

July 25, 2002

Mr. Chuck Doyle, TAG/SSP Steering Committee Liaison
Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park
1 Conservation Place
Syracuse, NY 13204

Dear Mr. Doyle:

The Seneca Park Zoo wishes to initiate the process for TAG/SSP breeding recommendation approval.

This request is in line with the goals of the TAG/SSP, and lead to their accomplishment. The calf produced from the requested breeding will contribute to the development of a viable ex situ population of African elephants. The female proposed for this breeding is a wild-caught female who has not produced a calf in her lifetime. Additionally, she has been fully evaluated for her reproductive potential.

Finally, the Seneca Park Zoo is committed to the long-term propagation of African elephants. This commitment is reflected in the emphasis placed on them in our recently adopted master plan. We are committing to an elephant facility capable of continued contribution to the ex situ propagation of this species. **In this regard, we are clearly stating that the Seneca Park Zoo will provide appropriate housing in perpetuity for any calves produced as a result of our breeding program whether they are male or female.** The letter from our Institutional Representative succinctly states our case and is fully supported by the entire management staff.

I urge you to make a positive recommendation to the TAG/SSP in order to advance the goal we all share of enhancing the continued presence of an ex situ population of African elephants in North America.

Sincerely,

Lawrence J. Sorel
Director

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The following is a review of the decision tree for breeding recommendations:

Question 1: Will the offspring of the proposed breeding potentially contribute genetically, statistically or scientifically to the goal of a self-sustaining ex situ breeding population?

Yes. This calf of this proposed breeding will carry the genes of a female that was wild-born, thus, with the current condition of the ex situ population, will contribute significantly to the growth and diversity of the ex situ population. Additionally, the potential semen donors include two semen producing bulls as Disney's animal Kingdom (Maclean and Jack), one bull in West Palm Beach at Lion Country Safari, and the bull at Riddle's Elephant Sanctuary in Arkansas.

Question 2: Does the proposed breeding have a probability of success?

Yes. The female has been thoroughly evaluated for reproductive soundness by our veterinarian, Dr. Jeff Wyatt and by Dr. Dennis Schmidt. She has been found to be reproductively sound. She has also had her estrous cycle fully characterized through blood collection and analysis. We have been able to predict and then confirm day of ovulation.

Question 3: Does the institution where the calf is to be born have the capability to house a male offspring, or has it made a commitment in writing, signed by the director of that institution, to provide housing for a male offspring?

Yes. The Seneca Park Zoo is committed to the long-term conservation of African elephants. To this end, in the recently adopted master plan for the Zoo, a major commitment to African elephants has been made. This commitment includes continued efforts to reproduce African elephants into the future and to provide appropriate housing for any offspring, male or female. A letter from the Director of the Seneca Park Zoo affirming that commitment accompanies this request.

In addition to the above information, I want to add that we have assigned significant resources to the effort to reproduce African elephants at the Seneca Park Zoo. Our staff has received extensive training, we have retained the services of an outside consultant to periodically review our program and we have sent various members of our elephant staff to other institutions to observe their programs, particularly institutions that had recently produced a calf. Our veterinarian is a member of the Elephant SSP Reproduction Subcommittee chaired by Dr. Dennis Schmitt. Finally, it is our intent to follow the birth protocol developed by Heidi Riddle.

Sincerely,

Gail Tabone
Elephant Manager
Institutional Representative