough to her time (gestation in the margay normally being 84 days), we decided to forego the movie and settled in for the duration.

The litter box was removed and clean newspaper put in that corner instead. The effort to use the litter box continued at intervals of about seven minutes for the next two hours. After this time, a small amount of discharge was noted. Tuffy seemed restless, pacing and shredding the paper. After each contraction, she would come to me for reassurance, breathing



We don't have a photo of Tuffy, so this 1984 photo of an unknown margay, taken by Fred Boyajian will have to do.

rapidly after each contraction and then returning to normal for a couple of minutes until the next. At about 11 pm, the contractions started coming about three to five minutes apart and this continued for about two hours. At no time did she seem to be in unusual pain or having difficulty; she was simply acting as if constipated

and trying to use the bathroom.

At 1:15 am, her water broke and contractions started coming increasingly closer together. At 1:28 am, she presented us with a little girl in a squatting position. The kitten arrived breach. In past deliveries, Tuffy had not severed the cord, so I went ahead and did this for her. I dried the kitten, making sure the air passages were clear and then gave her back to her mother.

At birth, the kitten weighed five ounces and measured an overall length of 10 inches, seven of it body and the remaining three inches tail.

As before, Tuffy insisted on pulling the hair from her tail; when restrained she would shred paper instead. Although she inspected the kitten shortly, she did not seem unusually interested in it and would only let it nurse if put in position and kept there. At this time, Danny was on the phone to Ken Hatfield, having gotten him out of bed to "assist." I finally removed the paper and put the kitten in Tuffy's box. Only then did she indicate any interest in it. She joined it in the box, but was not very motherly. For the next day Tuffy did not leave the box. We had to feed her by hand, but neither did she encourage the kitten to nurse and, in fact, seemed to prefer it didn't. She would allow me to put the kitten onto a nipple, but would move it as soon as I let my vigilance wander. During the first day, we were alarmed many times by the kitten's squalling when she couldn't get to a nipple, and we'd rush into the room only to find Tuffy curled up in a ball with her back to the kitten.

On the second day, Tuffy was beginning to look out of sorts. She had not used the litter box since delivering and had eaten only when fed by hand. Her ears were cool to the touch. A call to our vet was made and he asked that we bring her in. Since we knew if we did this we'd have to take the kitten, we opted for his alternative - two hormone shots. Shortly thereafter, her appetite increased and she began to look better, although she still did not seem interested in the kitten. It was then we decided to offer her a bottle. It was obvious she hadn't been getting

enough to eat and she went at it eagerly. It then occurred to us that she probably hadn't been pottied either and that procedure produced a flood. Poor thing was about to float away.

After the second day of incessant squalling, waking us in panic in the middle of the night, we decided to separate mother and daughter. Tuffy seemed relieved by this and immediately began



Another momma margay and her kitten named Bedbug, stand in for Tuffy. Photo by Fred Boyajian.

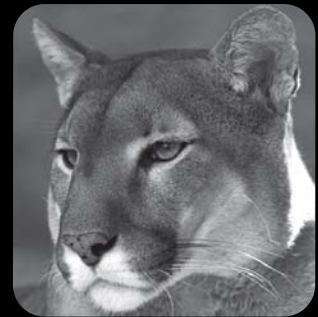
her usual routine without the burden of a baby. Her appetite returned to normal, as did her bathroom habits. Evidently Tuffy will be content to make kittens if we take care of them.

Tuffy is now in season again two weeks after the birth. I'll wait till next time to breed her again. Baby is fine, now weighing in at eight ounces at two weeks; her eyes opened at 11 days. She is on a diet of KMR (Borden's Kitten Milk Replacer), which she seems to like, and is doing everything seemingly on schedule. Although KMR produces somewhat loose stools, it does produce a fat, healthy kitten with no problem getting it to take the bottle - one quarter ounce every four hours. We had used Esbilac on previous kittens, but were faced with feeding problems continuously but with firmer stools.

So, as it stands now, we have a female margay kitten beginning to get that personality we are all so fond of. She does insist on sucking on her paw after every feeding even though she has had her fill and does not want her bottle anymore. We believe she's beginning to teethe, although no teeth have broken through the gums. And of course she's still demanding the bottle regardless of our schedule every four hours.



exploring
new ideas



premium
products
uniquely
formulated

perfecting
exotic
animal
nutrition



We know you take them seriously, which is why we take their nutrition seriously.

Exotic animal nutrition is our business. For over 20 years, we've collaborated with zoo and exotic animal professionals to conduct extensive research to improve nutrition of exotic species. Our products are proven to support the health and longevity of exotic animals.



Sign up for our newsletter today
at **MAZURI.COM** and
be the first to learn about:

- **Latest Product Information**
 - **Product Promotions**
 - **Tradeshows & Events**



Mazuri[®]
A World of Good Nutrition

Laurie Marker's Cheetah Conservation

By Debi Willoughby

One of my volunteers and I recently attended a lecture at Roger Williams Zoo in Rhode Island. The speaker was Laurie Marker, founder of the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF). We walked in not knowing what to expect and were greeted by friendly faces all interested in talking with you, including Laurie herself! She immersed herself among us, talking with everyone around her! As we walked around looking at the items they had on their sale table, we were greeted by a couple of the zoo's animal ambassadors. The zookeepers were very friendly and informative, and before we knew it we were comparing notes about performing animal educational shows!

Laurie Marker started working at Oregon's Wildlife Safari in 1974, and was fascinated by cheetahs. She wanted to know as much as possible about them, but was disappointed to find that there wasn't a lot of information readily available about them. So she took it upon herself to learn



Debi Willoughby got the chance of a lifetime to not only hear Laurie Marker speak, but even chat with her about wildlife education!

as much as she could by observing them and learning about them in the wild. Her love for this species took her to Namibia, where she founded the CCF in 1990, and developed a permanent conservation research center for wild cheetahs. Since then, they have expanded and opened a field research station for the public, featuring a visitor's center, cheetah museum, and education center.

Cheetahs are currently native to areas of Africa and a small part of Asia. There

are approximately 7,000 in the wild and cheetahs are living in only about 10% of their historic range due to a plethora of reasons. They stand out in the cat family due to their inability to fully retract their claws and their high speed of chase. Their spine is extremely flexible and their shoulder blades don't attach to their collar bone, both aiding in their ability to run very fast. With such great speed comes the need for agility, and that's where their long tail comes in. It acts like a rudder, enabling them to change directions quickly to keep up with their fleeing prey. Another factor that is unique in the cat family is their social structure. While

females tend to be solitary, males will stick together and form groups called coalitions. At about 18-22 months of age, cheetahs usually start separating from their mother. Daughters will stay close to their mother's range, while sons will be chased away by a mature male and usually end up about 100 miles away trying to find their own territory. Cheetah territories are quite large, averaging 800 square miles. A female's range will cover multiple males' ranges, giving her ample suitors



Laurie speaks at Roger Williams Zoo in Rhode Island.

Registered Exotic Feline Handler Program

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

Kylie Reynolds - Basic

Javiera Ugarte - Basic

Basic Feline Handlers have documented at least one year of experience, Intermediate level is at least five years of experience, and Advanced handlers have more than ten years experience. Update your registration when you obtain additional handling experience or new species experience.

The online registration form can be filled out directly in the members-only section of the FCF website. The \$30.00 registration fee can be made through PayPal.

Being a registered handler is the first step to becoming a Professional Member. Professional Membership application is also online on the Members-Only website. Congratulations to all of these members for their dedication to their cats.

Debi Willoughby, FCF Secretary



Dancing Goat Creamery is a goat farm which demonstrates the strategies Laurie promotes, using livestock guardian dogs, fencing, and careful management that protects their goats while not harming local cheetahs.

to choose from!

Over the years, the CCF has been able to determine what survival factors wild cheetahs are facing and they are working to mitigate some of those factors. The factors are habitat loss, human-wildlife conflict, and illegal wildlife trade. Because their territories are large, human encroachment and habitat loss have played a spiraling role in the decline of cheetahs. Cheetah territory has become fragmented, causing inbreeding. It has been found that the inbreeding has created

poor bloodlines, causing a variety of health problems, including malformation of teeth (which causes lower canines to puncture holes in the upper mouth) and kinked tails (which decreases the use of their “rudder skills”).

The CCF knows that working with the local farmers is key to cheetah conservation. They teach the farmers how to practice preventive healthcare for their livestock, how predators are an important factor in a functioning ecosystem, how to practice livestock predation prevention,

and how to make a living doing other things besides farming. The CCF is also tackling habitat loss in a unique way. The grasslands that cheetahs need to hunt on are being overtaken by thorny scrub brush once the grasslands are overgrazed by livestock. The CCF started cutting the scrub brush down and turning it into compacted fuel logs to be used by the locals. They have progressed these efforts into biomass energy systems which will create electricity. If the locals can run a refrigerator on this electricity, they will be able to store food for longer periods of time, store their livestock immunizations, and much more. The message that was quite clear in Laurie’s lecture was how conservation efforts are very complex and working with the local communities has proven to be a successful tactic in helping cheetahs in the wild.

After the lecture, I asked Laurie what message she would like to get out to our *FCF Journal* readers. She said, “We all need to work together to make our conservation efforts successful.” She urged FCF members to help in any way they can, whether it be donating funds to the CCF, volunteering at their facilities, or by spreading the word about how complex conservation efforts are and coming up with ideas on how to help.

You can learn more about the Cheetah Conservation Fund at www.cheetah.org.

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.

General Fund:
Chris Tromborg

The FCF appreciates your generosity & continued support.



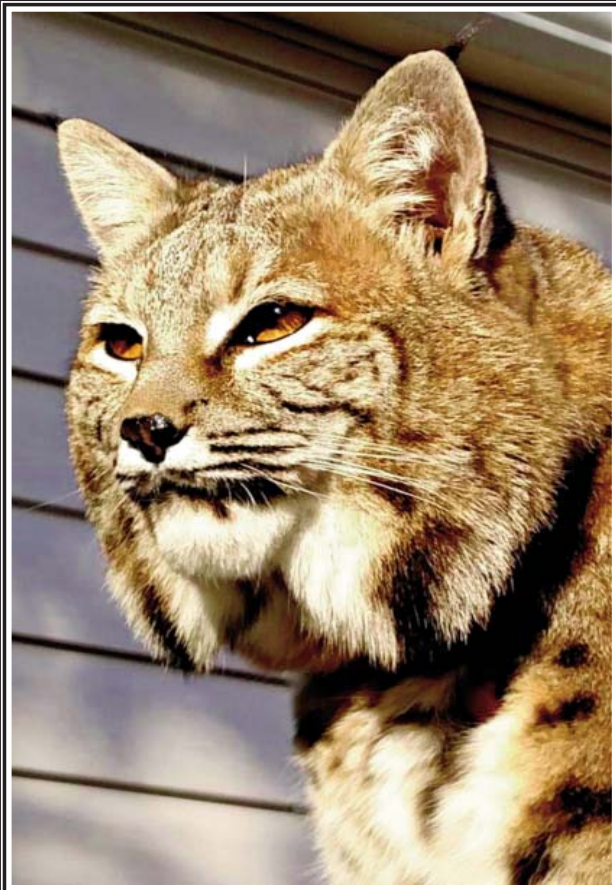
Laurie quite obviously has a unique rapport with the felines she lives to conserve.



Carpathian lynx Vladimir can't get enough of this wonderful spring weather at N.O.A.H.!
Photo by Lena Tran.



Julie McNamara visited Lyon Ranch and took this photo of this gorgeous blue-eyed serval kitten being hand-raised by Lynette Lyon.



Saan-Serif soaks up the afternoon sun in Wyoming. Photo by Jeff and Tammy Schrader.

Your Best Shots



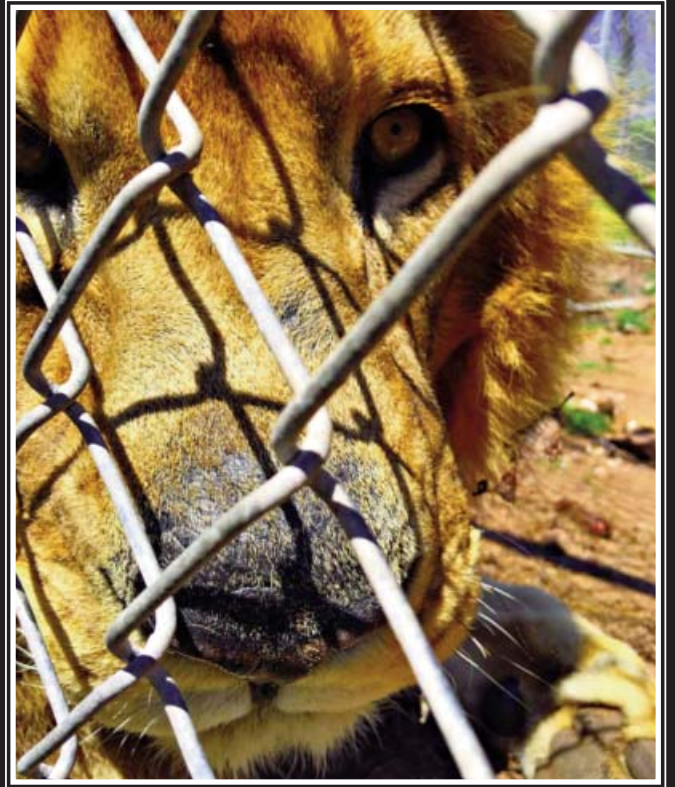
Gloria Johnson and her cougar Lakota console each other when times are hard. Photo by Richard Bunyan.



ook this
kitten
. .



Jennifer Kasserman took this photo of her adorable little Geoffroy's kitten.



Kevin Burgess, Jr., gets up-close and personal with his friend Bookie the lion.

S!



ach



Cheyenne, a momma bobcat, proudly peers out of her den box as her newborn kitten nurses. Photo by Noel Cowell.



Bandit was obviously a good boy, since he got to wear his handsome Christmas scarf! Photo by Stephanie Wells.

Encounter with a Wild Bobcat

By Fred Hood

With three days off work (instead of the usual two), I decided on a marathon drive from Tucson to Yosemite, stopping near Los Angeles to pick up my cousin, John Haubrich. Both of us are unencumbered enough to plan trips on short notice. On the way up, we stop for lunch at Fresno Chaffee Zoo. The zoo restaurant is part of an impressive new African savannah. Aside from the main savannah, the area includes a cheetah exhibit and an out-

standing lion exhibit.

We are in Yosemite Valley before sunset, hoping to photograph the elusive Firefall phenomenon. This unpredictable natural event, when it happens, occurs during the last two weeks of February. It already happened once this year, just a few days before our visit. If snowfall is good and the weath-



John Haubrich had his camera ready when this wild bobcat made a daytime appearance from the dining room window of the Ahwanee Hotel in the Yosemite Valley.



Another bobcat photo at the Ahwanee Hotel shot by Fred Hood through the plate glass window.



Fred Hood captures this wild bobcat strolling in front of the iconic Half Dome.

er warms up, magic is possible. The last rays of the setting sun light up Horsetail Falls. The result is what appears to be molten lava flowing off El Capitan. It does not happen for us tonight or tomorrow night, our only two chances.

The next day, before our failed second attempt, we explore the valley. A lovely attendant at the Ansel Adams Gallery informs me that a bobcat is seen almost daily in the village. As we walk to lunch at the historic Ahwanee Hotel, John and I discuss the unlikelihood of seeing a bobcat in the middle of the day. We sit by a window in the grand dining room and what should walk by but a bobcat! Our good cameras are in the car at the village, a fifteen minute walk. I get one shot out the window with my point and shoot camera, which only has a wide angle lens. John does a short video on his smart phone.

Our plan after lunch is to head to the car, pick up the cameras, and walk back in



Fred photographs this bobcat, so accustomed to the presence of humans that he just strolls in between the cars as excited visitors step out to record this rare encounter with their cameras.

approach, closer, closer, and closer still. At one point, it appears the cat will walk right into me unless I move, which of course I do. As he nears the road, other visitors take notice with several cars stopping to watch. The cat is neither fearful nor aggressive. In fact, he pays no attention to people whatsoever. He walks right through the cars and crosses the road. Most visitors stay there, but John and I follow him along the river for at least half an hour. We are both lovers of cats and we remark that this makes the entire trip worthwhile. The bobcat's grizzled coat leads me to believe he is old, and I attribute his calm demeanor to a lifetime of living near people.

On the drive home, we stop at

hopes of another sighting. We park at a large meadow with a nice view of Half Dome. As we are walking into the meadow, John says, "There it is!" When I told him at lunch there was a bobcat, he thought I was joking. Now I am the one who thinks he is joking. But sure enough, on the far side of the meadow, our bobcat is emerging from the forest. He is too far



John and Fred follow the bobcat for a half hour as it wanders along the river. Photo by Fred Hood.



At Project Survival's Cat Haven, Fred photographs this close-up of a resident Pallas's cat.

away for a clear shot, but seems to be heading in our direction. My heart is racing at the thought of an iconic photograph of a wild bobcat with Half Dome in the background. I have a short telephoto lens to include the entire scene while John has a longer telephoto lens for close-ups.

As the feline continues his approach, he is clearly relaxed. We had noticed this casual demeanor during lunch. The shutters on our cameras are working overtime as he continues his approach. He pauses just long enough for me to nail my iconic Half Dome photo. Then he continues his

Project Survival's Cat Haven in the foothills east of Fresno. Most visitors take a tour led by a staff member or volunteer. However, park owner Dale Anderson is always kind enough to give me a personal tour with extra photo opportunities. After a nice chat in his office, we are out. Dale and his team support conservation projects around the world, which is why I love Cat Haven so much. His keystone species is the jaguar, with a breeding group of both black and yellow cats. The impressive lineup also includes bobcat, Canada lynx, Eurasian lynx, serval,



Both spotted and melanistic jaguars are part of the Cat Haven breeding group. Photo by Fred Hood.



A snow leopard stalks photographer Fred Hood at the northern California feline facility.




jaguarundi, Pallas's cat, black leopard, Amur leopard, white and orange tiger, lion, snow leopard, and cheetah. Seeing these beautiful

ambassador cats is a great way to end a trip whose highlight is one magnificent wild cat.



Fox Valley
ANIMAL NUTRITION, INC.

Day One formulas are species-specific formulations having the required protein and fat for neonatal growth. Recommended for those neonates who are orphaned, cannot suckle, or are being bottle-raised.

-  All-milk protein from premium food grade milk ingredients
-  Complete complement of vitamins and minerals
-  Balanced fatty acids including medium chain fatty acids for easy digestion

We specialize in serving the wildlife, domestic, and exotic animal communities. For information on our "Sponsorship of Goods" program (a donation of products to your local center, group, or wildlife organization on your behalf), please contact us at:



FOX VALLEY ANIMAL NUTRITION INC.
(800) 679-4666 or email: nklc@aol.com

www.foxvalleynutrition.com



Virtual Educational Show is Making an Impact on Human/Wildlife Co-Existence

By Debi Willoughby

I have been a wildlife educator in the New England area for over 20 years, and I was approached by a company a couple of years ago regarding a new type of show. The company is Nepris, and they provide virtual educational shows to schools across the country. They are a hub that connects the professional industry to classrooms. How does this work? In a nutshell, Nepris markets these shows through the school system. Teachers can go onto Nepris's website and request a show with topics based on the curriculum they are teaching in their classrooms. Nepris reaches out to its group of professional people to find the right fit for the show. Once the show has been accepted by a professional, Nepris helps both ends (school classrooms and the professional) make sure they can hook into the Nepris site so they can see each other and talk (similar to Skyping, but more professional). At this point, Nepris has been providing this service free of charge to the schools by using grants and funds they have received, but there is talk about starting to charge schools a nominal fee for certain types of shows in order to comp both Nepris's and the professional's time.

I have done many of these shows for Nepris, reaching schools mostly in Texas. I have enjoyed touching base with people outside of my area in Massachusetts! One of the last shows I did was on a topic that I thought our FCF readers may be interested in. The town where this school is located has a large nature preserve, but unfortunately the town has started selling off some of the nature preserve's land. This has created a wildlife problem in the surrounding neighborhoods. When the newly bought land is cleared and built on, the wildlife has to move out and find a new territory to live in. Some of the wildlife has resorted to living in populated neighborhoods amongst humans and preying on their pets. Bobcats and

coyotes are now often seen in people's backyards, under their porches, etc. In today's day and age, humans have distanced themselves from nature and wildlife so they don't know what to do when they see a wild animal in their yard. This is causing friction and fear in the town. The citizens want the town officials to do something about it, but officials aren't sure what to do. That is why the school asked for a show through Nepris; they were looking for someone in the "bobcat" field to help them come up with a positive solution to the problem without harming the wildlife if at all possible.

I did some research as to what was going on in that area, what others have done in that area to mitigate the situation, and what others across the country have done successfully. I used this information to put together a list of topics to discuss in the show. When I do virtual shows, I have an internet connection in my cat building,

so my Wi-Fi is strong and I set up right inside my cat cages with a view of the cats. This way, the students can see how the cats act and behave while I am doing the show. The cats aren't on leashes; they are just walking around doing their normal



Various wildlife bridges, both under- and above-road systems, give animals a way to safely traverse their territories without risk of collisions with auto traffic.

thing.

I started my talk by introducing them to bobcats, what they look like, how they behave in the wild, what they eat, how we benefit from them being around, etc. Once the students had a good understanding of bobcats, I discussed with them their current situation and their goals. I pointed out that the first reaction people have to a wild animal in their neighborhood is they want the animal captured and released somewhere else. Then I explained how this often can end with the animal losing its life within weeks of being relocated. When you relocate a bobcat into another area, you are most likely dropping it off into another bobcat's territory, and bobcats will fight to protect their territory. If the newly relocated bobcat is able to avoid conflict, it still has to learn the lay of the land, where to find food, and what predators to stay away from. And some of the bobcats will try to find



Jungle Encounter's resident bobcats, Moxie and Dakota, appear on the screen to help raise interest as Debi teaches Texas schoolchildren how communities can improve their coexistence with native wildlife.

their way back to their own territory, opening them up to crossing multiple bobcats' territories and human neighborhoods along the way, with danger around every corner. Statistically, most relocated bobcats don't survive long.

Once the students understood that relocation is probably not the best answer, we discussed the types of things that may work. We focused on the idea of teaching humans how to co-exist with wildlife! It's not an easy answer, but can be a good one. Humans can do simple things like bring their pets in at night (or have a roof over their outside pens), keep their pets' food and water bowls inside, don't encourage prey animals into their yards, and fix broken porches so animals can't crawl underneath. If there is a bobcat in a person's yard that they don't want there – make loud noises. If you make your yard uninviting to a bobcat, it won't stay. I also showed the students pictures of land

bridges and wildlife corridors, which could be a way for bobcats to safely move about their town. I ended the show by giving them a couple of websites they could gather more information from to help them build their project. Once they finish their project, they will take it to the town board and discuss positive options on how to alleviate this situation. I also told the students they could email me anytime to discuss any questions they may have.

In short, if you want to teach people to co-exist peacefully with wildlife, first you need to teach them about their local wildlife and how animals act and think. Then give them options to choose from on how to handle the situation. Knowledge



Visit the site, choose "Feline Conservation Federation" as your charity and then shop. You'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection, and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to the Feline Conservation Federation.

is key and not every solution will work in every area. Now that I have given the students the tools needed, I hope they are successful in their endeavor... especially for the bobcats' sake.

The Back-Up Plan

By Lynette Lyon

Of all the struggles that private owners and exhibitors of restricted species face, from permit processing to PETA protesters, what to do with your animals in the event that you can no longer care for them

is possibly the most difficult. Most of us will likely outlive our animals, and many private owners at the end of their careers retire as their final exotics pass on. There are outlying circumstances, however, that most people do not want to consider. Sudden death or serious illness that leaves an

owner incapable of caring for their animals creates a dilemma for everyone involved. In cases like this where the animals are suddenly unable to be cared for, owners may assume that nearby zoos will immedi-

ately re-home their exotics. However, zoo protocol often states that they cannot receive animals from private owners. Whether it is because of quarantine procedures, lack of space, or government permits, there is no guarantee that a zoo will take your restricted species.

To help ensure your animals' wellbeing in the event that you can no longer care for them, it is important to know ahead of time where you want your animals to go and make sure that the facility can take them. Ideally, this should be stated in writing for both the new facility as well as any government agencies that issue your personal permits. This enables you to see where your animals will be going and that their care will match your standards as closely as possible. Hoping for someone



One of five ocelots that recently relocated to the Lyon Ranch settling into its new surroundings.



300 Stichter Rd.
Pleasant Hill, OH 45359
Phone: 937-676-2058
Email: oaao@windstream.net
Web: www.oaao.us

Protecting Your rights
To own Animals
since 1990

Polly Britton
Legislative Agent



Having plenty of advanced notice to construct five new enclosures and make proper arrangements with the California Wildlife agency helped ensure that everything went smoothly on the day of the transfer.

who will do things exactly the same way as you is ridiculous, as we all have our own methods. It is also unrealistic to ask someone who has not had the same relationship with your animals to interact with them in the same way. However, the standard of care with other private owners will often meet, if not surpass, your own.

Recent experience has made all of this abundantly clear to me, and despite being well prepared, transferring multiple wild animals to a new home presented a multitude of challenges. I have known for years that Lyon Ranch would likely be receiving several ocelots, but it was hoped to not happen for a long time. When their owner began to have difficulty maintaining their usual level of care, it became obvious that we would be taking them sooner rather than later.

Our first task was to design entirely new enclosures to accommodate each of the cats. Like most private owners, I do not often have a plethora of empty habitats. Building permanent structures takes labor, time, and money, but since we knew that we would be taking the cats at some point, a rough layout had been made over a pre-selected area. It took almost a year to finish the enclosures and make them inhabitable, though it took longer for us as we were limited to a very few workers.

During the building of the habitats, we took the time to inform our local Fish and Wildlife of the move and the reason

behind it. Admittedly, working with your officials and inspectors can be exceptionally difficult. If it is at all possible, however, a positive relationship with your inspectors can save you a world of frustration. Our officials made a few suggestions, but overall it was happily approved.

When the day came to actually start moving the cats, I enlisted some of my friends who work as keepers at a local zoo. It is vital when working hands-on in a stressful situation with restricted species to use people who are knowledgeable and sensible about wild animals. Every step of transferring wild animals is potentially dangerous, but a lot of issues can be avoided by

using someone who already has training to help.

Thankfully, the entire transfer went smoothly, with the exception of one stubborn ocelot which refused to vacate her den box. We finally just sealed the den box and moved the whole kit and caboodle. Each of the five ocelots is happily rehomed and we have five new residents here at the ranch. I sincerely hope that everyone reading this does not have to go through this anytime soon. That being said, in addition to finding a suitable back-up home for your animals, it is important to recognize that the people now homing them are responsible for the exotics in every way, including financially. In the event that you are unable to care for your animals, it may be in their best interest for a trust to be set up to help ensure that your creatures can be cared for until they pass away.

None of us like to think that our animals are going to need a new home, but it may just save both them and you a lot of trouble to be prepared, just in case.

**Own Your Pet's Food:
Take Control by Feeding Fresh!**



"FRESH + OASIS is the 'Missing Link' to a Healthy Complete Diet & Optimal Performance"

Add Oasis premix to fresh meat & the result is a scientifically balanced and complete real food diet – no guess work. Oasis is professionally formulated by Dr. Gary Pusillo, and for over 20 years, has been the #1 selling vitamin & mineral premix for exotic cats, trusted by the world's top breeders, private zoos and sanctuaries. Now Oasis is available under the Complete Natural Nutrition brand along with other exceptional nutritional tools like Primal Cal, Rapid Rehab & Crisis Care.

www.CompleteNaturalNutrition.com / 866-807-7335



CompleteNaturalNutrition

It's Time We Take Back the Conversation

By Mindy Stinner

Julia Wagner and I went to Florida, to attend this conference not certain about what tone would be set for this meeting. I did not know the veterinarian, Dr. Don Woodman, who was organizing the event, but I had met many of the other presenters and participants before.

We were concerned that this group would be so focused on their frustration from always having to be on the defensive about owning and working with wildlife that the conversation would be one about fear and anger, and not how to effectively reshape the conversation.

It may be helpful for me to clarify my perspective of how I view our industry's handling of the public discussion about wildlife ownership. Please understand that while my point of view is that of a business owner, I believe that our industry includes wildlife owners, educators, employees, interns, committed volunteers, educated hobbyists, and veterinarians who provide care to wildlife species, vendors who support the husbandry needs of the animals, and so on. We all stand to gain or lose together.

Historically, animal owners have worried about taking care of their animals, and if they own an animal-related business, they also have to manage or oversee the business concerns daily. We have not always done a good job of talking to the public about what we do. The public sees

the public face of zoos and wildlife parks, and sees presentations by mobile wildlife educators. However, most of the public will never see or know about what happens behind the scenes. We know that what happens at most facilities behind the scenes is the challenging husbandry work, nursing sick or geriatric animals, preparing diets, ordering supplies, landscaping maintenance, working on a never-ending maintenance needs list, running payroll, providing continuing education, and so on.

We have historically not shown that side of what we do to the public. Even now, when some zoos have a window available into their food preparation area or their veterinary exam area, the work being done there is still somewhat staged, with the less pretty aspects not visible to visitors.

Part of what activists, intent on ending animal ownership, have done is spin that side of our businesses into evil empires. They imply that no husbandry care happens except what is visible, and that "backstage" is the ugly truth of neglect and cruelty. And to them, "backstage" implies dank basements, hidden illegal transports, poor quality diets, euthanizing animals for convenience, and, of course, all of our limos and yachts.

And we have let them create this image of us by not actively pushing back against it effectively from the start.

The worst part is, every once in a while, they are right. They find an outlier who has such poor husbandry practices that animals die too often in their care, or who is so overwhelmed by debt or inca-

Speaker Topics Covered:

- *Defeating Animal Rights-Driven Legislation at the Local, State, and Federal Levels*
AND
- *Think It Cannot Happen To You? Think Again! What to Do When it Does (Mindy Patterson with the Cavalry Group)*
- *Creating a Grass Roots Advocacy Campaign*
AND
- *How to Create an Effective Media and PR Strategy (Andrew Wyatt, lobbyist with Vitello Consulting)*
- *Facts and Myths about White Tiger Genetics*
AND
- *The Genetic Facts of Endangered Animal Conservation (Dr. Brian Davis, geneticist from National Institutes of Health [NIH] and Texas A&M)*
- *No Non-Compliant Items: Dealing with the USDA (William Cook, Esq., an attorney who represents clients with animal law-based concerns)*
- *Falconry - a Model for Self-regulation (Patrick Bradley)*
- *SeaWorld and its Marketing in a PR Crisis (Eric Davis)*
- *Lessons in Teaching Lobbying (Robert Guyer)*
- *My Fight against the Animal Rights Movement: What I Think Has Worked, What Hasn't (Joe Maldonado [Joe Exotic])*
- *Roundtable Discussion: Where Do We Go From Here?*



Julia Matson Wagner poses with Mindy Patterson, one of the presenters at the "Take Back the Conversation" Seminar.

pacitated by depression that their collection is suffering. And those people become the focus of all the discussion, and the people listening to the activists who have exposed the situation are rightfully angered.

If we do not, as an industry, start to watch out better for and take care of each other, we will continue to have people with the agenda of shutting us all down exposing those of us who need help.

And if we do not, as owners, learn to ask for and accept help when it is offered, we are adding to the problem. That includes knowing when it is time to stop growing a collection, start downsizing, or even close a business or give up an animal we cannot provide for anymore. There is no shame in accepting the limits we all individually have. Ignoring those limits, or pretending there is no problem, makes us the same as the people profiled on the "Hoarders" shows, who live in misery and cannot see a way out. We cannot expect other people to constantly rescue us, or

support us, or take our animals when we have surplus so we can go get more. We must take responsibility for the fact that some of us make all of us look bad with our actions or inaction. And we must change this if we are to have a hope of beating back the movement to end wildlife ownership.

With this as my existing opinion, I arrived at the conference and looked at who was in the room as presenters or attendees.

Some of the people attending this conference have repeatedly been in court with the USDA. Some have had animals confiscated or have been ordered to surrender or place them by various federal or state level agencies, or even local health officials. Some people in the room have accepted those animals at their facilities. The people in the room ranged from huge personalities that seem to fill the room all by themselves, to quiet watchers who have never really had a voice in a conversation like this before.

What I saw on most of their faces was fear. Not fear of getting caught in a bad act, but fear of losing every cent they have in a series of court battles just to keep their business intact. Fear of having animals they have loved their whole lives being taken away. Fear of losing a multi-generational way of life, an all-encompassing, mind-numbing, depression-generating fear.

This fear is a dangerous thing. It makes rational decision-making much harder. It engenders paranoia and hate speech. It stops all ability to communicate cold in its tracks. Why even try to improve if you are just going to lose everything? How far will you go to keep them from taking your 18 year old lion that you raised and nurtured from infancy?

The first step to overcoming fear and learning to stand up for ourselves is to establish an atmosphere of trust so actual discussion can take place. This is already challenging for many “animal people” who do not tend to easily trust other people



Brian Davis, Dr. Don Woodman, DVM, event organizer, Mindy Patterson, and Joe “Exotic” Maldonado were some of the panelists at the two day “Take Back the Conversation” seminar.

to begin with, but it is a little easier when the room is full of other people with priorities like yours. To the credit of the group in the room, everyone made the effort to open themselves to at least listen to each other as the program began.

Dr. Woodman created a program intended to give a voice to many aspects of the issue of having already had the conversation taken from us, and having it instead framed by the people working to shut us all down. He invited speakers who have been on the “front lines” of this fight, in court, in legislatures and agencies, in social media, and in the public eye.

Mindy Patterson has spoken to the Feline Conservation Federation audience through presentations and articles addressing the issue of radical activism and how people engaged in this behavior seem to be effective at circumventing our rights to own animals and to engage in business


practices. She reinforced at this event how important it is for everyone to foster a personal relationship with local officials and political representation at all levels. She shared several case studies involving animal owners who were the victims of aggressive tactics that included communicating threats, attempting to act on illegal warrants with or without local law enforcement assistance, and even attempts to steal animals disguised as confiscation activity, but without any legal justification. An underlying theme of success in these activities appears to be the animal owners assuming that a lawyer or court appearance

can straighten out the error of this process after the animals have been removed from the property. And what is apparent from her experience is that once the animals have been removed from your possession, your odds of ever getting them back are significantly reduced, and if they do come home, it may not be in a condition you find acceptable.

In my opinion, the single most valuable service the Cavalry Group offers its clients is the ability to talk to an animal law specialist at any time of the day or night. As owners who have had their animals confiscated have discovered, confiscations rarely take place during normal business hours. As when repossessing a vehicle, officials do not want a confrontation and do not want to take the risk that an owner might behave in a threatening manner. And let’s face it; many of us would react very poorly to having our animals removed. So unless you have on retainer a lawyer who specializes in animal law and who will answer your calls at whatever time of the day or night, you may want to consider joining the Cavalry Group to have that benefit.

Andrew Wyatt, a lobbyist with Vitello Consulting, shared his advice for planning ahead to avoid last-minute media emergencies. He discussed the basic PR kit every site should have on hand, including a concise mis-

Join the Zoological Association of America



ZOOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA

Several levels of membership include commercial, educational, facility, and individual. Facility Accreditation is also available.

promoting the responsible ownership, management, and propagation of animals in both private and public domains

P.O. Box 511275
Punta Gorda, FL 33951
941-621-2021
info@zaaorg
www.zaa.org

sion statement, information about your location and animal species on site, and business related items such as points of contact and web site address. The kit should be available to share with officials as well as the press, and should contain only information you are comfortable with everyone knowing.

Andrew also shared his experiences working in multiple states on issues including proposed bans on specific species and other kinds of regulatory proposals. He explained that as a lobbying firm they represent clients' specific interests. They can be hired to represent the full spectrum of concerns at all levels including legislative and agency-based issues, or they can focus at a lesser cost on

coordinated breeding programs. In fact, he demonstrated, both in scientific modeling based on mathematical evidence and by sampling animals' DNA, that even a significantly inbred animal can carry valuable genetic material that can be reincorporated into a gene pool of healthy animals. As we have seen demonstrated in programs run by United States Fish & Wildlife (USF&W), even the infusion of a small proportion of healthy diverse genes into a very inbred population can have a significant positive effect, as evidenced by the Florida panther's level of recovery based solely on the introduction of six unrelated cougars from Texas.

Brian looked at genetic diversity of wild cats across the spectrum—in the wild, in the AZA-managed SSP programs, and in independently regulated businesses, including some FCF member facilities. He was able to demonstrate, again employing scientific evidence taken from DNA sampling by many scientists worldwide, that wild populations of cats are increasingly being cut off into island populations of increasingly limited genetic materials. The managed program SSP animals showed similar levels of diversity, and the independently regulated businesses operating outside of coordinated programs still maintained a healthy collection of genetic material overall, though he indicated the populations could benefit from coordinated management. Certain species being managed in larger groupings instead of overly subdivided subspecies are unsurprisingly more diverse and

therefore more genetically viable long-term than very limited smaller groups attempting to maintain a subspecies that may not even be a true subspecies. For example, Brian argues that tiger populations would be healthier if managed in the two subspecies groupings he sees a strong scientific argument to maintain— island populations from areas like Sumatra and Borneo, and mainland populations from the entire remainder of their territory.

Brian is continuing to collect and bank DNA samples and certain other types of tissues from not just wild felids, but any wildlife species. He can provide sample

collection kits to owners willing to participate, and would be delighted to be contacted by interested parties via email at: davisbw@mail.nih.gov.

William Cook is an attorney with extensive experience representing clients dealing with regulatory issues. His current clients include an owner who has been in court repeatedly in the last decade who was in the audience. He spoke candidly about the challenges of proving a truth when the evidence is the word of the owner versus the word of an inspector or investigator. He clarified that it would be wise to video record the inspection process, but emphasized that this should be done having notified the inspector clearly of the recording process, and having recorded their acknowledgement of the fact they are being recorded. The relationship between inspector and licensee does not have to be contentious to take this step—in fact it may help protect an owner from misunderstandings or misinterpretations of guidance provided by an inspector. Inspectors are being encouraged in some cases to provide “teaching moments” instead of simply writing up any non-compliance found during a routine inspection. If an owner does not have a history of serious issues in a related area, the inspector has some leeway to use the opportunity to clarify what the regulations stipulate and to further explain what that means in regards to the licensee. A recording of this explanation may aid in sharing this information accurately with staff members or others who help with facility maintenance, husbandry, and recordkeeping.

Some audience members shared that they had been advised by their inspectors that the recordings made them feel more formally accountable for their process, and they indicated they were more likely to hold a licensee accountable for non-compliance rather than have a teachable moment of coaching if they were being recorded. Mr. Cook indicated that this may be the case for many inspectors, and each owner will have to make an independent assessment of their situation to determine what option is the best choice to protect their animals and their reputation.

Mr. Cook also indicated that some court cases seem to reach back over significant periods of time, since there is no statute of limitations on when the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) can take action on non-compliances. This includes non-com-



Dr. Brian Davis, a geneticist working at NIH and Texas A&M (who will be speaking at this June's FCF convention), has looked at genetic diversity of wild cats across the spectrum.

just one specific issue to ensure their client's wishes are given full consideration.

Dr. Brian Davis, a geneticist working at NIH and Texas A&M who has presented at previous FCF conventions, spoke about two issues that are especially relevant to wild cat owners. He and other scientific collaborators have carefully studied the genetics of cats in both captivity and the wild. He debunked with DNA evidence the claim that white tigers in captivity in the U.S. are significantly inbred, and that cats with some level of inbreeding are “genetic trash” that are not valuable to

pliances written up more than five years ago by one inspector, and then never again addressed by inspectors who saw the site thereafter. All non-compliances should be taken seriously and addressed either by rectifying the problem as soon as possible, or by appealing the non-compliance if there are grounds.

Patrick Bradley, a veteran and falconer, shared with us his experiences with using nature as a healing tool, both for himself when he faced the challenge of reintegrating on his return from Vietnam, and for veterans facing some similar issues today. While his focus was on using raptors as part of a therapeutic process, the concept of working to be closer to nature can be appealing for anyone with PTSD, traumatic brain injury, or the shock of an abrupt transition. He noted that returning soldiers who had difficulty speaking with people they did not know were able to speak to the public with relative ease when holding a small owl that the public could focus on during the talk. While I would not recommend therapy with wild cats in this same manner, the concept of reconnecting with the wild is a solid one that can impact all people.

Eric Davis got heavily involved with Sea World during their efforts to reestablish their credibility as animal welfare experts after the release of the film "Blackfish." He provided significant support for them as a secondary resource for people seeking more information about the captive marine mammal situation who were not certain if they could trust their primary sources. Eventually, Eric ended up creating ZooNation, designed to provide a more accessible approach that the public could understand. As part of developing the new business, Eric assessed the impact of the animal rights groups working to present a radical picture of animal ownership and, therefore, abuse, to the American people. According to 2014-2015 records, the combined annual income of the HSUS, PETA, Animal Welfare Institute, GreenPeace International, and the estimated income of Sea Shepherd (based on 2013 numbers) is in excess of \$570 million. As these are only among the larger and louder voices, we



Eric Davis created ZooNation to help animal facilities such as SeaWorld, to reshape the public perception of animal rights and animal welfare.

know the income to groups soliciting funds in the name of animal welfare and expending them in service to animal rights is even more extensive, but just these five organizations are capable of spending more than \$1.6 million per day to be heard. If I believed most donors understood the actual missions of these groups, I might just give up hope now, but we have repeatedly seen that their fundraising tactics have so little to do with their spending practices, it consistently borders on litigious behavior.

Eric did some in-depth market research on the investors in activist publications and media mills like The Dodo, exposing the links between this radical activism and their funding sources. He created a careful assessment of Facebook demographics in a study of who is "liking" Animal Rights pages vs. Zoo- and Aquarium-based pages. Using this data to start the conversation, Eric argues cohesively what many of us have long felt, that we have let radical groups set the agenda and frame the conversation. He believes that it is time for zoo facilities to gather objective focus group data to develop a vocabulary that is not slanted in opposition to our goals, and that we can all begin to use in the same manner, across the industry.

Eric noted the rise in unfounded criticism of zoological institutions and wildlife ownership, and the lack of an immediate and coordinated response to such attacks. In addition, he noted the lack of zoos rising to defend each other.

He encouraged zoological facilities to view themselves as not in competition with each other, since there are plenty of people to patronize all the facilities, and people who love animals and who have a good time at one place will likely try another.

For activists, a small amount of hype gets a lot of attention, but Eric's research indicates even a small amount of working to set the record straight goes a long way toward impacting public opinion. After all, who are the animal welfare experts, the people who spend their lives working for and with these animals, or the inexperienced people who want no one to ever get near them? It used to be the safe position to be

silent, but this is no longer the case. People expect criticism to be met with a response, not what they perceive as indifference. Research shows that polite, authentic, and authoritative voices cut through the rhetoric and will be heard by the public to dispel sensationalism and correct misinformation.

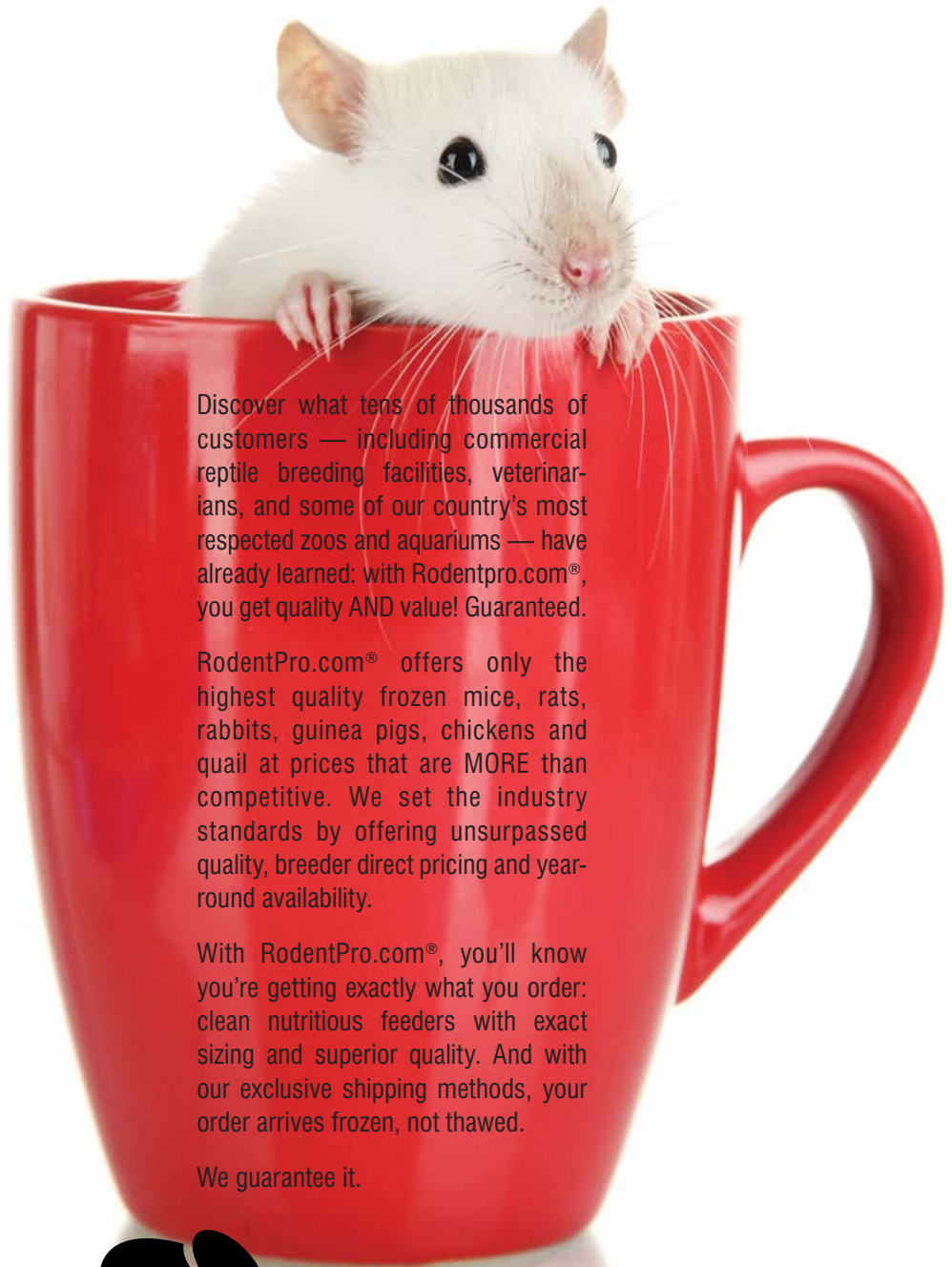
Sea World has been working toward shaping the conversation to remind the public that animal experts work inside these parks, and are not generally found among the protesters outside the gates. In advertising spots and on blogs and multimedia everywhere, they are putting their trainers, handlers, and veterinarians in the public eye to speak off-script about their work with the animals, sharing the bond they feel with them and their passion about their work. This is having an enormous impact on positive perceptions of the work Sea World does.

The philosophy of showing what happens in a park and sharing it with an audience in a video is paying off, as videos filmed by keepers, trainers, and others who work with their animals share the experience of the daily joys of working with the animals. This is one of the strongest messaging techniques effectively pushing back against the animal rights movement among Millennials, who are more likely to share on social media the things that make them laugh than the things that upset them.

ZooNation believes empowering zoos will save the world. He touts the good

Wake Up

To Quality, Value and Convenience!



Discover what tens of thousands of customers — including commercial reptile breeding facilities, veterinarians, and some of our country's most respected zoos and aquariums — have already learned: with Rodentpro.com[®], you get quality AND value! Guaranteed.

RodentPro.com[®] offers only the highest quality frozen mice, rats, rabbits, guinea pigs, chickens and quail at prices that are MORE than competitive. We set the industry standards by offering unsurpassed quality, breeder direct pricing and year-round availability.

With RodentPro.com[®], you'll know you're getting exactly what you order: clean nutritious feeders with exact sizing and superior quality. And with our exclusive shipping methods, your order arrives frozen, not thawed.

We guarantee it.

Order online!

www.RodentPro.com

It's quick, convenient
and guaranteed!

P.O. Box 118
Inglefield, IN 47618-9998

Tel: 812.867.7598

Fax: 812.867.6058

E-mail: info@rodentpro.com



 **RODENT PRO**.COM[®]
MICE • RATS • RABBITS • CHICKS • QUAIL

work the AZA has done for conservation, indicating the \$160 million going to projects in 2013 from the accredited zoos.

While I do not diminish this contribution in any way, I do not personally think that individual owners or businesses that are self-funded as opposed to ones based on a tax dollar-supported funding system (which describes many of the AZA zoos) can be expected to contribute a similar percentage of their income to these programs. I believe the FCF has given very generously to support conservation programs of great value, and hope we are able to continue to do so into the future.

ZooNation has indicated a willingness to assist zoos that are facing challenges. I believe Eric's vision is of facilities like Sea World standing up for other facilities funded to a similar level and with the track record, public support, and defensibility enjoyed by a facility funded at that level. I am not certain he knew much about some of the situations ongoing with people who were in the room even during this presentation.

I am not sure he even realized that sharing space in the room with him was one woman, still tearful about having her breeding birds confiscated so that she has no business income, but whose true fear had been that her children that Child Protective Services removed that same day would not be returned. She is so paralyzed with grief and fear she does not even know how to begin to pick up the pieces, much less fight back effectively.

Not long after this presentation, I received a phone call from someone who is appealing a recent judgment made after extensive pressure from the Animal Legal Defense Fund. Her lawyer is appealing the ruling that requires her to rehome her tigers and lemurs, and she is terrified they will come next to try to confiscate her beloved 18 year old lion she has had since infancy.

It can be challenging for someone used to dealing at a corporate level to understand the lack of resourcing available to some facilities and owners. It would be a wonderful thing indeed if strong and well-resourced organizations like SeaWorld would stand up against activism not just aimed at themselves, but at other law-abiding citizens owning legal businesses and caring for their animals at or above minimum USDA required standards.

Eric spoke passionately about advocacy, self-empowerment, and attracting strong additional advocates to your side, including cultivating celebrities and leveraging the attention they bring to your cause. I think that he is serious about supporting his beloved cause at SeaWorld and that has many excellent points about who our audience is and how to reach them. It would be amazing if ZooNation indeed helps rebrand zoos as enjoyable, safe, happy places, with a critical role in conservation and preservation of species.

And yet, not a month after this presentation, it was announced that SeaWorld has partnered with the HSUS, and will

discontinue all breeding and keeping of killer whales in its parks. Experienced animal owners know this is the first step. Next ownership of the brilliant dolphins will be challenged, and then the other marine mammals. Soon SeaWorld will be a giant aquarium experience with no marine mammals, except those in residence temporarily as part of their rescue and rehabilitation programs. And how long will funding for those programs last with reduced income at the park to support this work?

Joe "Exotic" Maldonado gave a brief talk about his ongoing public campaign around private ownership concerns and his personal experience in both maintaining his own collection and actively fighting animal rights groups. He delivered an impassioned call to action to the room, and rightfully called us all out on not sufficiently speaking out to defend ourselves from our detractors. The latest method he is using to call attention to these issues is his ongoing presidential campaign, for which a rally was held later that evening. The rally included media coverage and even campaign materials such as bumper stickers and buttons. He articulated a platform that in some cases more well-considered than those espoused by many of the candidates backed by major parties.

Robert Guyer, a lobbyist who teaches extensive educational seminars on lobbying skills and techniques, gave a presentation focused on helping a lay person with a cause of understanding where and how

A Few Words From Conference Organizer Dr. Don Woodman, DVM:

Patrick Bradley's presentation included a message that is both strong and deep. In the 1970s, when zoological institutions first started feeling animal rights activist criticism, they began to respond to the pressure by reinventing themselves and branding themselves as modern day arks and bastions of conservation. This has been their marketing niche and it has insulated them from the activist attacks only slightly.

The concept proposed by Patrick Bradley is to tie your facility to something that the community values more immediately, more strongly than conservation. This does not mean one should abandon this line of self-identification, or branding, but does suggest that this approach is insufficient in and of itself. By finding a secondary means of adding value to a community, be it from direct hands-on therapy sessions with raptors for PTSD veterans, or some other connection with a cause that society values highly, an institution can increase its value within a community, can draw in segments of the population that might otherwise learn about and become supporters of zoos, and can help create a body of the local population that is capable of saying, "I know the people at that institution and I see how they care for animals, and I know that the animal rights activists' lies and distortions are just that."

The new and valuable, albeit sad and cynical, message being imparted is that an animal-centered institution needs to find ways to make itself immediately valuable to a species that tends to value humans over animals. This can be a difficult message to fully absorb considering the animal-centric personalities at zoos and other animal facilities.

I will be putting info out on TakeBacktheConversation.net and the "Take Back the Conversation" Facebook page, plus I will announce it in the group which is for the prior attendees.

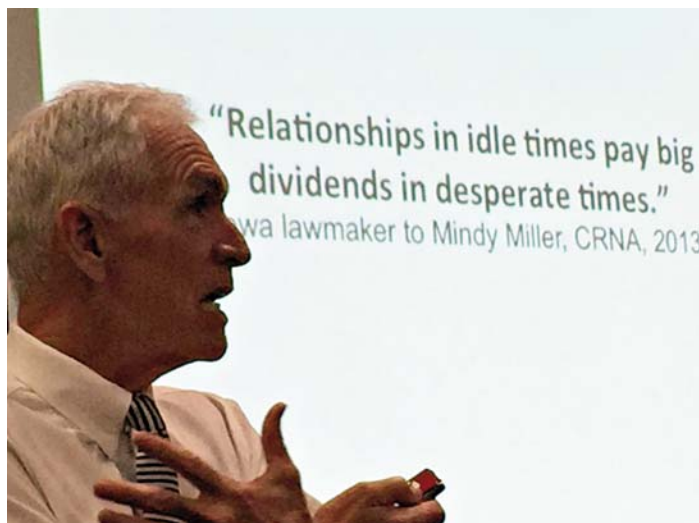
to focus resources like funding and activist time in order to make the most significant impact on the legislature and relevant agencies. Perhaps the most critical aspect of his presentation was in helping us understand that a lobbyist does not need to be a subject matter expert, but instead should work side by side with one to ensure the time expended and the message conveyed are best utilized. He also emphasized the importance of working directly with agencies charged with enforcing laws in order to make sure the impact of those enforcement activities follows the intention of the directive and are enforceable in a practical way within the industry. He reinforced the points made by earlier speakers that relationships with officials at all levels are absolutely critical and should be established not during a crisis, but long before. Mr. Guyer has multiple books available for sale and offers seminars on these skill sets. He was both informative and compelling.

Hermes the Owl, who attended the conference thanks to Dr. Don and Susan Woodman's hospitality, made several contributions to this presentation with appropriate punctuation of important points.

The impact of the "Take Back the Con-

versation" workshop will be long lasting. The attendees were provided a starting point for uniting as a group and helped identify the many areas of common ground we share across the industry. The opportunity to meet our colleagues and community members in person is especially critical in this industry since we are scattered across the country and often only know each other by phone, email, or reputation.

We are hopeful there will be additional conferences like this one in the coming months and years to help us begin to develop industry language that will help us reestablish ourselves as the experts in our field and to reassert our right to conduct business without fear of unreasonable actions by overzealous activists.



Lobbyist Robert Guyer helps attendees understand where and how to focus their funding and activist time to make the most impact on the legislature and relevant agencies.

Leaving this gathering we felt we had seen the most pro-active and organized approach to this matter that we have encountered across the industry. We commend this approach and the goals of creating tangible outcomes including the development of legislative and activist strategies on our industry's behalf.



MEAT COMPLETE WITH TAURINE

RAW MEAT SUPPLEMENT FOR ALL CARNIVORES

Based on whole prey composition, this supplement balances the nutrients lacking in skeletal muscle meat-based diets for carnivores: vitamins A & D (normally supplied by the liver), B vitamins (from gut contents of whole prey), and of course calcium (found in bones). This supplement also contains added taurine – an essential amino acid for felids – and the antioxidant vitamin E.

CENTRAL NEBRASKA PACKING, INC.

PO BOX 550 ~ NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA 69103-0550

1-877-900-3003 ~ 1-800-445-2881 ~ FAX:1-308-532-2744

2016 Spring Wildlife Conservation Expo

By Chris Tromborg

On April 2, 2016, the very first Spring Wildlife Conservation Expo was held at Canada College in Redwood City, California. Traditionally, the Wildlife Conservation Expo is held in October, on the San Francisco campus of the University of California.

The Spring Expo is something of an experiment, initially conceived to determine if offering such an event at a different time of the year in a different location might attract a new audience to the Expo.

This inaugural Spring Expo was somewhat more modest than the Fall Expo. The Fall Expo has grown to include over 60 exhibitors, including FCF, and features more than ten important speakers every October. Hundreds of conservation-minded members of the public attend.

The Spring Expo featured over 20 exhibitors and five important speakers. The topics of the presentations included



Chris and Julie McNamara supervising the FCF exhibit.

penguins and elephants, but felines were the focus of three presentations.

The first presentation was from Dr. Laurie Marker, representing the Cheetah Conservation Fund, the third was from the Andean Cat Project, and the fifth was from the Niassa Lion Research Project.

The exhibitors represented a wide range of conservation organizations, including those interested in insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and a wide range of mammals. There were three feline-oriented groups represented, including the Feline Conservation Federation, the Mountain Lion Foundation, and the Felidae Project. The Feline Conservation Federation was represented by

FCF member Dr. Chris Tromborg, professional feline handler and FCF member Lynette Lyon, FCF member Sherilyn Dance, and volunteer Julie McNamara. Dr. Tromborg, along with Leslie Anastasatos, also supervised the exhibit of the Mountain Lion Foundation. All accompanying photographs are courtesy of Julie McNamara.

A valuable, though distressing exhibit was that of the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, which displayed many interdicted articles of wildlife products. These included the fully mounted

skins of a tiger and a clouded leopard, rhino horn, and fully preserved turtles.

The fully mounted specimens got me to thinking about the Safari Club, which often encourages its members to procure such preserved specimens. The Safari Club often touts its commitment to conservation, though I have never observed their presence at any conference focusing on the conservation of large, potentially displayable wildlife, and they were certainly not visible at this one.

In the years to come, the Wildlife Conservation Network will attempt to continue to present the Wildlife Conservation Expo in both the fall and spring. When they do, the Feline Conservation Federation will be there.



Chris contemplates the lost life that was once a clouded leopard, not just a prospective wall decoration for someone who seems to value felines differently than some of us.

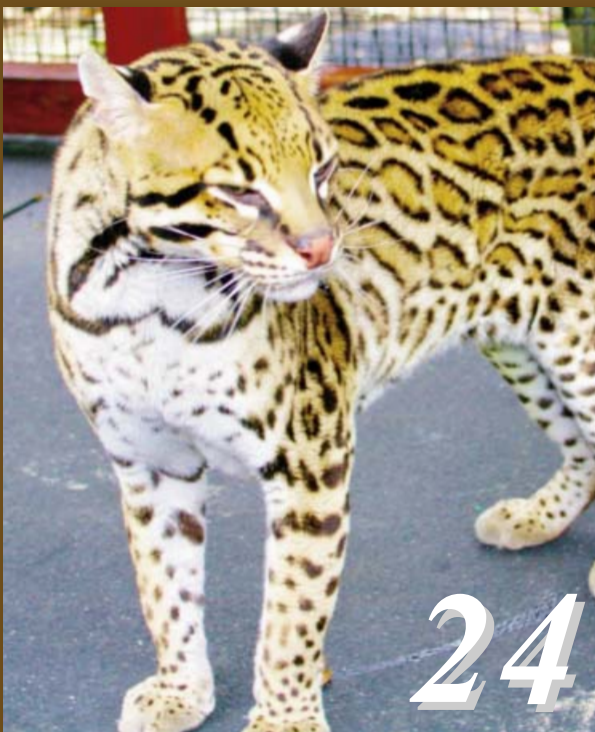
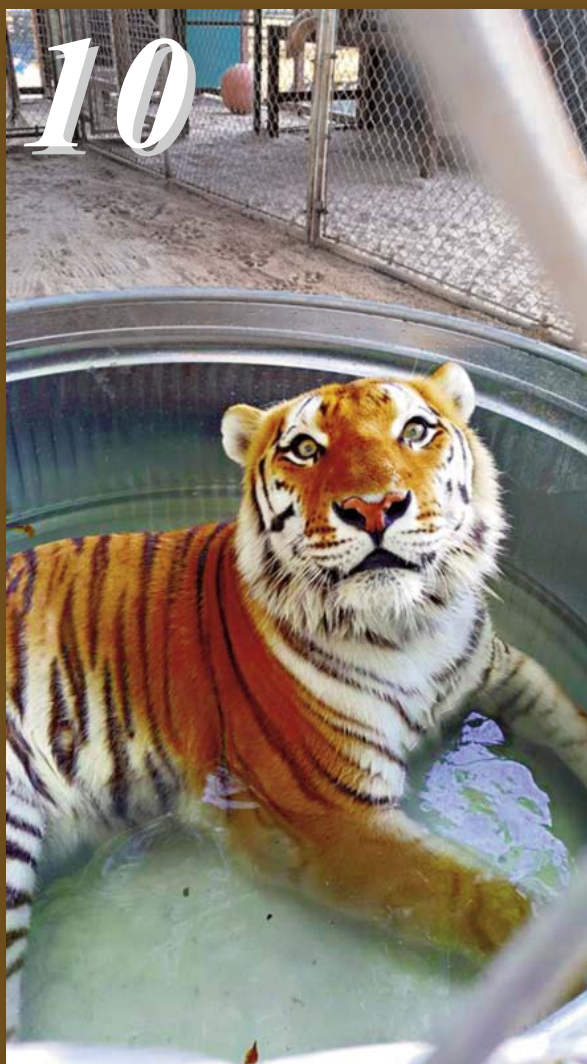


Chris inspects the grizzly results of trophy hunting. This was once a Bengal tiger.



PREMIUM NUTRITION FOR YOUR CARNIVORES

Your animals are your zoo. Protect and care for them with the most nutritious carnivore entree in the industry. The first all-pork complete diet formulated specifically for zoo carnivores, Carnivore Essentials is backed by years of extensive field research and testing, and proven to be a safe, nutritious diet for all carnivores. Your animals deserve only the very best. Feed them Carnivore Essentials.





Feline Conservation Federation

March/April 2016 Volume 60, Issue 2

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: A mother sand cat and her litter of three kittens. Mom is Scully, born August 2014, in Novosibirsk, Russia, imported with two sisters and a brother in 2015. Father is Fath, born at Cincinnati Zoo. These are some of the latest births at Exotic Feline Breeding Center in Rosamond, California. The Center has two other pairs of sand cats, but the males may be too young to sire offspring yet. Photo by Nancy Vandermeij.

Back Cover: Bing is a handsome, spotted Eurasian lynx that arrived at the N.O.A.H. facility in February 2015, as an 18-month-old. He has successfully pair-bonded with Kisa, another adult lynx that was acquired by N.O.A.H. at the same time. Bing and Kisa enjoy the run of a hillside habitat and plenty of attention from caregivers and visiting admirers. Photo by Eden Burgess, March 2016.

