



A Publication by
Friends of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo
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PRINTS

The Friends of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to support the Big Bear Alpine Zoo by inspiring understanding, respect and environmentally responsible action for the conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat through: public education, volunteer support, fundraising and development, and key project financial support.

The Big Bear Alpine Zoo is owned and operated by the Big Bear Valley Recreation and Park District of San Bernardino County. The zoo is an alpine wildlife sanctuary and rehabilitation center. For those animals that cannot be released, the park provides them a "Home for Life".



Paw Prints, the official newsletter of the Friends of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo (FOBBAZ) will soon go electronic. In fact, this issue of this newsletter will be the "final" paper version. We will be going all electronic in order to save money and protect the environment. Our circulation continues to increase, which is a very good thing, but our costs to print and mail the newsletter also continue to grow. The sole purpose of our organization is to support the Big Bear Alpine Zoo, and we feel that it is important to focus our funds on caring for the animals at the zoo. Costs to print and mail this publication are running many thousands of dollars each year. Additionally, we will be reducing our carbon footprint by cutting our use of paper, ink, etc. Our campaign to "Help Us Go Green" has been successful, with almost 1000 readers opting for the E version of the newsletter, but we still print and mail more than 3000 copies of each issue. We want to make this transition as easy as possible – simply click on the link below and provide your email address. You will be notified when each new issue is available on line. You can also view, read, and print any and all older editions.



WE'RE EXPECTING!

Big Bear Alpine Zoo is soon to be the proud parents of these beautiful snow leopard sisters. These exquisite snow leopards were born into the species survival program, but they have a genetic disorder that removes them from the breeding program. The Big Bear Alpine Zoo was selected as the perfect place to live out their lives. They are expected to arrive in the spring of 2014, and we need your help to build them an amazing enclosure where they will feel right at home for many years to come!

Please join us as we go "green"... Paw Prints is going electronic

PLEASE SIGN UP TODAY TO RECEIVE YOUR COPY ELECTRONICALLY.....

All you have to do is visit our website at

<http://friendsofthebigbearalpinezoo.org/newsletter/>

Our Roamers and Docents....

On a Mission



Bill Young, Past President of FOBBAZ

Why are we so concerned about having Roamers and Docents all around the Zoo? Mostly so we can keep Patron fingers out of the enclosures! Our Zoo is very patron-friendly and the patrons can get very close to our animals. That's a good thing, and that's a bad thing. It's good because the humans can more closely "connect" with the animals... after all, when Lotus Blossom the Badger snuggles her belly up to the fence, it looks like she wants to be petted... same with Bonsai, the coyote, and Bailey & Malibu the Mule deer, and sometimes Shakespeare, the bob cat. However, the bad thing is that the animals will "**connect**" with fingers and arms.

You may remember the case from several years ago of the Zoo's two spotted Skunks (Oleander and Gardenia) that Animal Control had to euthanize. One of the patrons allowed their little girl to get right next to the skunk enclosure so the child could "pet the little kitties". And wouldn't you know it, one of the skunks bit the little girl. Since we couldn't tell which skunk bit the child, BOTH skunks were dispatched by Animal Control... what a sad tale... Debbie calls it one of the worst days ever at the Zoo.

So, why did we have to euthanize the skunks? For the same reason that we must euthanize every zoo animal that bites a human...because that animal *could* have rabies. Problem: there is no test that can detect rabies in humans **at the time they are bitten**. By the time symptoms develop in the human, it is too late for treatment and there is no cure. Therefore, even though rabies may not be at the top of the disease list, it's imperative not to dismiss the possibility that the biting animal has rabies.

Wild animals like skunks, foxes, and bats are common reservoirs of rabies. Our domestic dogs and cats can carry the virus as well, but we know how long the virus takes to become infectious in our domestic pets... science calls this "shedding the virus". Science does NOT know how long the virus takes to show up in wild animals... hence, we must extract and test the brain tissue immediately when a wild or hybrid animal bites a human.

All of the Zoo's animals are given annual rabies shots in addition to distemper and other vaccinations. However, no long term studies have been done on the effectiveness of those vaccines on wild animals, so neither the health department nor Animal Control acknowledges the shot's efficacy. Reservoir or vector species can carry the disease, pass it on through a bite, but never show symptoms themselves of the disease. And you probably already know this as well, but the only approved way to test a wild animal for rabies is to microscopically analyze its' brain tissue in the lab... and the only way to get the brain tissue is to decapitate the animal and send the head in for tests. And since the rabies virus doesn't travel in the blood stream, there are no blood tests to detect the virus in either the bitten human or the suspect animal. Although Science can also use the spinal cord to do the rabies tests, that still requires us to send in the spinal cord as well. There are reports of a new type of test that does not require the death of the animal... those tests are continuing and reportedly look fairly promising.

I've found that if I have to tell the "skunk story" to a patron in order to drive home the "do not touch" rule, that the patron always understands why, and is very careful with their kid's hands and fingers while they're still at the Zoo... it is a painfully compelling story. Further reading... a good Q&A paper on rabies is here:

<http://www.ndhealth.gov/disease/Rabies/QandA.htm>

Many thanks for help writing this paper go to: Debbie Richardson, Curator of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo, and

Prof. Tricia Elliott, Carrington College, Pomona, CA.

The Big Bear Alpine Zoo is Open Year 'Round

(Weather Permitting)

Summer Hours: Memorial Weekend (May) thru Labor Day Weekend (September) 10:00 am – 5:00 pm with daily animal feeding tours at 3:00 pm (excluding Wednesdays).

Note: the zoo is closed on Christmas Day
Admission prices: Ages 11 – 59 \$9; Seniors \$6; Children under 3 are free. Free gate entry for members of the Friends of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo.

Are our gray wolves friendly?

Bill Young, 2013

When we see our PuppyPack at the zoo, they look playful and friendly. Fact is they *are* playful and friendly... to certain people. When we see Debbie or Christy go into the big wolf enclosure, we see 7 wolves that want humans attention... jumping, tail-wagging, ears back, licking, wrestling for the front position... looks like a bunch of family pets. But do you think the wolves would respond to YOU like that? Probably not.

There is a significant difference between Tame, Domesticated, Familiar, Tolerant, pack member, and dominant. The wolves seem “tame” to the Keepers they are familiar with... but this doesn’t mean that Summer could take Blaire home for the weekend. Summer and Christy and Debbie and the handful of other Keepers who enter the enclosure are entering the wolf’s home territory... the wolves are *letting* them come in.



With supervision from Debbie, some of us have been able to go down to the chain link fence and let a couple of the wolves lick us through the fence. You just don’t realize how big these wolves are until you are at eye-level with them. From the viewing platform, we are 5 feet above their eye level and although they look large from there, they look *huge* from ground level. This picture is NOT a product of Photoshop... that is the real Sedona standing against the real Christy.

Most of the time, Legend and Blair acknowledge me when I go to the top of the viewing platform... they do a whole-body wiggle, tuck their ears back, and smile at me. By the way, that is a particular thrill for me to see them react that way. However, I would NOT go inside the enclosure, with or without Debbie. Legend and Blair are *familiar* with me being on the outside of the enclosure, and they’ve seen and heard and smelled and tasted me since their birth, but they are not tame or domesticated, and are still dangerous.

So, when zoo patrons talk about how friendly and *tame* the wolf pups seem, remind them that our wolves are 100% wolf and 100% wild although they are tame and accepting to certain people. We are fortunate to be able to experience true gray wolves up close, but remember that these guys have twice the jaw crushing power and a 30% larger brain than a Rottweiler or German Sheppard... they are smart and strong and the progenitor of all dogs.



Our beautiful Truck—photo courtesy of the Bear Valley Recreation and Parks District



February 7th 2014 A Golf Benefit to build a Himalayan Habitat for the Snow Leopards

Event Schedule:	10 to 10:45 am	Registration
	10:45 to 11:30 am	Putting Contest for "Big Money"
	11:30 am	Lunch
	Noon	Tee off
	5 to 6:30 pm	Awards Banquet

\$100 per player - \$400 per team

Includes: Greens Fee, Cart, Hat, Balls, Lunch, Dinner, Putting Contest & Great Prizes
Without a doubt, the best golf tournament experience ever!

Enter your foursome now as spaces are limited. Register Early!

Registration fees are non-refundable.

Four-person scramble format with prizes for first and second place finish.

Player Registration: Please fill all 4 spots before registering

Player #1

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Cell _____

Player #2

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Cell _____

Player #3

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Cell _____

Player #4

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Cell _____

Please make checks payable to: FOBBAZ

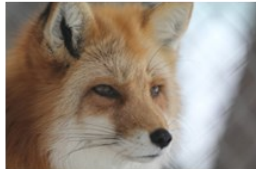
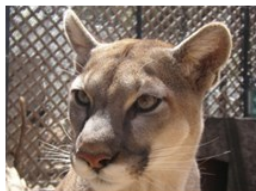
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Send registration form with payment to:

Big Bear Valley Recreation and Park District
PO BOX 2832, Big Bear Lake, CA 92315

Contact Lorie Judd for Player & Sponsorship Information: 909-866-9700 ljudd@sdd.sbcounty.gov

Friends of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo is the non-profit support arm for the Big Bear Alpine Zoo. Your tax deductible donations go toward helping the animals in our care live a better life.





1st Annual FOBBAZ Golf Tournament

"Himalayan Habitat"
Golf for the Snow Leopards

Friday ~ February 7, 2014 ~ 12 noon tee off



*Event held at the beautiful
Classic Club in Palm Desert*

Tax Deductable Sponsorship Opportunities

- Tee Sponsors \$400 (Be a Tee Sponsor and enter a foursome for \$750 a \$50 savings)
- Premier Sponsor \$5,000 ~ Dinner Sponsor \$2,500
- Lunch Sponsor \$1,750 ~ Hat Sponsor \$1,500 ~ Raffle Sponsor \$1,250
- Cart Sponsor \$1,250 ~ Ball Sponsor \$750
- Putting Contest Sponsor \$800



EXPERIENCE TROON GOLF[®]

Farewell to Peg The Passing of a beloved Mountain Lion

By Don Richardson,
Curator of the Moonridge Zoo in Big Bear Lake,
CA

(NOTE: This article was originally published in 2005 in *Paw Prints*. It is reprinted today, with permission, in hopes that we never forget Peg the mountain lion.)

“One day years ago we received a blessing that captivated our hearts and bonded our emotions as only a family can be bonded. The little ball of fur and claws and spit was far from fearsome. It was in very short order that “Peg”, our smallest mountain lion cub, gave us an amazing amount of love in such a small package. That love and family bond allowed us to reach out to others with her help.”

“She soon was letting children of all ages have the chance of a lifetime. She gave hundreds of thousands of visitors the chance to experience the awesome power, strength, and awe-inspiring gentleness that encompasses America’s greatest cat. We all expected to have her part of our family of animals joining us on the new and exciting journey to our new home. We never expected this gracious cat to be moving on so soon to another journey that her body could not take her on. We had to make a very difficult decision to let her take that journey before her time with us should have been over. We will forever carry her with us in our thoughts, in our vision and in our hearts and with her sisters who will always remind us that for a very brief moment our family was complete. The staff and Docents give to her part of our soul as we wish her God-speed on her new journey, and we will forever feel a part of us is missing.”

“Our smallest mountain lion “Peg” was euthanized December 29, 2005, after it was evident that her three-month battle to gain control over a debilitating metabolic disease was not recoverable. Irritable Bowel Disorder creates an inability to absorb and process food and proteins necessary to sustain life. If controllable, people and animals afflicted with this disease remain on medication to control it’s effects for the remainder of their lives. The medications often produce as much harm as the affliction itself.”

Background: Don and Debbie Richardson received these little orphaned cubs over three years ago. Peg was the smallest of three Mountain Lion sisters who came to the Moonridge zoo in 2002. These little felines were very small and completely camouflaged with spots. Young cubs are born helpless (in an “altricial” state) and are usually protected by their mother in a sheltered area until they are big enough to roam and begin to learn and practice hunting skills. By the time our Zoo had received the

cubs, their little eyes were open, their little ears had unfolded, their first teeth had erupted, and they were very capable of playing. Don and Debbie shared their home, kitchen, and bedroom with these three pound packages of terror until the cubs became too “mountain liony” to stay in the Richardson’s home. Peg, Cascade, and Canyon moved to their new home at the zoo and were constantly held, fed, and played with by a few lucky zoo curators and keepers. And now, more than 3 years later, Cascade and Canyon will continue to teach and entertain visitors to the zoo, but it will take several months for them to become accustomed to the empty spot in their hearts caused by Peg’s passing.

Meet Lotus, our American Badger. She came to the zoo in December of 2005 when she was about a year old. She was found abandoned at the side of a road at a very young age and was raised by a rehabilitator. Since she was so young when she was found, she imprinted on humans and could not be released back to the wild. Lotus loves frozen rats and plays with them for a while when she is given one.



American Badgers are a fossorial carnivore, which means they are adapted for digging and living underground. Most of the food they eat, they find underground—such as pocket gophers, ground squirrels and moles, but they also eat some plants and even poisonous snakes. Badgers have been known to live to about 25 years in captivity, although a life span of 15 to 20 years is more common. Badgers can have from 1 to 5 offspring but 3 is the average. Badgers are found mainly in the western regions of North America and also portions of Canada. Badgers are so aggressive they have been known to back down bears when they are confronted. Badgers are excellent diggers and have been known to dig through 2 inches of concrete. True to her nature, Lotus spends a lot of her time happily digging in her enclosure. Badgers have delayed implantation and the babies do not start developing for a couple of months after mating.

What's New at the Zoo?



BIG BEAR ALPINE ZOO AT MOONRIDGE

We have had close to 200 rehab animals brought in this year, and it hasn't stopped yet. We have had about 80-85% of those survive and about 75% have gone back out into the wild. The other 5-10% are still being assessed for injuries or degree of imprinting to determine if they can be safely released back into the wild. Just this year alone we have released about 11 raccoons, 3 bobcats, a coyote, 6 skunks, an opossum, about 10 bunnies and many other small mammals. We have also released a multitude of birds including about 12 ducks, several birds of prey and recently a poor will.



Several of these animals were very special because they were fighting against all odds. The coyote had a broken pelvis, but thanks to Dr. Delandtsheer at VCA, and our incredible vet techs, the most severe break was repaired and he was able to walk again. It was very rewarding to see him return to the wild.

The bobcat had severe nerve damage to a front leg, but the nerves reinstated themselves after several weeks and she was able to be returned to the wild as well. The poor will was hit by a car and was plastered to the grill. We thought for sure he wouldn't make it, but after some assessment we found that he was actually doing very well and he called to our keeper as she released him, then he flew off into the wild. This is one of the most important things we do for animals and the environment here at the Big Bear Alpine Zoo, and it is definitely the most rewarding. If an animal can't be released back to the wild we give them a home where they can be cared for and treasured for the rest of their lives. Their stories help to educate people about the important role all species play in the balance of nature, and how easily even the smallest things we do can impact them.

Here are a few stories that touched the hearts of many people:

5 baby ducklings came to zoo this summer after their mother was killed by a car on the boulevard. The babies had fallen into a drainage space, and members of the Dept. of Public Works were kind enough to come and remove the grate so the babies could be rescued. They were rehabilitated and released.

A little saw whet owl (just like Yoda) was found down in the desert and brought up here. Luckily, he was able to be released after a little care.



Luke and Luna, the ringtails that reside in our nocturnal house, had 3 babies this spring. Luna is a first time mother, so the keepers are being extra careful to make them feel safe and secure. This birth is exciting because most of the ringtails in captivity are genetically related. Luna was wild caught, so these babies are now part of a wider gene pool. Luke, the father, remains with Luna and the babies, and he is helping care for the new family. Both are extremely protective of the babies. The nocturnal house was closed temporarily to protect the babies, but was reopened in late summer.



Debbie Richardson, zoo curator, has been hand raising 2 baby flying squirrels. They were so tiny that they required feeding every two hours. They have grown and thrived, and although they still require a lot of care, they are able to eat solid food. They, too, will be released unless they become imprinted. They would not have survived on their own.



Note: All photos on this page are courtesy of the Bear Valley Recreation and Parks District—Thank you!

Visit Us on the Web

Discover More

Before your next visit to the Big Bear Alpine Zoo, browse our website at

<http://friendsofthebigbearalpinezoo.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 Big Bear Alpine Zoo can be reviewed, and you can read details regarding the relocation efforts to move the park.

Membership

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

You can renew or become a new member online at <http://friendsofthebigbearalpinezoo.org/membership/> or call 909 878-4200

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Yes! I'm wild about the BIG BEAR ALPINE ZOO

Would like to donate \$ _____ for relocation

Would like to donate \$ _____ for general use

<http://friendsofthebigbearalpinezoo.org/donate-now/>

Would like to adopt an animal for \$25

I want to adopt: _____
(name of bird or animal)

For: _____
(name of person)

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Email Paw Prints Newsletter: _____ YES _____ NO

Paid by: Check (to FOBBAZ) MasterCard Visa

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Signature: _____

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