

North Carolina Zoological Park

DAVID M. JONES, DVM, ZOO DIRECTOR

August 27th, 2008

Ms. Melissa Gonzalez
National Campaigns Coordinator
In Defense of Animals
3010 Kerner Blvd.
San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Melissa

Enclosed please find the materials you requested. These are mainly on the cd, with the exception of the three separate printed documents.

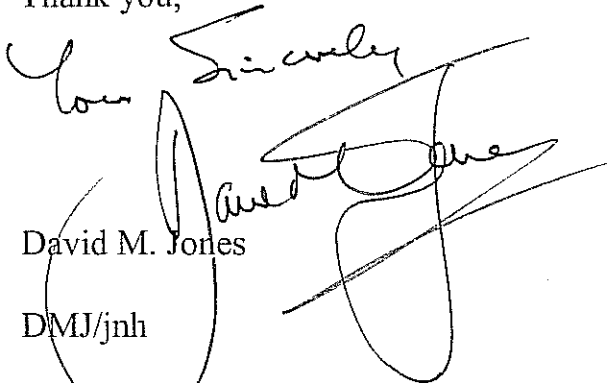
Amongst those is the last summarized AZA Inspection Report, which contains very little of significance in an animal welfare and husbandry sense, but where there are minor implications, these have all been corrected.

An invoice for the work involved in collating all of this will be sent separately.

Mission Statement

To encourage the understanding of & commitment to the conservation of the world's wild life & wild places through the education of the independent & nature world & this by creating a sense of awareness & respect throughout the Park & in our outreach programs

Thank you,

Yours Sincerely


David M. Jones

DMJ/jnh

Enclosures



AMERICAN ZOO AND AQUARIUM ASSOCIATION

**Final Report Of The Visiting Committee
To The Accreditation Commission**

NORTH CAROLINA ZOOLOGICAL PARK
Asheboro, North Carolina

UNDER REVIEW FOR ACCREDITATION

Date(s) Visited: July 27 – 29, 2005
Final Review & Hearing on: September 14, 2005

ACCREDITATION COMMISSION PRIMARY REVIEWER
Ilze Berzins, DVM, VP of Biological Programs, The Florida Aquarium, FL

VISITING COMMITTEE INSPECTORS
signatures on file

TEAM CHAIR

Operations Inspector: Alexander "Pete" Hoskins, President/CEO, The Philadelphia Zoo, PA

Husbandry/Animal Mgt. Inspector: Dino Ferri, Curator of Reptiles, Audubon Zoo, LA

Veterinarian: Mike Nance, DVM, Ellen Trout Zoo, TX

This Visiting Committee recommends that the next team allow at least 3 day(s) to inspect this institution.

NOTE: This is an official document of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association and becomes an intrinsic part of the institution's accreditation processing. The accreditation program is conducted in confidence; only the Accreditation Commission, related AZA staff, Director/CEO of the applicant institution, and Chair of the institution's governing authority shall be provided copies by AZA.

List of Concerns/Achievements

PART I:

Items of Concern Noted by Visiting Committee

INSTITUTION DIRECTOR: •IMPORTANT• The items listed below were of noted concern during the inspection. Please address as many of these concerns as possible prior to the Commission's meeting. •Status reports and estimated completion schedules are expected for items that cannot be finished by the time of the hearing. It is possible that, after reviewing all supporting materials (including the Visiting Committee's written report), the Commission may have issues or concerns to be addressed during the meeting *that are not included below*. [NOTE: •all items must be addressed, regardless of whether they are designated as "Major" or "Lesser".]

A written report to the Commission on how you are responding to these concerns must be submitted by the established deadline (check with the Director, Accreditation Programs if uncertain of date). The written report is for informational purposes only. At the hearing, the Commission will ask for a verbal update on additional progress made *after* the written report was submitted. The Commission cannot accept written reports during the hearing as they do not have time to read them.

MAJOR CONCERNS

1. (Prior Concern) Responsibility for oversight/control of water quality is still expressed as a concern by animal staff. The visiting committee did not see this as affecting water quality and is not a major concern but procedures should be established to assure that animal staff is appropriately involved in testing and water quality maintenance actions.
2. (Prior Concern) High turnover is no longer a major problem for the institution. However, the Animal Dept. must make significant use of Temp. employees for daily care due to budget cutbacks - thus affecting turnover with those positions. (This was made more acute with opening of Avian and Mammal Propagation centers and could be a greater problem if the State does not fund the newly approved positions (3) that will be required for the new Elephant/Rhino exhibit.
3. (Prior Concern) The operating budget has been improved with new earned revenue activities such as increased retail sales, the SimEx ride and dino island. Also marketing efforts have resulted in higher attendance to boost revenue. The Zoo is still dependent on continued state support that is often threatened to decrease. The Society is challenged to make up that difference and has been limited to focus capital fundraising for new facilities.
4. (Prior Concern) Lack of state support for marketing still exists but has been addressed in partnership with the Society with the addition of a new Marketing professional. This will need to be addressed on a continuing basis.
5. (Prior Concern) Maintenance support personnel is adequate and provide a high level of ongoing repair, in contrast to the findings of the prior visit. Of greater concern is the lack of capital investment for replacement or renovation of aging portions of the facility. This will be addressed separately.
6. (Prior Concern) The prior concern with no alarm systems in the Bear holding still exists, but appear to be adequately covered with walkie talkies.
7. (Prior Concern) The committee agrees with the prior concern about the location of the snake alarm in one of the venomous areas and conclude this is of minor concern due to backup via walkie talkie.
8. The major concern found by this committee is that of a lack of adequate and consistent commitment to infrastructure replacement and renovation - beyond what is possible to manage with even the best of maintenance. We agree with the Director's estimate that there is approximately \$20 million in such deferred investment. A plan and commitment are vital to assure the continuance of an exceptionally high quality physical environment in the next few years
9. The poor quality of the employee facilities for Horticulture and Maintenance Divisions is a legitimate source of concern.

The office and storage space for all employees below the top supervisors do not provide the basic needs for office, meeting, breaks, and daily preparation. This remains a priority that is connected to the lack of capital investment beyond that for new ex. .IS.

LESSER CONCERNS

1. The Education Department is missing opportunities to reach even more guests and students due to low staffing levels. They currently reach approximately 250,000 visitors on site, but only about 22,000 in local outreach programs. The quality of existing programs remains excellent.
2. Ground Fault interrupters (GFI's) are not consistently in place where required. A survey of the facilities should be completed asap and a plan to replace or upgrade those conditions is needed as a near-term priority.
3. The 500-acre developed site with hilly terrain and several buildings with concrete walls make the communications (both walkie talkie and cell phones) "spotty". Like the GFI issue, this problem should be addressed at least on the basis of those problem zones asap.
4. Some minor concern about the artificial cypress tree in the Cypress Swamp Pavilion has points sticking up from ground that could be a hazard to children should they fall on them.
5. Pay levels for key positions such as Keepers are too low for long-term recruitment and retention of quality staff. Presently Keepers are at approximately the 20th percentile of AZA equivalents.

PART II:

Points of Particular Achievement Noted by Visiting Committee

INSTITUTION DIRECTOR: During the inspection the Visiting Committee was particularly impressed with the items listed below.

Overall the North Carolina Zoo is one of the finest zoo settings anywhere, with exhibitory of the highest quality to serve a clearly-presented conservation mission. The linking of N.C. Zoo's own field conservation programs to their programs on site is remarkable - extending beyond the animal exhibits to include also the horticultural experience. What is especially remarkable in the Zoo's conservation programs is their integration across all Zoo departments and to the zoo's guests and program participants.

The Uganda (UNITE) program is impressive for its contribution to the education of local Ugandan families, but has been made even more effective by the leveraging of N.C. schools and integration into the zoo's on-site interpretation. Every department appears to be involved in carrying out this initiative. The Cameroon Project is also impressive for its long-term commitment and integration into the zoo's programs.

The institutional commitment to "in house" conservation is one of the most extensive anywhere, including: an innovative bio-diesel program, comprehensive recycling for employees and guests, "green vehicles", lake and stream water quality management, integrated pest management, composting, organic fertilizers, water conservation, energy conservation, managed under an award-winning ISO 14001 certification program.

The quality of grounds was immaculate. There was a near-absolute lack of litter anywhere in the zoo's 500 acres. Plantings are exceptionally well-designed and managed to greatly enhance the visitor experience while also adding to the conservation interpretation.

Local conservation efforts are especially commendable, from the Director's own regional leadership to that of staff such as John Groves' initiatives with local snake, turtle, fish populations. These initiatives are especially commendable for engaging the enthusiastic support of line staff of the zoo as well. Local efforts also include very strong programming of local environmental issues across the broad spectrum of plant, animal, water, and air quality.

A newer example of N.C. Zoo leadership in programming is the Wildlife Rehab Center. It is run completely by volunteers and provides an excellent engagement with the public with the zoo's conservation mission.