



## Friends of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo Newsletter

a nonprofit organization -EIN: 33-0350180

# FOBBAZ



### In this issue:

- Memory Lane
- Rescue Tips
- Kit Foxes
- Upcoming Events
- Snow Activity
- Local business Focus
- Support Opportunities

The Friends of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo's **VISION** is to be a valued nonprofit, whose cooperative support will be a key partner to ensure the success of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo.

The Friends of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo's **MISSION** is to support the Big Bear Alpine Zoo by inspiring understanding, respect, and environmentally responsible action for the stewardship of wildlife and wildlife habitat through conservation, education, volunteer support, and fundraising.



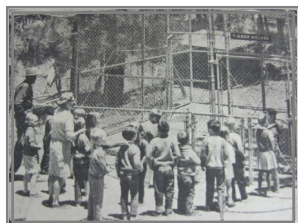
## How did the Big Bear Alpine Zoo get it's start ?



1959- The Big Bear Alpine Zoo really didn't start out to be a "zoo". A wildfire ravaged some of the forest areas surrounding the Big Bear Lake area in 1959. Several injured and displaced animals were found after the fire. A makeshift rehabilitation area was set up near the local ski area in Big Bear Lake. Loris Cady, who was the developer of the Moonridge Mountain Estates jumped into action and helped build the first two cages for the animals that were being brought to the new "Wildlife Habitat". Workers from the local ski resort were overseeing the operation. An orphaned 30 pound baby black bear and two bobcats were the first residents of the future zoo.

1960- Loris Cady and the Moonridge Mountain Estates agreed to a 50 year sub-lease between Big Bear Valley Recreation and Parks District and the Moonridge Golf and Mountain Club (who already had a 99 year lease with Moonridge Mountain Estates). So, the ball was now in motion to maintain the "animal deal" in Moonridge. Arrangements were made to supply food and water to the Wildlife Habitat.

1961- a Black Bear was brought down from a tree during another forest fire at Barton Flats. The bear was named Herman and he became one of the centers most famous residents.



1965- Mr. Harold Darling is hired as a zoo supervisor and care taker. Mr. Darling was the only caretaker for the zoo and the animals for many years.

1966- A female Black Bear was caught rampaging through dumpsters at the YMCA camp on almost a daily basis. She was relocated to the Wildlife Habitat in Moonridge. The bear was named "Jiggers" by the campers at the YMCA who were supposedly heard to say..."jiggers, here comes the bear!"

And so it started.... Little by little, animals were brought to live at the habitat. From the beginning, the intention was to rehabilitate and release the animals back into their natural environment. For some animals however, returning to the wild was not an option as they had been imprinted by their human caretakers or were too injured to take care of themselves out in the wild.

Some of the animals that lived at the "habitat" in the early years and projects that were completed:

Feb 1962 Silver Foxes arrives from a former Fox Farmer ( Fox Farm area)

Sept 1963 Deer and Raccoon are received

Dec 1963 Restrooms and storage buildings are built

Dec 1965 Bear enclosures completed

Dec 1969 Badger arrives

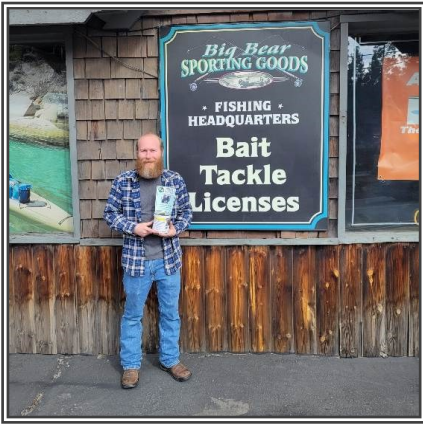
May 1970 Mule Deer donated to "work" in a motion picture- the zoo receives a female mountain lion in exchange.



*We will continue with the trip down memory lane in future editions of Paw Prints and continue to review the history of the Moonridge location as well as the BIG move to the current zoo location on Moonridge Road in Big Bear Lake .*

*In the mean time...if you have old photographs of the Moonridge Animal Park, please scan them and send them over to us...we would love to start up a photo collection to display for our current visitors. Scan photos in jpeg format to [fobbaz@fobbaz.org](mailto:fobbaz@fobbaz.org) .*





### Many Thanks to Our Local Supporters... 'Big Bear Sporting Goods'

Please meet Josh Cummings manager of **Big Bear Sporting Goods** in Big Bear Lake. This old timey store, complete with squeaky hardwood floors, opened in 1962 and has hosted a Friends of Big Bear Alpine Zoo Donation Can since the beginning of the can program. Josh was born and raised in Big Bear. Both he and his mother, Vicki Cummings, have been lifetime supporters of the zoo. At one time Josh was a zookeeper, passionate about caring for the reptile species. Over the years both gave educational animal talks and tours so children

in classrooms and families at the zoo learned how animals in the wild can be protected through wildlife conservation. Mom also continues to serve as a docent on the Friends of Big Alpine Zoo board.

Josh has worked at **Big Bear Sporting Goods** for 13 years and he proudly keeps our donation can raised high, close to the cash register. When asked why it is always so full every month, he laughed and said, honestly, it is because customers think they are tipping us. He shared what offsets Big Bear Sporting Goods from everyone else, is their "insane above-and-beyond service." They do not just sell products; they teach customers how to use the products. For example, Josh gets a kick out of teaching dads how to fish so they can teach their kids how to fish. It's a hoot. I have seen this myself and for this, customers are more than happy to put extra money in our donation can. We are more than thankful that Josh and staff gladly share their tips to benefit the zoo.

Over the years, we are grateful for the hundreds of dollars Big Bear Sporting Goods has donated for critical veterinarian services. They are also donors for our annual Bowling for the Zoo fundraiser coming up again in April. Every donation no matter how big or small benefits rescued animals that get rehabilitated and are either released to their natural habitat or permanently reside in Big Bear Alpine Zoo because they can no longer survive in the wild. Our animals are true ambassadors. Learning their life story helps us know how to better protect and preserve all wildlife so they never end up in a zoo.



*Big Bear Sporting Goods is located at 40544 Big Bear Blvd on the corner of Paine Rd. This all-season sporting goods store has a little bit of everything except ski/snowboard equipment which is just around the corner at Leroy's Ski and Snowboard Shop. Although customers can find quality snow toys, sports apparel, camping and outdoor equipment; also, the best hiking shoes in town, Josh claims Big Bear Sporting Goods is the best "fishing forward" store in Big Bear... everything you need for a great day on the lake. Josh is also certain that he and his staff have the best intel on the mountain so his customers don't just go fishing, they go catching! And for more fishing fun... Big Bear Sporting Goods is a partnering sponsor for the 2025 Fishing for the \$50K/Big Bear Trout Fishing Tournament June 7-8. There will be five trout tagged \$10K each; catch them all and win \$50K. Stop by Big Bear Sporting Goods to sign up and gear up for a fishing good time.*

-Kimberlee Kidd, Friends of Big Bear Alpine Zoo Docent, Donation Can Collector



### We are often asked...

### "What happens at the zoo when it snows ?



The majority of the animals living at the zoo absolutely LOVE the snow and it's a wonderful change to their daily routine. The keepers will sometimes hide their food in a snow drift to give the animals a bit more of a challenge at finding something to eat.



The staff have extra work to do after a snow event- clearing away some of the snow in the animal enclosures as well as making the walkways and observation areas within the zoo safe for our guests.

We haven't had much snow this winter- but here is a picture of the staff as they took a break during shoveling during our last storm in late January.





# “To rescue or not to rescue... that is the question...”

Spring is on its way... and with it comes wildlife baby season. As the weather gets better the chances of finding young animals ( from baby birds or lone deer fawns to baby squirrels) in our backyards and neighborhoods increases.

What should you do—and not do—if you find a baby animal in your yard or neighborhood?

## Determine If the Animal Really Needs Help

We are human...and our first instinct is to “help”. So, when we come across a small little baby animal we ,of course, feel it must need our assistance. This is especially true if the animal appears to be alone. But before stepping in make sure the animal actually needs help. In many cases, it’s totally normal for wildlife babies to be on their own. “Rescuing” an animal that doesn’t need rescuing actually decreases its chance of survival. Though it might seem harsh, it’s normal and natural that not all wild animals survive to adulthood. Letting nature, take its course is usually the best thing to do.

The exception is if an animal is injured as the direct result of human activity, such as getting hit by a car, attacked by a pet, striking a window, or falling from a nest during tree work. You may have actually witnessed its parent being killed and know for sure that it has been orphaned. In those instances, the ethical thing to do is try to help. Do not try to take care of a wild animal yourself. Caring for wildlife is a round-the-clock job and requires special training to do properly. Unfortunately, well-meaning attempts by untrained people may result in the death of the animal. Seek assistance from a local Animal Shelter, Veterinary Office , Local Zoo or Animal Control in your area.

## Species-Specific Tips

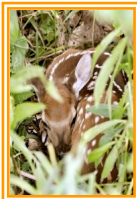
Here’s are some specific tips on some of the most commonly encountered wildlife in our yards and neighborhoods.

**Birds**—Baby birds are frequently encountered on the ground in spring. If the baby bird is featherless or covered in fluffy down, it is called a “nestling” and should be returned to the nest if possible. Listen and look for the parents. This can give you a good indication as to where their nest is located and where you can safely place the nestling. (Don’t be alarmed if the parents raise a fuss and dive-bomb you; they are just looking out for their baby!) Touching a nestling will not make the parents reject it.



If the baby bird is fully feathered, it’s called a “fledgling” and it is normal for it to be out of the nest. Fledglings spend several days on the ground hiding in the vegetation until they can fly. While this is a dangerous time for young birds, their parents continue to feed and protect them, and your intervention is not necessary. In fact, by taking fledglings out of the wild you decrease their chance of survival. However, if you see a fledgling in the street or otherwise in harm’s way, try to move it into dense vegetation close to where you discovered it so the parents can look after it.

Baby ducks and geese are “precocial,” meaning shortly after hatching their eyes open and they are able to walk, swim and feed themselves immediately, under the watchful eye of their parents who protect them from predators. They leave the nest shortly after hatching and shouldn’t be returned to it. If you encounter a lone baby duck or goose, contact a wildlife rehabilitator.



**Deer and Rabbits**—If you see a fawn lying alone in your yard or baby rabbits in a nest in your lawn, they are usually not orphaned. Mother deer and rabbits leave their young alone for most of the day to avoid attracting predators. Fawns and bunnies have fur that camouflages them and they instinctively stay still and quiet. Just observe from a distance and keep domestic animals and people away, chances are quite likely the mother will be back shortly. As with fledgling birds, “rescuing” baby deer and rabbits by removing them from the wild is unnecessary and reduces their chances of survival.



**Squirrels**—Squirrel mothers begin giving birth as early as late winter and can have several litters over the spring and summer. They give birth in a leafy nest built in the branches or inside tree cavities. If you find a baby squirrel on the ground with its eyes closed or that can’t move, it’s too young to be away from the mother and could be injured, dehydrated or malnourished. Contact a wildlife rehabilitator immediately and do not try to feed or raise it yourself. Baby squirrels require special care and must be fed a specific formula every few hours around the clock.

## Rescuing an Animal

Rescuing any wild animal in need is best left to trained professionals. Moving wildlife is a last resort and should only be attempted if the animal is in clear and imminent danger.

If an animal is moving erratically, approaching people without fear or foaming at the mouth, do not get near it as it could be sick and dangerous. Call animal control.

## Never Try to Make Wildlife into Pets

**While it may be tempting to keep wild animals as pets, especially ones you’ve helped, they are meant to live wild and free. In fact, there are laws to protect many species from being taken out of the wild by people.**





## Lets meet our San Joaquin Kit Foxes...

The San Joaquin kit fox historically roamed throughout much of the San Joaquin Valley in California, from San Joaquin County in the north to Kern County in the south. The San Joaquin kit fox typically lives in the desert and grasslands of California's San Joaquin Valley. They prefer areas with minimal shrubs and grasses.



By the 1930's the kit fox range had been reduced by more than half, with the largest portion of the range remaining in the southern and western parts of the valley. The kit fox's range also includes valleys along the Coastal Range including the Panoche and Cuyama valleys and the Carrizo Plain in San Luis Obispo County.

The San Joaquin Kit Fox is the smallest of the fox species in North America. The Kit Fox is nocturnal, hunting at night and resting most of the day in their dens. The dens help the fox escape the desert heat and provide shelter and cover from predators. Kit foxes will either dig their own dens, use those constructed by other animals, or use human-made structures such as culverts, abandoned pipelines, or banks in sumps or roadbeds.

The San Joaquin kit fox faces a number of threats that lead to direct mortalities, displacement, reduction of prey populations and denning sites. Those threats include:

- Loss of habitat due to conversion of land to agriculture, oil exploration and spills, urban and solar development and road construction
- Diseases including rabies, canine parvovirus, mange and canine distemper virus
- Wildfire
- Competition for food also comes from coyotes, red foxes and domestic dogs.

We have three San Joaquin Kit Foxes at the Big Bear Alpine Zoo. Kit Kat is about 11 years old and was rescued when a wildlife biologist found him with a severe leg injury. His injury had caused him to be separated from his group. Heath and Joy (about 7 years of age) came to us from the California Living Museum in Bakersfield, CA. Heath only has three legs and Joy (pictured above) was picked up as a "failure to thrive in the wild" girl. In the wild, life expectancy is about 7 years, while at least 10 years in captivity.

Next time you are at the Big Bear Alpine Zoo- stop by and visit with these three very adorable and fun little animals.

## Upcoming Events...



**Bowling for the Zoo** is taking place again this year at the Bowling Barn in Big Bear Lake, California.

Mark your calendars for April 27<sup>th</sup>...(note date change !)  
from 3 to 6 pm.

We had so much fun last year- please come and join us again this year.

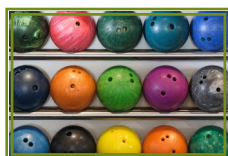
If you have 5 bowlers lined up and would like to get in on the fun- please contact us at: [fobbaz@fobbaz.org](mailto:fobbaz@fobbaz.org) or 909-878-4200 with information on your team.

**There are ONLY 16 lanes- so the team slots will be filled on a first come - first serve basis.**

Team fee- \$100.00 per bowler = \$500.00 per team. You must be registered in advance to BOWL- sorry, no street walk-ins on April 27th. Fans and supporters of the various teams are always welcome to join in and root for your favorite group !

If you aren't into the actual bowling aspect of the event- there are other ways to participate. Donations or sponsors are always welcome to assist with team fees. We are also actively seeking items from local businesses and residents to include in our silent auction and raffle games.

If you can assist with any of this- please contact us right away at 909-878-4200



# HOW CAN I HELP SUPPORT THE BIG BEAR ALPINE ZOO ?



There are several ways to help support the Friends of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo and ultimately support the Big Bear Alpine Zoo.

The Friends of the Moonridge Zoo was established in 1989 as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Our mission is to support the Big Bear Alpine Zoo by inspiring understanding, respect, and responsible action toward the stewardship of wildlife through conservation, education, volunteer support, and fundraising. We are always happy to have volunteer help and will provide a training program to those interested in volunteering at the Big Bear Alpine Zoo. Volunteer activities include roaming and educating our zoo guests as a docent for the Zoo as well as assisting with events and working in the background such as kitchen or maintenance activities..



For information on Volunteer options– please visit our web site -

If volunteering isn't in the cards for you, or you don't live close enough to routinely pitch in at the zoo, there are several ways to support the Zoo through various donation opportunities.

## Planned Giving

Your gift to the Friends of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo will help ensure the future of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo.

- Bequests – A Gift From Your Will or Trust
- Life Insurance Beneficiary

**Donor Wall at the Zoo- we have a focal point display near the center of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo where we spotlight our donors.**

Consider adding your name, the names of your family or of your business to the donor wall.

- 3 inch plaque for donations of \$1,000 to \$4999
- 4 inch plaque for donations of \$5,000 to \$14,999
- 5 inch plaque for \$15,000 to \$24,999
- 6 inch plaque for \$25,000 and higher



If you would like to discuss the possibility of your name or business being on our donor wall, please call the FOBBAZ office at 909-878-4200 or contact us via email at [fobbaz@fobbaz.org](mailto:fobbaz@fobbaz.org)

**For more information, please contact [fobbaz@fobbaz.org](mailto:fobbaz@fobbaz.org) or call 909-878-4200.**

*Friends of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo (FOBBAZ) is a non-profit support 501(c)(3) supporting the Big Bear Alpine Zoo. EIN 33-0350180*



## We had to say Good-bye.....

To our sweet little Fallow Deer- **Godiva**.

Godiva was born at the old zoo location in 2007, Her mother was part of a "private" herd that had been confiscated by Fish and Game. Godiva was one of three babies born at that time and lived out a great life– sharing her enclosure with Mule Deer Bailey. Godiva was suffering from a few age related issues and passed away peacefully in January.



We also recently said Good-Bye to **Samba**– one of our Coyotes. Samba came to live at the Big Bear Alpine Zoo in 2013. Samba was orphaned and was found very sick with parasites, anemia, mange and a jaw issue. We estimate that she was about 2 months old when she came to live at the Zoo. The picture at the right is Samba when she first arrived at the zoo with her Keeper– Lesley. Samba was also experiencing some age related issues when she passed away in February.





The Big Bear Alpine Zoo is committed to rehabilitation, conservation and animal welfare. One of our missions is to increase awareness for our guests of our fragile ecosystem and the fascinating wildlife that calls our mountain HOME. When you visit the Big Bear Alpine Zoo, the animals that you can observe are full time residents. If we feel they will not thrive back in the wild, we will keep them with us and the Big Bear Alpine Zoo will be their forever home.

We do, however, get several animals into our Animal Support building that hopefully, you will never get to meet.

Our goal with the animals that are entrusted into our care is to rescue, rehabilitate and return them to their original habitat.

It was not as busy in the Animal Support building this past year as it has in the past. We did assist 43 birds in 2024- this included various owls, some hawks, vultures and a variety of song birds

The Animal Support team also took care of 31 mammals in 2024 which included skunks, chipmunks, squirrels, opossum, rabbits and a bobcat- just to list a few.

We ask you to continue to be aware that this mountain is home to many, many species of wild animals, all of whom are vital to our environment.



The Big Bear Alpine Zoo had a great visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus on two different Saturdays in December. Santa and Mrs. Claus were taking a much-needed break from all the holiday preparation and their reindeer received a little bit of tender care in our zoo back area. Children and Adults from all over southern California took advantage of getting in a few last-minute requests and a good chat with the "Big Guy".



## Additional Upcoming Events.....



Big Bear Lake Shore Clean up will take place April 23rd.



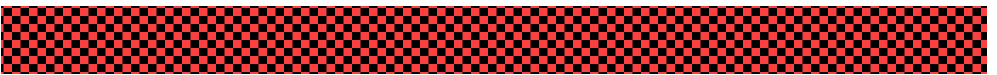
Bear Awareness Day will take place on June 7, 2025. A fun day to visit the Big Bear Alpine Zoo as there will many different activities all focused on our special Bears.



Mark your Calendars and stay tuned !





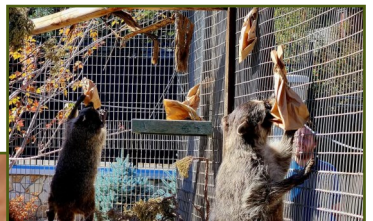


# Kids Corner

Can you get through the “winter” maze ?



Some pictures from around the zoo....



*Special thanks to Dar, Zoo staff and FOBBAZ volunteers for some great shots !*



Contact Information: Friends of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo  
42718 Moonridge Road (PO BOX 1749 PMB 19) ,  
Big Bear Lake, CA 92315

Phone: 909-878-4200 email: [fobbaz@fobbaz.org](mailto:fobbaz@fobbaz.org)