

ANIMAL ACQUISITION GUIDELINES and APPROVAL PROCESS FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF COOK COUNTY

When Nature Center Staff propose acquiring a new animal the following guidelines must be addressed in the form of a written request/proposal to the Animal Care Committee. The Animal Care Committee will make a recommendation to CEP Senior Staff. Animal acquisitions should not be made without going through this process.

- All necessary state and federal permits must be in place prior to acquisition. All terms and conditions of permits must be followed.
- Acquiring an educational animal should enhance and further the Forest Preserve District's mission. Please address the following:
 - Do other FPCC sites have this animal in their collection and care? If yes, why add another one?
 - Is this animal native to Cook County or Illinois? * Rocky was acquired from Tennessee
 - How does this animal fit into the Forest Preserves/CEP's and the Center's Interpretation messaging?
 - What is the interpretation plan for this animal or what interpretation goals will you be meeting with the animal?
- The animal should be suitable for display and education/interpretation (some species and or individual animals do not do well in captivity, i.e. high strung, easily stressed or aggressive temperaments). Please provide information about observed behavior from the acquiring group/person. Dr. Valerie Johnson discussed at length with Britton and Suffredin why coyotes are the worst ambassador animal due to their easily stressed nature. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0U71nnQOao&ab_channel=Nuh-uhX
- Prior to acquisition, any injuries should be completely healed and a medical history needs to be provided.
- The reason for being in captivity (permanent injury or wild capture) should not be a cause of undue stress, pain, or on-going health problems. Please provide information about why this animal is in captivity. Violation as we've repeatedly caught Rocky stress pacing aka Zoochosis
- FPCC staff should talk with approved veterinary vendors and determine that they will be able to provide care/support for this animal.
- Forest Preserve staff should have experience working with this or similar species (or receive training from experienced keepers prior to acquisition). Please provide staffing plan for this specific animal.

River Trail Nature Center does not have a burrow den or place for Rocky to escape, nor another animal to keep warm.

- Animal enclosure(s) should have adequate predator proofing, escape prevention and provide appropriate housing for the species in all weather conditions. Please provide description of enclosure and any modifications you'll be making to support this animal.
- Proper diet and nutrition must be provided and those foods should be readily available from nature center suppliers. Provide dietary plan for this animal.

Additionally, please provide:

Animal Species:

Age of Animal:

Acquisition Site and contact information:

Any additional costs anticipated for prepare for acquisition:

As some of the guidelines are subjective, nature center staff are encouraged to meet with their animal care lead and discuss. These guidelines are meant to be part of a discussion that ensures the Forest Preserves of Cook County acquire appropriate educational animals and provide those animals a good quality of life. All guidelines should be followed for all animals but an acquisition request should be completed for birds and mammals and should be brought forth to the Animal Care Committee to give a recommendation to senior staff.

Notes on EXTREME TEMPERATURES

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF COOK COUNTY

Revised 3/3/2022

Hutches – aka jump boxes, allow birds to get out of the wind and harsh weather. These should be built to a size and dimension that allows the bird freedom of movement but still be small enough to hold some of the bird's body heat and provide shelter.

Shade tarps—place on north and west side of enclosures to block prevailing winds in winter. Also provides shade in summer months.

Straw bales—provide straw bales or bedding material for mammals in winter months. Replace soiled straw as needed. Recommend removing straw when temperatures are above 50 degrees Fahrenheit due to increased potential for bacterial growth.

Snow removal—clear and remove snow from perches, stumps and feeding platforms after snowfalls. Shovel snow from cage floor as necessary, especially for non-flighted animals.

Note: avoid using salt or chemicals around cages that could easily be tracked with shoes.

Feeding—offer food on top of astroturf or surfaces that it won't freeze to overnight. If necessary, feed owls or birds that don't eat right away at end of day or closest to when they are most active. Food can be offered more frequently for small raptors or animals that don't consume everything before it freezes.

One of the birds of Prey at River Trail has an arthritic leg. Why isn't there a heated perch made available for it as it states in the policy document?

Heated perches—commercial heated perch for chickens can be wrapped with rope and placed in hutch. Operates when temperatures are below freezing. May be useful for birds with a history of foot problems, circulation issues or reduced tolerance to cold weather. Requires access to electricity. **WARNING:** avoid having exposed electrical cords near animals that tend to chew or bite (mammals, vultures, etc.). No light bulbs or fragile heat sources inside of cages.

Bathing & drinking(winter)—In the past, it was common to offer fresh water regularly, if not daily, year-round. Be aware that any bird wearing equipment and taking a bath under freezing conditions could potentially risk metal grommets freezing to their skin. Raptors acquire most of their hydration needs from their food, though they should have access to drinking water on a regular basis.

We've repeatedly documented this violated.

According to *Wildlife in Education: A Guide for the Care and Use of Program Animals*:

"In a cold climate, water containers can pose a danger to outside animals. Most experienced wildlife educators withhold water baths in freezing weather conditions or offer them for short periods of time. Bring the animal inside and offer it a mist bath or water pan in a different enclosure. The animal must be completely dry before being placed outside."

"Raptors often have bracelets and jesses on their legs. This equipment must remain dry under freezing conditions. If the animal or equipment is even slightly damp frostbite can result. Frostbite under the equipment may remain undetected, causing much damage to the tissue."

Notes on EXTREME TEMPERATURES

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF COOK COUNTY

Revised 3/3/2022

Inside vs. Outside (winter)—Regarding whether to bring an animal inside during extreme cold temperatures or wind chills, observation and daily health checks are key:

- Watch for excessive shivering, weakness or lethargy
- Pre-frostbite signs include redness of feet or toes (check to see if feet are cold)
- Frostbite may present as a brownish pink discoloration of toes or white fluid-filled skin in wrists of raptors (contact a vet immediately if frostbite is suspected)
- Keep track of eating—Is any food not being consumed for more than 1 or 2 days?

Don't you think Dr.'s of veterinary medicine should be writing up protocol for animal care instead of uneducated employees guessing?

I'm not sure if there is an absolute right or wrong regarding temperatures. We know these species are found in the wild year-round and those individuals survive without hutches, tarps to block the wind, or regular sources of food to provide the calories needed to stay warm. Each nature center may decide what temperature range they are most comfortable using. With close observation and common sense, I tend to use the following guidelines:

- Birds with missing feathers (bare patches or broken feathers) or exposed skin (vultures) should be treated with more caution
- Watch weather forecasts and try to plan ahead
- I generally use 0 degrees Fahrenheit as my threshold
- If the high temperature is **below** 0 degrees for more than one day I will bring the birds indoors
- If the temperature dips below 0 degrees for one day but warms up the next, they may stay outside depending on observations
- Avoid large temperature fluctuations, so if the forecast calls for several days below 0, consider bringing the birds indoors a day early so they're not going from below 0 degrees to 70 degrees

It's been below zero when several citizens and I went to the River Trail Nature Center and none of the birds were taken inside

Summer—during extreme heat or ozone action days make sure water is available at all times. Signs of stress or heat stroke may include excessive panting or open-mouth breathing, drooping wings, weakness or collapse. Contact a veterinarian immediately if you think an animal is experiencing heat stroke. Keep in mind, however, that mild panting or gular fluttering are normal methods of heat dissipation for hawks and owls.

Birds that are susceptible to heat stress can be given showers with a hose or misting with a spray bottle to thoroughly soak the animal down to the skin. Raptors will also dissipate heat through their feet so soaking feet in cold water can help reduce heat stress. Shade should be made available to animals so they can get out of direct sunlight. Mammals can get treats like frozen watermelon or “flavored” ice cubes to help cool off. **Note: frozen treats should not be given to animals already suffering from hyperthermia.**

Please see the attached Cook County Forest Preserve Policy documents titled, *Animal Acquisition* and *Extreme Temperatures*. Three photos are also attached.

In the policy documents are violations highlighted in yellow with notes written in red.

Here is video footage of Rocky demonstrating Zoochosis:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSl4PwtRWwI&ab_channel=Nuh-uhX

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6HmO6eqxkg&ab_channel=Nuh-uhX

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6_9L1sX0rw&ab_channel=Nuh-uhX

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/0A6DbuCOygz>

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/wjbvLedEICA>

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/G9rMtAcJ-Zw?&ab_channel=Nuh-uhX

The Wild Animal Sanctuary is accredited by:

- The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries
- American Sanctuary Associations
- Better Business Bureau

Brookfield Zoo gives their wolves two acres to roam. Can't compare that to 266 square feet with metal bars.

Thank you.

Nicole Milan



Rachel Siegel <rschicksiegel@gmail.com>

Update requested: review of CCFP captive and ambassador animals programs

1 message

Rachel Siegel <rschicksiegel@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 30, 2022 at 12:30 PM

To: arnold.randall@cookcountyiil.gov, Cherie Travis <cherietravis@msn.com>

Cc: Larry Suffredin <lsuffredin@aol.com>, toni.preckwinkle@cookcountyiil.gov, kevin.morrison@cookcountyiil.gov, District15@cookcountyiil.gov, brandon.johnson@cookcountyiil.gov, district10@cookcountyiil.gov, Info@bridgetgainer.com, bridget.degnen@cookcountyiil.gov, district12@cookcountyiil.gov, info@michaelcabonargi.com, mike@cabonargi.com, luis.arroyojr@cookcountyiil.gov, arroyojrstaff@gmail.com, Dennis.Deer@cookcountyiil.gov, Pamela.Cummings@cookcountyiil.gov, bill.lowry@cookcountyiil.gov, stanley.moore2@cookcountyiil.gov, deborah.sims@cookcountyiil.gov, donna.miller@cookcountyiil.gov, alma.anaya@cookcountyiil.gov, cookcty9@aol.com, john.daley@cookcountyiil.gov, frank.aguilar@cookcountyiil.gov, sean.morrison@cookcountyiil.gov, scott.britton@cookcountyiil.gov

Dear Superintendent Randall:

Thank you for your comments on March 15 broadly outlining the review process of the Cook County Forest Preserve's (CCFP) captive and ambassador animals programs. We appreciate your leadership as the CCFP undertakes this necessary review to ensure that its captive and ambassador animals programs are in alignment with current science and best practices in the field.

We are requesting additional information about the review process, specifically:

- The list of key topics that have been identified and are being researched by the committee.
- Which local and national facilities have been selected to benchmark against for best practices.
- Which organizations and their representatives have been selected to interview for more information.
- The resources and studies that have been gathered to date by the committee, which are being used to inform decision-making.
- The names and qualifications of the third-party experts who are being brought in to assess the care, feeding, enrichment activities, habitats, and other factors that impact the quality of life of current captive and ambassador animals throughout the CCFP facilities.

Because the CCFP has committed to providing this report for the Forest Preserve Board at the July board meeting, we are certain that the review must be underway and that at least some of this information could be made available to us as well as to the public, perhaps at the Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners meeting that is scheduled for April 5 at 10 a.m.

Sincerely,

Cherie Travis, Animal Law Attorney; former Chair of the Chicago Bar Association's Animal Law Committee

Rachel Schick Siegel, President, Illinois Beaver Alliance; graduate student at Loyola University Chicago's School of Sustainability, Certificate Program in Environmental Law and Policy

STANDARD OF CARE POLICY for Nature Centers

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF COOK COUNTY

Revised 2/5/2020

When possible, every effort will be made to meet the following guidelines in caring for nature center educational animals:

- All necessary state and federal permits must be in order. All terms and conditions of permits must be followed.
- Animals should receive **visual health checks** by staff **daily**. We've repeatedly caught River Trail violating this standard of care.
- **Animals should have daily access to water and receive fresh water regularly (above 32°F).**
- Maintenance and cleaning/disinfecting of cages should be performed regularly.¹
 - **Spot-cleaning of feces or soiled bedding** should be done **daily** or as needed.
 - **Deep-cleaning** of enclosures should follow a regular schedule of disinfecting cages (including substrate) with a recommendation of **once per month**.
- Annual visits by CEP supervisor or ACC rep (to provide support where needed, observe general animal care, assist with raptor husbandry, discuss any needs or issues, etc.).
- Birds and mammals must have **yearly veterinarian examinations**.
- Staff should follow proper diet, nutrition, and handling of food standards.¹
- Staff should follow proper feeding schedules and maintain detailed record keeping.¹
- Nature Centers should maintain an animal care binder that includes:
 - Care and Management protocols (Fish, Amphibians, Reptiles, Birds, and Mammals)
 - Escape Protocols
 - Emergency Management Plans (options for what to do with resident animals in case of injury, natural disaster, extreme weather, etc.)
 - Emergency Contacts (phone numbers of staff, vet, etc.)
 - Feeding and cleaning schedules
- Nature Centers should keep and maintain supplies on-site including:
 - First Aid Kit (basic supplies for animal emergencies)
 - Coping supplies (materials for trimming talons and beaks of raptors)
 - Travel carrier, transport, or secondary enclosure for each resident (birds and mammals) in case of emergency, natural disaster, etc.
- Each Nature Center Director should assign a full-time staffer as an “animal lead” to help ensure consistent care and oversee medical attention of educational animals.
- When possible, staff should be allowed and encouraged to attend continuing education classes, animal care training, or wildlife first aid workshops (IWRC Basic Skills Seminar or similar wildlife rehabilitation class).

1. Buhl, Gail and Lisa Borgia, Editors. 2018. *Wildlife in Education: A Guide for the Care and Use of Program Animals*. National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association, St. Cloud, MN

☐ SALE ☒ EXCHANGE OR TRANSFER ☐ DONATION

USDA 36800

River Trail Nature Center
3120 Milwaukee Ave
Northbrook IL 60062

~~258~~ 33-C-0410, # 2916

Debbie Sykes

DATE 7/30/18



**Coyote den/burrow tunnel at
Wild Animal Sanctuary
Appropriate for cold weather**



Unnatural cage where cars drive by. When someone parks in the hanidcapped spot their lights shine right into Rocky's cage. There's nowhere for him to escape.



**Unnatural parking lot cage where cars drive by.
If someone parks in the handicapped spot,
their lights shine on Rocky.
There's nowhere for him to escape the crowds.**