



VOL XXI ISSUE 2

# PAW PRINTS

A  
Publication  
by  
Friends  
of the  
Moonridge  
Zoo a non-profit  
organization

\$1.00 DONATION

SUMMER 2009

The Friends of the Moonridge Zoo is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to support the Moonridge Animal Park through (1) educating the public regarding the treatment, protection, and conservation of wildlife, (2) recruiting and coordinating zoo volunteers, and (3) Fundraising.

The Moonridge Animal Park is operated by the Big Bear Recreation and Park District of San Bernardino County. The park is an alpine wildlife sanctuary and rehabilitation center. For those animals that cannot be released, they are provided a "Home for Life" in the park.

## Receive the Electronic Issue of Pawprints

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<http://moonridgezoo.org/fomz/pawprints.html>

### Cool Cats

by John 3 Hawks

Hi there! My name is Aslan, one of the cool cats of the Moonridge Animal Park here in Big Bear, California. You may know me as a Canadian Lynx, but I like my name and entertaining is my game! One of my many good friends here is Milo...he is a Snow Leopard from the other side of the globe and is not quite as outgoing as I am. So I will speak for both of us on who we are and what we teach you humans. about everyday life.

I came from Bakersfield of all places. Now keep in mind I



Photograph by Merci Mangabat Ojecla

am a cold weather kind of guy so being there in the heat didn't quite do it for me. Thanks to your donations I now have a home in the type of environment that is most comfortable for me.

I am often mistaken for a Bobcat but we have several differences in our

characteristics. My feet are much

larger than the average cat, and this allows me to move quickly through deep snows to get my favorite dinner of Snowshoe Hairs. Although I don't have that ability here at the park, I am fed steak from time to time by our lovely keeper Diane. Now mind you, I am a bit picky with this, so she goes out of her way to get me what I like next best to the hare.

These great keepers have worked diligently with me so that I can get out and about on educational events with schools and other places in the hope that you humans will better appreciate my important role in keeping nature in balance. Unlike bigger cats, I cannot roar so I just purr, and this works to get my steaks and the chicken that I also enjoy. Hey...let's face it...I am adorable and know how to use this gift. What can I say?

(Continued on page 2.)

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Electronic Edition of the Pawprints .....	1
Cool Cats .....	1
President's Corner .....	2
Meet Diane Roberts .....	3
Relocating the Moonridge Animal Park	3
Canadian Lynx and Bobcat.....	4
Interview with Jenna Troublefield.....	6
Park Open Hours .....	6
Meiko's Fun Stuff .....	7
Adopt an Animal .....	8
Visits us on the Web & Membership .....	8



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Summer is finally here! It took a little while for it to appear this year, but at last its here and we've been happily holding our summer events.

**Bear Country Fair** was a resounding success. We held it on just one day, Sunday of the Memorial Day weekend, and it seems to have really been the ticket. It was lots of fun and we had an amazing turnout. Thanks to Donna Blatherwick and her crew for a job well done.

**Sentinel Day** was also successful. Our loyal participants from as far away as the United Kingdom showed up for a great day of fun and supporting our animals. Our thanks go out to all of them and to Garrett Maggart for his continuing support.

**Zoocasion** celebrated its 21<sup>st</sup> year with two days of great family oriented activities. The children earned their wildlife expert badges by answering quizzes about our animals and made all kinds of fun art projects like puppets, masks and snakes. Our appreciation goes out to Mike Traxler and his group for a wonderful weekend.

So we're off to a great start and looking forward to our August and September events: **Music in the Zoo** on August 8<sup>th</sup>, **Native American Arts Festival** on August 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>, **Ice Cream Safari** on September 5<sup>th</sup>, and **Run for the Grizzlies** on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

I also want to mention how beautiful our zoo is this summer thanks to Carrie Traxler and her "Department of Water and Flowers." If you haven't made it over to the zoo yet this summer, be sure to visit the zoo--the animals will be happy to see you, and you'll be impressed with how pretty everything looks.

Hope to see you at the Zoo!

*Betsy Henke*



### Cool Cats from page 1

Now my buddy Milo is a great guy albeit a quiet one. His family comes from Central Asia, and they live in altitudes of 10,000 to 17,000 feet. Sadly there is only a few hundred of his kind left because of being hunted for their beautiful fur. Take a look at him when you come here, and you will see just how handsome he is (but don't forget me of



course!). You will also note that he has a long tail, and males in his family can weigh up to 120 pounds or so. The favorite food of his family in the wild are sheep and goats, but he also gets fed very well here at the park. Right Milo? Hmm...no answer...see...I told you he is shy!

Being of the cat family, and like most all cats everywhere, we have the ability to leap great distances for our size, and this will remind you that if you have a goal you wish to achieve and can't seem to reach it, just leap a little further ahead on your path; you just might accomplish what you have set out to do.

We have very keen eyesight, and this will help you to keep in mind that seeing what is really there is more important than seeing what only 'might' be there. As Milo and I can trek through deep snows so too you can move forward in good ways when the going gets tough. I understand your economy is rough right now but keep us in mind and don't give up!

Cats serve a wonderful purpose within nature to keep things balanced, and we ask that you do the same. Please put your trash in proper places so other animals do not ingest it and die a slow death. When you walk in the woods or deserts leave it as you found it so others may enjoy the area as well. We all have a responsibility to take care of this one and only earth we all share.

Well....now you know a little more about Milo and me. We encourage you to come visit us soon and learn even more about our importance in your world.

Thank you for your donations that keep us in a great home with such wonderful keepers.

Say goodbye Milo...Milo!.....tsk....well...I tried. Until we meet in person we are and always will be, Your friends, Aslan and Milo

## Meet Diane Roberts, A member of the Friends of the Moonridge Zoo and an Animal Keeper, Too!

by Bill Young

You probably didn't know that Big Bear has our very own version of Dr. Dolittle, did you? Her real name is Diane Roberts, and she came to Big Bear and the Moonridge Zoo after a very long career as the Executive Assistant to the department chair of Ob/Gyn at the UCI College of Medicine and the UCI Cancer Center.

As you recall, Dr. Dolittle was able to understand the animals, and the animals could understand him too. That's exactly where Diane is now. I've been fortunate to be with her during her "rounds" and see the reactions from the animals when they hear her coming down the path. They all know that Diane will deliver the goods... they're not sure what the "goods" will be this time, but they're ready. All of the animals will run to the side of the enclosure that's closest to Diane... the bears, the mule deer, the coatimundis, the raccoons... everyone is interested in Diane and what she's concocted for them. On her food tray

you'll see goodies for everyone... you'll see sardines arranged like a gourmet salad, you'll see a bowl of thawed chicks, and you'll see various arrangements with peanuts,



bread, grapes, veggies, and naturally there will be a few purple eggs too. Cordon Bleu? Nope, Cordon Purple. (Continued on page 5)

## RELOCATING THE MOONRIDGE ANIMAL PARK

By Bill Treadwell

Well, we have a new venture interceding into our relocating the Moonridge Animal Park onto National Forest Land next door to the Discovery Center on the North Shore of Big Bear Lake.

As you may recall, the National Forest Service released the Draft Environment Impact Study (DEIS) last November 2008 for public review.

Some public comments came back to the National Forest Service stating in effect why are you dealing with the National Forest Service when there is private land available for the park?

So let's step back. In January 2001 an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was sign that initiated the Na-

tional Forest Service to begin exploring the possibility of relocating the Moonridge Animal Park on National Forest Land. This is a very unique venture because there are no other animal parks (zoos) on any National Forest Land in the United States.

The MOU has a contingency stating the forest service can only consider the new park if it is the last alternative location available in Big Bear. In 2001, that was true. And since then, the focus has been to work with the forest service to move the park next door to the Discovery Center.

Now here we are nine years later kind of like a ostrich caught with its head in the ground. Oh there's land? Where?

At this time we are in the process of conducting a due diligence review as to whether or not there is viable privately owned land for sale in the general Big Bear Valley area. If there is,

then moving next door to the Discovery Center is moot, because the Forest Service will only work with us if they are the last alternative.

Given suitable private land is located, and a strong desire remains for the Moonridge Animal Park to relocate next door to the Discovery Center, the only options are (1) to change Forest Service Policy and if that is not possible then (2) enter into a land swap agreement with the County of San Bernardino and then it is not a National Forest Service issue.

You can read the public responses to the DEIS on the internet at

<http://moonridgezoo.org/lfwc/futurevision.html>

In addition all other documentation regarding the relocation project is available for review, too.

The saga continues.

# The Canadian Lynx and Bobcat

By Bill Young

Canada lynx are short-tailed, long-legged wildcats. Though similar in appearance to bobcats, lynx may appear taller because of their long legs and large feet. By the way, their hind legs are longer than their front legs.



The weight of the lynx is similar to that of the bobcat - about 20 to 30 pounds - but some bobcat males can be considerably bigger. Like most other "small" cats, lynx have retractable claws for capturing prey. They can be easily distinguished by their tail tips. The tail of the Lynx looks as though it was dipped in an inkwell being black all the way around, whereas the Bobcat's tail appears to have been painted black on top and white on the bottom.

Unlike any other cat - in the wild this Lynx almost exclusively, on the snowshoe hare. No other predator has such a strong cyclic prey base to which it has become uniquely adapted - both behaviorally and physiologically. The snowshoe hare population peaks every 10 years, and with it, so does the lynx population. When the hare population decreases, so does the lynx population. When hares are low, the Lynx will change their prey base to include small ro-

deents, ground birds, and small ungulates so that the overall Lynx population is still synchronous with the hare population. Lynx are not fast runners. The cats rely more on stealth than speed for capturing prey; they will ambush prey from a concealed spot beside a well-used animal trail. Biologists estimate that for every animal a lynx captures, it misses ten. On average, a lynx kills every other night, eating 150-200 hares a year.

Lynx live deep in coniferous forests near rocky areas, bogs and swamps. The Canada lynx is like a gray ghost of the north - elusive, evading human

contact. It is such a secretive animal that scientists really don't know how many are left.



Although not a timid hunter, the lynx will rarely contest its prey if confronted by other carnivores and will leave the kill uneaten. But when it comes to protecting their young, noth-



ing holds them back.

You can view a three and a half minute video presentation by Don Richardson at <http://moonridgezoo.org/video/WLBBe1Lynx.wmv>

These two cat species seem to have divided the North American continent up between them, with the lynx in the northern forests and the bobcat being limited by snow depth to southern Canada, and through to Central Mexico.

The word lynx comes from the Greek word 'to shine'. This may refer to the reflective cells that assist cats to see at night by re-using light that has already passed through the eye chamber by reflecting it

back a second time.

Have you watched any of the videos we have online? They are located at <http://moonridgezoo.org/map/education.html>

**Diane Roberts** from page 3

Diane began as a Friends of the Moonridge Zoo Docent in 2003. In 2005, Diane was asked to be the Animal Enrichment Coordinator, and in 2006 she was hired as an animal keeper in the zoo. Now she conjures up practical ways to provide our animals with the 4 C's of Enrichment: Change, Challenge, Choice, and Control. This program gives our animals a chance to be active, and the program stimulates their minds and bodies as well. For example, what do you think a Canadian Lynx would do with a paper bag full of chicken legs that are stuffed into an empty paper towel roll? Give up? Well, Aslan our Canadian Lynx doesn't give up... he investigates the paper bag, rips it open, then tries to figure out how to get to the chicken legs. Diane also puts in a few bunches of Bison Fur that is "harvested" from our two Wood Bison. Aslan will roll on the bison fur and tries to get it all over his own fur. You can see his mind working with this new problem... you can see him try new techniques of getting to the chicken... you can see him learn. What a vastly more challenging way to feed him than just tossing the food into the enclosure. This mental and physical exercise encourages our animals to use their natural abilities in an otherwise limited environment.



As you can see from the above picture, Diane's favorite color is purple... not sure if the animals can identify the purple color, but Diane's voice is definitely known... "Hello Harley" and 800 pounds of a male Grizzly bear comes walking up his pool's edge and waits for pineapple balls that Diane has in her purple bucket. By the way, she makes about 150 of these golf ball sized treats each week-end for the animals. So, here's this 800 pound bear reach-

ing out of the chain link fence with his lips begging for one more treat. What surprised me is how gentle the Grizzly is... he doesn't snap the treat from Diane's hand, he gently uses his lips to take the ball



through the fence. He knows that Diane is his friend. Obviously she won't go inside the enclosure with the bears, but they definitely share a mutual respect for each other. Then whether Diane is out of the treats or not, she tells him "I love you Harley" and he slowly turns around and goes about his daily business... that's a very cool experience to behold.

Then there are the two baby raccoons, Siren and Poseidon, that Diane is bottle feeding every 3 to 4 hours 24/7 plus two baby opossums that are now eating solids.

The best part of what Diane likes is the Enrichment part. You'll notice that her title is "Animal Enrichment Coordinator"... but it's not just the animals she enriches... she teaches and enriches all of the humans around her too. The following picture tells all...



Diane contributes much of her growth and working knowledge to Debbie Richardson, the zoo's curator, and what is Diane's favorite motto? "We don't stop playing because we get old, we get old because we stop playing."

# An Interview with Jenna Troublefield

## Animal Keeper at The Moonridge Animal Park

by Bill Young

If you've been to the Moonridge Zoo in the last couple of years, you've probably seen Jenna. She's usually working around the Black Bear or the Snow Leopard's enclosure, and she's the one the animals are smiling at.

Jenna's family moved to Big Bear about 11 years ago from 29 Palms, California. That's quite a change from the hot SoCal desert. While Jenna was still in high school, a part-time job opened up at the zoo... Jenna applied,

was hired, and that's how her journey here at the Moonridge Animal Park began.

As with all brand new keepers, Jenna started out in her new part-time job preparing food in the kitchen and cleaning the enclosures. Although her original

ambition was to work at a marine facility like Sea World in San Diego, during the last four years she's fallen in love with the Moonridge Animal Park and all of its animals. When I asked her about her future plans, she said "I never want to leave here!" That's how important her relationships with these alpine animals are to her.

Jenna is currently enrolled in a couple of on-line college courses in Training Enrichment. She routinely works with the black bears and Milo, the Snow Leopard, on "target training." This involves having the animal learn to touch their nose to a red target (a red ball on the end of a stick) that Jenna moves around the outside of their en-



closure. This conditioning puts the animal close enough to the enclosure walls that the keepers can touch, examine, and eventually draw blood from these still-wild creatures. Also target training teaches the animal to move from one part of the enclosure to another so the keepers can clean up and place food inside their enclosure. This direct involvement with humans intellectually stimulates the animals as well.

Jenna keeps regular updated reports in each animal's folder so others can see the current training, and so the keeper's can track the animal's progress on a long term basis.

For example, Milo (our Snow Leopard) was not friendly at all when he came to the Moonridge Animal Park last year. However, Jenna would walk by his enclosure, talk to

him, and sometimes sit and look at him. Now he recognizes her voice and will respond when she calls him. Jenna says Milo actually likes the training and is responding more with each session.

What's the toughest part of the job at the Zoo? Without blinking an eye she said "shoveling snow in the winter, but ya just get in there and do it." And winter is also when Jenna's target training becomes valuable... many of the creatures want to stay in their home during winter, and they all move a little slower when there's snow on the ground... so by having the animals respond to her training, they will come to the side of the enclosure or move to another part of the pen even though they move a little slower than during the summer time.

Jenna's future plans include the Moonridge Animal Park and all of the animals. When I asked her about her "wish list," she said that she is looking forward to the new Zoo relocation so the animals will have bigger living spaces... she's thinking about the animals more than she's thinking about herself... but that's not unusual here at the Park... all of the animal keepers are 100% dedicated to their charges here at 7,000 feet.

### The Moonridge Animal Park is Open Year 'Round, (Weather Permitting) with Daily Noon Animal Presentations

**Summer hours:** Memorial Weekend (May) thru Labor Day Weekend (September) 10:00am—5:00pm with Daily Animal Feeding Tours 3:00pm (excluding Wednesday).

**Winter hours:** 10:00am—4:00pm Animal Feeding Tours only on Saturday & Sunday 3:00pm

**Admission prices:** Ages 11-59 \$9; 3-10 \$6; Seniors \$6 and children under 3 free. Friends of the Moonridge Members free gate entry.

**Tour Groups** available call 909 866-9700 for details.

# Meiko's Fun Stuff!



Word Search

SMBMMRKTJY  
 NPTA AUONFA  
 ATUVDLHYZW  
 KJEPAGWWNT  
 ENZFFB E OOC  
 UAFSCL D ROE  
 UUKWAHOJCW  
 B QVF SLTWCQ  
 C OYOTE BQAM  
 T GSRFWCARZ

Words to find:

Badger	Buffalo	Coyote
Hawk	Owl	Raccoon
Raven	Snake	Wolfpups

Chipper is a grey squirrel.  
 She has 7 acorns hidden-  
 how many more does she need  
 to make a total of 24?

Do YOU know?? What is the name of our awesome Opossum? (hint...Miss.....?)

Circle the words that are spelled correctly:

Grizzly    Skunkk  
 Wolf       Eagle  
 Tortoise   Bobcat

WHO AM I?

I am an animal with four legs and big ears. My eyes are brown, and our babies have white spots for a while. Our males are called 'Bucks' and our females are called 'Doe's'. Do you know what else we are called?

\_\_\_\_\_



Howdy!!

I am Wally the Frog and I want to remind you that if you come to the mountains to be sure and use sunscreen and drink plenty of water.

Our days here are often very bright and I want you to enjoy your time while here without getting a sunburn!

*Meiko says...you are like our earth...one of a kind and very special!*

**Yes! I'm wild about the  
MOONRIDGE ANIMAL PARK**

*Please help me Adopt a wild bird or animal for \$25.00*

I want to adopt \_\_\_\_\_  
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for \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of person)

Mail this form to: FOMZ, Adoptions  
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Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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(Friends of the Moonridge Zoo)*

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Acct. # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Visit Us on the Web**

**Discover More**

Before your next visit to the Moonridge Animal Park, browse our website at <http://www.moonridgezoo.org>

Learn what's new at the park and when the next Special Event is scheduled. You can read about some of the animals and find out why they are with us.

Also background information of the Friends of the Moonridge Zoo can be reviewed, and you can read details regarding the relocation efforts to move the park.

**Membership**

Has your membership lapsed or have would you like to join as a new member?

You can renew or become a new member online at <http://moonridgezoo.org/fomz/join.html> or call 909 878-4200

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-8-

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