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## Minneapolis woman attacked by tigers

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FLORENCE TOWNSHIP, Minn. — A woman was recovering at a Rochester hospital today after she was attacked by four tigers at a rural residence outside this southeastern Minnesota town, authorities said.

The Goodhue County Sheriff reported that 37-year-old Allison Asher of Minneapolis was apparently helping care for the cats when they attacked her about 4:45 p.m. Wednesday. She suffered wounds to her leg and neck, said Kris Weiss of the sheriff's office.

A helicopter ambulance took the woman to St. Marys hospital for surgery. She was in serious condition.

The attack happened on 48-year-old Grant Oly's property, which includes at least two large fenced pens for the animals. A working telephone number for him could not immediately be found. He refused to comment to the Red Wing Republican Eagle while standing just outside his property this morning.

Sheriff Dean Albers said the initial investigation indicates Asher was cleaning a pen when one of the animals attacked her, and then three more joined in. Oly scared them off by yelling at them, and dragged Asher to safety, Albers said.

The sheriff's office said the tigers have not been loose and aren't a threat to the general public. However, officials said they were concerned for the safety of people who visit the property.

Exotic animals have gotten Oly in trouble in the past.

Assistant Goodhue County Attorney Carol Lee said Oly violated the county's zoning laws for exotic animals in February 2004 and was placed on probation until March of this year. On March 18, he was sent to jail for 45 days for violating his probation.

Those zoning rules limit the ownership of exotic pets to three, while Oly had eight tigers at the time. Authorities were considering more charges today after finding seven tigers on the property.

"We believe Mr. Oly is in violation," Albers said today. "He has seven (tigers), and you are only allowed to have three."

In 2003, a tiger at the site was euthanized after it bit a 31-year-old pregnant woman on the wrist.

Authorities don't yet know whether it will be necessary to kill the tigers to test for rabies. State law requires that owners of some exotic animals, including tigers, keep health and other records.

Southeastern Minnesota was the scene of another high-profile tiger attack in 2001 when a young girl was wounded at the BEARCAT Hollow animal park in Racine. The owners were later convicted on charges related to illegal animal trafficking.

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