

# Cinder the burned bear cub leaving LTWC



Cinder is now 83 pounds. She arrived at LTWC weighing 39 pounds. Photo/Provided

**By Tom Millham**

I am very pleased to inform you that Kevin Willitts, the official volunteer veterinarian for Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care, has released Cinder, the bear from Washington with burns on all four paws, from his medical care and will allow her to return to the area from where she came to complete her rehabilitation and to hibernate for the winter.

On Nov. 23 at 6:30am, Willitts will be at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care to immobilize Cinder one last time, give her a final goodbye exam, weigh her and witness her being placed into a transportation cage for an eight-hour car ride to Garden City, Idaho.

She will spend the rest of the winter at Idaho Black Bear Rehabilitation Center, just outside Boise, in a cage next to a first year bear cub (for at least a short time, until they get to know each other).

In the spring, Sally Maughan, founder of IBBR, will inform Washington wildlife bear specialist Rich Beausoleil that she is ready to go. Then Beausoleil will pick Cinder up and take her on her last car ride.

It has been quite a ride.

Beausoleil will then release Cinder in a suitable habitat and she will again be free in the wild. The reason she will be at IBBR for the next four months will be to allow her now healed burned paws a chance to toughen up so she can be as natural as possible when she is released.

On Aug. 4, Cinder was flown by plane by pilot Bill Inman from Washington to South Lake Tahoe so LTWC could treat her wounds, just as we did six years ago with Li'l Smokey. On Sept. 30, after almost two months of having her bandages changed every other day, Willitts decided that she did not need bandages anymore and it was time to let air get to her paws. That was the first time she did not have any dressings on her paws since Aug. 3.

*Tom Millham is secretary-treasurer of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.*