



## NEWS RELEASE

### Big Bear Alpine Zoo

March 4, 2020

#### CONTACT:

David Wert  
Public Information Officer  
(909) 387-4842  
[dwert@sbcountry.gov](mailto:dwert@sbcountry.gov)

## Big Bear Alpine Zoo in good hands during search for new curator

The county's Big Bear Alpine Zoo will transition temporarily into the capable hands of Lead Animal Keeper Summer McElroy while the county conducts an exhaustive nationwide recruitment for a new curator to succeed Bob Cisneros, who announced on Monday that he will leave San Bernardino County within the month to take a position with a larger zoo in Salt Lake City. The Big Bear Valley Recreation and Park District will continue to support business operations for the zoo.

Summer has been with the zoo since 2004 and was promoted to Lead Animal Keeper in 2012. Along with providing incredible care to the zoo's animals, Summer has managed numerous events at the zoo, including Boo at the Zoo, Bear Awareness, and Flashlight Safaris. As a lead keeper, she has cared for all of the animals at the zoo and helped to shape the zoo's animal welfare plan and USDA readiness program. Summer's knowledge of the zoo processes and her dedication to the animals is vital to keeping operations and programming on track.

"The community and I will miss Bob's experience and passion," said Third District County Supervisor Dawn Rowe. "But this will be an opportunity to build upon Bob's legacy with leadership from a new curator who will add their experience and knowledge to everything we have accomplished and plan to achieve at the Big Bear Alpine Zoo."

The biggest news on the zoo's horizon will be the opening of the new, greatly enhanced zoo site just down the road from its current location. The county expects the prospect of a new zoo facility to be a major attraction to top curator candidates from across the country.

"We think many of the best zoo professionals throughout the United States will jump at the chance to open and operate a brand-new, state-of-the-art facility," Supervisor Rowe said.

"The Big Bear Alpine Zoo provides a great experience and service for the people of Big Bear Lake and our visitors," said Big Bear Lake City Manager Frank A. Rush Jr. "We are confident the county will recruit an experienced and visionary curator who will build upon the zoo's success and make it an even greater asset to our beautiful community."

The [Big Bear Alpine Zoo](#), opened in 1959, is a rehabilitation facility offering injured, orphaned, and imprinted wild animals a safe haven, temporarily while they heal, or permanently, as they are unable to survive on their own in the wild.

The county is proud that 90 percent of all the animals brought to the zoo for rehabilitation are successfully released back into their native environment. Those that are either too injured to be released or have been imprinted by humans remain with the zoo on exhibit in an effort to educate and enrich zoo visitors.

The Big Bear Valley Recreation and Park District, a Special District of the County of San Bernardino, owns the zoo, the facilities, and the animals.

