

# Bears freed in Idaho

**Behind** the picket fences and clean sidewalks of Idaho's suburban Garden City, exists an extraordinary project to rehabilitate orphaned bear cubs and introduce them back into the wild. The project is run by a remarkable woman who devotes her life to caring for these cubs, and preparing them for their return to freedom.

The Idaho Black Bear Rehabilitation Centre is run by Sally Maughan (below), surrogate mother to cubs that have come into her care as a result of their parents being killed by hunters, in road accidents, or just by getting lost. Without intervention,

they would simply die, but the balance between nature and nurture is delicate; adaptation to ordinary captive conditions would seriously impede their chances of survival alone. Last year, nine cubs were rehabilitated and returned to their natural habitat, and this Winter a further six bears were released.

Each cub spends eight or nine months in Sally's care, and this doesn't come cheap. In 1998, when her limited resources were stretched to breaking point, WSPA stepped in with emergency funding. *"Frankly, if WSPA hadn't helped out when they did, I seriously doubt there would still be a bear programme,"* commented Sally.

Last year, a particularly memorable contribution was made when dedicated WSPA supporter Pam Walker sadly died. But her generous legacy left to WSPA's Liberty campaign has left a lasting impact, allowing Sally to complete a much larger cub

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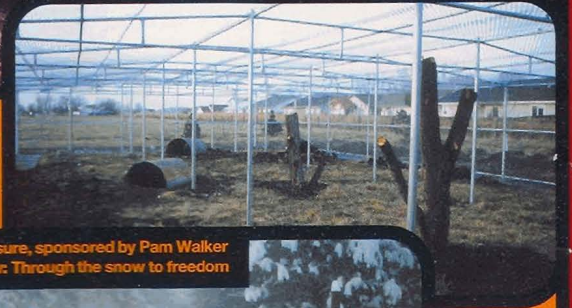
Three bears in the tub at Sally Maughan's Rehabilitation Centre



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enclosure with space for up to 15 bears. The enclosure will be ready in time to take in more orphans of the Spring bear hunt, which are expected to arrive in April.

This year, the BBC are following the release of three cubs in Idaho for a documentary *'Born to be Wild'*. The programme shows how the bears are fattened for hibernation, tranquillized and put safely into natural dens beneath the snow-covered landscape. There they will remain until they are woken by the warm spring air, and their empty tummies! Don't miss the remarkable story of their return to the wild to be broadcast at the end of the year.



**ABOVE:** The new enclosure, sponsored by Pam Walker  
**FRONT COVER AND BELOW:** Through the snow to freedom

