From: jopalk@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Jeri Opalk
To: CookCounty Board (Secretary to the Board)
Subject: A bigger cage is not the answer — send Rocky the coyote to the sanctuary that will care for him
Date: Friday, September 2, 2022 4:57:33 PM

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Dear Cook County Board Cook County Board,

As someone who is concerned with the welfare of captive animals, I'm writing to urge you to abandon your inhumane plan to keep Rocky the coyote at the River Trail Nature Center and ask that you instead send him to The Wild Animal Sanctuary in Colorado.

Meeting the guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is certainly not something to be proud of, as it's well known that the USDA's standards suggest the absolute bare minimum of care. In fact, it's almost unheard of for the USDA to act decisively on behalf of any animal. Another excuse is that the Cook County Forest Preserve's Animal Ambassador Program has been around for decades. This does not mean it is acceptable to confine a wild animal in the name of education.

The 'Animals-First Approach' insisted that cage expansion is not necessary nor urgent. With recommendations like this, perhaps the "Animals-Last Approach" would be a more suitable name. Additionally, The Forest Preserve has no plans to ever provide Rocky with a companion, so he is essentially a prisoner in solitary confinement. Most people realize how cruel it is to keep any animal in a cage, and a social animal isolated, for any extended length of time. Nobody needs biased reports to prove this obvious fact.

Please reverse your inhumane decision. Don't waste Cook County taxpayer dollars on a cage for a wild animal and allow Rocky to live out his life at a legitimate sanctuary.

This animal deserves sanctuary, as they all do. No one should be held captive. Humans need to move toward this humane approach.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jeri Opalk
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