

Genesis Wildlife Sanctuary Issues Update

Written by Steve Frank

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The Genesis Wildlife Sanctuary issued a statement updating the court issues that stem from their continued dispute with the Town of Beech Mountain. After 10 years of the lease, the town changed ordinances regarding animal housing and, then found Genesis in violation of the new ordinance. The preserve removed the animals in early 2011, only to find their lease of property for their Buckeye Lake facility in jeopardy a year later, notified of a number of violations. The board of Genesis has fought back, and with no immediate action, issued an update:

"The lawsuit is proceeding slowly until the pleadings have been finalized. Under the guidance and representation of Genesis, by the Clement Law Office of Boone, Genesis is confident that the final outcome will be favorable.

In a surprise move, the Town has retained the services of a Charlotte law firm to contest the Genesis' claims. It has become obvious that originally the Town relied on its vastly superior taxpayer source of funding for the lawsuit. The status of the lawsuit, its cost to the taxpayers, or even the rationale for the original lawsuit against Genesis has not been communicated to the taxpayers despite several Council meetings since the filing of the original lawsuit. It appears that the Town relied, in part, on the assumption that its unlimited resources, as compared to the relatively weak financial abilities of Genesis to defend itself and to bring a counter suit. Donors to Genesis as well as the Board of directors have been helping Genesis with advances toward costs.

Genesis is committed to defending the original lawsuit. Importantly Genesis is now unwavering in its commitment to vindicating itself and the pursuing counterclaims of Contract violations, as well as violation by the Town of at least three Constitutional rights held by Genesis.

Genesis is committed, as well, to continuing the public service in animal rescue and rehabilitation of injured wildlife, to the limited degree it is able from a temporary location. Their educational programs have been continuous and extremely popular."

Just when the legal action will be heard is not currently clear, with a number of continuances granted by the court, according to a board member.