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Newsletter of Critter Creek Wildlife Station Fall 2011

Volume 16, No. 3

Fall Open House Saturday, September 24, 2011

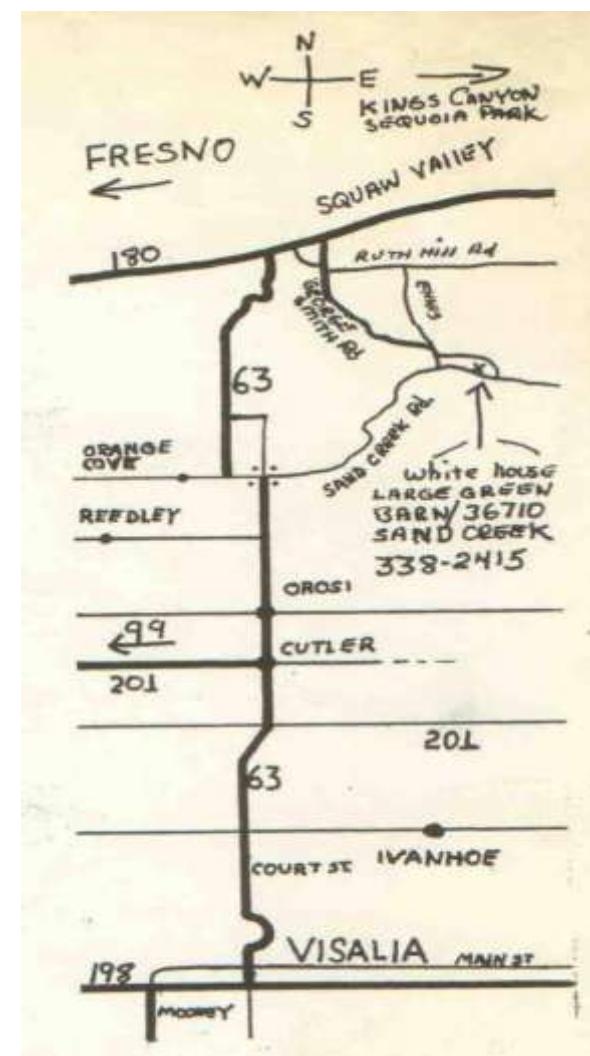
11:00 am until 2:00 pm
Gate will close at 1:30 pm
to allow you enough time to tour

This Open House will be unguided. For many of our visitors this is the format they like best because it allows them to spend more time with the wildlife they like best. The pace is leisurely and there are more opportunities to take pictures. Our volunteers will be on hand to answer any questions that you may have and to share stories of some of our permanent residents. We will have picnic tables available if you want to bring a lunch since no food will be available for sale. However, for those of you traveling from the valley floor, this is meat bee (actually a type of wasp) season. They swarm meat and sugary products making a picnic a challenge. Sandals are not recommended.

End of Baby Season Wish List

1. Towels (all sizes)—This year when the towels got dirty rather than scraping and washing them, we pitched them. This saved an incredible amount of time and energy but has left our supply of towels depleted. The towels cannot be threadbare since the animals can get tangled up in the frayed edges, but towels that are stained work great. We still have an ample supply of sheets and pillow cases.
2. Flat cardboard—We use the cardboard to line the stainless steel infirmary cages. Generally a piece 2'X2' or larger can be cut to fit. Costco used to have the perfect size in between the bundles of paper towels and bath tissue, but lately they have switched to brown paper rather than cardboard.

If you have these items bring them during Open House or give us a call at 338-2415.



Critter Creek Chronicle
Animals for Education

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Demon Cat

We have had many bizarre things happen at Critter Creek. It is never dull around here and whenever some one is away for even a few days, he cannot believe the events that have occurred.

We had a neighbor in Squaw Valley who complained about a bobcat eating her chickens. She showed up with it in a Havahart trap having caught it the night before. This was the strangest bobcat any of us had ever seen. He was scrawny and clearly had been having a tough time in the wild which was probably why he was raiding the chicken coop.

We have shown his picture around and have had several theories floated. His head is not the shape of a bobcat; however, his body, tail, and coat of fur look exactly like a bobcat's. His face is dark, virtually black. He has not been burned; none of his fur is singed. It isn't stained from some kind of natural dye. He is eating voraciously and is putting on weight.

He has "cleaned up" some, but he clearly is different from any other bobcat we have ever had come in. One theory suggests he might be a hybrid, bobcat and what????????? He is too big for one parent to have been a domestic cat...bobcat and mountain lion...yikes!

I've never heard of such a mating. Jaguars and leopards can have excessive black pigmentation occur called melanism, that we call a black panther. Perhaps this bobcat has an extra dose of melanin in his genes.



Happy Ending for Bear Cubs

The saga began on a Sunday morning. Fish and Game called to say that bow hunting season had begun and a hunter near the Kaiser Pass area had killed a sow with two bear cubs. The young were sticking close to their mom trying to get milk. The wardens were responding and wanted to know if we were able to house the cubs for awhile. We have done this before on several occasions. The outcome for those cubs wasn't very good, so we were cautious. It took Fish and Game the entire day to corral the cubs. One went into a carrier without a problem but the other one headed up a tree and had to be tranquilized. Luckily with expert netting, the wardens were able to save it from a bad fall. By 9:00 o'clock Sunday night, the cubs had arrived and were together again. Arrangements were made for them to go to Fish and Game in Sacramento for some blood work and then off to South Lake Tahoe where a facility had room for both of them. There was no problem loading them up for their trip, and we verified that they had, indeed, made it to their rehab destination. I always try to savor these happy endings.



Raccoon Complex Completed

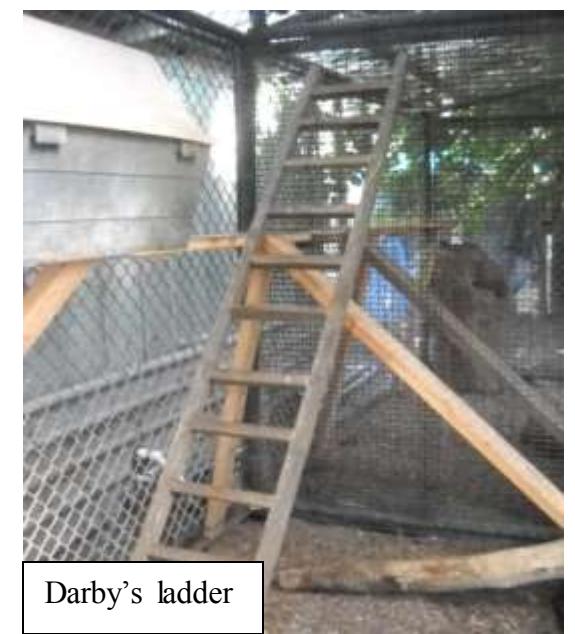
We have finished the renovations creating the new raccoon complex. Our four adult raccoons had never been housed next to each other and each had been in much smaller cages. The move was relatively easy...most of the raccoons climbed into the transfer cage and let us carry them to their new digs. We tried to make their new enclosures much more exciting with a large tub, self-waterer and plenty of limbs and tree trucks. We also moved a little something they were familiar with such as their sleeping quarters.

We started with Bandit, our chubbiest raccoon. She was thrilled with the size of her new cage. Then came Darby, the old man of our quartet. He had never been around tree bark, so he spent hours tearing bark off the tree stump in his enclosure. His den box was up high in his old cage, so he also spent a lot of time climbing and exploring the much larger area prompting us to put a ladder in his cage.

Then came Jasmine. She was grumpy about the whole move but changed her tune when she saw the other two raccoons who will be her neighbors. Finally we moved Rayne. She was sound asleep and didn't appreciate the excitement of the move or change. Once she was settled in, she went right back into her hollowed out log and went back to sleep. We suspect she spent the entire night enjoying her new surroundings.



Bandit discovers her water tub



Darby's ladder

The next day we had to make a few adjustments, but our little band of raccoons was pretty tuckered out and let us go about our work. There has been some snorting and grunting with each other but in the end they are much more lively and active in these new surroundings.



Rayne saved her exploring for the evening hours



Bandit in her log after a hard day of exploration