

HAWK CREEK

connecting to nature



Life Below Zero—Collective Diaries of Cold, Sad Keepers

Dear Friend of Hawk Creek,

Spring 2018

We thought we were ready for winter considering the new location was built to handle Buffalo's notorious weather. We installed heated boxes for the cavity dwellers, heated perches for the birds, insulated dens and heated indoor housing for the mammals. Our generator was finally hooked up to run heaters and freezers in an emergency. Most of the animals were moved to the new facility, the remaining animals were tucked in for winter at the old site. Winter prep was done by our skeleton crew which struggled with the challenge of running two facilities, especially during Buffalo winters. We were ready for snow, but nature can be a fickle friend and she gifted us with a long record breaking cold spell. **The cost will also be record breaking, but we hope that we can count on our friends to help us continue our quality care for 89 resident animals with nowhere else to go. We may have a skeleton crew, but what we lack in numbers we make up for with passion and dedication. Passion and dedication doesn't pay the bills however so we find ourselves in the humble position of needing to ask for your support to get us through.**

Since so many wonderful people were checking in on us and the animals during the winter storms, we decided to share our logs with you. We hope this gives you a glimpse into daily life at Hawk Creek! Welcome to the *Collective Diaries of Cold, Sad Keepers*.

December 25th, Tanya's Diary

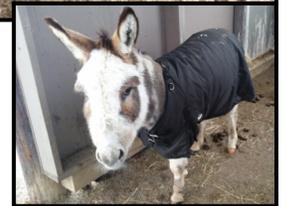
The drive home from Ohio started out okay, I thought I had driven through the bad weather and was getting ahead of it. I could not have been more wrong! I crossed into PA and all chaos broke loose, traffic was at a crawl and often a complete stop. With zero visibility, I had to frequently pull over to scrape ice off the windshield. I don't remember how many times I thought about turning around, but I had 90 animals that were counting on me to clean and feed them. Finally, I got in front of the storm as I crossed into NY. If I had left an hour later I would not have made it. Called Loretta to let her know I was alive and we needed to make emergency preparations for the storm that was coming!

December 26th, Loretta's Diary

Snow is deep but the new habitats were built Buffalo tough. During *Snovember*, we lost NINE enclosures due to the heavy snow load at our old facility - that greatly influenced our new facility's designs. My worry now is the predicted extreme temperature of -6 degrees without wind chill. Met with Tanya to adjust our cold weather protocols for these record temps. We need more hay, the herd is eating an astronomical amount. Additional heaters, heated perches, and wind breaks need to be ordered, built and installed. Some of the animals have been moved back to the Luther site but cannot stay too long or they will lose their acclimation to the outdoors and be forced to stay inside for the winter, making them unhappy campers. Another pm check around two facilities to make sure all is working. Furnaces - check, generator - check, snow blower - check, backup fuel and chargers - check and extra food - check. I'm dreading our electric and gas bill when this is over. Orders have been made, I hope the heaters make it in time. Installed feeding stations and windbreaks for the herd today - of course they insisted on "helping" us. Note to self, camels eat screw guns (while you are using them) and the goat really likes ladders.

December 26th, Tanya's Diary

Atticus the Burro, who has lived outside for two years, is already showing signs of being cold and temperatures are just starting to drop. Heater shipping delayed due to weather! So who sells donkey coats? The folks at *Creekside* came through for the win. I measured *Atticus* and thankfully there was a blanket in stock for a miniature horse that fit! I was skeptical if *Atticus* would tolerate a coat since he's never seen one let alone worn one. He happily strutted around in his new coat and terrorized the horses and camel who thought the coat was eating the donkey! I hope the heaters get here soon. Extra hay arrived and had to be hand-carried to the barn through the deep snow-100 bales!



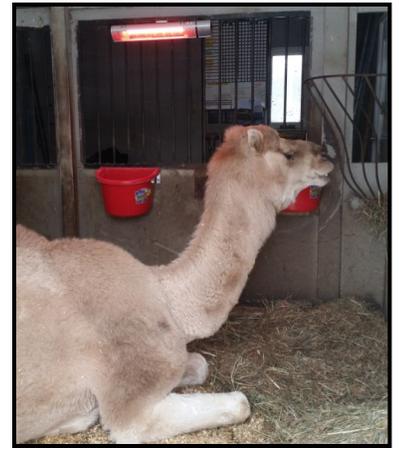
December 28th, Loretta's Diary

Preparing for an unknown disaster makes for very restless nights! I go over every possible scenario and fear I am missing many. The camel is our big (huge) unknown, we already know we can't confine him to a stall. Tried it, he tore down a wall because he couldn't get to his goat. We appreciate his commitment to his little friend, but even the goat seems to think he can be a bit too clingy. So we tried to come up with a plan to warm up the camel. He has thick fur everywhere except for his neck and his legs. We quickly discarded the idea of leg warmers and slouch socks, that idea was too ridiculous even for us, no way would they fit over his platter-size feet. We could try to get a horse blanket on him but that odd hump is in the way-who designed this animal? We optimistically thought that like *Atticus*, who is loving his warm coat, *Baboo* would go along with the dress up game, a down vest around his neck -

wrong! I walked into his stall with the vest and put it around his neck. He promptly grabbed it, stomped it into the ground with all four feet for 2 mins making sure that it was dead and then threw it at me - maybe he didn't think it was his color? I decided to put the vest on the goat to help him stay warm. We had to stay late to make sure *Baboo* wouldn't try to go after his best friend to kill the evil vest again! Apparently after *Baboo* killed the vest, it was safe to use. Please don't tell my husband where his vest went.

January 3rd, Tanya's Diary

So grateful we have dedicated volunteers that braved the cold to help us care for the animals, they are troopers! *Misu* the River Otter's pool de-icer has been working overtime in this frigid weather. The opening for her to swim was getting too small for my piece of mind however. Sledge hammer and a pick axe did the trick— of course *Misu* wanted to help with this project, she couldn't wait to get back into the pool! It made us shiver to watch her splash and play in the water while simultaneously warmed our hearts to see our amazing 20 year old otter enjoying herself. She's slower than she used to be, her vision and hearing are going, but she is happy and doing what otters do best, swim and play. Some of our animals absolutely love this weather.



January 4th, Loretta's Diary

Finally a day off for Tanya and I to warm up - just kidding! The heaters arrived and needed to be installed. We had six hours before the arctic cold front would hit. Finally the big moment, we turned the heaters on and one of the heaters was broken in transit! We kept the good one and *Baboo* quickly located it, laid down and started eating. Then the donkey and goat discovered this magical heater and joined the camel. It was like a nativity scene in there, little late for Christmas but we appreciated the effort. The horses discovered they got the short end of the stick and they wanted the heated stall. One would think it was impossible for a horse to pout, we have two that proved otherwise.

January 5th, Tanya's Diary

MY EYELASHES FROZE TO MY FACE and all of the food in the fridge was frozen solid! The locks had to be thawed with my hands. It was a few degrees warmer than my midnight animal check-negative 20 degrees with wind chill. These arctic days are taking their toll. During this extreme weather we spend all of our time checking on animals, making sure dens are warm and dry, that everyone has water, that all of the heat sources are working properly and animals are fed multiple times per day because their food freezes. Some animals were hand fed and we delivered food to their dens and favorite perches to make sure they ate before it froze.

January 6th, Loretta's Diary

We survived the worst of the cold. Animals that were brought indoors were happy to go back out. Ice crept into our Welcome Center, thankfully we caught that before it started an electrical fire! Outside we had to use a pick axe to chip away ice, on the inside we had to smash ice that covered an electrical outlet. Resolving it permanently goes on our spring to do list. As a result of this emergency: sixteen permit renewals, grant reviews, grant applications, audits, bills, year end paperwork and more had been put on hold.

January 8th, Loretta's Diary

We are devastated. After the trials of the last few weeks we thought life would get back to normal. Now we are heartbroken over the loss of *Thunder*, our 19 year old Bobcat. He passed away peacefully in his sleep but his absence is a cruel reminder that we have several geriatric animals. His cage mate, 20 year old *Whisper*, is a wreck - they were inseparable for 18 years. *Whisper* guarded his body for several hours, we let her grieve giving her a chance to say goodbye. When Tanya removed *Thunder* she broke down in tears - as she carried him out, *Whisper* tried to follow and made the saddest, wailing cry we have ever heard from an animal. We aren't the only ones heartbroken. Our vet warned us that his passing may be the stressor that causes us to lose her too. **As we grieve the loss of *Thunder* and try to comfort *Whisper*, we hear that we have another arctic blast headed our way and we still have 89 animals that need us. More animal checks, more supplies, more equipment, more food, more cold days and more sleepless nights. I pray our supporters will help us get through this.**

Thank you for helping us keep the animals safe during Life Below Zero!

Soar With the Eagles!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Loretta Jones".

PS: The bills will be rolling in soon from all of the extra supplies and expenses—food, heat and vital equipment. We appreciate your decision to help our mission. We realize that funds are always limited and there are many causes seeking donations. An easy way to help our mission is through smile.amazon.com! Simply choose Hawk Creek Wildlife Center, Inc. as your supported charity, shop, and a portion of your purchases will be donated to Hawk Creek. If you cannot give at this time, please share this with family, friends and co-workers.

Did you know that you can designate your United Way donations to Hawk Creek and many employers have matching donations to double your dollars? (United Way #3430, CFC #42802, SEFA #5700099). We do not receive any state or federal funding.