

Cubs making progress at LTWC



Gardner is Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care's newest cub.
Photos/Provided

By Tom Millham

Briefly we were 12.

Last Friday, California Department of Fish and Wildlife brought us the Gardner Mountain bear cub we assisted in trapping on Oct. 9. Yes, we still have Cinder (more on her later) and we still have the cubs in the bear cage (also later), but, now, we have Gardner (as we are calling him).

For those of you not familiar with Tahoe's South Shore, Gardner Mountain is the northwest corner of the South Tahoe Y, where South Tahoe High is located. On Oct. 4, Gardner's mother was hit and killed by a car on Highway 89 across the street from the Cantina. Gardner was up a tree, directly adjacent to

where his dead mom was laying.

Over the next five days, LTWC received many calls telling us Gardner was in their area. But he was moving from street to street and from the west side of Highway 89 to the east side of Highway 89.

On Oct. 16, I went on all three local radio stations pleading for help from the residents and workers in the Y area that if they saw Gardner to please call LTWC and let us know where he was.

We had spoken with CDF&W and they were sending a biologist up with a trap to get Gardner and help him.

It worked.

We got a call from 13th Street telling us that Gardner was right across the street from Anderson's Bike Rental. I got there within 10 minutes and found Gardner within another 15 minutes. He had already crossed Highway 89 to the west side. When I saw him he was at the base of a big pine tree and I "convinced" him that his best place was up the tree. He conveniently did as I requested and I awaited the arrival of CDF&W.

They brought two cages and loaded them with all kinds of yummy food. It didn't take his nose long to get the scent of that good, scrumptious food and, shortly he was in the trap chowing down. CDF&W took Gardner to their Region 2 headquarters in Rancho Cordova and kept him there until Oct. 17, at which point they brought him up to LTWC so we can rehab him with the other bears.

So, like I said, that made for 12 cubs at our center. However, that didn't last long. They came up here Oct. 22 to get the three cubs that came from Paradise (just east of Chico) and will be releasing them in the foothills nearby.

So, almost as quickly as we got cub No. 12, we are down to nine. Eight are in the bear cage and, of course, Cinder, who is in the bobcat cage.



Cinder

Here is some good news for you regarding where we are at with Cinder. Kevin Willitts was here Oct. 9 to examine her paws. He had not seen her since Sept. 30 and at that time he decided to put her into her cage without any bandages on her paws. This was the first time since Aug. 3 that she was without bandages. On Sept 30 he told us to watch and see if she does any excessive licking or if we see any small pools of blood. On Oct. 9, he saw nothing to change his mind and decided to let that good Tahoe air get to her paws and scheduled his next visit for two weeks.

That is indeed great news. In addition, he said that we could go ahead and start preparing to transport her back to Washington around the middle to late November so she can complete her rehab closer to where she will eventually be released. Yes, she will be released sometime next year. He wants her to spend the winter in the same area she came from and then can be released either in the winter or spring next year near the Methow Valley.

I have contacted the Washington Fish and Wildlife biologist,

Rich Beausoleil, who will coordinate the exact location she will spend the rest of her time in rehab. It sounds like Beausoleil wants us to take Cinder to Sally Maughan's Idaho Black Bear Rehabilitation Center in Garden City, Idaho, just outside of Boise. When Cinder was examined Oct. 9 she weighed in at a very healthy 80.8 pounds, more than double her weight when she arrived at LTWC on Aug. 4.

Tom Millham is co-founder and secretary-treasurer of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.