

# SOUTHWEST WILDLIFE

CONSERVATION CENTER



## **LEADERSHIP**

Board Chair: Sam Coppersmith

Board Members
Linda Searles: Founder
Raandi Morales
Paul Diefenderfer
Fairfax O'Riley
Dr. Nick Robl
Michelle Edwards
Pam Wugalter

**Executive Director:** Raandi Morales

**Assistant Director:** Kim Carr

**Lead Education Specialist:**Robyn Moul

Front Cover: Tequila, Red Fox Photo By: Peyton Young

Back Cover: Bobcat Family
Photo By: Kris Wheaton

Photography by Peyton Young and Kris Wheaton

As I step into my role as Executive Director, I reflect on my five years as a volunteer and Board Member and the transformative journey of Southwest Wildlife with gratitude for the support of our community, donors, and other friends throughout 2024.

Precious creatures were given a second chance to live and thrive in the wild where they belong **because you cared.** 

Orphaned baby wild ones received state of the art care around the clock and a clean bill of health to start their journeys because you kept them safe.

Critically endangered wolves enjoyed the freedom to live out their lives without fear of being hunted or persecuted because you protected them.

And lest we not forget that the future holds great promise because of our growing communal understanding and appreciation of the value of our native wildlife, which is possible only **because you won't give up on them.** 

Words cannot express the depth of gratitude that we feel for the generosity and love that you show our treasured animals every day.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. And know this:

- Because you understand their value;
- Because you are who you are; and
- Because not only do you believe that Individuals can make a difference; you actually make the difference.

How many people can say that?

Please know that this 2024 Impact Report reflects your sustained commitment to wildlife conservation. The work that Southwest Wildlife does would not be possible without you.

Raandi Morales

Executive Director



## FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

2024 was a great year for Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center. We rescued and rehabilitated more animals and welcomed more visitors to Arizona's unique animal education, rehabilitation, and sanctuary facility. We celebrated our 30th anniversary where hundreds of supporters recognized our history and accomplishments at the Gala.



We pushed forward on planning for our relocation to McDowell Mountain Regional Park, with design planning and planning for our major capital campaign to fund the first phase of development nearing completion.

We grew our board and organizational capacity, and we welcomed our new Executive Director —Raandi Morales, who has volunteered at SWCC for years and has been a stalwart board member for the past four years.

But our biggest transition in 2024 was recognizing Linda Searles, who started SWCC 30 years ago, and watching her transition SWCC's leadership to Raandi. Linda's love of animals and willingness to sacrifice to give injured and rescued wildlife the best life possible is SWCC's core value and culture. We are what we are because of Linda's remarkable accomplishments and dedication. Linda will still be a board member and will forever be our Founder, but we can watch her enjoy a well-deserved retirement from running SWCC.

As we push forward in 2025 and beyond, the best way to honor Linda is make SWCC bigger and better – and in a bigger and better location. It's a big challenge for a small organization, but one with a remarkable 30-year history, and with an extraordinary Founder – Linda Searles.

Sam Coppersmith Board Chair

our Comeson to



We seek to inspire the conservation of native wildlife through education, the care of sanctuary animals, and a teaching hospital dedicated to healing, rehabilitating, and releasing wildlife.

### Rescue

Our 24/7 wildlife
emergency hotline
connects the
community with trained
volunteers to provide
wildlife advice, dispatch
rescues, and safely
transport animals to our
on-site veterinary clinic.

## Rehab

Animals receive expert medical care, including exams, surgeries, and specialized treatment, followed by recovery in our rehab area with minimal human contact.

### Release

We believe wildlife
belongs in the wild. Once
healthy and ready,
animals are released into
safe, natural habitats to
thrive in the wild where
they belong.



## THE FINAL RESCUE OF 2024

With a volunteer rescue team on call 24/7, they're always ready to jump into action when needed. The team is made up of 18 rescuers and 8 rescue line operators, all dedicated to helping Arizona's wildlife. When a call comes in, the closest available rescuer is sent out. This time, it was Ben Shakespear who answered the call.

#### The emergency? A raccoon stuck in a leghold trap.

When Ben arrived, at first glance, it looked like the raccoon was simply perched on top of a fence. But a closer look revealed the grim reality: one of its paws was clamped in a leghold trap, the attached chain stuck between the wooden slats as the raccoon struggled to break free. The injury to the leg was devastating, leaving the raccoon trapped in a painful, desperate situation.

Like most animals caught in a trap, this raccoon fought hard to free itself, enduring immense stress, pain, and exhaustion.

The prolonged struggle can often lead to self-inflicted injuries as the animal panics. Leg-hold traps don't just restrain; they can cause deep lacerations, muscle and nerve damage, and, in some cases, permanent disability.

This was a tough rescue. The raccoon was in a vulnerable spot, trapped, in pain, and unable to free itself. Ben first tried to free the chain to keep the trap from pulling on the injured leg any more than it already was but had no luck. The property owner, eager to see the raccoon freed, offered to have the fence cut—anything to help. Removing a section of the fence turned out to be the safest way to free the raccoon without making the injury were.

free the raccoon without making the injury worse.

Once the section of the fence was cut and the raccoon was freed, it was carefully secured in a crate. Another volunteer met Ben at a halfway point to transport it to Southwest Wildlife, where our clinic team was ready to provide the critical care the raccoon needed.

This raccoon was a fighter, no doubt about it, but it never should have had to fight for its life this way. Because of our rescue team's quick response and dedication, this raccoon got a second chance at life. While we hope for a day when rescues like this aren't needed, we're grateful to have a team that's always ready to step up when they're needed.

These rescuers, who volunteer their time, are giving back to the wildlife harmed by the thoughtless actions of other people. In a world where wildlife often suffers due to human impact, it's the least we can do, as we save wildlife, one life at a time.





Our 24/7 wildlife emergency hotline connects the community with trained volunteers to provide wildlife advice, dispatch rescues, and safely transport animals to our on-site veterinary clinic.



## **2024 FINANCIAL REPORT**

#### 2024 Revenue

Individual Giving \$2,105,910.49

Institutional Giving \$138,256.35

Earned Revenue \$378,586.39

30th Anniversary Gala \$252,587.83

Other \$137,618.33

Thanks to the redonors, Southwe million in 2024. the way, suppor program revenu fundraising ever

Thanks to the remarkable generosity of our donors, Southwest Wildlife raised over \$3 million in 2024. Individual contributions led the way, supported by institutional funding, program revenue, and a successful fundraising event.

**Total Revenue** 

\$3,012,959.39

Individual Giving 70%

Institutional Giving 5%

Earned Revenue 13%

30th Anniversary Gala 8%

Other 4%

#### **2024 Operating Expenses**

**Total Expenses** 

Animal Care	\$859,473.07
Vet Clinic	\$462,925.22
Education	\$119,777.35
Facilities	\$830,322.06
Fundraising	\$346,401.81
Administrative	\$316,116.99

In 2024, Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center allocated over \$2.9 million to ensure the highest standards of care for Arizona's native wildlife. The largest portion supported direct animal care, with significant investments in our clinic, education programs, facilities, and operations.

\*Programming includes Animal Care, Vet Clinic, and Education

Programming 49%

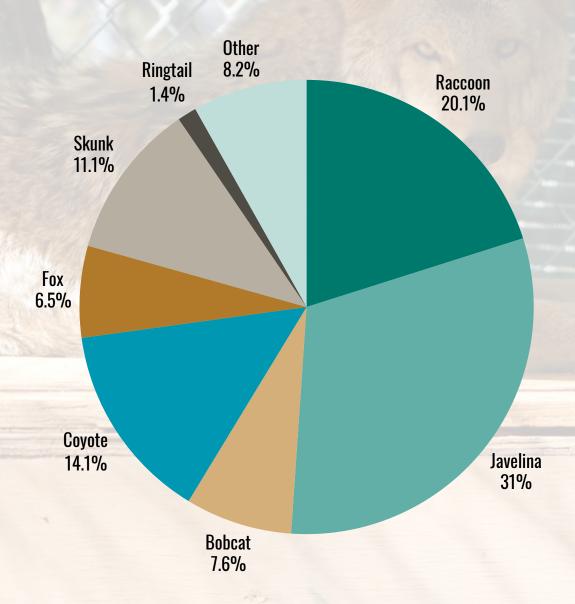
\$2,935,016.50

Admin 11%

Fundraising 12%

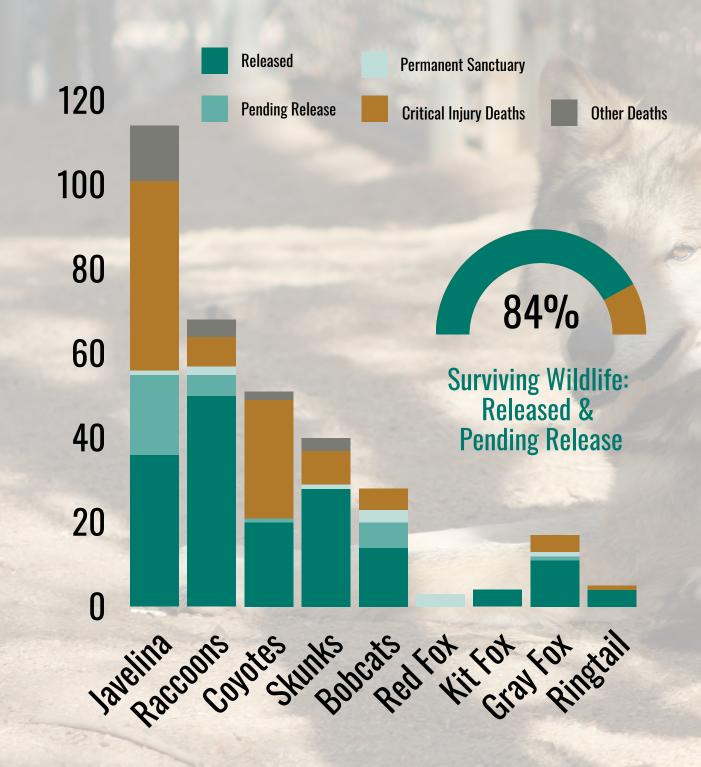
Facilities 28%

# **2024 INTAKES**



In 2024, we cared for a diverse range of wildlife, with javelinas, raccoons, and coyotes among the most common intakes.

# **2024 RELEASE RATE**



The release rate was calculated using the following calculation.

Released + Pending Releases

# of Core Species Rescued - Critical Injury Deaths

# **WELCOMING 10 NEW SANCTUARY RESIDENTS**



In total, Southwest Wildlife cares for 128 animals as permanent sanctuary residents.

In 2024, Southwest Wildlife provided lifelong sanctuary to 10 non-releasable animals, offering them a safe and peaceful forever home. Whether due to injuries or human imprinting, these animals now receive dedicated care in our sanctuary, with some living along our tour route to help educate the public about Arizona's native wildlife and the importance of coexistence.

# **COMMUNITY**

10,210

Sanctuary Visitors 52,129

Social Media Followers

13,730

Weekly Readers of Email Newsletters 23,052

Volunteer Hours Served

With thousands of visitors to our sanctuary, a growing social media presence, and an engaged audience reading our weekly newsletters, our reach and impact grew stronger than ever in 2024. We are especially grateful for the countless volunteer hours served, a testament to the passion and dedication of those who support our mission every day.

## **30TH ANNIVERSARY GALA**

# Wild About Wildlife













Our Gala raised \$252,587

Our 30th Anniversary Gala was a night to remember, celebrating three decades of impact and honoring Linda for her unwavering dedication. Thank you to all who joined us in supporting our mission and making this milestone so special!

# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

**Karl Land: Facilities Manager** 



#### Describe your role at SWCC.

This is easily the hardest question to answer. I could say the generic answer for the role of a facilities manager—which is to keep the facility running smoothly and safely. This would probably be okay, but at my core, I've always set out to be as helpful as possible wherever Southwest needed it the most. That's been my focus since even my early days as a volunteer. I fulfill many roles such as IT guy, animal care specialist, animal trainer, mechanic, pest control, facilities technician, rescue volunteer, and event volunteer. In fact, I came to learn that many of my coworkers are just the same, a key characteristic of being successful here at Southwest.

#### What does a typical day in the life of Karl, the Facilities Manager look like?

One thing I love about my job is that none of my days are typical. I can always expect something new to pop up. This makes dinner conversation with my family interesting—though they're probably a little tired of me talking about Southwest at this point.

My typical responsibilities fluctuate from season to season. In the summer I can expect to be putting shade cloth over enclosures, doing maintenance on our mister system, and helping repair evap coolers. In the spring I'll be preparing enclosures for our releasable babies, helping our animal care department clean and feed, and deep cleaning our bear pools. The fall is where we all can take a deep breath—we survived summer and now we have time to plan and begin larger projects. During the winter, we're also preparing for the colder temperatures – heat lamps go up and shade cloth is pulled back. If I had to pick a favorite season at Southwest, it would definitely be spring.

#### What's the most unique or unexpected task you've had to do?

Building an artificial den for two of our red foxes, Marco and Chaco. I loved this project! I originally proposed this idea to our Animal Care staff after they had temporarily been moved to the clinic to receive their annual exams. Inside their old enclosure, the two of them had built a den that had become a hazard and required attention. I proposed to build an artificial one that mimics the natural dens red foxes build in the wild. This way, they would have a safe and familiar space when they got back. After some research, planning, and ten days of digging dirt by hand. Their new home was ready, and the two of them LOVE IT. It warms my heart each and every time I see them use their new den.

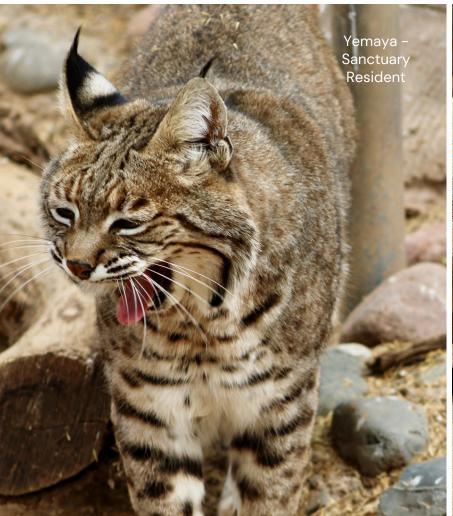
#### What's your favorite part about your job?

Learning new skills while being surrounded by happy animals and amazing people. But seeing a red fox every day doesn't hurt either!

#### What is one thing you wish more people knew about the work you do?

20,000 steps in a day is considered normal for us.









Written by: Kris Wheaton

# **AZUL & ELA: SANCTUARY SIBLINGS**

Since Southwest Wildlife began participating in the Mexican wolf recovery program way back in 1995, many wolves have lived at our sanctuary. Of those wolves, no two could be more different than Ela (F1468) and Azul (M1470).

Before coming to Southwest Wildlife, Azul lived at Dickerson Park Zoo in Springfield, Missouri, in a pack with four of his brothers. After being treated for bladder and thyroid issues in 2020, his position within the pack was diminished, and because of ongoing medical concerns, he was transferred to us.

Ela was born and remained at the Chicago Zoo in Brookfield, Illinois, with her parents, and later, with an older male Mexican wolf, before they moved together to the Living Desert State Park in Carlsbad, New Mexico. After her older companion passed away, she came to us in 2023 with a history of spinal issues and is currently on medication to keep her comfortable.

Azul's arrival here in 2020 was, like him, memorable. He was flown in on a private aircraft from Missouri to an airfield in Albuquerque, New Mexico, chauffeured through an Arizona mountain snowstorm, to arrive after midnight at our sanctuary in the desert outside of Scottsdale. Azul was so heavy it took 3 people to heft his crate from the SUV and into the clinic, where he waited for an introduction to his new home the next morning.

Three years later, Ela arrived at a more reasonable hour in a U-Haul van from Carlsbad. Although not easy to capture before the trip, Ela was quiet during the more than 10-hour drive, even when traffic was delayed for a long time on the highway coming into Phoenix. She walked right out of her travel crate and into the waiting enclosure.

At nearly 90 pounds Azul is one of the largest Mexican wolves we've had at Southwest Wildlife. He's a powerful, handsome wolf with a big attitude. Little Ela is about half his size, short for a Mexican wolf, but fluffy and, honestly, adorable (something we never say about wolves!).

And then there are the ravens! At another facility during feeding time, ravens would swoop in and try to steal Azul's meal. Apparently, several of those ravens ended up on his dinner menu! A few weeks ago, after Ela was moved to a large open-topped enclosure, we observed her standing back while ravens stole her meal! She wasn't about to take them on. Perhaps she's never had to deal with these bold birds. We'll be feeding in her house for now to give her time to figure out how to deal with the ravens.





Although very different wolves, we have recently discovered some similarities. They will both turn 9 years old this spring, both are gorgeous wolves – each in their own unique way, AND not only do they share a birthday, but they're brother and sister! We never guessed! Azul and Ela were born at the Chicago Zoo in Brookfield, Illinois, in 2016. In the notes from their early days their caretakers share that Ela was the runt of the litter, and even as a puppy preferred to hang back and observe the family dynamics while her much larger brothers, including Azul, were bold and gregarious.

Southwest Wildlife has an important role in the management program for the endangered Mexican wolf as a holding facility for older wolves. While quite a few of our wolves are on the geriatric side, we also house wolves that need specialized medical care, like our unlikely siblings Ela and Azul, and those who just need a peaceful spot to call home and a wolf family to howl with.

# **DONOR AND COMMUNITY EVENTS**

A glimpse into our 2024 tours and programs, ranging from exclusive Don Coyote Society events to community tours and gatherings, all designed to connect our community with our work.



**Family Day** 



Bat Netting with Arizona Game and Fish



**Fall Enrichment** 



Howl-O-Ween



Edible Plants of the Southwest- DCS



Big Horn Sheep Tour with Arizona Game and Fish- DCS



Walk with Wildlife Tours



#### WE BELIEVE THAT KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

Our vision inspires conservation of native wildlife through educational programs, tours, events, and community building. Through onsite, offsite, and virtual programming, social media engagement, and marketing efforts, Southwest Wildlife staff and volunteers work endlessly to teach the public how to safely coexist with wildlife in Arizona.



sanctuary in 2024





"The wildlife and its habitat cannot speak, so we must, and we will." ~Theodore Roosevelt

"Empowering young people to care for the world they inherit is the responsibility of every generation. Southwest
Wildlife is doing their part in building future stewards to protect the earth."

~Robyn Moul, Lead Education Specialist

# **VOLUNTEERS**



#### **CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS**

In 2024, 115 dedicated volunteers contributed over 23,052 hours of service to Southwest Wildlife. Their commitment, passion, and hard work are the driving force behind our mission.

Volunteers do it all, from animal care and assisting in the vet clinic, to leading tours, supporting special events, and more. Every hour they give makes a difference, helping us provide exceptional care to wildlife and bring meaningful experiences to our community.





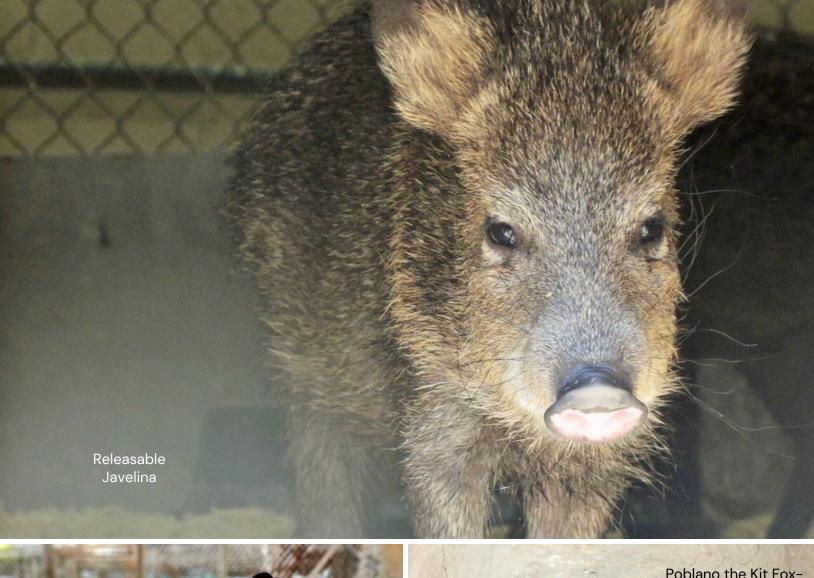


















In 2024 the Don Coyote Society gave over \$900,000.

In 2024, the Don Coyote Society raised over \$900,000 to support Southwest Wildlife's mission. We are deeply grateful to each and every one of you—your generosity provides hope, and care to the animals who need us most.

The Don Coyote Society is Southwest Wildlife's leadership annual giving group providing mission-essential funds for rescues, rehabilitation, and a release structure that returns animals to their native habitats.

Don Coyote was the first sanctuary resident of Southwest Wildlife way back in 1994. He came to our founder, Linda Searles, as an orphaned pup with no place to turn. Linda saw a need and rose to meet it – and thanks to your compassion and generosity, Southwest Wildlife continues to serve animals in need.



## Don Coyote Society

Thank you for your unwavering support of Southwest Wildlife's mission to save our native wildlife, one life at a time. Together, we are making a lasting impact—thank you for being an essential part of our journey.

## Mountain Lion Pride (\$25,000+)

Thomas Crews Jim and Anne Christensen David and Gwen Huck

## Mexican Wolf Pack (\$10,000-\$24,999)

Jeffrey Augustine LoriAnn Busse Barb Cecrle Kathy Davis

Bert and Betty Feingold

Keith Halliday

James and Anna Hoag

Alex Kvassay Kathryn Lincoln Catherine Long

Mary and Bradford Manatt Alice and Frank Puleo Ronald Francis Sassano

Carolyn Sheley Louise Short Michael Wilson Patricia Witek

Carole and John Wooldrik

## Bobcat Clutter (\$5,000-\$9,999)

Kimberly and Tylor Armstrong Isabel Arnone Marion and Bob Auray Penelope Baker Carla and Chuck Borkan Sue Borman Perry and Kim Brush Suzanne Elizabeth Buerger Dr. Niranjan Chandragiri Edward and Barbara Chulew

Michele and Cliff Crooks

James H Davis Robert Dudacek

Michelle and Eric Edwards

Mark Fairhead Marleigh Fletcher James Hugh Gordon Johnson Family Foundation

Susan Josephson

Robin Kaehr

Michael and Joanne Klonoski

Coleen Lehman

Mammel Family Foundation

Debra Michaud Raandi Morales Ron Morton Robert C. Nyman

Wiliam and Suzanne Oelman

Kinsey and Tammy Rawe Ryan Ridley

Michael Ringer Nick Robl Kallie Rose Brigitte Scanlon

Carol P. and Frederick R. Schilling

Dr. Marc and Rikki Schmidt Joan and Michael Smith Catherine Stewart

Steve and Kim Stovall Robert and Janet Vreeland

Ron Weir

Dan and Barb Wochos Kristen and John Wolfe

#### Javelina Squadron (\$2,500-\$4,999)

Kimberly and Michael Beatrice Jean and Barry Bingham Gail Bliss Mary Bradley Sandra Brown Sandra J. Carroll

Barbara and Roger Carter

Marcia Colpas

Rosemary Cudzewicz

Ann Damiano

Peggy Kavookjian and

David Nora

Paul Diefenderfer

Beverlynn and Steven Elliott

Ellman Foundation Ernest Fujimura

Richard and Nicke Hetzel

Ernest Fujimura Deeann Gibbons Debbie and Leon Gross Sharon and Tony Guastella

Darlene Hagan

Florence and Darrell Harding

Sheila and Allen Henry
Marianne Jensen
Diana and Mark Kirk
Roberta Kreutzfeld
Donna and John Leipold
Peter and Sheila Levy
Nancy Martori-Dunlap
Katharine Messenger

Deborah OKeefe William and

Bettye-Lynn Pollard

Julie Rachlin Renee Ragland

Christopher and Wendy Reynolds

Frank J. Romaglia Sandra Romanoff

Elizabeth and Robert Rusy

Debby Satter

Ellen Schoenbeck

Carol and

Lawrence Schreibman Robert and Maureen Siefert

Michael Skovran Vincent Valentino

Beverly and Dewey Whittaker Thomas and Barbara Wolf Judith and Robert Worcester

Gay Wray Pam Wugalter Richard Zepp

## Raccoon Committee (\$1,500-\$2,499)

Lowell Arnold Janice Bergmann David Bixby

Brian and Karen Boyer

Anita Broeren

James and Michele Capron Anthony and Joyce Carey

Sam Coppersmith
David Crabb
William Culbertson
Kathy Duncan
Linda Eikenberry

Gregory and Deanne Falls

Linda Garrett

Andrew and Nancy Gordon

Sue Halvorsen Marc Hapke Russ Hartzell Robert Helmand Nancy K. Hoff

Sharon and Jeffrey Hotham

Barbara Irwin

Norma and Daniel Johansen Fletcher Beacon Foundation, Inc

Ellen Jane Katz

Charles Klein Deidre Knee Henry Krautter Ada Lang Linda LeBlang

Carol and Joseph Lizzadro

Pat MacAllen

Luis and Sara Mangas

Devon Mason

John M. and Charlene G. McMillan

Be Memorable Foundation

Wayne Nelson Sharon Orbeck David E. Owens

Jonathan and Stephanie Poure

D J Rael

Merilee Reynolds

Louis and Nancy Santacruz

Gail Silverstein

Fred and Vickie Sixta
Neil and Nancy Stacey
Katherine Thornton
Marion Unger

Karen and John Voris

Rolf F Vrla

Susan and Walter Warzecka

Jackie Westbay Willard E. White Stephania P. Williams

Janet Zetah

### SUPPORTING BOBCAT CARE: THE HUCK FAMILY'S COMMITMENT

Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center is honored to recognize Gwen and David Huck, dedicated members of the Don Coyote Society, for their generosity and commitment to wildlife conservation. Their support in 2024 provided critical funding for infrastructure improvements, including the replacement of a vital water tank, ensuring the continued care of our wildlife. Their dedication and love for our bobcats have also made a lasting impact on their well-being. We are deeply grateful for the Hucks' sustaining support and passion for protecting Arizona's native wildlife. Learn more about their journey and dedication in the Q&A below.



#### What inspired you to first get involved with Southwest Wildlife?

First of all, we love Phoenix. For several years we have looked into Wildlife care facilities where we vacation to and visit and found Southwest Wildlife. We took a tour and found the facility to be professionally run and the wildlife well cared for. Our subsequent visits confirmed this.

## Is there a particular species at Southwest Wildlife that holds a special place in your heart?

Together my husband and I are interested in many species of wildlife, but big cats are extra special. Bobcats especially!

# Is there a specific moment or experience throughout your life that deepened your commitment to wildlife conservation?

I have spent the last 23 years as a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. For 18 years I worked in the wildlife department at our SPCA and since then I've worked with them and on my own, mainly fostering baby opossums. We are now broadening our interest.

#### What do you think is the most compelling reason for supporting Southwest Wildlife?

We are in the process of making a larger commitment to wildlife care. With our past experience with your facility, we feel that Southwest Wildlife would be a place we want to be involved with in the future.













## **DONATE**



## **VISIT**

Book a tour online, and bring your friends and family! Meeting the sanctuary animals and learning their stories is a life changing experience.

## **SHOP**

Check out our online shop at bit.ly/ShopSWCC or purchase items for Southwest Wildlife through our Amazon Wishlist.

## **VOLUNTEER**

Over 100 dedicated and passionate people rescue, rehabilitate, and release the animals at Southwest. Why not you? Apply at *bit.ly/VolunteerSWCC*.

## STAY CONNECTED

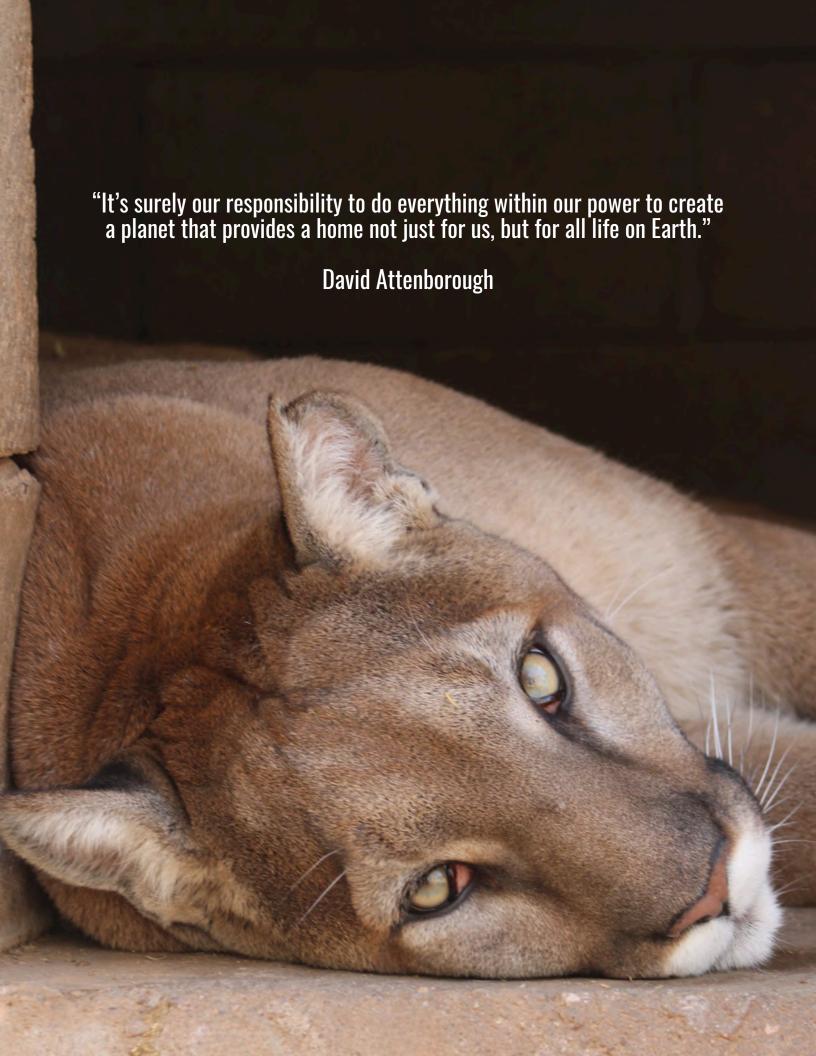
Follow, like, share and comment on our Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok pages @southwestwildlife to help spread the word on wildlife advocacy and stay up to date on happenings at Southwest Wildlife.

For more ways to get involved, email us at **swcc@southwestwildlife.org** or give us a call at **(480) 471–9109**.









#### **Sanctuary Address**

27026 N. 156th St Scottsdale, AZ 85262

#### **Mailing Address**

Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center PMB 115 8711 E. Pinnacle Peak Rd. Scottsdale, AZ 85255

- Instagram @southwestwildlife
- TikTok
  @southwestwildlife
- Facebook Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center































