National Center for Research Resources

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Summary of Chimp Haven Visit and Meeting with the Chimpanzee Sanctuary Working Group and the Chimp Haven Board of Directors

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

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On July 8, 2008, the Chimpanzee Sanctuary Working Group toured the Chimp Haven facility with the Chimp Haven staff and Board of Directors. The tour was comprehensive, and all of the facilities were visited — though it did not include entering the interior housing areas. The Working Group had sufficient time to gather information and ask questions related to housing, husbandry, veterinary, and animal care. Overall, the Working Group felt that the facilities were impressive, well maintained, and that the chimpanzees appeared to be receiving excellent care.

Following the tour, the Working Group and NIH staff met to review the on-site information provided by Chimp Haven. Information provided — in addition to that mailed before the visit — included Chimp Haven By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation, Phase 1 and 2 Construction Reports, yearly fund-raising totals and number of donors, a Development Planning Report prepared by a consulting group, budget and chimpanzee receipt and mortality statistics, and challenges encountered by the board. The new Chimp Haven Director of Development and her staff were introduced, and they briefly outlined their qualifications, experiences, and goals for increasing the total financial contributions to the sanctuary. The Working Group expects that the development staff will have a positive impact in implementing a more robust fund-raising program in the future.

The Sanctuary Contract Project Director presented a PowerPoint presentation, describing the history, organization, operation, policies and procedures, and financing of the sanctuary, including federal government funding. The current composition of the board was presented, along with a note describing the types of individuals needed to fill three vacant slots. There was an extended exchange of questions and comments concerning the sanctuary operations among all attendees. The Working Group members discussed areas they considered important to the continued success of the sanctuary and provided input, suggestions, and recommendations for consideration. The points of interest listed below represent the major suggestions and recommendations (not in any order of priority):

- Serious considerations should be given to appointing one or more individuals to the board who can enhance the access to corporate and foundation funding sources. Members from the business community and animal protection or charitable foundation groups should be considered for membership on the board. The current board members are very dedicated and well qualified to oversee the sanctuary operations and quality of care issues.

- Consideration should be given to making the Project Director (CEO) a non-voting member of the board, which would provide another voting slot that could then be used to enhance diversity of the board and remain in compliance with the CHIMP Act.

- Development of a new strategy for recruiting a full-time veterinarian that include administrative as well as clinical responsibilities. It seems that someone other than an entry-level person is needed.

- Provide the support necessary for the current development and public relations staff to develop and implement their ideas and programs, using reasonable annual financial goals to measure success.

- Develop an improved marketing strategy that includes the use of on-line products, and experienced fund-raising consultants when needed.

- The sanctuary should consider developing funded proposals to perform noninvasive studies with the chimpanzees in the sanctuary.
- The public and private image of the sanctuary should receive the appropriate priority in the short- and long-term strategic planning process. The sanctuary board might consider using consultants to assist in the development of this portion of the plan.
- Planning for future funding of the sanctuary once the current congressional cap is reached must begin as soon as possible. The plan should consider funds from all possible sources.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:15 p.m. The Working Group will prepare a final report for presentation to the National Advisory Research Resources Council during the September 2008 meeting in Bethesda, Maryland.