



PRESS RELEASE
(For Immediate Distribution)

2020 VISION



Eight Big Cats from Notorious Tiger King Associate Safe in Arkansas
Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge Rescues Tigers Owned by Tim Stark of Wildlife In Need, Inc.

Eureka Springs, Ark., (September 18, 2020)- Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR) is in the process of rescuing at least 8 big cats from Wildlife In Need, Inc. (WIN), a pseudo-sanctuary located in Charlestown, Indiana, and featured in the popular Netflix docuseries *Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness*.

WIN profited from hands-on animal interaction activities for years only to lose their exhibitor license at the beginning of 2020. Owner and operator, Tim Stark, was sued by the USDA following 120 violations between 2012 and 2016. In 2017, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) filed a lawsuit against Stark for, "...allowing big-cat cubs to interact with the public, separating mother cats and their infants, declawing, and possessing the tigers, lions, and tiger/lion hybrids (big cats) on Stark's premises who were unlawfully taken in violation of the ESA [Endangered Species Act]."

According to a press release on PETA's website:

*The court found that Stark's declawing procedures (about which he said he didn't "give a sh*t what [a veterinarian's] opinion" was) were "a gross failure to meet the accepted standards of medical care," that premature separation "deprives [cubs] of vital components that help develop a healthy immune system," and that cub petting "also subjects cubs to extreme stress." The court also held Stark, Lane, and WIN responsible for the maternal separation of cubs they had acquired from other traffickers, because cub-petting events "created a demand for young [c]ubs."*

TCWR has been preparing for this rescue for several months by relocating animals to different parts of the sanctuary, ensuring roll-cages are in proper condition, and having staff on standby to leave within a moment's notice. The Refuge has also been working closely with PETA to ensure the big cats have a smooth and safe transition to their new home.

Extra precautions are being taken during the trip to Indiana, given the COVID-19 pandemic. And due to the kindness and generosity of IDEXX Laboratories Inc., the newly rescued animals will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms at no cost to the Refuge. The animals will be quarantined, per usual rescue standards, upon arriving at TCWR.

Turpentine Creek would like to thank compassionate supporter, *C. Martin*, for offering \$15,000 in matching funds to support fundraising efforts for the rescue effort. Those who would like to help the new animal residents acclimate to their forever home at TCWR can make a direct donation at: https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=BUU6ARFS7KKB6&source=url.

The public can "meet" the new rescues by liking Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge on Facebook and by following them on Instagram and Twitter @turpentinecreek. The Refuge is also open to the general public, and they are following all state requirements and regulations in order to keep guests safe during the current pandemic.

About Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge

Founded in 1992, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and rescue operation protecting survivors of the exotic animal trade. The 450-acre refuge, located 7 miles south of Eureka Springs, is also an ethical animal tourism destination and a "Top Ten" family friendly attraction in Northwest Arkansas. The organization does not buy, sell, trade, loan out or breed their animals, and they do not offer cub petting or harmful pay-for-play opportunities. They are accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries, a member of the American Association of Zoo Keepers, and licensed by the USDA and Arkansas Game and Fish. Their mission is to provide lifetime refuge for abandoned, abused, and neglected "Big Cats" with emphasis on Tigers, Lions, Leopards, and Cougars.

Additional Information, Photo and Video Sources

[TCWR Website](#) / [TCWR on Facebook](#) / [TCWR on Instagram](#) / [TCWR on Twitter](#) / [TCWR on YouTube](#)