

Focus on Animals

THE MIKAL KELLNER FOUNDATION FOR ANIMALS NEWSLETTER

FALL 2000 - SPRING 2001



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Bitterroot Bear Cub Returned to the Wild

A white plastic dog igloo served as a temporary den for the Bitterroot bear cub. The young black bear was in hibernation earlier this year at the wildlife shelter operated by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) in Helena. At the end of February, wildlife biologists released the cub in the mountains near Choteau.

His odyssey began last summer in the Bitterroot National Forest, where wildfires separated the cub from his mother. Starving, his feet burned and blistered, he was found clinging to a tree. His rescue captured national headlines, sparking similarities to another forest fire survivor, Smokey Bear. Not wanting the cub to become a forest fire poster child, wildlife biologists brought him to the shelter. "His health is fine. His feet have completely healed," says Kurt Cunningham, shelter supervisor.

He's also packed on the pounds, which will help him survive the winter. Cunningham says he's hibernating with another cub found in the same area. Though not siblings, the two became pals after a few weeks together.

Fitted with ear tags and radio collars, the cubs were transported to man-made dens in the backcountry near Choteau. The dens are so remote that biologists must ride snowmobiles. Located on north slopes, the dens are angled six feet deep, with enough room to fit two cubs. Biologists covered the straw-lined dens with logs, pine boughs and snow.



Photo by Tom Bauer, Missoulian

Bitterroot Bear - continued on Page 2

MKFA Wildlife Gala and Banquet



Vince Yannone with bald eagle whose permanent wing injury prevents release to the wild, so the bird is used in educational programs.

It was an extraordinary evening for an extraordinary purpose – the MKFA Gala raised over \$15,000 for the new Montana Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center on November 11th in Helena. A full house enjoyed a memorable evening. A stirring video featuring Tom Brokaw of NBC News presented an update on the project, its mission and its importance to Montana's wildlife.

Two keynote speakers delivered excitement and entertainment. Paul Schullery, Yellowstone National Park naturalist and historian, captivated us with his witty and knowledgeable presentation on the evolving imagery of the bears of Yellowstone.

Wildlife Gala - continued on Page 2

WILDLIFE CENTER DEVELOPMENT IS TOP PRIORITY IN 2001

Message from Chairman Kelly Kuntz

Many MKFA supporters have asked when we will break ground for the Montana Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. That is our top priority this year, but we have had to adjust our original plan to accommodate updated construction costs. While changes and delays can be frustrating and costly, they are part of any comprehensive building project.

The good news is that we accomplished a great deal last year. We paid off the loan on the land, installed the sewer system, and funded architectural construction documents. Negotiations continue for turning the land over to Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks. During this legislative session, FWP submitted a budget for operating the facility. The U.S. Forest Service budget contains approved funding for the interpretive component of the project.

We are all working together to ensure that the facility meets the highest standards for wildlife rehabilitation. Site development will start this year and if all goes as planned, construction could be completed next summer. Your vision, donations, and patience have helped make this dream a reality. Please continue your support as the project unfolds. The new wildlife center will be a facility we can all be proud of. 🐾



Wildlife Gala - continued from Page 1



At the gala, Drs. Julie Kappes and Arla Barkemeyer were presented with an award from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. The award was given in appreciation to the veterinarians and staff of the Animal Center for 20 years of dedicated service in healing Montana's sick and injured wildlife.

Vince Yannone, Montana's favorite wild animal advocate, literally brought wildlife into our midst. Talking about his favorite friends with humor and passion, Vince reminded everyone of the vital role the shelter plays in rehabilitating orphaned, injured or displaced wildlife for release back to the wild. He underscored his belief in the new center — and the need for it — by presenting a personal check for \$1,000 to go toward construction of the new facility. 🐾

Bitterroot Bear - continued from Page 1

As the weather warms, the bears will slowly wake up and emerge from their dens. Wildlife experts hope the bears' instincts will kick in and they'll start looking for food. There was extensive media coverage of the Bitterroot cub's release. Cunningham received calls from national as well as Montana media.

Eighteen bears were in hibernation at the wildlife shelter, but there are only enough man-made shelters for eight, so the other ten cubs must wait until spring to be released.

Last year MKFA funded six radio collars for the bear release program. 🐾

Emergency Funds

Evelyn Moe, 81, was devastated when she couldn't afford surgery needed by Toi, her Pomeranian. Toi has been her best friend since ill health made Evelyn housebound three years ago. Financial assistance from MKFA's Emergency Funds program made the surgery possible. Now fully recovered, the little dog is a devoted companion to Evelyn, who said, "Toi keeps me going. She's a lot of company and a real sweetheart."

In 2000, the Emergency Funds program provided over \$4,000 toward veterinary treatment for 47 animals. Another \$1,200 purchased medical equipment that helped wildlife impacted by fires. Since the program was established in 1992, more than 380 animals have benefited from over \$25,000 in financial assistance. The majority of funding has come from the Animal Center in Helena, which has donated euthanasia fees from the clinic. 🐾

5th Annual Cardboard Cup Regatta July 14

The Cardboard Cup Regatta sails into its fifth year Saturday, July 14, 2001 at Spring Meadow Lake in Helena. This wet and wild event for all ages raises funds for the new Montana Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center. The event is co-sponsored by MKFA, Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks (FWP), and the U.S. Forest Service. For information about boat registration, including corporate sponsorship, call Craig Marr at 406-444-4720 (FWP). 🐾



HAPPY ENDINGS

In October 1998, we opened the doors of a building on MKFA land to house 53 dogs rescued in a Helena-area cruelty case. Here's a brief update on two of the many dogs that found new homes through the efforts of the Lewis & Clark Humane Society.



Schatzi and Georgia Barker

Schatzi was middle-aged and shy when adopted by Georgia Barker. Housebroken, with a knowledge of basic commands, Schatzi didn't bark the first year and still won't eat until given permission. Things are changing, though, since another abused dog joined the family. Schatzi is now

more relaxed and expressive, and has even started giving Georgia "kisses."

Shep makes his home with Linda and Dan Owens, who say he's wonderful and that he immediately fit in with their 3-dog family. Linda was a volunteer who walked him for a year before adopting him. Shy and fearful of men, it took Shep a long time to build enough trust to even wag his tail, but he has developed into a friendly, outgoing dog. 🐾

A Blessing of Animals

Last fall pet owners brought dogs, cats, birds, a ferret and an iguana to the courtyard of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Helena to receive a blessing in a special ceremony for the animals that add so much to our lives.

Adopt-A-Species Program Highlights

The program's focus this year in Helena is students teaching others. At the spring Science Circus at Helena High, students exhibited educational trunks they developed on their chosen species. Next year the trunks will be traded among schools to continue teaching students about wildlife and habitat in Montana. During Earth Week, the Independent Record will publish a supplement of students' essays and artwork. 🐾



A youngster takes a close look at the grizzly bear rug which is part of Rossitor School's educational trunk.

KID'S CORNER Ospreys Benefit From Adopt-A-Species Program

If you're an osprey looking for a place to build a nest and can't find a tall, sturdy tree in the area, you might choose a utility pole — a very dangerous location. Now Montana ospreys are being offered safe alternative places to roost.

Volunteer Gene Hickman coordinated the effort after he was asked to mentor Montana City schools in their Adopt-A-Species program. When the school chose to study the osprey, Montana Power Company (MPC) donated materials and poles for six nesting platforms.

Working from specially developed plans provided by MPC, students in Ray Berg's shop class at the Montana City Middle School cut out "kits" so the class could construct the platforms. Montana Power then attached the platforms and erected the poles. Students were invited to visit the sites when MPC installed the poles and platforms. From the students to the ospreys who roost on the platforms: "Happy nesting!" 🐾

Adopt-A-Species Program Karelian Bear Dogs in Action in Montana

Carrie Hunt and her Karelian bear dogs traveled from Utah to visit 19 Helena area schools last fall to demonstrate to students how problem bears can be "taught" to avoid trouble, thus saving their lives.

Carrie, a bear biologist working with the "Partners in Life" program of the Wind River Bear Institute (WRBI), is a living example of how one dedicated person can change the future for wildlife. She developed the technique based on research into how bears learn in the wild. The program "shepherds" the bears with adverse conditioning tools. First, problem bears are trapped, when possible, at the site where the trouble occurs. When the bears are released, trained personnel yell, fire rubber bullets and pursue the bears with Karelian bear dogs at a safe distance.

This unique program is now being used in Montana, other western states, and Canada. Working with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the program has led to the preservation of at least 16 grizzly bears and numerous black bears in the state that would probably have been destroyed if they had not been trained to avoid areas where humans live.

An important part of the "Partners in Life" program is educating people to avoid leaving food in camping and living areas where bears are located. Four elements work together to make this program successful: the bears, the public, bear management agencies, and the WRBI's bear conflict teams. 🐾



Students get acquainted with Rio, one of the Karelian Bear Dogs that visited Jefferson School in Helena.

MKFA Helps Wildlife Impacted by Fires

Montana's wild fires last summer consumed many more homes than the media reported. Chipmunks, songbirds, raccoons and other small mammals were left homeless and sick as flames destroyed their habitat and smoke filled the air they breathed.



A young squirrel affected by smoke, receiving treatment in the Animal Intensive Care Unit.

Marvel Weggenman, a licensed rehabilitator, didn't hesitate to take in the many creatures brought to the door of the "Flyaway Foundation" that she and her husband, Mark, operate in Helena. When she realized that the animals needed advanced care to be successfully rehabilitated and returned to the wild, she called MKFA for assistance. The Foundation provided \$1200 toward the cost of an Animal Intensive Care Unit (AICU) and nebulizer for birds and small mammals. The AICU, a versatile medical device that can be used to treat a variety of ailments, will also be available for use by veterinarians. 🐾

"Bully!" Raises Money for MKFA



Almost \$4,000 was raised for MKFA through the Port Polson Players' production of "Bully". A grant underwritten by D.A. Davidson brought "Bully", a one-man play based on the life and times of President Theodore Roosevelt, to Helena last spring. State Senator Mike Taylor portrayed the president, who was known for his dedication to conservation. The production was timely as we find ourselves entering a

new century and facing new challenges to conserve habitat and use natural resources wisely. 🐾

Planning to Make a Purchase Over the Internet?

Now, your online purchase can make a difference. By visiting the internet charity sites listed below *before* you buy online, you can designate the Foundation to receive a percentage of the proceeds from your purchase. There are no hidden fees or mark-ups, and there are plenty of retailers to choose from. By making a purchase you would have made anyway, MKFA will receive funds needed to maintain our animal welfare programs. Please visit:

<http://www.igive.com>

<http://www.4charity.com>

<http://www.greatergood.com>

Spay + Neuter = Fewer Animals Euthanized

MKFA's Spay/Neuter Program started issuing spay/neuter certificates in the Helena area in 1992. A recent study of euthanasia at the local humane society animal shelter showed that the number of pets put to sleep since 1992 has decreased, and in 1999 it was the lowest euthanasia rate in the 25-year history of the shelter.

Since 1992, MKFA has provided financial assistance of more than \$31,000 to alter 1331 animals, including 264 last year. Credit goes to Helena veterinarian Dr. Arla Barkemeyer (and her colleagues at the Animal Center) for the inspiration and most of the funding for both this program and our Emergency Funds program.

We'd like to tell you about two exceptional people who have used the program. Kay requested assistance with a colony of feral cats near the Montana Developmental Center. After helping her obtain a humane trap, MKFA funded alteration of 6 of the cats. Now a stable colony, the cats are being watched over. In return, they control the mouse population in that area.

Last fall, when Nancy didn't have enough money to have her cat neutered, MKFA provided assistance. Nancy has sent us a \$5 donation every month since then. She says the operation made her cat a much better pet. We say, "Thank you, Nancy, for helping us to prevent unwanted litters".

For more information about this program, call Judy Fenton at 406-933-5922.

Other special supporters of this program are Al and Marilyn Adams, who recently gave a donation in celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary. They decided they would get more satisfaction from donating to the program than going on a cruise. 🐾




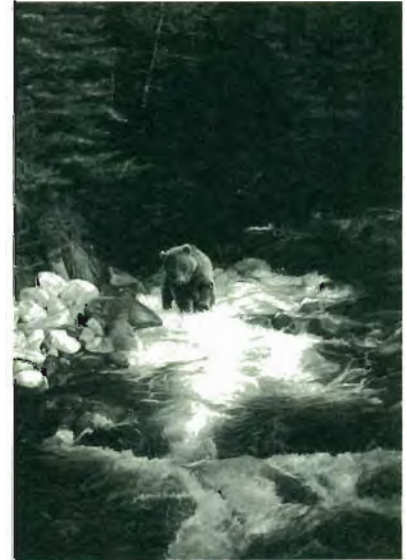
And We Are All Friends, Bob Morgan

MKFA Offers Two Fine Prints That Any Animal Lover Would be Proud to Own

Bob Morgan's "And We Are All Friends" is reproduced from his original oil painting, which depicts a Native American Elder surrounded by wildlife from the Indian Napi legends. Prints are available for \$150 each.

Your print may be personalized by the artist with a remarque of a wild animal of your choice for an extra \$50. For \$6 shipping and handling, we will mail your print to you or, if it is a gift, to the person you designate. For information, call 406-443-6532. The Foundation accepts MasterCard/VISA.

In his print titled "Cold Feet," Alan Snell captures a grizzly bear wading through a cold mountain stream with afternoon sun highlighting the water. Reproduced from an original acrylic painting, "Cold Feet" may be purchased through the Bear's Den, 633 Helena Avenue, Helena, MT 59601 (phone 406-441-4151). Prints are \$125. 



Cold Feet, Alan Snell



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