

September 25, 2025

Bernadette Juarez
Deputy Administrator
USDA/APHIS/Animal Care

Via e-mail: [REDACTED]

Re: Request to Cancel Ryan Easley's (d.b.a. "Growler Pines Tiger Preserve") Exhibitor's License

Dear USDA Animal Care:

I am writing on behalf of PETA to respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) cancel Ryan Easley's (d.b.a. Growler Pines Tiger Preserve) exhibitor's license (license no. 73-C-0193) and deny any applications made by interested staff or ownership for this site.

The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) prohibits any person from exhibiting regulated animals without a valid license from the USDA.¹ AWA licenses are "issued to specific persons" and are nontransferable, even in the case of a licensee's death.² The USDA has clearly stated that "if the licensee passes away and a new owner (including relatives) takes possession, a new license is required."³

On Saturday, September 20, 2025, Easley was fatally attacked by a tiger, reportedly while exhibiting the tiger to an audience at Growler Pines Tiger Preserve (Growler Pines).⁴ According to the Choctaw County Sheriff, the tiger bit and shook Easley, causing him fatal injuries. Because Easley has passed away, he obviously cannot hold an AWA license. PETA has no evidence that there are any other partners, officers, or agents approved under Ryan Easley's AWA license. Thus, because Ryan Easley cannot hold a license and the license cannot be transferred, the license must be cancelled.

Ryan Easley and his wife, Elaine Easley, apparently co-operated Growler Pines.⁵ Public statements indicate that Elaine likely had some level of control over the facility's operations and animal handling decisions.⁶ Ryan Easley's

¹ 7 U.S.C. § 2134; 9 C.F.R. § 2.1(a)(1).

² 9 C.F.R. § 2.1(b)(1); Animal Welfare, Amendments to Licensing Provisions and to Requirements for Dogs, 85 Fed. Reg. 28,772 (May 12, 2020).

³ *Id.* 85 Fed. Reg. 28,772.

⁴ Sean Murphy, *Tiger fatally mauls handler during big cat show in Oklahoma, sheriff says*, AP NEWS (Sept. 22, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/growler-pines-tiger-preserve-oklahoma-handler-killed-772021b38af1f8758172803a4578adbc>.

⁵ Ex. 1, Corporate Record & Business Registration for Red River Wildlife Conservation Foundation (d.b.a. Friends of Growler Pines) (listing both Ryan and Elaine Easley as principals for "Friends of Growler Pines" located at the same address as Growler Pines).

⁶ See e.g., Ex. 2, Growler Pines Tiger Preserve Facebook Post at Mar. 8, 2022 (picturing Elaine's work at Growler pines and crediting her for "behind-the-scenes" work),

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fate was entirely preventable. Ryan and Elaine Easley's insistence on dangerous direct contact and high-stress animal handling created the conditions that led to Ryan's tragic death. The Easleys' handling practices inherently create a greater risk for emergent and unpredictable situations, which unnecessarily endangers public safety. Granting Elaine, or any other applicant with an interest in Growler Pines, an AWA license would allow Growler Pines to continue exhibiting animals in a proven dangerous manner and is inconsistent with the purposes of the AWA.

Accordingly, PETA respectfully requests that the USDA immediately cancel Ryan Easley's exhibitor's license and deny any applications for future licenses at Growler Pines.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.



Cydnee Bence
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PETA Foundation