

(S.D.)-Spearfish Sanctuary Hit Hard By Drought, Economy

By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 09/21/2012 09:29 AM

Photo: A resident of the sanctuary (www.spiritofthehillssanctuary.org)

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) - Dry weather and a rough economy have made it a tough year for the Spirit of the Hills Wildlife Sanctuary in Spearfish.

Officials there hope the facility's largest fundraiser of the year Saturday will help change the tide.

Sanctuary Director Mike Welchynski says every day is a challenge because the sanctuary operates entirely on donations, but this year has been particularly difficult. He says the fundraiser, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., is necessary to "continue to operate."

Officials say that thousands of people attend the annual fundraiser.

The sanctuary opened in 1999 and is home to more than 350 animals, including bobcats, emus, parrots, dogs, cats and buffalo. The facility has partnered with area schools to educate youth.