

Burned bobcat returned to wild

Chips the bobcat, whose rescue by a firefighter from the Chips Fire in Plumas County last August gained national attention, was released back into the wild Friday along with her den mate Sierra.

The juvenile cats are 8 months old.

Their other den mates, Tuffy and Sutter, are being released together in another region.



Chips is back in the wild.
Photo/Sierra Wildlife Rescue

Chips was about 4 weeks old when rescued by U.S. Forest Service firefighter Tad Hair. Chips' eyes were full of soot and ashes and her paws had second-degree burns.

The bobcat kitten, which weighed about 1.5 pounds, was taken to Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care for intensive medical treatment by veterinarians and rehabbers, and subsequently transferred to a Sierra Wildlife Rescue rehabber in Placerville to continue her recovery.

Early concerns were that she would not become wild enough to be released. However, over many months in the exclusive company of the other bobcats, she became extremely cautious of

any human contact, emerging from her den only when no one was in evidence, and grew up eating, playing, wrestling and competing with her den mates, as a proper bobcat kitten should. Along with the others, she became very competent at chasing down her own food (live mice), supplemented with additional nutritious foods she will hunt in the wild.