

# Ironwood Pig Sanctuary

Post Office Box 35490

Tucson, AZ 85740

Dear Friend,

June 2023

Summer is not officially here until later this month, but you'd never know it by the weather. It's already hot and has been for a while! We have closed our tour season due to the high temperatures. It's just not safe or comfortable for people to be out on a walking tour, particularly if you're not used to being outdoors in the desert heat. Plus, the pigs don't want to be in the sun either and stay hidden in the shade,

not in the mood to socialize with visitors. Tours will crank up again in the fall after it begins to cool down.



Luke, Hermosa & Kirbita

Pigs cannot pant or sweat to release body heat like other animals and must find other ways to cool off. There is some natural shade from the creosote



Gretel, Chicky, Hercules & Goliath

bushes, mesquite trees, and palo verde trees. The pigs will tuck themselves up under the vegetation to get out of the sun. Recently, I spent a long time checking all the shelters in Lil' East Field and circling through the field several times in search of

Billie Jean for a photo session. Almost to the point of panic, I suddenly saw her poke her head out of a



Snooky

huge Catclaw Acacia bush that was covered in blooms. She and her friend Bailey were completely hidden under

there. Billie Jean and her nice, cool hiding place are on the cover of this issue.

The pigs' shelters have had the carpet doorways removed for the hot season to allow for air movement. The piggies still love sleeping inside even when it's hot. We have also built numerous shade ramadas throughout all the fields. That is where the pigs will congregate the most this summer to take advantage of the mud wallows and wading

pools. Getting into the water is the best way to get their body temperature down. Some pigs prefer using the pool and will even



Brazil & Uno

take naps there. Others would rather splash around in the wallow. A lot of the pigs like to be lightly sprayed with the water hose and will spin around in circles acting all silly. Cooling off can be so much fun! The pigs and I hope you are keeping it cool this summer!

Sincerely,

Donna Thomason  
Sponsor Coordinator

# Changing Colors

**T**here are sometimes subtle changes in appearance as a pig ages, but these lovely ladies are examples of drastic differences in color. Loni has been a part of Ironwood since April 2008 when she and her family of 30+ pigs were rescued from a home in Peoria. At that time, she was solid black and remained that way for most of her life. It wasn't until the fall of 2021 that Loni began to lose pigmentation. Over the past two years, she has slowly been turning pink. We assume the color change is due to vitiligo, when the pigment producing cells either die or stop producing melanin which



Loni June 2015

gives the skin, hair, and eyes their color. This normally occurs in patches that gradually increase in size.

In February of this year, Loni developed several oozing sores on her legs, neck, and belly. She went to the vet clinic to have those debrided and got a biopsy done while there. The results showed she has Solar Dermatitis, a condition that occurs when a



Loni Jan. 2023

pigment change has increased the sensitivity to ultraviolet radiation. Loni's tissue was odd and waxlike. The vets had never seen anything like that before and had a veterinary dermatologist study the results. Everyone was a bit stumped as to what was happening. A round of antibiotics and topical ointments healed up Loni's sores and we are keeping an eye out for new developments. She is happily living with 11 of her family members in an area with lots of shade and at age 17, she leads a rather sedate life.

In Mallow's case, the change in her hair color and markings is highly unusual because of her young age of only 2.5 years. She



Mallow Feb. 2021

was a stray, just a few months old, when she and her mom were rescued in February 2021. There was a small growth on her side that was irritated and oozing. When she was spayed later that same month, it was removed. It turned out to be melanoma, a type of skin cancer that develops in the cells that produce melanin, the pigment that gives skin its color. That could be related to the change in Mallow's hair color, but



Mallow Jan. 2023

if so, it is certainly uncommon. Her hair is making a gradual shift from black to silver and white. Whatever the cause, Mallow looks beautiful. Her health has been good and there have been no more signs of melanoma development.

Loni and Mallow are gorgeous girls happily living with family and friends. Thank you for giving them the opportunity to spend their lives at the sanctuary and to receive medical care and testing when needed.

...Donna

# Tomahawk

**T**omahawk appeared at someone's gate in February 2023 after having been attacked by dogs. He was let into the yard and they began making calls for help. Word got to Ironwood so we picked him up and took him to Adobe Veterinary Center. The poor pig who appears to be 6-8 years old, had lost both ears and had injuries over most of his body. Some wounds were older than others, so the attacks had been ongoing for a while. Infected areas were debrided and treated, but Tomahawk was in serious condition and in extreme



heavy pain medication. The ear canal is missing from the left side, but he can still hear from the right side. We will continue to monitor the "ear holes" for abscesses and infections which will remain a possibility for months to come.



pain. Six days later, he was doing well enough to be neutered which the vet wanted done as soon as possible due to an infected bite wound in and around one of the testicles. The surgery went well and after an 8 day stay at the clinic, he was able to come to the sanctuary.

Tomahawk was still in fragile condition with many sutures and infections to be cleansed and treated. He was on antibiotics and

Tomahawk often drags his front right foot due to a deformity/injury to his elbow. The bones in his leg don't fit together properly because of that joint, but there is nothing that can be done surgically. Another 5 days at the clinic came in March for more debriding of wounds and a recheck of his injuries. Both elbows got shock wave treatment to help with the lameness and pain in those legs.

Tomahawk slowly recovered and continues to heal. After gaining



strength and mobility, he was moved into Hospice, a small, special care area that is home to 4 other pigs. Louie Gray, Pebbles and Chaco are elderly and in the later stage of life while Bubbles is extremely obese with little mobility. None presented a challenge for Tomahawk who quickly settled into the barn and made himself at home. He soon became a staff favorite due to his calm, lovable personality. He is still dealing with infections and abscesses but overall has made



tremendous progress. We are so grateful for the opportunity to give this sweetheart a second chance at life thanks to your support.

...Donna

*If you would like to contribute toward Tomahawk's medical expenses which totaled \$6,167.21, please dedicate your donation in his name. Thank you!!*

**IRONWOOD PIG SANCTUARY**

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**NEWSLETTER UPDATE**

## IRONWOOD PIG SANCTUARY



**Billie Jean,  
Born at  
Ironwood  
2-17-18**