



Winston Helps Rescue Animals Held in Squalid and Unsafe Conditions

JUNE 15, 2023

Winston attorneys and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) obtained an emergency stay order that allowed for the transfer of several severely mistreated animals from a roadside zoo to an animal sanctuary.

In April 2022, Winston and co-counsel the PETA Foundation filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina against the Waccatee Zoo, which had confined and exhibited more than 460 animals in cramped conditions and deprived the animals of basic necessities such as adequate shelter, food, and water. The chronic neglect caused the animals immense suffering and led to the death of an endangered tiger.

Approximately five months after filing the lawsuit, PETA learned that the Waccatee Zoo was secretly transferring animals out of the facility to other roadside zoos or selling them at shady exotic-animal auctions. Winston and the PETA Foundation then filed an emergency motion to prohibit further transfers.

The motion was granted, and on May 4, 2023, PETA and The Wild Animal Sanctuary (TWAS) rescued the remaining animals—one llama, two North American black bears, and six emus—from the Waccatee Zoo. The rescued animals have been transferred to one of the Wild Animal Sanctuary facilities in Colorado.

“We are extremely pleased that the Court granted the emergency request for relief and directed Waccatee Zoo to account for all of its animals,” said Washington, D.C. Partner Jonathan Brightbill. “Now the last of the roadside zoo’s animals are going to an appropriate sanctuary.”

Both of the black bears, who were thin and suffering from a chronic skin condition were provided with immediate veterinary care and once rehabilitated will be released into multi-acre habitats in a natural setting where they can socialize with other bears. The llama and the emus now reside in a spacious outdoor enclosure with plenty of room to take shelter from wind and rain and will also have access to warm indoor areas.

“Waccatee spent years exploiting vulnerable animals and allowing suffering ones to languish in cramped enclosures, but now these survivors will get the care they so desperately need and deserve,” said PETA General Counsel for Captive Animal Law Enforcement Brittany Peet. “Thanks to the lawsuit by PETA and concerned citizens as well as the sanctuary provided by TWAS, this shoddy roadside zoo has been shuttered and animals have been saved.”

The Winston team that helped rescue these animals included Jade Briana Baker, Jonathan Brightbill, Kylan Gilmore, and Stacie Knight.

[You can access the emergency motion here.](#)

[Learn more about Winston's commitment to excellence in serving the public interest.](#)

2 Min Read

Related Locations

Charlotte

Washington, DC

Related Topics

Pro Bono

PETA

Animal Welfare

Related Regions

North America

Related Professionals



[Jonathan D. Brightbill](#)



[Jade Briana Baker](#)



Kyllan Gilmore



Stacie Knight