Every once in a while, someone asks what the hardest part of working at a wildlife sanctuary is. Anyone who has done it will give you the same answer. It’s not the long days, the dirty work, or the heavy lifting. Each time we promise an animal a ‘forever home,’ it means there’s only one way they will leave us. This spring we suffered two losses, within only a few weeks of each other.

Toro, our shy but plucky American Black Bear, came to us with her siblings Rowdy & Coco in 2016. (cont p 02)
The Challenge of a Forever Home, cont.

(cont from p 01)
All three bears had spent the entirety of their lives in captivity, and they set foot on soft earth for the first time when they arrived at PrideRock. Toro was ill for a very short time, our first sign that something was amiss came when she stopped eating. Within days, she was gone, and her necropsy revealed that she had succumbed to rapidly growing tumors.

Just a few weeks later, our Pharaoh fell ill and lost weight rapidly. We ran tests and discovered that he too, was suffering some form of cancer. We lost him to a series of tumors between his spleen and digestive tract. His partner Allie watched over him and mourned his passing, a common behavior within a pride of lions.

Why does cancer seem so prevalent in sanctuary animals? The simplified explanation is that the animals in a sanctuary don’t fall victim to their natural predators like they would in the wild. They live much longer. A big cat with a natural lifespan of 7-8 years may live into their twenties with good care in captivity. (Our lion Mia lived to be TWENTY EIGHT!) And like humans, the longer they live, the higher the chances that some form of cancer will take hold in their bodies. Animals also tend to mask their pain, so often- even with regular veterinary care- there are no signs or symptoms until they succumb to their illness.
Max is an Eagle Scout!

Community outreach is important at PrideRock! Our volunteer and education programs play an important role in keeping us in top shape and educating the public about the care of wild animals in captivity. Late last fall, we connected with Max, who was in the final stages of becoming an Eagle Scout. As part of his final project, Max came out to the refuge and helped with projects ranging from building enrichment toys and activities for the animals to helping refresh the paint and freshen up our front gate.

"The sport in Scouting is to find the good in every boy and develop it."

ROBERT POWELL

Becoming an Eagle Scout takes years of dedication and hard work. To reach this rank a Scout must earn a minimum of 21 Merit Badges, meet physical demands and ascend through the ranks of Scouting. It's estimated that only 6.5% of Scouts who enter the program ever reach Eagle.

We are proud of your dedication and commitment, and thrilled that you chose PrideRock as part of that process.

Congratulations, Max!
Jenny’s Recovery

Another health scare at PrideRock, but this one has a happy ending- our wolf hybrid Jenny had a traumatic event this spring. Jenny is a long-time resident of PRWR. We don’t know the details of her early life, but her veterinary records told us she was spayed before she came to live with us, and none of her caretakers have ever witnessed a heat cycle to make them believe otherwise. While making rounds one day, her caretakers witnessed unusual bleeding, and Jenny suddenly seemed to be in pain.

"For the strength of the Wolf is in the Pack, and the strength of the Pack is in the Wolf."

RUDYARD KIPLING

After being rushed to the vet, the diagnosis that saved her life shocked us all. Jenny had Pyometra- a deadly infection of the uterus that tends to come on suddenly. We quickly managed our surprise at the diagnosis (after all, we all thought she’d been spayed all this time!) She was rushed into emergency surgery, at which time her uterus was removed, along with her spleen when her surgeon found a mass there. We are thrilled to let you know that Jenny has recovered beautifully, and the mass on her spleen was declared cancer-free! You can visit our YouTube channel and see an amazing video of her lying calmly as Corey removes her surgical staples, and MightyCause has a fundraiser open to help us recover the costs of her emergency care.
Spring News & Events

Spring kicks in to high gear around here, and Summer brings the heat! We will be welcoming a fresh set of interns in mid-May, and are excited to introduce them to you and follow their journey. During their time at PrideRock they will learn firsthand how to care for wildlife living in captivity and move on to their careers in this challenging industry.

Learn more about our Volunteer and Internship programs at www.priderock.org/opportunities

Terrell Heritage Jubilee

The end of April means the Terrell Heritage Jubilee! We love setting up at this community event and talking with our neighbors about our rescue mission and how they can get involved. This year was no different, we had the chance to talk to so many people, share our experiences, and outfit them in our favorite PrideRock gear (check out our T-Shirt clearance on the website and get yours before they’re gone!)

"When one neighbor helps another, we strengthen communities."

JENNIFER PAHLKA
Keep In Touch!

Follow along with the day-to-day adventures, get insider information, daily photo and video coverage, and so much more! We may not be open to the public, but there are SO many ways to get behind the scenes with the pride & pack. Find us on social media and get in on the action!

@priderockwild

New Text Update Program!

The newest way to keep up with the kitties at PrideRock is our text updates program. No spam, no fees, just exclusive access to photos, media, and breaking rescue news. Texts go out approximately once a month and it’s free to sign up! To sign up, text “priderock” to 474-64 and then press “6” to subscribe.