



PAW PRINTS

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Friends
of the
Moonridge
Zoo a non-profit
organization

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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) fund-raising.

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

Evolution of the Zoo

By Don Richardson, Curator

I was recently reading and reliving the history of the Moonridge Animal Park. Over the years, I've heard and recited the animal park stories on hundreds of occasions at hundreds of public education programs. It always humbles me to see how far our park has come during our stay here at the top of Moonridge Road.

In 1990 our park, in a sense, woke up and began to discover its potential. Our animal park is the only zoo in a county with a population of nearly 2 million; and yet, the park had only been visited by about 13,000 people a year. However, that was about to change. After a year of upgrading conditions at the park, we embarked on a journey which would open our doors all year round to the citizens of our county and beyond. By 1996 three names became household talk, when Tutu, Harley and Ayla took San Bernardino by storm. The first grizzly bears to arrive in California since 1970 had returned to their historic range in Big Bear Lake, California and the Moonridge Animal Park. The three charmers had become only the second exhibit of grizzlies in our golden state, where they had been hunted to extinction by 1906.



Our special grizzly bears welcomed 98,000 visitors during their first year at the park. The Moonridge Animal Park was being discovered by more and more people, thanks to Tutu, Harley and Ayla. Also at this time, the American Zoo Association recognized the high elevation location of our animal park and climatic conditions provided an ecosystem that is unique among zoos across the United States. So, the park became a participating member of the Snow Leopard Species Survival Program and began housing a very rare and stunningly beautiful endangered wildcat.

Focusing on another distinction of our park, a rare California animal came to have a home with us. It was the Fisher, which is currently represented in just five North American Zoos. There are only two surviving wild Fisher populations that exist in California: One near the southern tip of the Sierra mountain range and the other on the Northwestern side of the mountain range near Humboldt. Fisher populations were decimated during the fur trading periods of the 1950's.

New visitors to the park are often surprised with the diversity of rare animals under our care. This diversity provides a stunning background as the park continues to bring the message of wildlife to Outdoor Science Schools. Our **Wildlife Awareness Programs** bring our wildlife ambassadors and their message to over 40,000 kids a years. Many of these kids may not be able to make the trek up to our alpine park or any other zoo for that matter. **Wildlife Awareness Programs** bring the zoo to the front

(continued on page 2)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Evolution of the Zoo	1
President's Corner	2
Featured Animal - Lynx.....	3
Zoo FAQs.....	4
Boo in the Zoo Pictures.....	5
Membership	6
Elvira Poem	7
Wolf Awareness Day Recap	8

Building Tomorrow's Zoo



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Happy New Year everyone! Can you believe its 2007 already? Time sure flies when you're as busy and involved as we all are here at the Moonridge Zoo. We've put our schedule of events together for this year and we're very excited to have most of our annual events returning plus some additional ones.

Two of our events, Bear Country Fair and Zooccasion are returning but this year we hope to make them unique. Over the last few years they've grown to resemble each other a little too much. The emphasis at Bear Country Fair will be based around the "fair" idea with lots of games, booths and activities typical of a country fair.

On the other hand, Zooccasion will emphasize the educational. The Educational department of the Friends will have activities which, while lots of fun, will truly give children the opportunity to learn about our animals.

Our other returning events are Sentinel Day, Music in the Zoo, the Native American Art Festival, Ice Cream Safari, Wolf Awareness Day and Boo in the Zoo.

A "new" event for this year is our Photo Day. At this event, photographers (professional, amateur and children) are invited to enter a photo contest. The entrees will be given opportunities to "shoot" our animals and grounds. The winners of the contest will have their photographs published in a calendar.

In other news, our relocation efforts continue. Our designers are hard at work designing and the environmental study at the proposed site continues. We are still hoping to get our permit in late summer.

I want to thank all of you who have sent me ideas and comments, I really appreciate it-keep them coming!

Betsy Henke

Friends of the Moonridge Zoo

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Hours:

Office Open Tuesday - Saturday
10 am - 6 pm

(continued from page 1)

door of kids who may be isolated by geographical or social boundaries. Now they can have their personal experience and an opportunity to learn from these exciting visits by our animals and their animal care staff.

But, for the past few years the clock has been ticking. Time is running down at the current park site as the 50 year lease is coming to an end. We have the chance to look forward to a new exciting home and a unique adventure for our visitors. We have the possibility of joining our Big Bear Discovery Center as neighbors on the north shore of Big Bear Lake. For that to become reality we still have to reach the funding goal for the first phase of the move. We're not there yet! More funds are needed to make the move before the end of our current lease expires in February 2009.

We want to urge our supporters not to wait till the last minute to make funding for the move a firm reality. Designing new homes for these rare animals is underway right now, but the actual move depends on you and us working together. **Please take the time to contact and offer your financial support for the move to Friends of the Moonridge Zoo.**

No donation is too small to be counted. Even the pennies collected by Palm Springs elementary schools have helped. The animals are ready to embark on the animal ark to their new park! Let's make sure no one is left behind.

Pistol, our newest lady bobcat, is recovering from yet another example of wild animal -vs- humans.

Pistol came to the Moonridge Animal Park several months ago in a pretty bad condition... her hind quarters were paralyzed, and she could only drag herself around. She was actually TASER'ed when she came to close to a human camp, and that caused a spinal cord injury that paralyzed her.

Now that our dedicated handlers/keepers have given daily therapy to the little Bobcat, she is starting to show signs of improvement... she can stand for a few seconds at a time now.

Still as feisty as a wildcat (after all, that's what she is) and she will try to bite and scratch anybody or anything during the Therapy sessions. Fortunately, Stacy, keeper par excellence, is experienced in seeing a scratch or bite coming, so Pistol seldom tastes human skin.

If all goes well, we may be able to see Pistol in the bobcat enclosure by early summer 2007... we're keeping our claws crossed for her quick recovery.



Featured Animal - Lynx

Aslin, the Canadian Lynx, is one of our newest family members... He came from Bakersfield, CA to Big Bear because he couldn't take the heat in the California desert... his natural habitat is Canada, Alaska, and the northern U.S. He was actually hand-raised so he can't be released back into the wild.



The debate continues whether or not the Canadian Lynx is in fact a separate species from the Eurasian (a.k.a. Siberian or Iberian) Lynx, or merely a sub-species. Experts

are evenly divided on this subject, but for now, it remains a separate species based on its marked adaptive differences for prey capture. The name Lynx comes from the Greek word "to shine," and may be in reference to the reflective ability of the cat's eyes.

As you can see from these pictures, Aslin looks just like a regular house cat. One big difference is that this cat is about 3 times larger than the ordinary house cat even though he's still considered a "small cat"... he has retractable claws, purrs, pupils are slits rather than circles, he can't roar, and he crotches to eat. By the way, what do you feed a Canadian Lynx, eh? Well, one of his keepers, Diane Roberts, buys steaks for "his majesty"... normally his diet would be almost exclusively snowshoe hares, but here in Big Bear Lake he gets steaks. Stacey, his other keeper, says that he also really digs chicken drumsticks, and any thing beef.

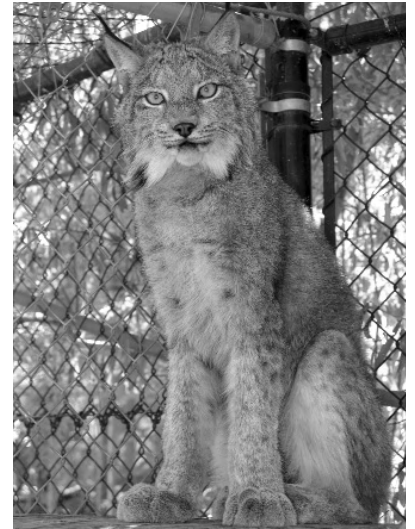
Aslin was hand-raised and is very tame with the keepers. Sometimes he'll lean down so the human will scratch his head. Debbie Richardson, our head Keeper, is hopeful that with continued nurturing,



Aslin will be able to go on Educational Tour programs to schools and other off-site locations. What a treat those kids have coming !!

The Canadian Lynx' fur is usually white tipped, giving it a frosted appearance, and is only indistinctly spotted. The coat color ranges from a reddish-brown to gray, and also occurs in a rare "blue-lynx" which is the result of a genetic mutation. They have a flared facial ruff, black ear tufts, and long hind legs with a short tail. Their large, wide-spreading feet are cov-

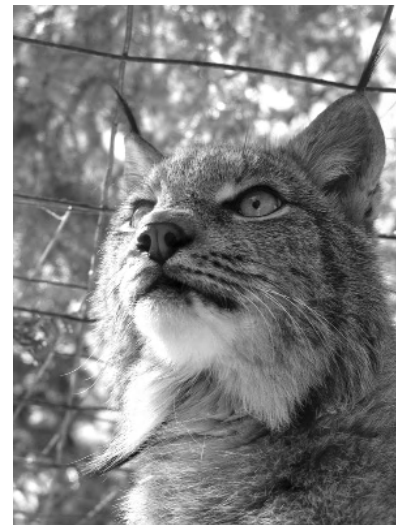
ered in fur, which act like snowshoes, and are effective in supporting the cat's weight on the snow... purrfectly suited to winters the alpine winters in Big Bear Lake. They are often confused with their smaller feline cousins the Bobcat, but can be easily distinguished by their tail tips. The tail of 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. In the wild, Canadian Lynx have lived up to 15 years, and in captivity, up to 21.



Unlike any other cat – this Lynx usually depends solely and 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.

By day, the wild Lynx rests under a ledge, the roots of a fallen tree, or a low branch. It frequently climbs trees and sometimes rests in them, waiting to leap down on passing prey. The Lynx's long ear tufts serve as sensitive antennae, enhancing its hearing, while its big feet help make it a powerful swimmer. The animal's thick fur permits silent stalking and speed through soft snow, in which some animals may flounder.

It is a solitary animal, associating with the opposite sex only during mating, at which time several males may follow a female. Females with young are tolerated within a male's home range. Kittens are born streaked and spotted, and remain with the mother through the first winter; they begin foraging with the mother at about two months, and are weaned at three months. Young Lynx bury their scat; adults do not. Lynx often urinate on stumps or bushes, which is suggestive of territorial marking, but little is known of territoriality in this cat. Its main natural predators are wolves and the mountain lion, but humans, who destroy its habitat and value its long, silky fur, are its chief enemy today.



Zoo FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

1. Should Individuals Keep Wild/Exotic Animals as Pets?

No. Wild and exotic (non-native) animals are unsuitable for home rearing and handling. They have complex needs that are difficult to meet. Most individuals have neither the finances nor the experience to care for them properly. It has been estimated that 90% of the wild animals are dead within the first two years of captivity. Many wild animals forced into a domestic situation cause injury to humans, especially children. Raccoons, for example, are cute and cuddly as youngsters, but can tear a home to shreds overnight. Our very own Rocky, was such an illegal pet before coming to our zoo, as was Miranda the red fox, Cinnamon the serval cat, Peanut the coatimundi. Others, if released into the environment, can cause irreversible and costly damage to our ecosystem or themselves. Another example: our two 3-year old mountain lions seem to be perfectly able to hunt and defend themselves. However, if we turned these two ladies loose in the mountains, and a hiker sees them "charging" towards them, how terrified would those hikers be? But the two puma-lasses would just do what comes natural: run to a human for care, play, and feed.



- Frightened hikers? Yes
- Playful Pumas? Yes
- Disastrous results? Yes

2. When Is Captivity Justified?

Wild animals should only be kept in captivity by professional zoological facilities like the Moonridge Animal Park. The only individuals who should be allowed to have wild animals are licensed wildlife rehabilitators and certain breeders. In both cases, they should demonstrate a thorough knowledge of their field and an ability to care for the animal humanely.

3. Why Are Public Health and Safety Concerns?

Wild and exotic animals carry a number of diseases that are transmissible to humans, including rabies, tuberculosis, hepatitis, tularemia, leptospirosis, salmonella, and ringworm, and other parasites. Fortunately for our animal-guests and visitors alike, the Moonridge zoo's curator and staff keep a very close watch for any infections or diseases... and they're prepared to administer the correct medicines and treatments... something that "non-zoo people" could completely ignore. This means that a bobcat, for example, could have a case of feline leukemia or hepatitis that goes undetected by the private owner... a danger to the bobcat and the family.

4. What Does the Future Hold for a Wild or Exotic Animal in Captivity?

Most owners are ignorant of a wild animal's needs.



Lotus - our Badger

Their local veterinarian can neither properly diagnose nor effectively treat health problems. The animal's behavior is usually misunderstood and often radically altered in captivity as a result of inappropriate care; in order to domesticate the animal, the owner resorts to such "corrective measures" as defanging, declawing, and castration. When at last the owner decides to get rid of the animal, it is usually impossible to find her a new home. Obviously, other individuals are no better equipped than the original owner to care for her. Most pure zoos, for a variety of reasons, generally do not accept such animals. There are a few sanctuaries that will accept these animals, like Moonridge Animal Park, but often these facilities are stretched to the breaking point... and most local animal shelters are ill-equipped to handle anything other than the occasional raccoon. Here in Big Bear we are blessed with veterinarian resources who can repair mountain lion teeth, care for a snow leopard, or even amputate Hucklebeary's right forearm. Huck, as you may remember, is cutest 354 pound 3-legged black bear on the planet!



HuckleBeary - our 3-legged bear



BOO in the ZOO



Join Friends of the Moonridge Zoo!

(a non-profit organization)

Members of the "Friends" are scattered across the U.S. from California to Maryland to (2) members in the United Kingdom!

See benefit packages under box at right.

Check appropriate box

Individual Membership\$30.00

Couple.....45.00

Family Membership65.00

in Family _____ (immediate household family members - 2 adults & 3 children under 18. Each additional child add \$3.00 to pass price)

Contributing Membership \$150.00

Sustaining Membership \$500.00

Keepers' Circle \$1000.00

Curator's Circle \$5000.00 - One Time

Are you interested in docent training? Yes No

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone No. with area code _____

E-mail _____

Date: _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Paid by: Check Mastercard VISA

Acct.#: _____ Exp.Date: _____

Signature _____

Please make checks payable to:

FRIENDS OF THE MOONRIDGE ZOO (FOMZ)

Mail to: Membership

P.O. Box 2557, Big Bear City, CA 92314

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MOONRIDGE ANIMAL PARK

Curator: 909-584-1299

Open Year 'Round

Park Hours September-May

Monday-Friday 10:00AM-4:00PM

Saturday-Sunday 10:00AM-5:00PM

Animal Presentations at Noon

Group Tours 909/866-9700

Monday-Friday 9:00 AM-4:00 PM

Admission General (Ages 11-59)\$5

Seniors (Ages 60 plus)\$4

Children (Ages 3-10)\$4

Children under age 3 free

MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATIONS, DUES & PRIVILEGES

BASIC MEMBER BENEFITS

- Free admission to the Big Bear Zoo for one year
- Free or reduced entry to reciprocal zoos
- Subscription to Paw Prints, FOMZ newsletter
- 10% discount in gift shop
- Free or reduced entry to zoo special events
- Docent training

MEMBER CATEGORIES AND BENEFITS

INDIVIDUAL – \$30 per year, one person –
Basic member benefits

COUPLE – \$45 per year, 2 adults –
Basic member benefits

FAMILY – \$65 per year, 2 adults, 3 children
(under age 18, immediate household) - additional children
\$3 per child per year – *Basic member benefits PLUS*

- Four (4) free one-day guest passes

CONTRIBUTING – \$150 per year –
Basic member benefits PLUS

- Free admission to Zoo for family members
- Two (2) additional guests each visit
- 10 free one-day guest passes
- Animal Adoption of your choice

SUSTAINING – \$500 per year –
Basic member benefits PLUS

- Free admission to Zoo for family members
- Two additional guests each visit
- 12 free one-day guest passes
- Animal Adoption of your choice
- Paving Stone with family name in a new specially designated area

KEEPERS' CIRCLE – \$1,000 per year –
Basic member benefits PLUS

- Free admission to the Zoo for family members
- Two (2) additional guests each visit
- 15 free one-day guest passes
- Animal Adoption of your choice
- Paving Stone with family name in a new specially designated area
- "Behind the Scenes" Tour of the Zoo

CURATOR'S CIRCLE – \$5,000 – ONE TIME –
Basic member benefits PLUS

- Lifetime free admission to the Zoo for family
- Four (4) additional friends each visit
- Unlimited one-day guest passes
- Animal Adoption of your choice
- Paving Stone with family name in designated area
- 20% discount in the gift shop
- Annual behind-the-scenes Tour of Zoo
- Annual Dinner Party with Zoo Curator
- Lifetime plaque on Curator's Circle Recognition Wall





Elvira



*Days bring blessings
Blessings bring days
You entered our lives
And days were blessed*

*To your Spirit Lodge
You have now journeyed
Enter with great honor
Freedom is yours*

*With great love
We thank you
With lessons learned
We honor you*

*We will honor your earth walk
With our love and compassion
That which you gave us
We will give in return*

*Who could know you
And not be touched?
Who could see you
And not be smiling?*

*You have gone home
Yet you are here
Deep in our heart
Ingrained in our love*

*A great teacher you have become
Your footprints embedded in our hearts
Your softness and crossed eyes
Bring beauty to our soul*

*Walk in beauty Elvira
Thank you for your days
Teaching is your way
We will continue your path*

*Children watched you
Eyes wide with wonder
Resting upon loving shoulders
You moved their spirit*

*We love you Elvira
And for today and all tomorrows
We will always be
Your Friends of the Moonridge Zoo*



*Sidanelai
3 Hawks*

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

Please help me Adopt a wild bird or animal for \$15.00

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

for _____
(name of person)

Mail this form to: FOMZ, Adoptions
P.O. Box 2557 • Big Bear City, CA 92314

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

Email Address: _____

Make check payable to: **FOMZ**
(Friends of the Moonridge Zoo)

Date: _____ Amount \$ _____

Paid by: Check Cash MasterCard Visa

Acct. # _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature: _____

Wolf Awareness Day

Our annual Wolf Awareness Day was, again, very successful and lots of fun. Approximately 35 children participated in games, art projects and jewelry making based around the wolf awareness theme. Our wolf Nova was presented at the Noon Presentation and was a big hit. In the afternoon, our wolves were given "enrichment" treats such as pumpkins stuffed with chicken legs which was very exciting for the wolves and great fun for the people to watch.

VISIT US ON THE WEB

Before your next visit to the Zoo why not spend a few minutes browsing our website www.moonridgezoo.org?

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

Looking for a way to help the Friends of the Moonridge Zoo or want to join the Friends yourself? You'll find out right here. There is even a wish list where Don Richardson, our Curator, has listed some of the special needs he has for providing the best possible environment for our animals.

-8-

Return Service Requested

www.moonridgezoo.org

Gift Shop: 909-584-1171

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