

# KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

September, 2010

## The Perfect Baby Bear

In early September a female Black Bear broke into a tent at Lake Tahoe's **Fallen Leaf Lake**. After the incident trackers with dogs treed the bear and her cub and ultimately moved them to the **California Department of Fish & Game** facility in Rancho Cordova. DNA from a partially empty yogurt container found in the tent matched that of the adult bear. Already designated as a "problem bear" the mother was euthanized. The cub moved to the **Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary**.

Upon his arrival at the Zoo Sanctuary on September 3, the male cub was estimated to be six-months-old and weighed approximately 55 pounds. While shy at first, he's increasingly confident with Zoo staff. Although possibly raised on Twinkies and camp garbage, at the Zoo his little bowls contain wholesome selections like fresh greens, yams, strawberries, apples, cucumber, blueberries, pears, nuts, bear chow and more. On warm afternoons he cools off in his private small pool and sleeps hugging big soft teddy bears, one in his hammock and the other in his crate.

That he is Perfect goes without saying. Since he's very small some modifications to the exhibit are necessary so he'll not be on public view on a regular basis for several months. After he's grown up a bit little bear will move into one of the three large, oak-tree shaded Black Bear Exhibits. The Zoo will celebrate this milestone with a perfect **Bear Day Event**.

## Prevent Conflict With Bears

- . In bear country, keep kids & pets close.
- . Make noise when hiking: bell your shoes
- . Never keep food in your tent, or gum, scented sun block, cookies, toothpaste, body lotion, etc.
- . Keep a clean camp. Store leftover food after each meal.
- . Wash dishes after each meal.
- . Use "bear proof" food safes &/trash containers.
- . Never pick up, pet or chase a baby bear.
- . Don't "stalk" a bear with cubs for a photo. Risky behavior!

## Missing Nimbus

Born in the mid 1970's, golden eagle **Nimbus** was rescued after he flew into a barbed-wire fence and permanently damaged his left wing. While some birds can get along with injuries (seagulls are famous for this) *raptors* – hunting birds-must be in perfect physical condition to survive living

wild. Nimbus joined female **Cirrus** at the Zoo Sanctuary where they formed a bond that lasted for years. With her passing in 2007 female golden eagle **Sierra** became his roommate. For years Nimbus was successfully treated for a viral lung disease called *aspergillosis* which is common in wild birds. Sadly, over time asper has a debilitating effect and Nimbus was gently euthanized. We think of him flying free among the storm clouds that bear his name.

## Sidewalk Supervisor

Water was oozing out of the ground on a hill near the first **Black Bear Exhibit**. Three strong/City workers spent lots of quality time digging. And digging. And finally found a cracked pipe, the repair of which required yet more digging. They were not alone. Young mountain lion **Flash** spent hours crouched by the exhibit fence intently watching every move the workers made. There she sat. Ignored calls for meals, disregarded appeals to move into lockup. Watching. Over the years Zoo mountain lions have spent a lot of quality time watching and apparently thinking about neighboring bears, too.

## Taking Over?

Raking the extensive Zoo pasture is a daily chore. One morning big draft horse **Gus** was hanging out near a raking volunteer. This being the kind of place it is, she gently held the end of the rake handle out, and Gus being the kind of animal he is, took it in his teeth. Apparently having watched the raking process over the years, he bowed his neck and raked several times and handed it back (well, not actually, because horses don't have hands, but you get the idea.) Pleased, the Docent gave him another raking opportunity. He raked a few more strokes and then decided to watch, wise enough not to set a precedent.

## Intel Inside! We Are Grateful!

Carrying on a long tradition, in recent weeks the Zoo Sanctuary has had the good fortune to have **Intel** employees donating work hours to the Zoo animals. A group of 30+ spent all of a very hot morning making the well traveled off-exhibit areas safer for staff foot-traffic. They raked bags & bags of dry grass and leaves, clipped back overgrown wild roses that cover Zoo fences, chopped prickly blackberry overgrowth and engaged in digging / clipping / removing diverse plants that some would call "weeds." The dumpster filled up so they established a bag-drop off site and a volunteer's truck was used to haul bags to dumpsters across the parking lot in front of the Zoo.

On another very hot day a second smaller **Intel** group was lucky enough to be tasked with hauling buckets of decomposed granite / pea gravel to replenish substrate to animal exhibits: parrots, eagles, rabbits, foxes, and wolf-dog hybrids. They swept and raked and accomplished major improvements just about everywhere for the animals. In fact they worked so fast and efficiently that a keeper spent full time transporting DG to the pickup site with the Zoo Gator.

### **Dasher!**

Handsome liver chestnut (*brown* to horse dummies) mini-horse **Dasher's** story is all-too common in these hard economic times. His original purchaser was unable to care for him, so fortunately he was taken in by rescue person who paid his substantial vet bill and found him a forever home with the Zoo. Less than 4-years old, he's probably full grown, which does not mean that he's – *um* -tall. He joins Zoo Manager **Jocelyn Smeltzer** and the **Docents** on walks outside the Zoo grounds which are interesting, enjoyable and educational for all involved. At the rodeo grounds Dasher and Gus were getting acquainted under watchful eyes. Apparently all was well because they were seen mutually grooming each other in a friendly way.

**Attendance: Enjoying the moderately hot days of summer, 7,706 moms, dads, grandparents, little kids, teenagers, etc. visited the animals in September, approximately 1,000 more than last year.**

### **Yahoo! Folsom Cyclebration In The Zoo!**

A lot of work went into the creation of a truly gnarly downhill bike trail on the steep hillside of the oak forest usually populated by Zoo deer. Volunteers from **Race MTB**, who are pretty gnarly themselves spent mega time hand-digging the trail on a nearly perpendicular hillside. All six deer were moved to the llama pasture some days prior to the actual race. They seemed fine with this arrangement, possibly because several times a deer would discover a way (like hop a fence) to browse on plants in front of coyote **Maggie**, which also seemed to please Maggie. The deer were fine with the speeding bikers on the test run before the official event. However, on race day cheering crowds made them a little tense, so the Wednesday oak forest race was canceled.

### **Picky Eater I\***

You know how picky Zoo staff is about animal diets. Organic greens and fruit. Scientifically balanced raw meats. Only the best in formerly frozen rats and mice. Etc. Still, it was a surprise when some delicious, wholesome high quality leftover all-beef hotdogs from **Fisher's Beastro** were offered to the bears. An exciting event for all bears - except

**Woody.** He refused the hotdog altogether. (And he calls himself a bear.)

### **Picky Eater II**

It's not that everyone hasn't tried to come up with a meal toward which Livestock Guarding Dog **Annabelle** will show some enthusiasm. Wet kibble. Dry kibble with raw ground meat. Ground raw meat all by itself. Plain dry kibble. Nope. It has been noted that Annabelle will condescend to eat canned dog food. Even some kibble with canned dog food. And possibly a delicious all-beef hotdog.

### **Natural Wild Behavior?**

For safety reasons **Perfect Baby Bear** is residing in the Bear Quarantine Area. For several weeks after his arrival, he moved in and out and pretty much was where everyone wanted him to be. That was Then. Currently when his presence is requested inside (so the bear yard can be tidied up) he is reluctant to come in. Yes, there's food. Extra wonderful food like canned sardines. He's tempted. Mightily tempted. But in he does not move. Interestingly, having always lived in the wild, he and all the Zoo bears before him know about the I-Won't-Quite-Come-In-Ploy. Yes, the bear comes through the door, and yes he reaches with tongue and paw for the goodies that await. But he keeps one back foot solidly planted just outside the door.

### THE TRADITIONAL ANIMAL'S THANKSGIVING FEAST

Thursday, November 25 11 a.m.

HOLIDAY PARTY FOR THE ANIMALS

Saturday, December 11. Animals open festively wrapped gifts starting at 11 a.m.

WILD NIGHTS and HOLIDAY LIGHTS

The Zoo Sanctuary transformed! Tens of thousands of LED efficient lights create a memorable Holiday Experience. Holiday Carols! Holiday food and Drink! A Warming Bonfire! Special visitors from the North Pole! Ride the decorated Steam Train! Open s Dec 2 continues on Thursday, Friday & Saturday nights until Dec. 23. More information at [zoo.folsom.ca.us](http://zoo.folsom.ca.us)

**\*Taste Treat! Fisher's Beastro! Annie's Big Dog: delicious one-quarter pound all-beef-on-a-bun: \$2.95. The clear choice of three out of four discerning Black Bears! (Baby bear wasn't asked.)**

**[rratcliff@folsom.ca.us](mailto:rratcliff@folsom.ca.us)**