

## *Where Do We Go From Here?*



My name is Jason Savage. I am the founder and director of The Zoe Foundation, Inc. I had the privilege of working with the renowned zoologist and tiger expert Dr. Michael A. Bleyman before his untimely death in July 1996. I learned a great deal about tigers and their plunge toward extinction from Michael. He was also confident the species could be saved, but not through traditional methods.

To help you better understand this controversy I have written a paper entitled Generic vs. Pure. This paper is lengthy but **vital** important. It will help you make a more educated decision about the tiger effort in general. You can read that paper later. Right now I would like to go over some more pressing matters concerning funding and my effort to save the tiger.

Along with many other successful endeavors I have been doing product development and research for many years. I launched this site when the Internet was just beginning to gain attention, so I have had the opportunity to experiment with numerous donation structures, product sales, and the like. Individual participation and interest has verified conclusions made by prominent research institutions. I will attempt to encapsulate many articles I've read so you can get an idea of how I made my decision to fund our project to save the tiger.

The most important item of information you **must** understand is that the tiger is critically endangered and will not survive in the wild due to habitat loss and poaching. Neither will it survive in captivity for an extended period because there is **no** facility designed to date that will meet the needs required to save this species - period! Following is a sampling of headlines I've selected from many that attempt to drive these points home every day.

### **Posted on Exxon's Save The Tiger Website**

**"A one-day survey conducted in 1995 at the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History showed that the Museum's visitors' knowledge about the Tiger was *limited* to its physical appearance and dietary habits. Visitors surveyed "demonstrated much concern and respect for animals but little more than a very basic knowledge of animal conservation." Visitors surveyed did not associate Asia with animal conservation or Tigers and did not make a direct connection between their own lives and animal conservation."**

Tigers are losing ground in the wild every day. The small isolated areas where they reside (called islands) fosters inbreeding because the tigers cannot travel to other tiger locations. Consequently the gene pool diminishes and the smaller populations will inbreed themselves to extinction. In addition these islands are gradually diminishing in size due to human encroachment.

The link between conservation of these animals and a healthy ecosystem was extensively written about by Dr. Bleyman. The tiger is a **Keystone** species. From Dr. Bleyman: "Keystone takes its meaning from the building of an arch. There is a stone at the top center upon which the arch depends. If the keystone is pulled out, the whole arch collapses. Keystone is used for components of the ecosystem without which the whole system collapses." The survival of the tiger is vitally important when it comes to maintaining the ecosystems in which they live.

Of course these systems are being systematically destroyed every day - logging, dam building, clear cutting rain forests to create farm land, which does not work due to the top soil depth, and so on.

### **Exxon's Save The Tiger Site - August 20, 2002**

"While the exact number of tigers being poached is unknown, some sources have estimated that **one tiger a day** is being killed in India."

### **Exxon's Save The Tiger Site - November 7, 2002**

**Shrinking habitat, poachers threaten Sumatran tigers. Reuters News Service, November 7, 2002**

**Vancouver Sun, November 2, 2002**

**Symbol of Asian pride extinct, biologist reports, Vancouver Sun, November 2, 2002**

China has managed to kill off one of the most enduring symbols of Asian pride, driving its long-endangered population of wild south China tigers to extinction, says a new report. The report was written by Ron Tilson, a US biologist and chairman of The Tiger Foundation, a Vancouver-based conservation group....

**Friday, November 1, 2002 - The News & Observer - Raleigh, NC**

**Headline: Nearly half of plant species may be threatened. Study blames human activity.**

**Sunday, August 25, 2002 - The News & Observer - Raleigh, NC**

**Headline: Earth Form Goals Slim. Expectations are low for a 10-year follow-up summit on improving the well-being of Earth and its 6 billion people.**

**Wednesday, August 14, 2002, ST. LOUIS (AP)**

"The Fish and Wildlife Service has alleged that a group of people in the Midwest bought and killed tigers, leopards, snow leopards, lions, mountain lions, cougars and black bears to produce meat and skins for the animal-parts trade."

**Sunday, November 24, 2002 - Chicago Tribune**

(This is one of the best in depth reports I've read on the subject. These reporters did an excellent job. Due to copyright restrictions I posted only the first few paragraphs in hopes you will retrieve this article and read it in its entirety. It puts much of what I have written into perspective. I have a link to the Chicago Tribune above. You may want to send a message to Jon Yates or Maurice Possley and inquire about a copy of this fine article. It is well worth your effort.)

"Trophy slaughter  
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Tigers are bought, sold and killed on the lucrative private market so eager collectors can show off the rare hides

By Jon Yates and Maurice Possley  
Tribune staff reporters

November 24, 2002

Darkness had settled by the time Todd "Squirrel" Lantz wheeled the truck and goose-necked trailer through the gravel parking lot and into the warehouse in southwest suburban Alsip. Through the slats on the sides, Bill Kapp and Kevin Ramsey got their first look at a most unusual cargo: tigers. Some were lying down. Others peered out, as Kapp and Ramsey advanced on the trailer carrying handguns. Then the shooting began.

The first tigers went down quietly. But as the bodies began to drop inside the cramped trailer, the remaining animals realized what lay ahead. With the echo of gunfire came roars. Massive paws swiped in vain at the gun barrels as the bullets found their marks.

By the time the shooting stopped, eight tigers lay dead.

While the March 25, 1998, massacre--which Ramsey and Lantz described to authorities--was the largest documented slaughter of endangered tigers in the US, it was not an isolated instance of cruelty to rare animals. According to federal authorities, this was one of many such killings in the exotic animal trade, a multibillion-dollar worldwide industry in which a wide assortment of creatures are bought, sold, traded and sometimes slaughtered.

Operating out of roadside zoos and makeshift animal farms, illicit dealers feed a lucrative market for hides and stuffed animals."

#### **April 13, 1999 SHANGHAI, China (AP)**

"A new survey has found as few as 15 Siberian tigers are left in the wild in China, state newspapers said Tuesday. The number was dramatically lower than earlier estimates that as many as 100 of the endangered cats lived in the wild."

#### **October 17, 2000 HYDERABAD, India (AP)**

"Authorities say intruders entered the zoo at night two weeks ago and killed and skinned a 13-month-old female tiger after drugging the animal. They believe the unidentified intruders were poachers."

#### **Excerpt from one of the world's foremost Indian tiger experts - Billy Arjan Singh "THE LAST HURRAH:**

As the time approaches for final extinction, for me as an individual, and for the tiger as a race, I feel that I should share my thoughts with my countrymen, many of whom do care, for the demoralizing extinction of processes of evolution of animate creations, by the rapacity of the human race.

We have ravaged habitat of underground dwellers by the plunder of fossil fuels built up over the millennia

and by strip mining. We have razed great timber stands, and unleashed floods and siltation for short-term political motives. We continue to rob the oceans of their sustainable wealth in international bickerings. We have upset the rhythm of life by the unrestrained proliferation of the human race and savage experimentation with other life forms, to preserve our own species. We continue to grab the habitats of vulnerable entities. We have transformed the tolerance of religions, into religious bigotry to serve political ends. The civilizing processes over the ages has projected itself in the spurious claim of the use of wildlife derivatives for medicinal functions.

The final extinction of the tiger, in all its eight subspecies, has been widely and sympathetically written about internationally, but sympathy alone cannot stem the rot. Basic measures are required to halt the lure of enormous profits of the skin and bone trade. This effort must be an international one--to obliterate the final destination of these derivatives, and a Indo-Nepal one to abolish the incentives of the internal trade."

## June 2, 2003

A headline in the **June 2, 2003** Environment News Service reads, "Conservationists Worry About Inaccurate Tiger Data." The first paragraph continues:

"NEW YORK, New York, June 2, 2003 (ENS) - The New York based Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) says a new study casts doubt on the method used by India's government to count tigers for the past three decades. The study finds that counting tiger "pugmarks" - or track prints - is still being used by the Indian government, even though the technique is scientifically flawed."

Dr. Ullas Karanth, a scientist who has been studying tigers for the past twenty years and the lead author of a paper says that counting pug marks is inaccurate and thus makes it impossible for the Indian government to predict tiger populations.

**Wow! What a revelation!** Give me a break. I wrote about tiger population estimates being exaggerated by 100% - 200% five years ago. Richard Ives mentioned this in his book *Of Tigers & Men* first published in 1946. The inaccuracy of using pug marks to identify tigers has been known for many years. Dr. Bleyman often spoke about the futility of using that method a decade ago. In fact, look at this.

The following is quoted from a Tiger Trust article by Michael Day, founder of Tiger Trust in the UK.

"Scientist and tiger expert Dr. K Ullas Karanth conducted an investigation into the reliability of the pugmark (tiger foot prints) technique and published his findings in a scientific paper in 1989. Dr. Karanth asked six wildlife managers, each having between 4 and 12 years of census taking experience behind them, to take part in a blind experiment which involved analyzing 33 tracings taken from an unspecified number of captive tigers. The results of the experiment showed that in fact none of the experts could identify even one tiger correctly and, quite remarkably, they estimated the total number of tigers involved in the experiment as being between 26 and 6. There were only four tigers used in the experiment."

The study was done in **1989!** It's being written about now as some kind of revelation. I believe it's being used as more of an excuse for the remaining Indian tiger population. Why? Because the successful programs they've been reporting have not been successful. Stop the studying and concentrate solely on protection. If that's not done the tiger's in the wild **will not survive!**

**Dr. Michael Bleyman:**



Illustration by  
Jason Savage

"The present financial reality is a situation in which zoos all over the world (from the prestigious London Zoo to several municipal zoos in the United States) are going broke and closing down. The resources, including money, cage space, and personnel available for managing captive breeding programs are rapidly decreasing. The IUCN needs to face reality: We no longer have the luxury of maintaining separate captive-bred populations of 30 subspecies of cougar or 15 subspecies of ocelot. If we wish our grandchildren to be able to see any living cougars or ocelots then we must genetically manage all of the existing specimens in captivity so as to preserve as much species-specific genetic variability as is possible."

**(Dr. Michael Bleyman passed away due to cancer in 1996. He was 58 years old.)**

Poaching is beginning to happen within zoo walls. The illicit trade in animal parts is second only to the drug trade - in the billions of dollars. The AZA and their stud book specialists persist in their quest for subspecies purity in the face of species' extinction. Zoos are not equipped, nor is it their mission, to preserve these large felids. They are showcases for people to view these animals. If one tiger a day is being poached in India how long do you think the species will survive in the wild? Reports vary widely as to the number of tigers remaining in the wild. The high end is 8,000, but few believe that many exist now. Lately some reports have dropped to 4,500. Some ex-hunters and wardens in the range states think there may be far fewer than reported by field scientists and conservation organizations.

**Raleigh News & Observer (May 27, 2001) "The nation's 20 largest groups - a tiny slice of the more than 8,000 environmental organizations - took in 29 percent of contributions in 1999, according to IRS Form 990 tax records."**

The large, high profile groups receive the bulk of the funds. That's not unexpected since they spend huge sums on advertising and direct marketing campaigns. People spend little time researching better opportunities for their donations. The large organizations must be doing the right things since they are so successful.

**Raleigh News & Observer - May 27, 2001 "...chief executives at nine of the nations 10 largest environmental groups earned \$200,000 or more, and one topped \$300,000."**

"Those who know the environment best - the scientists who devote their careers to it - say environmental groups are just as likely as their corporate adversaries to twist fact into fantasy to serve their agendas."

**Raleigh News & Observer - May 28, 2001 Fiction:** "From Defenders of Wildlife: "Won't you please adopt a furry little pup like 'Hope'? Hope is a cuddly brown wolf. ...Hope was triumphantly born in Yellowstone." **Fact:** "There was never any pup named Hope," says John Varley, chief of research at Yellowstone National Park. "We don't name wolves. We number them."

"Environmental groups spend so much on fund raising and overhead that they often don't have enough left to meet the minimum benchmark for environmental spending - 60 percent of annual expenses - recommended by charity watchdog organizations."

"At its simplest, joint cost accounting allows nonprofit groups to splinter fundraising expenditures into

categories that sound more pleasing to a donor's ear - public education and environmental action - shaving millions off what they report as fund raising."

These large organizations have become fund raising machines. I'm not saying the remaining money is not spent on deserving programs. But individual donations would go much farther if they could be placed directly in the hands of the program managers. Small organizations cannot compete with these giants. They remain mostly unknown and thus out of the loop, relying on a few benefactors to keep them operational.

I just wanted to touch on this problem because it affects all smaller organizations. It also prompted me to make changes in my donation options as well as the methodology to raise funds for Paleocene Park. I have outlined for you how proceeds from product sales and donations will be used on the Use Of Funds page.

I will **not** let this project fall into the trap that plagues many zoos, preserves, and rescue organizations. That trap being the accumulation of animals before sufficient operating capital along with a sound funding approach assuring a reasonable cash flow are in place. I've seen too many organizations disappear due to funding shortfalls fostered by good intentions but bad planning. In these cases the animals are the big losers. If tigers have one chance remaining, it better **not** fail!

### **What about Exxon/Mobil?**

#### **Tuesday, December 17, 2002 - The News & Observer - Raleigh, NC**

**"Exxon/Mobil has spent more than \$250 million on the series (Masterpiece Theater) since it premiered Jan. 10, 1971."**

Since launching the Save The Tiger Fund in 1995 with the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Exxon/Mobil has probably been the largest single contributor to the effort to save the tiger in the wild. But let's put this into perspective and see if we can determine how serious they are about saving the species.

From their Save The Tiger site: "Since its launch (1995), the Save The Tiger Fund has supported 158 projects with more than \$9.1 million. The general public has contributed over \$1.4 million of this funding."

So Exxon has donated \$7.7 million to the fund over the past eight years. That from a company whose Net income in 2001 was \$15,320,000,000 - a one year Net growth of 13.5%. That donation is equivalent to an individual making \$35,000 a year donating \$17.57 to the tiger fund over eight years - or **\$2.20** a year. Is a company making billions that serious about saving the species? Do you think supporting 158 different projects with limited funding is going to save the tiger in the wild? No way is that going to happen.

What about the public relations effort? Is that working? Exxon states the general public has donated \$1.4 million over the eight years to this fund. Somehow I don't think the people are getting the message. The 2000 Census listed 115,681,202 employed persons in the US. That \$1.4 million breaks down to **1.5¢** a person per year since 1995 - hardly a glowing reference for a successful campaign. Either people just don't care about saving the tiger or their not informed. I choose to believe the latter.

Please don't get me wrong. I welcome Exxon/Mobil's participation. They are a major player in the attempt to save the tiger in the wild, and they keep a lot of scientists working. But their efforts are failing. The South China tiger has just been declared extinct in the wild by Ron Tilson (November 2, 2002). If the tiger is going to be saved it's a good bet the NFWF isn't going to be successful. In a recent article - November 21, 2002 - Environmental News Service (ENS) - it says, "Wild tigers still face serious threats from habitat loss

and poaching, but international efforts to protect the endangered species from extinction in the wild are succeeding, according to a new report from the Save the Tiger Fund." The article goes on to quote old guard scientists who have been at it decades who believe things are going quite well. What else are they going to say? None of them are going to confess that the effort has generally been a failure even though independent reports and surveys support this conclusion. Their funds would dry up. The spin is in!

### **What about the AZA?**

They keep stud books on tigers. The AZA would like to see all but pure subspecies tigers eliminated. That's a **great** plan. Their fixation on preserving only pure subspecies (these being predominantly dictated by geographical location and not DNA) is **ridiculous**. It's a marketing company run amuck. I've often said if you take a group of children, or adults for that matter, and place one each of the pure subspecies and a generic tiger in front of them all they would see are tigers. Spending time trying to come up with a method to keep each subspecies pure while the tiger continues toward extinction is baffling. Do you understand it? If not you're in the vast majority. The AZA isn't going to save the tiger.

### **What about Zoos?**

Zoos, for the most part, are not in business to save species. They display healthy animals for the public to enjoy. Many zoos do have breeding programs. Some are really quite good. But for the most part they follow the AZA's edicts. In addition, zoos are not prepared to deal with catastrophic events like a world monetary collapse. How would they feed their animals? Are they prepared for poachers who eventually may try and take tigers for their bones and other body parts? Not hardly. Some zoos are very nice, but they're not going to save the tiger either.

### **What about private breeders, independent owners and small preserves?**

Many private breeders are especially heinous. They have no knowledge or regard for scientific breeding principles and little real care for the animals. They are in the business to make money. Similarly some small facilities breed so they can keep a new crop of young animals around. Visitors love to see and hold the babies. Few have the means or knowledge necessary to breed scientifically nor do they need to breed these animals at all. Some small preserves, that term (preserve) is being used loosely, are terrible. They are started because people see an opportunity to make money showing animals. Others are decent and a few are quite good. But most are strapped for cash. These facilities come and go for a variety of reasons. Ultimately the animals pay the price. As far as saving a major species, I don't think so.

## ***How Can We Save The Tiger?***

If we are truly going to save the tiger a number of crucial elements must be put in place.

### **The Facility**



It is my belief that we should raise the funds, including enough for an operational endowment, before taking any other step forward. Borrowed money could spell disaster for the animals. On Saturday, November 9, 2002 I read this: "The National D-Day Memorial Foundation filed for bankruptcy to protect the \$25 million monument from creditors while it contends with massive debt!" They ended up in this position because they borrowed money in hopes that community generosity and patriotism would foster monetary support.

It didn't happen.

Paleocene Park is designed to be self sustaining when completed. We plan to use renewable energy resources, produce food for the animals and staff, have the capability of generating our own power, maintain housing for on site personnel, provide advanced on site veterinary facilities and maintain a state of the art security system. I believe these are the basics. If we ever need to endure a cataclysmic event the tigers will survive. It's a worst case scenario plan, one that zoos and private facilities do not have. Paleocene Park has been termed a *Noah's Arc* concept; a very accurate description.

However, leaving the worst case scenario for a moment, this facility is designed to generate resources from a broad range of clientele. The PGA golf course, Hall of Fame, the equestrian facility and the athletic complex is designed to attract the more affluent, the individuals on which recessions have little impact. That support base will be enduring. The visitor center, education complex and facility tours are aimed more at the general public, people who don't want to spend a lot of money but want to see and learn about the animals.

This facility will not be a theme park like Disney World. There will be no rides. Neither will it be a zoo where the objective is to display a large, diversified animal population. This facility combines high end visitor amenities with the preservation of a species - a hybrid - much like a generic tiger. There is no other place like it on earth.

## **Location**

This will be crucial for the animal's safety. The park needs to be located in an area where hurricanes, tornados, earth quakes and similar natural disasters are less likely. For instance, we would not entertain building the facility on the east coast where hurricanes are a threat. I stayed at my home in Charleston, SC in 1989 through hurricane Hugo - a 145 mile per hour nightmare. Similarly we would not build in some western areas due to the lack of water and trees. We would not build the facility in another country because the USA has every resource right here and I'm accustomed to our business environment.

We must also give consideration to public access. An airport is not part of the plan. Ultimately we would like to be within a forty five minute to an hour's drive from a major airport.

The land requirements play a major roll as well. We need trees, adequate water and a topography that ensures distinctive but manageable tiger habitats. We have planned the layout using 1,200 acres. The tigers will be living in large, natural settings, so adequate land is a necessity.

## **Tigers**

Based on Dr. Bleyman's genetic formulas we want to maintain a healthy population beginning with 26 founding pairs which will greatly reduce the genetic drift associated with smaller captive populations. We will use experts in the field of genetics to map an effective captive breeding program that will maintain maximum diversity.

## **Funding & Methodology**

I am going to solicit public support for this project. I am taking this approach based on consumer research conducted over a ten year period. I patented a cat care product for which I wanted to determine interest



among domestic feline owners. I also designed a new puzzle aimed at a potentially large buying population. I contracted mall research and I conducted surveys at cat shows, Christmas shows, veterinary clinics and via the Web. One of the questions asked was, "Is it important that the funds raised go to help save the endangered big cats?" I did not specify the tiger which is arguably the most popular. In one 1995 puzzle survey the response to that question was **94.9% yes. (1995 Synopsis)** Respondents answered **yes** to that question over 90% of the time throughout **all** our research whether it was asked on the puzzle or cat product questionnaire. Using this input as a guide I designed a fund raising program that will enable the average consumer to participate and be remembered on site for their contribution to the park's development.

I patterned my program based on a very successful campaign conducted here in North Carolina for the maintenance of the battleship Wilmington. I spoke to the coordinator and determined a modified plan introduced on a national level may successfully raise the funds necessary for park development. I will not delve into detail for reasons of confidentiality but this effort involves a **Guinness World Record** attempt, an awe inspiring tiger sculpture, and **The Manx** puzzle competition. If this process is successful we will be able to put funding in place first.

### **In Conclusion**

I do not mean to belittle Exxon/Mobil and the NFWF for their work. I do believe this is more a public relations strategy than anything else. There is really very little funding designated to save this species. Here in Raleigh we had a bank commit \$80 million just for the naming rights to a sports complex. There are hundreds of millions of dollars being spent by cities on new football stadiums. And there's how much going to save the tiger?

I welcome their effort in the wild. If more corporations would step up to the plate maybe they would have some real funding. I hope their efforts are successful beyond their wildest dreams. But what if they're not? There's no good contingency plan out there except one - **Paleocene Park. That's why I may be the only man alive who can save the tiger.**

Our mission statement is quit simple: ***Save the endangered tiger as a species in a secured, genetically managed preserve focusing on healthy generic tigers as an alternative to subspecies concentration.*** I am not discounting the possibility of using a pure subspecies if a large enough founding population could be assembled. It is more likely however this population can be more easily actualized using generic animals.

I get many messages asking how to help. Please read the You Can Help! page. There are several things you can do that cost absolutely nothing. If you have an area of expertise that may prove useful in the future please don't hesitate to write. If you are enamored with the idea of working with these animals I cannot help you. You may want to look into volunteering at a local facility.

I want to point out that I publish **all** relevant information on this site. I do that because it is the most efficient and cost effective method of communicating. I do not forward additional information through the mail unless I receive a request from someone who read about the foundation but has no Internet access. In that case some brief summary information is forwarded along with the recommendation to locate a library, friend, business, or other institution with Internet access.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this vast project. It is one that can be accomplished if people take the time to understand, even partially, the tiger's plight and decide to help. I cannot make Paleocene Park a reality without your support. **(This article was written in January 2003.)**