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*Managing fish and wildlife
resources for their long-term
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of people.*

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March 7, 2019

Jon Brangan
8225 North Wickham Roan
Melbourne, Florida 32940

Dear Mr. Brangan:

This correspondence is in response to your request for approval to allow incidental contact with class I animals, more specifically, white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*). Florida Administrative Code 68A-6.0023(3)(a)2.b.V., states in part:

Incidental contact with other Class I wildlife must be approved in writing by the Commission prior to the use of the wildlife for incidental contact with the public. Factors to be considered when approving such contact are found in subparagraph (3)(a)1.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Captive Wildlife Office staff received a proposal from the Brevard Zoo dated January 8, 2019, requesting approval for Rhino Encounters, more specifically, a wild encounter tour allowing visitors to interact with (1) of (4) white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*). The proposed policies and procedures to be implemented during the Rhino Encounter are as follows:

1. Children ages 7-11 are permitted to attend Rhino Encounters if they are accompanied by an adult. No child under the age of 7 shall be permitted to attend encounters under any circumstances. This rule applies to paying guests, VIZ's (Very Important Zoo Guests), specialty tours and employees.
2. No more than a total of 8 guests are allowed at one time within a 20-30 minute Rhino Encounter period. Only four children ages 7-11 are allowed at each encounter. There are two time slots open per day between the hours of 12 and 1 p.m.
3. An additional Africa Keeper is required when friends and/or family of one of the Africa Keepers conducting the encounter are present, for a total of three trained Africa Keepers at the encounter. A trained animal manager may take the place of an Africa Keeper for the third staff member requirement if needed.
4. If the entire group isn't together and doesn't arrive within a 15-minute time-frame, the encounter will be cancelled.
5. No one enters the rhino encounter area without prior permission from the trained Africa Keepers or animal managers to include curators and the Director of Animal Programs, or designee.
6. Two Africa Keepers trained on Rhino Encounters must be present during all animal interactions. If for any reason a keeper is not at 100% capacity, a trained substitute will be assigned to the encounter. A keeper must not under any circumstance be comprised and unable to perform at a level expected in a human/animal encounter where safety is the utmost concern.
7. One Africa Keeper stays with the rhinos at all times while the other escorts the guests to and from the encounter area. Guests must stay with the Africa Keepers and within the encounter area at all times.
8. Guest may only interact with the rhino while they are lined up along the bars and when the keeper says it is safe to interact. Only one guest interacts with the rhino at a time. Two guests may interact with the rhino if the keeper announces it is safe.

9. Guests must not cross their arms in front of the safety bars and the rhinos. This is to prevent guests from getting their arms pinched by the rhinos if they were to lean against the bars.
10. Guests may not interact with the rhinos from the neck area forward (including the ears, eyes and horns). These are sensitive areas and can sometimes agitate the rhinos.
11. Keepers must make sure guests move back and there is no interaction with the rhinos if the rhinos are facing the encounter area.
12. If at any time guests refuse to follow the safety instructions, the Africa Keepers may end the encounter with no refund. In these circumstances the Africa Keeper will need to communicate with an Animal Manager.

In addition to the policies stated above, a physical net barrier will be added to prevent guests from falling through the bars into the encounter area. This barrier will be a removable 2", #84 nylon netting material hung on a 3/8" diameter polyester perimeter rope. The new barrier will be put in place prior to each encounter. The barrier will then be removed and stored after the daily encounter session. Eye bolts will be installed on the guest side of the bollards to allow for the net to be hung using carabiners and securely attached at the top and bottom of the nylon net. The bottom of the net will be set just above the concrete. The top of the net will be set and maintained at a height of 36" above the concrete.

Based upon the proposal submitted, FWC approves the incidental contact with white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) provided that all wildlife used for contact with the public shall have been evaluated by the exhibitor to insure compatibility with the uses intended and the policies and procedures listed above are followed. All wildlife shall be exhibited in a manner that prevents injuries to the public and the wildlife. The exhibitor shall take reasonable sanitary precautions to minimize the possibility of disease or parasite transmission which could adversely affect the health or welfare of the public or wildlife. When any condition(s) exist that result in the threat of human safety, or the welfare of the wildlife, the animal(s) shall, at the direction of a Commission officer be immediately removed from public contact for an interval necessary to correct the unsafe or deficient condition.

It is our desire to work with our constituents for the benefit of wildlife and the public. The approval of the Rhino Encounter, however, does not alleviate the Brevard Zoo from any civil or criminal penalties resulting from the escape of the animal or injury to the public and this approval may be terminated if injuries to the public occur or the practice becomes unsafe.

Sincerely,



Major Rob Beaton
Division of Law Enforcement

jh/kh
Enclosure