

the Wild Side

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Newsletter of Forest Animal Rescue (formerly known as Peace River Refuge & Ranch)



A TRUE SANCTUARY

Forest Animal Rescue (FAR) is a nonprofit sanctuary dedicated to meeting the lifetime needs of almost 100 rescued wild animals.

At FAR's state-of-the-art, 80-acre facility in the beautiful Ocala National Forest, we are 100% committed to providing each animal with:

- a spacious, natural habitat
- a healthful, natural diet
- high-quality care by staff and volunteers
- quality veterinary care, when needed
- a firm "no breeding" policy
- socialization and enrichment appropriate to each animal's preferences, and
- protection from further victimization

FAR is an internationally recognized organization, accredited by the American Sanctuary Association and listed as one of the "Best Tiger Sanctuaries in the U.S." according to Tigers in America.

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Silver Springs, FL 34488
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FAR is a registered 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible as allowed by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.



The largest big cat and bear rescue in US History!

Forest Animal Rescue teamed up with Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge and Tigers in America, together with 15 other accredited animal sanctuaries to rescue 110 wild animals from a facility in Colorado.

The animals, mostly tigers and bears, were formerly used as cubs for petting and photo opportunities. When they grew too big to handle they were used as breeders. The facility was offered for sale due to the failing health of the owner and now all of the animals are in forever homes accredited sanctuaries across the country. **Happily ever after...**

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Socialize with FAR:



ForestAnimalRescue.org



Facebook.com/forestanimalrescue



Twitter.com/ForestAnimalRes



Youtube.com/ForestanimalrescueOrg

Tigers [and bears] rescued from a cub petting operation (Part 1)

*By: Meredith Whitney IFAW Wildlife Rescue Program Officer
(condensed)*

The tiger cubs in this advertising flyer from July 2016 are suffering from Metabolic Bone Disease and couldn't stand or walk when rescued from a roadside zoo. This is only one example of the horrible conditions that these animals face in such situations.

Cub petting is the practice of using baby animals, like tigers, as photo props for paying customers. These operations are deceptive because they prey on people's affection toward baby animals, and exploit the desire to hold or care for them. This masks a secretive dark side, inherently dependent on animal cruelty for its very existence.



- The first victims are adult female tigers. Some cub petting operations engage in “speed breeding” - the practice of removing baby cubs from their mothers days or even hours after they are born.

In the wild, a female tiger will stay with her cubs and care for them for as long as 2 years, which means that even the most successful wild mothers only produce a litter once every 3 years. In contrast, when cubs are removed from their captive mother she can be quickly bred again, producing litters as often as three times in one year. The strains of frequent breeding can compromise the health of the mother.

- The second victims are the cubs. Removed from their mother as infants, they are fed from a bottle and passed from stranger to stranger, often for hours at a time with no rest. This can lead to dehydration and psychological stress. It can also lead to illness, as their immature immune systems are not equipped to cope with diseases they may be exposed to, such as Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) domestic dogs can carry. CDV is known to be lethal for big cats. Bottle feedings can lead to malnutrition if an inadequate formula is used, or if the kittens and cubs aren't switched to a solid diet at an appropriate age. Transition to a solid diet may be delayed in an effort to prolong the amount of time the cubs can be used to generate profit. The resulting malnutrition often presents as metabolic bone disease (MBD), a condition in which bones become weak and easily break because of insufficient calcium in the diet.

- Last to be victimized is the public. Pay for play operations may tell you that by paying to pet, hold or feed the babies you're helping conservation. They often say their breeding efforts are helping save endangered species. The truth is the vast majority of tigers in roadside zoos in the United States are hybrids. That is, they're a cross between different subspecies of tigers, (for example, Bengal tiger crossed with Malayan tiger). That means that even if there was a place to release them into the wild, these animals can't be released because they never existed in the wild in the first place. Introducing hybrid genetics into wild ecosystems violates international best practices as it can negatively impact wild populations. The continued breeding of hybrid cats offers no conservation value, and this misleading message dilutes the impact of true conservation efforts.

Unfortunately, cub petting is not illegal in the U.S. The sanctuary movement, IFAW and many others are working as a coalition of organizations to encourage the USDA to close the loophole that allows the public to handle big cats between the ages of 8 and 12 weeks (currently the only age at which it's legal for them to be handled). We're also working on a single nationwide policy that will protect big cats, making it illegal for individuals to own or breed them.

Priya's story, a tiger rescued from cub petting (part 2)

By: Meredith Whitney IFAW Wildlife Rescue Program Officer (condensed)

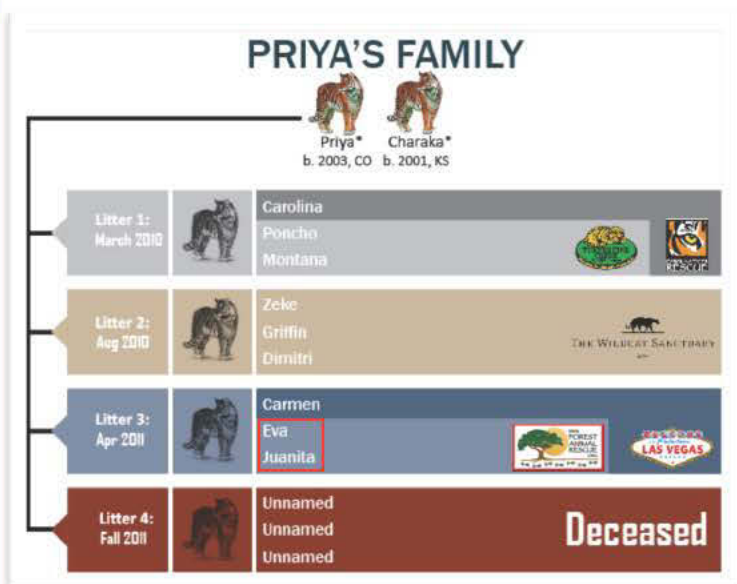
Following the rescue of more than 100 big cats, including 75 tigers, from a cub petting operation, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR) and Tigers in America (TIA) took over the facility and were given a rare glimpse into the world of pay for play cub petting operations. IFAW provided a grant to help with rescue costs. Forest Animal Rescue and 15 other accredited sanctuaries all pitched in to provide forever homes to the animals.

Reviewing animal records, TCWR and TIA were able to piece together a portion of the life story of one tigress, Priya, and her cubs. Because of how disturbing these records can be, cub petting operations keep information like this from public scrutiny. Some operations keep no records at all, making these records a rare and valuable insight into the clandestine big cat trade.

Priya was born at this Colorado roadside zoo in 2003. She eventually lived with a male tiger, named Charaka, who was born in 2001 at a speed breeding facility in Kansas. Late last year, the owner of the facility Charaka came from was quoted in the media saying "we have more babies born here than anywhere else.....a big part of that has to do with the fact that we are able to pull them from their mothers."

In March 2010, Priya gave birth to a litter of 3 cubs: Poncho, Montana and Carolina. It is unclear if this was Priya's first litter, as female tigers may start breeding as young as 3 years old. It was not her last litter.

Five months later, in August 2010 Priya gave birth to Zeke, Griffin and Dimitri. Eight months later, she gave birth again to three more cubs – Eva, Juanita (now at Forest Animal Rescue) and Carmen. The last birth records TCWR and TIA could recover tell a grim story of 3 cubs born to Priya who all died from medical issues in the fall of 2011. No birth date was recorded.



Juanita and Eva are extremely happy to be living at Forest Animal Rescue for the rest of their lives

A family tree tracing four of Priya's litters shows where her cubs ended up after being rescued

Excerpts with permission from IFAW - View original articles in their entirety
<http://www.ifaw.org/united-states/news/tigers-rescued-cub-petting-operation-part>

Eva and Juanita weren't the only animals rescued by FAR...

We agreed to provide lifetime care to a total of six animals – **EVA** and **JUANITA**, along with two more tigers, **NATASHA** and **ZOEY** - and two black bears, **CODY** and **OATMEAL**.



The animals all arrived safely and have had their veterinary exams



Cody and Oatmeal have been introduced to our other three bears in a 4-acre habitat at FAR.



The animals all love having TOYS too!



Cody and Oatmeal love their pool!



Cody was excited to have *real live trees!*

The two bears, **CODY** and **OATMEAL**, have been introduced to our three other sanctuary bears in a 4-acre wooded habitat, the **largest captive bear habitat in Florida**. They didn't have a pool to swim in or live trees to play with and climb in Colorado and it has been a real joy to watch them enjoy their new home.



Westbrook Services sent yet another team of volunteers to help us prepare for the arrival of the rescued animals

The 18 year-old tigress, **ZOEY**, will eventually move in with our (neutered) male tiger Tony in a 1-acre wooded habitat. The three rambunctious girls, **NATASHA**, **EVA** and **JUANITA**, will move in to a new 1¼-acre habitat as soon as it is completed, our other (also neutered) male tiger, Roy, will move in to join them.

Tigers in America is helping us with a grant to pay for 1/3 of the cost of the new habitats!



OSU and UK Alternative break students made real progress on the new 1¼-acre tiger habitat!

Our volunteers are priceless

Every year we are amazed at the increasing numbers of volunteers who come to help the animals. The level of dedication we see is such a heartwarming display of how caring people can be and how much they appreciate being able to make a difference in the lives of animals that truly need their help.

This year is no different – the outpouring of volunteers to help us with the care of the animals at the sanctuary and to help us expand to accept more animals is amazing.

Once again, “Alternative Break” groups from universities around the country have sent groups of hard-working students to Forest Animal Rescue to work on projects benefiting the animals. Since our last newsletter, we have hosted groups from the **University of Akron, Ohio State University and University of Kentucky**.

We have had corporate team-building groups from **Westbrook Services and Deerwood Luxury Apartments** volunteer to help the sanctuary while building positive morale and exercising teamwork in their groups.

We have had international volunteers from **Germany, England, and the Netherlands** and interns from across the **U.S. and Puerto Rico**.

Our local volunteer base is also growing steadily, with new faces from all over **Florida and Marion County** reaching out to lend a hand.



We could never build habitats and maintain high quality care for so many animals without our priceless volunteers!

Do you want to help?

You can learn more and apply through our website at

ForestAnimalRescue.org

Look under “Get Involved”

Bob Barker Animal Care Building

We are hoping to finish the construction of our Bob Barker Animal Care Building by fall so that we have full on-site veterinary care capabilities and the animals will not need to leave the sanctuary property to have everything they need.

Mr. Barker helped us get the ball rolling with a substantial gift, but we still need to raise more funds to complete the construction.

Once this building is finished it will allow us to rescue more animals from situations of abuse and neglect, we can expand our **Black Bear Rehabilitation and release** program to include the youngest, most fragile cubs because we will have greater on-site veterinary care capabilities.

Will you help us to finish the building?



Meet Nika, our new Animal Care Coordinator

Nicole “Nika” Wolf came to us as an intern in September 2016 and we appreciated her hard work, dedication and infectious smile so much we just couldn’t let her leave.

Nika is now part of our permanent staff as our Animal Care Coordinator. She is responsible for training and supervising all of our incoming interns and volunteers to ensure consistent high quality care of the animals at the sanctuary.

Please join us in a warm welcome to another new member of our Forest Animal Rescue family!



Nika graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 2015 with her BS in Biological Sciences with a concentration in Biology of Animals

Wild Side 5K walk/run



We will be hosting our 1st annual 5K charity walk/run on November 11, 2017 at Citizen’s Circle in downtown Ocala.

This is your chance to help rescued wild animals that come from situations of abuse, neglect or confiscation. You can walk or run in the event, volunteer to help organize the event or simply come show your support – everyone needs cheerleaders!

Animal print and safari wear is encouraged!

For more information, please visit www.WildSide5K.org - more details coming soon!

Animal Spotlight: Cody and Oatmeal

CODY & OATMEAL are the newest black bears at the Forest Animal Rescue.

They were recently rescued, along with four tigers, from the cub-petting operation in Colorado described earlier. Born in captivity, they can never be released into the wild – but we can give them the best lifetime care possible.

They are brother and sister and after they grew too big to be handled for photos, they lived for 4 years in a small chain-link enclosure with no live trees to play with or pool to swim in.

Immediately after their arrival at Forest Animal Rescue, they demonstrated how much they LOVE to swim in their pool. Cody loves floating on his back with his feet in the air – you can see videos of them playing in the water on your YouTube channel at <http://www.YouTube.com/ForestAnimalRescueOrg> - they now live in the **largest captive bear habitat in Florida** - 4 acres of wooded habitat along with our other three bears at the sanctuary.



YES - I WILL HELP!!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

☐ I am enclosing my tax-deductible donation to Forest Animal Rescue for \$ _____☐ Please charge my credit card in the amount of \$ _____

Card Number: _____ Expiration: _____ CVV Code: _____

Name on card: _____ Signature: _____

Please earmark my gift: ☐ Where it is needed most ☐ Animal Care Building project☐ Nourishment/medical care ☐ other _____☐ *Make this a recurring monthly gift, ending on (date) _____**(One-time and monthly donations can also be made securely at ForestAnimalRescue.org)*☐ Please contact me to discuss a tax-deductible contribution of equipment or materials☐ Please contact me regarding a planned gift to The Legacy Society

Thank you!

Forest Animal Rescue is grateful to our dedicated supporters, who help us care for over 100 animals at our 80-acre location in the beautiful Ocala National Forest



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We are tax exempt under IRS 501(c)(3), EIN 65-0864695.

Forest Animal Rescue

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Silver Springs, FL 34488



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THE WILD SIDE

www.forestanimalrescue.org

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FAR Extends our deepest gratitude for support from the following
Groundbreaking Sponsors:

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- The Morningstar Foundation
- Winn Dixie of Silver Springs
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- ASL Administration Services, Ltd.
- Northern Tool & Equipment
- Master Lock
- Nutramax Laboratories, Inc.
- Bears vs. Babies

New rescues!

After 19 years of rescuing animals, and relocating the entire sanctuary in 2013, we have finally recovered from our growing pains.

We have completed enough construction to rescue more animals! The swift progress we have made is absolutely a result of the wonderful support we have received from all around our community. We couldn't do this without you – So much to be excited about..

Warm regards,

Lisa Stoner



FAR Officers:

President Kurt Stoner; Vice President Lisa Stoner and Secretary Lila Hepner