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March 11, 2022

Patrick Craig
Executive Director
The Wild Animal Sanctuary
1946 County Road 53
Keenesburg, CO 80643

Mr. Craig,

We have received your letter dated February 18, 2022, concerning the coyote that lives at River Trail Nature Center. It is good to finally have contact with your organization directly, and we appreciate the information you've provided about The Wild Animal Sanctuary and its philosophy and approach.

The Forest Preserves of Cook County is an organization, such as yours, that has a mission to preserve and protect the natural world. As you likely know, we have initiated a review of our ambassador animal program. We are aiming to compile an overview of information from the latest academic research and third-party experts, the state of the current discussion of animals in captivity, best practices locally and nationally, and benchmarking against other, similar programs. With this full picture, we will determine if and how we could best modify our ambassador animal program, which would include the coyote.

Your letter does provide useful information for our review. There are other questions we have for The Wild Animal Sanctuary to give us a fuller understanding of your organization and your operations. Thank you in advance for assisting the Forest Preserves in gathering information that will ensure the best option for our ambassador coyote's health and well-being.

You note that nearly a dozen coyotes currently live at The Wild Animal Sanctuary facility at Keenesburg, Colorado. What is the exact number?

Do these coyotes all live in one "habitat"? If not, how are they distributed?

How large is the sole or main coyote habitat at the Keenesburg facility?

Can you provide documentation on what and how often the coyotes are fed? Are they monitored to make sure each animal has equal access to food resources?

What materials do you use for your underground dens for coyotes? How deep do they go underground, and how long is a den?

How large is the habitat where a newly arrived coyote lives while it is isolated from other coyotes?

Have any of the coyotes that live or have lived at the Keenesburg facility been diagnosed as imprinted by a licensed animal rehabilitator before arriving at The Wild Animal Sanctuary?

- If so, how long did it take for a coyote or coyotes diagnosed as imprinted to “bond with other coyotes” and then live in the same enclosure?
- Has there ever been a coyote or coyotes diagnosed as imprinted that has not been able to live with other coyotes at the Keenesburg facility?

In your letter, you assert that the coyote at River Trail “would not be in danger from the transfer or subsequent introduction to other coyotes.” From your website, it appears that the coyotes that currently live at the Keenesburg facility were either living together at a roadside zoo, or are the pups born from that set of coyotes. Has a coyote that is not from that zoo or born from a coyote from that zoo ever been introduced to this pack?

Have any of the TWAS coyotes ever been ill or injured while living at the Keenesburg facility?

Have any of the TWAS coyotes ever received medication, currently or in the past? If so, what were the medical issues and what medication is or was prescribed?

How many coyotes could be housed at the Keenesburg facility in total if it was at full capacity?

What is the standard process for identifying and then adding a coyote or any animal to the Keenesburg facility? Does TWAS work with the International Wildlife Rehabilitations Council for animal placement for coyotes or other animals? Another rehabilitation organization?

How many animals in total live at Keenesburg facility?

Local residents who are working with TWAS to remove the coyote from River Trail Nature Center say that at TWAS, the coyote will undergo “rehabilitation.” Can you provide documentation on what constitutes the "rehabilitation" process for coyotes (or other animals) that have been diagnosed as imprinted before arriving at The Wild Animal Sanctuary?

Are there other facilities or organizations in the U.S. that “rehabilitate” imprinted animals as your organization does, in addition to TWAS?

- If so, can you provide their contact information?

In your letter, you wrote that the coyote at River Trail sees the presence of humans as “direct threats to his territory and general safety.” Can you provide academic research that indicates that an imprinted animal has this kind of reaction to humans?

You also wrote, “The behaviors he displays are not natural and toggle between stress and boredom.” Please quantify the evidence TWAS has gathered to evaluate the coyote’s behaviors: How many hours of footage have you been provided and by whom, what were the conditions of the footage in terms of number of people present, time of day and other factors, is this continuous video or edited moments, has TWAS been provided information from any in-person evaluations by a wildlife expert, etc.

- Is this the standard method TWAS uses in evaluating animal behavior?

On behalf of the coyote at River Trail Nature Center, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jacqui Ulrich

Director of the Department of Conservation and Experiential Programming