

Tiger Creek Animal Sanctuary

175552 FM 14, Tyler, TX 75706

Tiger Creek Animal Sanctuary, also known as the National Foundation for Rescued Animals and Great Cats in Crisis, is operated by Brian Werner Ferris and has failed to meet minimum standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited Tiger Creek repeatedly for failing to contact the attending veterinarian (AV) when animals showed signs of injury and before the death or euthanasia of animals. In 2021, Tiger Creek failed to contact the AV before the death or euthanasia of 11 big cats who exhibited signs of ailments before their deaths. The USDA has also cited Tiger Creek for repeatedly failing to maintain enclosures in good repair, repeatedly failing to have adequate drainage in enclosures, and failing to have adequate disposition documentation and veterinary records. Contact PETA for documentation.

December 9, 2021: The USDA issued Tiger Creek an official warning and notice of alleged violation of the AWA for failing to provide all animals at the facility with adequate veterinary care. (See the April 8, 2021, entry below.)

August 24, 2021: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a citation for failing to clean pools in the enclosures properly. Several of the pools had very dark, green water, and the sides and bottom were not visible. The inspector noted that “access to pools this dirty is a health hazard due to the mosquito larvae, algae overgrowth, and bacteria in the water.” A citation was also issued for

failing to clean one of the bobcat enclosures properly. The approximately 8-foot-by-8-foot cage had an excessive accumulation of feces, hair, and other debris.

April 8, 2021: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a critical citation for failing to contact an AV before the death or euthanasia of 11 big cats:

- Amir, a 20-year-old tiger, was noted by a veterinarian to need “a slight increase in weight, with a dental check in the future” during a January 2018 checkup. From May 9 to June 19, 2018, Amir’s appetite declined. He was found dead in his enclosure on June 19. There were no records of the AV examining him during that time.
- Greg, a 20-year-old tiger, was noted to have a distended abdomen on September 18, 2018, and had not eaten a complete diet for several weeks prior. He was euthanized on October 2, 2018. There were no records of the AV examining him prior to euthanasia.
- Juda, an 18-year-old lion, was noted to be thin and wobbly and have muscle atrophy in his hind legs during a January 2018 checkup. Records indicate that the AV recommended providing Juda with an anti-inflammatory medication for a couple of days and directed Tiger Creek to contact them if his condition did not improve. The next note in Juda’s records state that he was euthanized on July 15, 2018. There were no records of the AV examining him prior to euthanasia.
- Kumari, a 12-year-old tiger, only had records beginning September 7, 2019, which stated that she had not been eating her complete diet from then on. On September 19, she was observed eating dirt, and on September 24, she underwent an ovariohysterectomy. She died the next day. There were no records of the AV examining her before the surgery.

- Kenya, a 21-year-old lion, was noted to be bloated on June 3, 2020, and breathing heavily on June 9, 2020. She was euthanized on June 17, 2020. There were no records of the AV examining her prior to euthanasia.
- Sarge, an 18-year-old tiger, had blood drawn on March 13, 2020, started having diarrhea in September and October, and was euthanized on November 2, 2020. There were no records of the AV examining him between the time his blood was drawn on March 13 and euthanasia.
- Scrunches, an 18-year-old lion, had an episode of vomiting and nausea in August 2018, but there were no records of the AV being contacted. On January 9, 2019, Scrunches was noted to be dragging herself around the enclosure. The AV did not examine her until she was euthanized on January 23, 2019.
- Sierra, a 20-year-old tiger, was noted to appear dizzy on April 21, 2018. Over the next couple of months, she had multiple episodes of stumbling, back-end weakness, and collapsing until she was euthanized on August 18, 2018. There were no records of the AV examining her prior to euthanasia.
- Tara, a 17-year-old tiger, was seen vomiting on February 17, 2020, but was not evaluated by the AV until February 23, 2020, when she died under anesthesia.
- Coco, a 15-year-old cougar, was noticed to be lame in March 2018 and was euthanized on June 8, 2018. There were no records of the AV examining him during that time.
- Dakari, a serval, was noted by the AV to have been treated by Tiger Creek for a week before the facility sought medical care from the AV. The serval ended up dying.

The USDA also issued a citation for failing to have records of acquisition for nine animals. A further citation was issued for not

having an environmental enrichment plan approved by the AV for the facility's primates.

December 3, 2014: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a citation for failing to contact the AV when an old wound that a tiger named Thai had sustained 14 months prior appeared pink and inflamed. Nor did the facility inform the AV that Thai was intermittently lame on the left front leg, with each episode lasting a whole day. Thai's toe was surgically removed from the front left foot many years before inspection. The USDA also issued a citation for failing to maintain multiple enclosures in good repair. Many enclosures had metal frames and tin panels that had excessively rusted, resulting in holes. The inspector noted that the metal "may have sharp edges and if in contact with the animals could cause injury."

January 31, 2013: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a citation for failing to construct appropriate enclosures for the animals. The leopard cages appeared to be "prefabricated 6 foot tall dog kennels" that had chain link fencing that attached with bailing wire as a roof. The inspector noted that this was insufficient for big-cat enclosures. The mountain lion cage was constructed from part of a 6-foot-tall dog kennel and several panels that were slightly taller. The enclosure had a chain-link fence roof attached with bailing wire and had a gap at the junction of the top and two panels of different sizes. Other big-cat enclosures had unprotected trees or trees enclosed with 8-foot fencing that were too close to the enclosure fences. The inspector noted that "[i]f motivated the cats could use these trees as a method for escape from their enclosures." The facility was also cited for failing to provide the leopards and mountain lions with enough space in their enclosures to allow normal postural and social adjustments with adequate freedom of movement. Their enclosures were less than

8 feet tall, which did not allow them to make normal postural adjustments.

September 24, 2008: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a citation for failing to have an adequate written program of veterinary care (PVC) while having a part-time AV. The PVC was dated May 30, 2007, and an approved diet signed by the AV was not available upon request. Beef and chicken were noted as the diet for the large cats. The inspector noted that diets “composed exclusively of poultry necks or red muscle meat is not nutritionally complete, and will result in metabolic disease and severe structural damage, if not the death of the animal. A diet based on muscle meat alone will result in a vitamin A deficiency.” At the time of inspection, a young cougar and lion had both recently been seen by a veterinarian. “The cougar ha[d] a hind limb fracture in two places and the lion ha[d] a calcium deficiency. Both cats were noted to have an abnormal gait and posture.” A citation was also issued for failing to maintain enclosures for big cats in good repair. The wooden floor in one enclosure contained a large opening, causing a risk of injury to the animals; there was heavy-gauge fence wire with sharp edges in two different areas; and the same enclosure had tin siding with sharp, rusted edges, while tin siding in several other enclosures had excessive rust, causing corrosion.

August 24, 2004: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a repeat direct citation for failing to maintain enclosures in good repair. There was exposed wire in the primary fencing of the enclosure housing a tiger named Katrina. In the enclosure housing a tiger named Simon was a wooden baseboard that had water damage and needed to be replaced. A direct citation was issued for failing to have an AV evaluate a 2-to-3-inch cut on Katrina’s right forelimb. Management stated that she was being treated with antibiotics, but there was no record of veterinary care available upon request. The

USDA issued a citation for failing to produce adequate records of acquisition for four tigers obtained by management.

Management stated that they were “acquired by a private owner and a circus donation.” Tiger Creek was also issued a citation for failing to have a method to eliminate excess water from enclosures rapidly. Eight tigers’ primary enclosures contained pools of water due to poor drainage.

October 29, 2003: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a direct citation for failing to maintain enclosures in good repair to prevent injury to the animals. Two lions and a tiger had shelter boxes with wooden roofs that had exposed nails, and four wooden surfaces used as perches were damaged due to clawing or chewing.

July 9, 2003: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a direct citation for failing to have a method to eliminate excess water from enclosures rapidly. Two new facilities housing three tigers contained pools of water due to poor drainage.

February 19, 2003: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a repeat direct citation for failing to maintain enclosures in good repair. Three sheets of plywood used to prevent two leopards and three lions from reaching through the fence at each other were damaged by the leopards. A further repeat direct citation was issued for failing to provide animals with appropriate shelter from local climatic conditions. A cougar, a lion, a leopard, and six tigers did not have appropriately sized enclosures to protect them from the elements. Another repeat citation was issued for failing to have an 8-foot-tall perimeter fence around a trailer housing four tigers. The USDA also issued a direct citation for failing to provide these tigers with “adequate space to make normal postural [adjustments] and adequate freedom of movement.” The enclosure did

not have resting surfaces for each of the tigers.

January 13, 2003: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a repeat direct citation for failing to have the AV evaluate Gunther, an 18-month-old tiger who had excessive hair loss and a dry coat on his hip and flank areas. A repeat direct citation was also issued for failing to maintain enclosures in good repair to avoid injury to the animals. The primary enclosure housing two lions had wooden pallet floors, and the floor of one tiger enclosure was incomplete, with a large gap in the rear. The inspector noted that the gaps in the pallets and the tiger enclosure floor “predispose[d] the animals to injury.”

April 2, 2002: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a repeat direct citation for failing to maintain enclosures in good repair to avoid injury to the animals. The wooden roof of two shelter boxes and three perches were badly chewed or clawed. One perch had an exposed nail due to the damage. A direct citation was issued for failing to provide animals with appropriate shelter from the elements in five tiger facility areas. The perimeter fencing around two lions was also incomplete. A direct citation was also issued for failing to thaw approximately 250 pounds of frozen beef and poultry in a way that would avoid possible contamination and unwholesomeness. During the inspection, the meat was being thawed in a large gondola of static water rather than continuously flowing potable water.

November 6, 2001: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a citation for failing to maintain enclosures in good repair to prevent injury to the animals. The wooden roof of a shelter box holding Amara, a tiger, had two boards that were badly clawed.

May 31, 2001: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a citation for failing to have adequate drainage to allow rapid elimination of excess water. During inspection after a heavy

rainfall, the inspector observed ground erosion surrounding several big-cat enclosures along with sand accumulation from soil erosion that resulted in the floor flooding.

June 6, 2000: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a citation for failing to maintain a tiger enclosure in good repair. The shelter box had protruding nails, and the wood was badly chewed. A citation was also issued for failing to maintain an adequate perimeter fence. The fence around the enclosure holding two young lions was incomplete, and the fence for the cougar enclosures was not stable enough and needed more posts.

April 15, 1999: The USDA issued Tiger Creek a citation for failing to have an AV veterinarian evaluate a 7-month-old male lion cub who appeared to be suffering from a neck injury.