

KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

December 2010

As you know the **Folsom Zoo Sanctuary** is providing 24-7 care for a very young female mountain lion. Emaciated and quite ill when confiscated in the Santa Cruz area by the **California Department of Fish & Game**, she weighed less than four pounds upon arrival at the Zoo in mid-November. She's thriving now and ultimately will move in with resident mountain lions **Ventura, Rio** and **Flash**. Like kittens of all species, she's smart and inquisitive. Her tawny gold fur has black camouflage spots and her claws are needle sharp. She exhibits lots of Attitude on occasion. At the beginning of 2011 she was 13 weeks old and still has a lot of growing to do before she moves to public exhibit.

Pick The Perfect Name For The Mountain Lion Kitten!

VOTE NOW! Visit the Friends of the Folsom Zoo Sanctuary homepage at www.FolsomZooFriends.org and vote for your favorite name in the right-hand column. Choose from Cedar, Lily, Leah, Penelope or Emma. Voting will be open until February 4th.

Wild Nights, Holiday Lights!

Count the superlatives: Best idea! Best execution! Most mysterious holiday light glitches! Best repair(s) of mysterious light glitches! Best tree decorations and Zoo decorations by volunteer groups! Best Docents (always)! Best Santa(s)! Best Santa Claws(s)! Best Zoo animals and staff (always)! Most good-hearted-bundled-up-crowd-engaged-in-a-freezing-early-Saturday-morning-decoration-removal-effort-ever! Our sincere thanks to everyone in Folsom; clubs, departments, organizations, the Friends of the Folsom Zoo Sanctuary, schools, families – everyone – for spreading Holiday Cheer throughout the Zoo. And kudos to event organizers from **City of Folsom Parks & Recreation Department**. Plus special admiration for He Who made daily A.M. and P.M. visits to the Zoo to renew his close personal relationship with each balky lightbulb. The Good News is that we're doing it again next year!

Artistic Vision

You may be aware that many **Folsom Zoo Sanctuary** animals are painters. Since painting is also a training exercise, and involves food rewards for dipping a paw in non-toxic kid's poster paint and "targeting" the canvas, it's a popular pastime. Bears, wolves, bobcats and raccoons are enthusiastic painters. But tiny squirrel monkey **Monita** may have raised the artistic accomplishments of Zoo animals to hitherto unknown heights. Breakfast on a recent morning included some lovely ripe fresh blackberries (thanks **Trader Joe's**) and while males **Orinoco** and **Curley** were gustatorily appreciative for these treats, **Monita** apparently was overcome by an Artistic Vision and finger-painted an extensive dark purple blackberry mural on the white walls of the monkey greenhouse.

Fisher's Beastro Spring Menu!
Even More Good Victuals!

Brave Heart

Right now bear cub **Henry** is approximately 11 months old. If he was still with his mother he'd be learning the essentials of becoming a successful adult. Because Henry will live out his days in captivity, he won't require these survival skills, but many are instinctual and he's demonstrated some behaviors on his own. Case in point: the Zoo has begun modifying the bear enclosure to ensure Henry's safety - and that of the other bears, too. As part of a new routine, a large den door that has been closed is now open, allowing Henry to see the adult bears who are locked a safe distance away. *Whoa!* Henry's instincts to "tree" himself kicked into high gear. He bolted up to the top of his enclosure and stayed there looking outside with an occasional *chomp*, *huff* or *snort*, indicating that he was aware of a nearby threat. But it wasn't long before this smart little bear thought it over and came down. Raisins and peanut butter assisted the decision.

Rabbit Snit

With all the construction* going on at the **Zoo Sanctuary** some of the animals have been moved off-exhibit away from dust and scary machine noises. Lovely brown & black speckled rabbit **Bella** and handsome gray male **Stormy** are camping out in the **Zoo Ops** dressing room & shower area. The green concrete floors are protected with newspaper. There are comfy rabbit privacy crates, two big bowls of timothy hay and a nice stainless steel pan for fresh produce goodies. The rabbit apartment is cleaned first thing in the morning and the floor is re-papered several times more during the day. But there's a problem.

There's a time lapse between cleaning and produce delivery, which means that **Stormy** is likely to have a tantrum. He yanks up newspaper and throws it around –

pausing occasionally to listen for keeper footsteps. Or he resorts to the *poor rabbit* ploy. As a Flemish Giant, Stormy takes advantage of his bigness, standing bulky & tall, front feet clinging to the enclosure wire fence. “Is food here yet?” Pitiful.

***Excellence In Zoo Construction**

Though slowed by lots ‘o rain, construction of the new **Zoo Aviary** is moving ahead at a rapid pace. Footings are poured and 15-foot high girders support the impressive roof superstructure. This project is generously funded by the **Bosack & Kruger Charitable Foundation**, the **Friends of the Folsom Zoo, Inc.** and the **Zoo Trust**. ADA compliance construction is reconfiguring Zoo grounds from the front of the Zoo to the fox exhibit and is possible because of **Community Development and Block Grant Funds**. Eagle Scout **Patrick Wyler** and his crew have improved the wetland area, clearing non-native blackberry and privet and planting native willows and grasses.

Attendance for a record wet rainy December was 7,508 with 6,671 of these visitors attending **Wild Nights, Holiday Lights!**

Kira

We mourn the passing of tortoiseshell cat **Kira** who, with nine other “wild” cats moved to the Zoo Sanctuary in 2006. Funded by a grant from the **Robert Bauder Estate** the **Feral Cat Exhibit** may be unique in a public zoo. Upon arrival the cats literally climbed the walls of the **Cat Garden**. They spent weeks hiding in the **Cat House** and even lurked out-of-sight in the **Cat Tunnel** connecting the two sections of the exhibit. With Official Cat Spoilers and lots of TLC from staff & volunteers the remaining feral cats are tolerant and in some cases, even friendly to humans.

A New Animal Hanging Around The Zoo

What animal has thumbs on all four feet, has the shortest lifespan for mammals its size (2 to 4 years), and is North America’s only marsupial? Did you say opossum? It’s possible that being a male opossum might require a little less effort than being a female. A female can carry and nurse up to 12 babies in her *marsupium* for 3 months and then haul the kids around on her back for several months more. When threatened they growl and show all 50 sharp teeth, and might even fall into an involuntary shock-like state, or “play possum” mimicking the appearance, and smell, of a dead animal.

Good-looking Zoo opossum **Stewart** was part of a rescued spring litter of six born in April, 2010. While the rest of his family is living wild Stewart needs some extra care and

will move into the **Zoo Sanctuary Miner’s Shack** with blind skunk **Gizmo** and ringtail **Chaos**.

Something To Think About

As we celebrate the life – and yes, cuteness - of the baby mountain lion who is now part of the **Folsom Zoo Sanctuary** family, it’s important to remember that California’s biggest wild cat is a predator. Mountain lions are quiet, solitary and elusive. They typically avoid people. And while mountain lion attacks on humans are extremely rare, conflicts are increasing as California’s human population expands into lion habitat. Half of this state is deer habitat, and where there are deer, there are mountain lions

- . NEVER feed deer. Use deer-resistant plants
- . Don’t hike, bike or jog alone.
- . Lions are most active at dawn, dusk and night.
- . DO NOT approach a mountain lion
- . If you encounter a mountain lion, DO NOT RUN.
- . Pick up small children.
- . Face the lion, make noise.
- . Look bigger by waving your arms. Throw rocks.

Afraid Of The Dark?

During **Wild Nights** keepers cruised close to the front of some animal exhibits tossing in small treats to encourage the animals to move closer to visitor areas. More than a few people were heard commenting with awe on “how *big* the animals are.” We rarely hear this during daylight hours. Is this part of a prehistoric afraid-of-the-dark syndrome? Intrigued with this night snack time the animals caught on pretty quick that this was a Good Thing. With one exception. Six-hundred pound bear **Sequoia** was enthusiastic on the first treat scattering occasion. And the second. But by the third go-around he appeared to be fatigued and ready for some den time.

Wild Nights Wild Sounds

Undeterred by a bazillion (conservatively) human **Wild Nights** attendees one Zoo animal had the usual family & friends drop by. Their overheard (and to some visitors, scary) conversations got a lot of attention. For years barn owl **Grayson** has enjoyed night visits by wild owls, but rarely are humans within earshot. Visitors were treated to the sight of three wild barn owls flying about, perching, and conversing with Grayson. By dawn’s early light you could see a small furry rodent-like gift stashed on one of the beams outside Grayson’s barn.

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