



[www.batworld.org](http://www.batworld.org)

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*Bat World Sanctuary is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization providing rescue for bats worldwide.*

*Every year Bat World Sanctuary rescues, rehabilitates and releases hundreds of bats that might otherwise die. We also provide lifetime sanctuary for bats that have been retired from zoos and research facilities.*

*Bat World is 100 percent staffed by volunteers. We are not state or federally funded. We are not reimbursed for medical treatments, food, or shelter. Our funds must come from the public we serve.*

*Please help us save these wonderful animals by becoming a member of Bat World or making a donation on-line at [www.batworld.org](http://www.batworld.org).*

June 26, 2009

Donna Robins  
Health Inspector, City of Mineral Wells  
211 SW 1st Ave  
Mineral Wells, TX 76067

Dear Donna Robins,

I understand you may have concerns about our building located at 115 NE 1st Avenue, where a colony of Mexican free-tailed bats resides. I would like to take this opportunity to explain the history of the building as well as our future plans.

This building was purchased in 1993 specifically to save the bats that resided in the crawl-space above the second floor. At the time, the resident colony had been using this building as habitat for an estimated 50 years. Over the years we have made numerous improvements to the structure, including removal of the ceiling planks in order to clean the south side of the crawlspace (where the majority of bats now reside). This initial clean-up took several months and we removed approximately 6000 lbs of guano. Since then, we have made several other improvements including the addition of a new roof, foundation repair, repainting and stabilizing the back wall, and adding solar-powered extraction fans. Daily clean up of the guano also takes place.

Free-tail bats have taken advantage of the older buildings in Mineral Wells -as well as other towns throughout TX- for the past few decades. As our town also serves as a migratory stop-over for these bats, colonies are located in almost every building in our downtown area, including the Baker Hotel where approximately 100,000 to 150,000 bats reside. Our wild sanctuary is home to approximately 30,000 bats. When the building was originally purchased it contained around 20,000. Over the past 15 years I have helped several businesses exclude nuisance bat colonies from their buildings, including First State Bank (previous building), Mineral Wells Office Supply, Earl Clark's sound studio, Mark Witchorke's antique store, Hanchy's Leather Goods, Farm Bureau Insurance, George's Men's Wear, Coys Barber Shop, Hills Style Shop, as well as a few residences. Bats are extremely territorial and, if unable to re-enter their old roost due to eviction, they will seek shelter in a nearby building. If they cannot find shelter they generally end up grounded, creating a potential health hazard as grounded bats are more likely to come into contact with people and pets. The wild sanctuary has provided an alternate roost for these evicted bats by giving them a place to roost away from the public, and out of other businesses. As bat colonies have been evicted from other businesses throughout the years, the number of bats in our wild sanctuary has subsequently increased. (It should be noted that the bats in this building eat an estimated 150-million bugs nightly in Mineral Wells and the surrounding countryside.)

I also help collect bats that have wandered or become lost inside buildings throughout Mineral Wells, including Perry Equipment, Houston, Travis, and Lee Elementary schools, Mineral Wells High School, Beal's Dept. Store, Tractor Supply, Family Dollar, Save-a-Lot, Metro, Mr. Jims Pizza, Pulidos, Penny's Florist, Downtown Video, Garrets, Whatley's Auto, Crawford Accounting, the Christian Book Store, The Crazy Hotel, the post office, City Hall, and the Police Station to name a few. All of these bats are subsequently released into our wild sanctuary, away from the public.

For the past several weeks we have been involved in cleaning the crawl space on the north side of the building, removing guano that has been in the building for perhaps 50 years or more. I am sure the building produced an unusually strong odor at this time. (Please note that, although offensive, the odor of guano is not a health threat, as stated in the enclosed letter to Charles Simms from Melissa Starnes, a Texas Parks and Wildlife Permits Official who visited the sanctuary in 2002.) The removal of 50 year-old guano is the first step in a process we are involved in to actually move the bats into a man-made cave outside the city limits (as explained below). Our building, as well as the other buildings where bat colonies reside, also produce more odor when it is humid. However, during dry weather, as in the past week, an odor can hardly be detected. Interestingly, a meteorologist visited us about two years ago and stated that the Baker Hotel had a very strong odor. She later sent the enclosed document explaining how the odor can travel downward from the hotel and subse-

quently be blamed on our wild sanctuary.

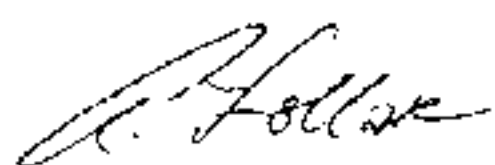
I have also enclosed several letters and articles that will help to explain our future plans a bit better. Depending on funding, it is our hopes to begin the process of relocating the bats within the next two years. I personally wish it could happen tomorrow, but funding and manipulating wildlife behavior dictates how fast it will occur.

As the city grows, so does the potential for bat/human contact. This cave will also provide a roost for future displaced bats in the city. Acreage has been donated for this manmade cave, which will be located north of town and outside the city limits of Mineral Wells.

You may be aware of White Nose Syndrome (WNS), a fungus that is currently affecting bats (article enclosed). It is the most devastating condition to ever hit wild bat populations in all recorded history. It has wiped out 95 to 100 percent of cave dwelling bats in nine states so far. The fungus is cold-loving and scientists previously believed the bats in TX are potentially safe from the condition, however, last week it was discovered that the fungus can survive in temperatures that exceed 200 degrees Fahrenheit. We currently have an intern with the US Forest Service, and in late July, US Fish and Wildlife officials will be training here on collecting and maintaining breeding colonies of endangered species of bats. The wild sanctuary is essential to this training, as it has been in the past for other research projects for universities and scientists around the world.

I hope this letter helps to answer any questions and concerns. If I can be of any further help please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at 940-325-3404. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,



Amanda Lollar, Founder/President  
Bat World Sanctuary

CC: Lance Howerton, City Manager