

Michelle “Mindy” Stinner

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Cofounder and Executive Director at Conservators Center Inc., DBA Animal Park at the Conservators Center

Burlington, NC (1999-present)

Focus: Guide the development and mission success of the organization, a nonprofit educational wildlife park.

Responsibilities:

- Supervise managerial staff leading business operations, including HR, Accounting, Animal Care, Facilities, Educational Programs, Donor Services, Communications, Visitor Services, and Retail.
- Curate the animal collection in its entirety, including managing all acquisitions, dispositions, and individual or special needs of incoming animals.
- Guide development of educational programming across departments, including tour guide training, internship program, staff continuing education, and implementation of new programs.
- Serve as primary state and federal licensee and permittee for the organization.
- Manage contingency situations from preparation to response and recovery.
- Establish a collaborative of NC animal facilities with focus on contingency response.
- Oversee external communications and media relations as primary spokesperson, including media interviews and appearances.
- Provide professional and educational presentations in person and via webinar for local and state officials and national and international industry-related groups.
- Collaborate with researchers focused on genetics, animal behavior, cancer research, felid reproduction, veterinary issues, linguistics, and documentary studies at educational institutions including NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine, Elon University, Texas A&M University, the NC Museum of Natural Sciences, the Harvard Canine Brain project, and the Harvard University Museum of Comparative Anatomy.
- Establish and maintain relationships with field researchers, providing husbandry, technical, and fundraising assistance and hosting researchers for training and information exchange.

Surgical Veterinary Technician at Durham Animal Protection Society

Durham, NC (2003-2004, part-time)

Assisted veterinarians in shelter-based spay/neuter and emergency clinic. Monitored anesthesia and assisted during surgeries, prepared surgical supplies, and managed animals from pickup to delivery.

Manager at ZooFauna

Wake Forest, NC (1999-2000)

Oversaw all husbandry needs of approximately 200 animals of 30+ species, along with office management. Performed zookeeper duties and recruited and trained volunteers and staff.

Supervised veterinary care and nutrition, maintained all records, created habitat design specifications, and assisted with construction. Led emergency preparedness planning.

Head Keeper at Carnivore Preservation Trust

Pittsboro, NC (1997-1998)

Managed husbandry needs of nearly 270 carnivores of 15+ species. Maintained digital records, assisted veterinarians with exams and procedures, and trained and managed interns.

Bookkeeper and Office Manager at Carnivore Preservation Trust

(1997-1998)

Managed accounting, fundraising, donor services, and communications. Assisted with grant writing, led tours of the facility, coordinated events, provided educational programs, transported animals, and assisted with maintenance and construction.

Teacher at William G. Enloe High School

Wake County Public School System, Raleigh, NC (1991-1997)

Taught literature courses at levels ranging from basic to AP, including combination classes taught in conjunction with history instructors.

Education

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

BA, English Secondary Education

Continuing Education

- FEMA ICS 100, 300, 700
- USDA Animal Transport Symposium, 2023; Lions, Tigers, and Bears Symposium, 2014 and 2019; Primate Management, 2024

Professional Activities

Publications

- Credited author/significant contributor in the AZA's *Viverrids Care Manual* on the subject of binturong care: AZA Small Carnivore TAG 2010. *Viverrids (Viverridae) Care Manual*. Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Silver Spring, MD

- Cannizzo SA, Stinner M, Kennedy-Stoskopf S. "Prevalence of Cystinuria in Servals (*Leptailurus serval*) in the United States." J Zoo Wildl Med. 2017 Dec; 48(4):1102-1107. doi: 10.1638/2016-0177.1. PMID: 29297813
- Koler-Matznick J, Stinner M. "First report of captive New Guinea dingo (*Canis dingo hallstromi*) den-digging and parental behavior." Zoo Biol. 2011 Jul-Aug; 30(4):445-50. doi: 10.1002/zoo.20370. Epub 2010 Dec 8. PMID: 21154450
- Contributed chapter for *The End of Captivity* by Tripp York, Cascade Books, 2015

Presentations

- Delivered presentations on Legislative Advocacy, Interpreting Legislation, and Industry Collaboration at the Education and Conservation Society of Macropodidae's Macropod Annual Conference, Gainesville, TX, 2023
- Served as keynote speaker at the Iowa Waste Reduction Convention, Boise, IA, 2019
- Presented on topics including government affairs, advocacy, and animal welfare and husbandry at Zoological Association of America annual and semi-annual conferences, 2016-2025
- Delivered presentations on Carnivore Husbandry and Enrichment to students and staff at the NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine, 2015-2019
- Various presentations to and collaborations with universities including Exotic Animal Law at Campbell University Law School, Animal Law Symposiums for HSUS/Duke University, and Duke University Environmental Sciences Club, NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine, NCSU Pre-Veterinary Club, Barton College panel on ethics of captivity, Elon University Animal Ethics, Biology, Communications plus Elon Academy programming.
- Delivered presentations on Careers With Captive Wildlife to NCSU's pre-vet club, 2016-2017

Educational Programming and Research Support

- Collaborated with Elon University Engineering Department on a semester-long design and fabrication project (2025), Elon Statistics Department on assessing the connection between social media engagement and connectivity with the physical Park (multi-semester 2024-2025)
- On and offsite hands-on training with NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine faculty and students (2014-present)
- Supported a Burroughs-Wellcome Foundation grant with Elon Academy at Elon University, 2018-2024
- Collaborated with Elon University Psychology Faculty on a multi-year study of the use of language to influence charitable giving (2018-2024).
- Host USDA's Ag Adventures Summer Camps, 2016-present
- Facilitate expert presentations including Jim Sanderson (Small Cat Conservation Alliance and IUCN) speaking at Elon University to biology students and staff, and Andrew Miller (author of *Between Dog and Wolf: Understanding the Connection and the Confusion*) presenting a workshop for animal control officers, regional officials, and members of the NCSU Center for Veterinary Medicine's Carnivore Team

- Provide educational tours on site for local universities tailored to their curriculum needs, including Elon University's Animals in Captivity ethics course and Environmental Ethics Today course
- Host international visitors representing in situ facilities (areas have included Costa Rica, Chile, Vietnam, and Brazil) and conservation initiatives (areas have included Cambodia, Suriname, Chile, and South Africa)
- Travel nationally and internationally to visit facilities in situ (including in Costa Rica and South Africa), facilitate animal delivery, and visit zoos with shared goals (Germany and Bahrain)
- Served as a member of Alamance Community College's Animal Husbandry and Technology Program Development Committee, 2003-2009

Advocacy

- Serve as the Government Affairs Committee Chair for the Zoological Association of America, representing the organization and leading webinars and training for members, 2022-present
- Represent the Feline Conservation Foundation and other organizations as an advocate in Washington, DC, 2015-2025
- Worked with NC legislators to address concerns about specific bills and conducted a public awareness campaign, 2014-2018
- Served on NC House Study Group assessing the status of wild animal ownership and risks to the public; presented to the oversight committee speaker by request, representing the dissenting minority on the group's published conclusions, together with representatives of the AVMA and the State Veterinarian of NC, 2006-2007

Feline Conservation Foundation

- Served as Chair of the Board (2025-present), President (2019-2025), Board Vice-President (2012-2016), and Conservation Director (2006-2010)
- Honored with "Lottie" Lifetime Achievement Award for work on behalf of wild cats, 2017
- Oversaw hiring an Executive Director and led the process of establishing the organization as the foremost advocacy group for wild cats in human care
- Oversaw the rebrand from "Federation" to "Foundation" and updated mission to focus on advocacy, husbandry education, and conservation project support
- Served as lead curriculum developer and instructor for the Exotic Feline Husbandry Course, 2002-2024; continuing as co-lead to present.

Emergency and Crisis Response

- Served as Working Group participant in a long-term project with the Zoo and Aquarium All-Hazards Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Fusion Center, in collaboration with the USDA and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, 2015-2023

- Worked with NC State Animal Response Team and PEART (Piedmont area) for certifications in core-level training, for participation in training exercises, and for creation of emergency action plan at county, region, and state levels, 2003-2017
- Oversee crisis intervention and management activities, including transport of big cats with behavioral issues or health concerns, negotiation between owners in need of assistance and facilities willing to provide help, assistance with rehoming individual animals and whole collections, accepting animals on site with special needs (geriatric, serious health conditions), providing emergency animal care and new staff training, 2000-present

Individual Licenses

- NC state licensed wildlife rehabilitator, 1999-present
- NC state licensed captive wildlife permit holder, 2004-present