

hidden GEMS



A Monument and Story of Samson the Hot Tub Bear

Living in the foothills provides an opportunity to experience nature and wildlife. Monrovians visit the mountains to see squirrel, deer, the occasional bobcat, and a variety of migrating birds. These furry and feathery friends can be seen with a quick hike, bike or drive to Canyon Park, but what if the tables were turned and our furry friends stopped by our house for a visit?

In the 1990's, a beloved, old bear roamed the Monrovia foothills, knocking over trash cans for an easy meal, gathering fruit from the trees (especially avocados!), and occasionally jumping in a nearby hot tub to cool down from the summer heat. Samson the Bear quickly became the talk of the town, as he regularly came down the mountain to visit homes in our community. In 1994, Samson ingested a plastic bag that made him very ill. The Department of Fish and Wildlife came out to treat Samson it was recommended that due to his old age (he was missing a lot of teeth) and illness that he be euthanized.

Word quickly spread about the plight of Samson, and the media attention grew so large that word reached Governor Pete Wilson who ordered the state agency to give Samson a stay of execution. Overjoyed with the news, the citizens of Monrovia, the San Gabriel Valley and the Orange County Zoo raised money and built a special habitat for Samson. Samson lived happily the rest of his life at the Orange County Zoo, eating healthy food and swimming in a special pool resembling the many hot tubs and pools he frequented during his time in Monrovia. Saving Samson demonstrates how a community can work together to educate, preserve and create a positive solution from a challenging situation. In early 2000, the City of Monrovia erected a statue of Samson, which is located in front of Canyon Park's Nature Center and is one of the many gems we cherish in Monrovia.

