



# MOUNTAIN LION FOUNDATION REVIEW

Summer 2011

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## My, How Far We've Come!

In 1986, a small group of friends gathered in the living room of the late poet, Margaret Owings, to discuss how to stop California from allowing trophy hunting on its dwindling population of mountain lions. That night the Mountain Lion Coalition was born. Two and a half decades (and a few name changes) later, MLF is still here and fighting harder than ever to save America's lion. We are pleased to welcome new members, but we would like to give a special and sincere thank you to those of you who have been with us since the beginning.



This edition of the *Review* is dedicated to our activists and volunteers... to all those friends gathering in living rooms (or online chat rooms) across the country saying, "Enough is enough. It's time to take a stand and protect our mountain lions!" MLF wouldn't be here if it weren't for people like you. We depend heavily on local volunteers to spread our message and save lions locally. We hope this newsletter informs you about our committed volunteers and inspires you to take action. Wherever you live and whatever your time or talents, mountain lions desperately need your help.

## MLF Extends a Helping Hand to Activists in Missouri

paw



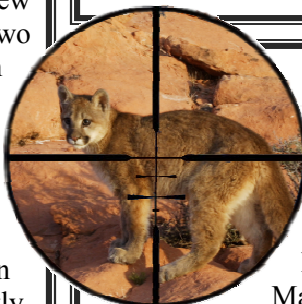
**Ozark Trail Association Hike.** From left to right: Sarah Luehmann, Matt Bell, Brendan Rowe, Paul Corley, Natalie Gosejohan, and Leslie Keuss. Courtesy of Craig Lanham.

Earlier this year MLF was contacted by Craig Lanham, one of our members in Missouri who is also involved with the Saint Louis Audubon Society. A few mountain lions had been confirmed in the state—the first since Missouri wiped out its lion population in 1927—and the cats were a hot topic. With very little mountain lion information available, some residents became worried. Everyone had questions. The local Audubon folks wanted to help but had not worked on mountain lion conservation before. Luckily, Craig knew exactly who to call. MLF staff quickly created two *Mountain Lions in Missouri* brochures (you can view them on our website). The handouts cover basic biology and behavior of lions as well as their history in the state, legal status, a sightings map, and what actions residents need to take. The Saint Louis Audubon Society was very pleased with the brochures and has been distributing them around the state. Most recently, Craig handed them out during a hike event hosted by the Ozark Trail Association, not far from where one of the confirmed lion sightings had occurred just a few weeks prior.

## Allies in Washington

Not long after wrapping up the Missouri project (left), MLF received a call from Bob McCoy in Washington State. A dedicated cougar advocate, Bob is concerned by the lenient cougar hunting rules proposed by the Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife. He has rallied a handful of key animal-protection organizations, including MLF, to discuss the proposal and to find a way to stop the reinstatement of hound hunting. As in Missouri, educational materials were needed to help residents understand the science behind the issues and to get them involved. No other group had the time or resources to put together the needed information.

MLF has stepped up to the plate. For the partner groups, MLF has summarized decades of Washington's cougar data and highlighted the vital facts supporting our arguments. We have also created a special *Washington's Cougars* brochure to inform residents about the species and the history of its management by WDFW, and to explain why overturning the citizen's ban on hound hunting is bad news for everyone. The brochure is a hit! And incidentally, we are proud to announce Bob McCoy has joined MLF in a voluntary capacity as our Washington Field Representative. He is a huge asset in our continuing fight to defend cougars by law in Washington.



## Stop the Killing Now!

*Petition Hits 2000 Signatures*

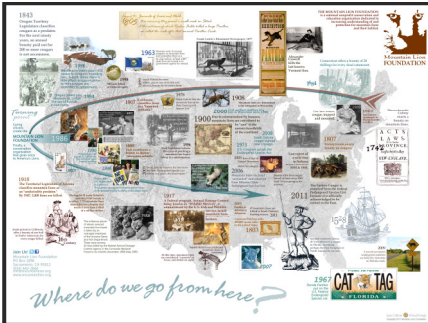
Recently, we mailed out petitions and asked you to gather a few signatures to help stop the killing of mountain lions. Many members did. But a few people took it one step further. Helen from Carlsbad, for example, single-handedly gathered over one hundred signatures! To help promote the petition, contact MLF for paper copies, or link your online friends to: [www.MountainLion.org/petition.asp](http://www.MountainLion.org/petition.asp)

## Community Outreach Events

With a small staff and global membership, MLF employees physically cannot be everywhere we are needed—but thankfully, our members can! Here are some more highlights from our volunteers' activities:

### Creek Week

Every year, right around Earth Day, Sacramento parks celebrate Creek Week. It's a chance for residents to help clean up the local waterways, followed by a huge carnival-like picnic. Creek Week is MLF's Sacramento Volunteer Coordinator Lyn Whitcomb's favorite event. In fact, this year marked her 20th anniversary attending and running the mountain lion educational booth—talk about dedication! Lyn celebrated in style by handing out kid's t-shirts, postcards, and reminding everyone why cougars still need our help. Thanks, Lyn! And congratulations on reaching this remarkable milestone.



### Academy of Sciences Mountain Lion NightLife Event

NightLife is a weekly event at the California Academy of Sciences (San Francisco, CA) where visitors ages 21 and older can enjoy music, science, entertainment and cocktails, while experiencing the Academy's world-class exhibits. Each installment features something new and different. March 31st featured mountain lions! MLF created a new table display showing the Mortality History of Lions in America (pictured left). The timeline map was also incorporated into a brochure and distributed at the event. The booth was popular and visitors had a great time learning about both local and national lion issues.

### Mountain Lion Agency Workshop

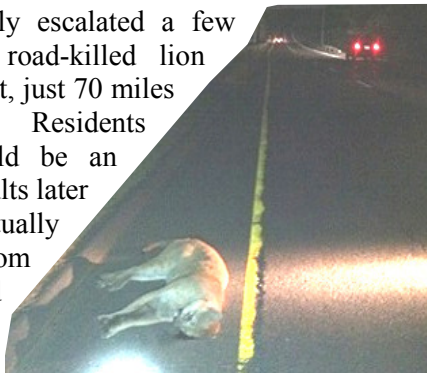


In May, Outreach Coordinator Amy Rodrigues and MLF's San Diego Field Rep. Robin Parks attended the Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies' 10th mountain lion workshop, this year held in Bozeman, Montana. Each game agency presented their state's lion status update and management strategy; field researchers also shared their latest findings. It was a great opportunity to network with biologists, wildlife managers, and other lion activists. Meeting game officers was especially beneficial for Robin, a volunteer who briefs law enforcement personnel and other first responders about non-lethal ways to resolve mountain lion encounters.

## Why We Fight Nationwide!

In March, the US Fish and Wildlife Service announced the extinction of the eastern cougar. The last known cougar native to the East died back in the 1930's. Wildlife officials continue to receive sighting reports but have not confirmed any of these represent the indigenous eastern subspecies.

The controversy quickly escalated a few weeks later when a road-killed lion turned up in Connecticut, just 70 miles from New York City. Residents wondered if this could be an eastern cougar. Lab results later revealed this cat was actually a western cougar from South Dakota who had traveled two thousand miles 'cross country!



The loss of this cat is a tragedy, but the fact that he made it so far proves lions are capable of repopulating the eastern half of the United States. Unlike wolves, deer, and even some bird species, lions do not require expensive reintroduction programs. No captive breeding. No capture and relocate. No human intervention of any kind. Lions are plenty capable of reestablishing populations in the East on their own. The only thing mankind would have to do to restore this iconic keystone species is to change our game laws and wildlife policies.

Most midwest and eastern states do not protect lions (should any turn up) from being shot on sight. Western states are increasing their lion hunting quotas and eradication programs, thus not giving lions a chance to disperse east. Cats don't recognize state borders and so neither does MLF. We will continue to fight for America's lions, wherever they may roam, until every lion is fully protected.

## Tejon Ranch Accused of Illegally Hunting Lions



In May, a southern California resident contacted MLF to expose an ongoing illegal mountain lion hunting operation taking place at Tejon Ranch in California. MLF alerted the California Department of Fish and Game, and the agency has now opened an investigation. The 270,000 acre ranch, located in the Tehachapi mountain range just north of Los Angeles, has been implicated in this crime in a wrongful termination suit filed by Bron Sanders. A former hunting guide—once employed by the ranch's wildlife management division—Mr. Sanders claims to have been fired after he complained to top officials at the ranch about the illegal killings. According to MLF's sources, an LA Times report on the death of twenty lions is only the tip of the iceberg, with more than one hundred lions allegedly killed at the ranch over a number of years. The mountain lion is classified as a *specially protected mammal* in California which prohibits hunting the cats for sport.

### Have You Joined Us?

More than 1800 members have connected with MLF on Facebook, and they are busy swapping information about lions in their area, sharing news stories, and commenting on the latest MLF updates. Log onto Facebook and join us today.

### **MOUNTAIN LION FOUNDATION**

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