

**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**



the
guide to approval of
Non-member SSP participants

2009 edition

PLEASE NOTE: THE 2009 EDITION OF *"GUIDE TO APPROVAL OF NON-MEMBER SSP PARTICIPANTS* MAY BE USED FOR SUBMISSION OF MATERIALS FOR DEADLINES OCCURRING IN THE YEAR 2009. SUBMISSIONS FOR DEADLINES IN THE YEAR 2010 REQUIRE THE 2010 EDITION, AVAILABLE IN DECEMBER, 2010.

GUIDE TO APPROVAL OF NON-MEMBER SSP PARTICIPANTS

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM, OBJECTIVES, AND SCOPE

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a professional organization representing zoological parks and aquariums. Among its objectives, the Association strives to raise professional standards and to influence continuing development of superior zoological parks and aquariums. Throughout their history, zoological parks and aquariums have been governed according to varying objectives. Nevertheless, AZA believes that facilities maintaining collections of exotic wildlife must recognize and accept their common goals and seek to advance them by adhering to professional standards for maintaining quality and performance.

NON-MEMBER APPROVAL

In developing the Non-member approval process, AZA has been especially concerned with the need for assuring the highest standards of animal management and husbandry. It is our belief that this objective is paramount in the operation of collections of living creatures and that good conscience permits no higher priority. It also accords special attention to the use of the living collections and the nature of their management for conservation, education, scientific studies, and recreational purposes, thus justifying the maintenance of such collections.

Non-member Species Survival Plan (SSP®) Participants are expected to achieve and maintain or surpass the same basic standards as AZA certified related facilities and accredited institutional members. Non-member SSP Participants are *not considered accredited or certified*. They are referred to as approved. Like accreditation and certification, approval is required every five years.

POLICIES, RULES, AND GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING

PRINCIPLES OF NON-MEMBER APPROVAL

1. Zoos and aquariums located within the U.S. and open to the public for exhibition purposes on a regularly scheduled, predictable basis are not eligible to be Non-member SSP Participants.
2. Zoos and aquariums located outside the U.S. and open to the public for exhibition purposes on a regularly scheduled, predictable basis are eligible to be Non-member SSP Participants.
3. Facilities that hold wildlife (located within or outside of the United States) but are not open to the public on a regularly schedule, predictable basis are eligible to be Non-member SSP Participants. Examples of these types of facilities include, but are not limited to, wildlife ranches, wildlife refuges or rehab centers, research facilities, sanctuaries, survival centers, breeding farms, private individuals, and educational outreach organizations.
4. All Non-member SSP Participants must provide a genetic, demographic, conservation, and/or animal husbandry/welfare benefit to the SSP species or population.
5. If a Non-member is found to provide a benefit to the SSP, they must then pass the remainder of the application and inspection process before being granted approval. To facilitate international cooperation with other professional zoological associations, the following exceptions in the application and inspection process have been made for institutions/facilities that are (1) located outside of the United States and (2) members of a World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) super-regional zoological association and/or WAZA:
 - a. Non-member applicants that are members of the super-regional zoological associations of WAZA are required to submit (1) a completed General Information section of the Non-member Application and (2) a letter of recommendation from their association supporting their participation in the AZA SSP. They are not required submit the entire Non-member Application or pass an on-site inspection unless required by the SSP. AZA institutions involved in any animal transactions with a Non-member will use due diligence through their institutional acquisition/disposition policy and through any necessary governmental permits.

The super-regional zoological associations of WAZA include: Asociación

Latinoamericana de Parques Zoológicos y Acuarios (ALPZA), Asociación Mesoamericana y del Caribe de Zoológicos y Acuarios (AMACZOOA), Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria (ARAZPA), Asociación de Zoológicos Criaderos y Acuarios de México (AZCARM), Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA), Eurasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (EARAZA), European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), Japanese Association of Zoos and Aquariums (JAZA), African Association of Zoos and Aquaria (PAAZAB), South East Asian Zoos Association (SEAZA), South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation (SAZARC) Note: these are called super-regional associations because all other WAZA-member zoological associations fall under these larger umbrella organizations.

- b. Non-member applicants that are members of WAZA but are not located in an area covered by one of the super-regional zoological associations are required to submit a completed General Information section of the Non-member Application. They are not required submit the entire Non-member Application or pass an on-site inspection unless required by the SSP. AZA institutions involved in any animal transactions with a Non-member will use due diligence through their institutional acquisition/disposition policy and through any necessary governmental permits.
6. When an inspection is required, facilities are approved based on what exists at the time of the inspection and review—not on future plans.
 7. The Non-member's entire facility will be considered in the approval process. AZA's Policies and Code of Professional Ethics will apply to the entire animal collection.
 8. Only AZA accredited institutions and certified related facilities and participating government agencies/facilities are allowed to display the SSP logo.
 9. The approval program is conducted in confidence.
 10. Approval must be achieved before the Non-member may begin participating in the SSP.
 11. The granting of approval is for five years, and expires at the end of that period. Facilities must successfully complete the full process again before the end of the five-year period.
 12. An SSP representative must visit Non-members at least once a year, with

that representative providing a summary report to the appropriate TAG, WCMC, and the AZA Conservation Department. Failure by the SSP to conduct an annual review of all approved Non-members and submit a report on these reviews as described above could result in removal of the Non-member. In addition to annual reviews conducted by the SSP, an approved Non-member facility may be reviewed or inspected at any time within the five-year approval period, at the discretion of the SSP, the WCMC or the AZA Board of Directors.

For international facilities that are members of a WAZA regional association, an annual report from the regional office will suffice. The report should confirm that the Non-member is a member in good standing of the regional association with a recommendation that they should continue to participate in the AZA SSP.

13. In those instances where the entire population is owned by a non-AZA entity (e.g., USFWS, IBAMA), requests from the owning entity may supersede the AZA Non-member policy.

ZOOLOGICAL PARKS AND AQUARIUMS - BASIC DEFINITIONS

For facilities located within the United States, the Non-member SSP Approval program is intended for those that benefit the SSP species or population and that hold wildlife, but **do not meet the definition of a zoological park or aquarium.**

A zoological park or aquarium is defined by AZA's accreditation program as: a permanent institution which owns and maintains wildlife, under the direction of a professional staff, provides its collection with appropriate care and exhibits them in an aesthetic manner to the public on a regularly scheduled, predictable basis. The institution, division, or section shall further be defined as having as its primary mission the exhibition, conservation, and preservation of the earth's fauna in an educational and scientific manner.

Non-members located within the United States may not be open to the public on a regularly schedule, predictable basis. Examples of these types of facilities includes, but are not limited to, wildlife ranches, wildlife refuges or rehab centers, research facilities, sanctuaries, survival centers, breeding farms, private individuals, and educational outreach organizations.

For clarification, the key words used in the definition are further defined as follows:

1. PERMANENT (cultural institution): an institution founded by an authority that intends it to continue indefinitely.

2. WILDLIFE: non-domesticated animal life.
3. PROFESSIONAL STAFF: at least one paid full-time employee who commands an appropriate body of special knowledge and has the ability to reach zoological park or aquarium management decisions consonant with the experience of her/his peers and who has access to and knowledge of the literature of the field.
4. AESTHETIC: pertaining to the beautiful.
5. REGULARLY SCHEDULED, PREDICTABLE BASIS: regular and predictable hours equal to, or greater than, one thousand (1,000) hours per year, so that access is reasonably convenient to the public.

BENEFIT TO THE SSP

All Non-member SSP Participants must provide a genetic, demographic, conservation, and/or animal husbandry/welfare benefit to the SSP species or population. The SSP Coordinator is responsible for working with the SSP and the Non-member applicant to clearly articulate this benefit in a letter to the WCMC (with a copy to the AZA Conservation Department) and request approval. WCMC will review the request and, by a simple majority vote, determine if the Non-member applicant provides a benefit to the SSP species or population. If no benefit is evident, that Non-member will not be approved and cannot be a member of the SSP at that time. Note that this would not exclude the SSP from petitioning for that Non-member in the future. All Non-member applicants, both within and outside of the United States, must have WCMC review and approve their benefit to the SSP species or population. Once that benefit is established, the Non-member must move on to the application phase of Non-member approval (see *Summary of the Application Process*, page 7).

Determination of a Non-member's benefit will only be required for initial inclusion in the SSP, not during subsequent five-year renewals. If a Non-member loses approval, for any reason, the benefit will have to be reassessed before the application can proceed.

SUMMARY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process begins with the SSP establishing a Non-member's benefit to the SSP species or population (see *Benefit to the SSP*, page 7). Once that benefit is established, the Non-member must submit five copies of the completed questionnaire/application, and all supporting materials, to the SSP. *A sixth copy of the complete materials should be maintained on site by the institution for the use of the Visiting Committee during the inspection.* An

on-site inspection will occur approximately three to five months after submission of materials. At the conclusion of the inspection, the facility will be presented with a list of items the facility must address to be considered in compliance with standards. Following the inspection, the SSP submits the application along with the results of the inspection to WCMC (with a copy to the AZA Conservation Department) for review, scheduled at the WCMC mid-year or annual meeting (see *Deadlines*, page 8). At that time, the facility's case will be discussed and a determination made whether to grant, table, or deny approval. *WCMC's decision will be based on what exists at the time of the inspection and final review—not on future plans.*

Non-member applicants outside the United States that are either (a) Members of a WAZA super-regional zoological association or (b) Individual WAZA members located in an area not covered by a WAZA super-regional zoological association, are only required to fill out the General Information section of the Non-member Application and, if applicable, are required to submit a letter of recommendation from their zoo association. They are not required to pass an on-site inspection unless required by the SSP. If no inspection is required, the SSP must submit a copy of all application materials to the WCMC and to the AZA Conservation Department. At this point, WCMC will review the materials and vote to determine if the Non-member will or will not be granted approval to participate in the SSP. If an inspection is recommended, the SSP must also submit a copy of the inspection report to WCMC and the AZA Conservation Department for consideration during the approval process.

BASIC INFORMATION

Deadlines. January 15 and June 15. Facilities wishing to have their applications reviewed at the WCMC annual meeting must submit application packages (including the results of the inspection process) *by June 15*. Facilities wishing to have their applications reviewed at the mid-year meeting must submit application packages (including the results of the inspection process) *by January 15*. If the deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, the next regular business day immediately following shall be considered as the deadline. Please note that late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances, and will be scheduled to be heard at the following regularly scheduled WCMC meeting. *Missing an application deadline will not be considered an acceptable reason for extension of approval, and will result in removal from the program.* Once a Non-member is removed from an SSP program, they must first prove a benefit to the SSP (see *Benefit to the SSP*, page 7) before applying. Non-members are expected to keep track of their own expiration dates.

Fees. No fees will be charged for the Non-member application. However, the

Non-member will be responsible for all expenses incurred by the inspectors as part of the inspection process. Visiting Committee Deposit: The SSP may require that an applicant submit a deposit of up to \$1,000 to the SSP for use towards Visiting Committee expenses. The SSP Coordinator will be responsible for administering the deposit through their dedicated fund and reimbursing the inspectors. SSPs that do not have a dedicated fund may create one by contacting the AZA Conservation Department. If Visiting Committee expenses exceed the deposit, the facility will be invoiced for the balance; if less, a refund will be issued. Deposits may be waived if agreed upon by the SSP and all members of the inspection team.

Confidentiality. Information submitted to WCMC is held in *strict confidence*, and is made available to the following individuals only: SSP Coordinator; WCMC Members; WCMC Advisors; Inspectors (Visiting Committee); AZA Vice President, Animal Conservation. The following also have access, but typically do not view the materials: AZA President/CEO; AZA Executive Director; AZA Senior Vice President, Conservation; AZA Vice President, Accreditation; AZA Board of Directors.

Conversely, WCMC will not disclose the names of any person(s) requesting confidentiality when providing information, verbally or in writing, about the facility before, during, or after the Non-member review, or at any time during the five-year approval period. This includes staff, colleagues, and/or members of the public.

APPLYING FOR THE FIRST TIME

It is advisable for first-time applicants (those facilities that have never gone through the approval process before) to be familiar with fundamental AZA philosophies before applying for Non-member participation.

In addition, first-time applicants are strongly encouraged to work with a representative of the SSP for which the Non-member is applying who is also an AZA trained inspector. This will help first-time applicants to assess whether their facility is ready to undergo full review. This mentor will help identify areas that need additional attention before an inspection takes place. A facility should also believe that it meets or exceeds current professional standards as outlined in this booklet.

Some helpful things to remember, for first-time applicants:

- Contact the Coordinator of the relevant SSP for a mentor well in advance of beginning the application process.
- Read the **current** edition of the Guide to Approval of Non-member SSP Participants
- Make sure that the annual edition of the materials you use matches the year

- Become familiar with the contents of this booklet, as most questions about the process are answered within.
- Follow the instructions for assembling the application as contained in this booklet.
- When completing the application, be sure to answer every question and attach required items.
- Participate in AZA through individual membership and attendance at conferences. Read publications to thoroughly familiarize your self with fundamental philosophies and policies.
- While future plans are important and are considered in the overall picture, the final decision to grant approval will be based on what exists *at the time of the inspection and final review*.
- Make sure to address all items on the List of Concerns received at the end of the inspection. Address as many as possible *prior to the WCMC review*, and be prepared to show timelines, contracts, etc. for those items that are not complete.
- Remember, all facilities receiving approval are expected to maintain standards *throughout the five-year period*. An SSP representative will visit Non-members at least once a year, with that representative providing a summary report to the appropriate TAG and to WCMC. Failure by the SSP to annually review the institution and submit a report could result in removal of the Non-member. In addition, colleagues who visit (formally or informally), and members of the public *do* notify us if problems are perceived. Approval can be rescinded at any time if WCMC concludes that standards are not being consistently met and maintained.

ASSEMBLING THE APPLICATION PACKAGE

Important: Please read these instructions and follow them carefully. Improperly assembled or incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant. Related delays could result in an inability to complete processing in sufficient time to continue on the schedule desired by the applicant and the SSP.

Five sets of the completed questionnaire/application and all supporting documents must be submitted to the SSP Coordinator by the required deadline. ***An additional copy of the complete materials should be maintained on site by the facility for the use of the Visiting Committee during the inspection.***

Questionnaire (Application). It is essential that the questionnaire be completed *in its entirety*. Missing attachments, or unanswered or missed questions, will delay processing of the application. Improper assembly of the application will result in its being returned. The *edition year* of the application

must match the year in which the application is being submitted.

When assembling the complete application package, the questionnaire should be placed **in its entirety at the front** of the notebook, with the supporting attachments in sequential order following behind (see *Supporting Materials* immediately following).

Supporting Materials. All required attachments *must* be included. Attachments must be in sequential order and inserted behind a tab labeled for the section to which the attachment applies (for example, “*Governing Authority*,” or “*Staff*”). The first page of the attachment must be clearly keyed to the item on the questionnaire to which it applies (for example, the attachment for item F-4 should have “F-4” written or printed *boldly* on the upper right corner of the *first page* of the attachment, and be located in sequential order behind the tab labeled “*Finance*”). Attachments that are extremely thick and/or bound separately (such as manuals, animal inventories, master plans, etc.) should be included as separate items and not inserted into the primary application notebooks. These attachments should be *boldly* labeled using the item number on the questionnaire to which they apply (for example, “Attachment F-4”). Please make sure that photo-copied items are readable. [NOTE: While it is not a requirement, large attachments may be submitted on CD, if desired. See “*Submitting the Application on Compact Disc*” below.]

Preparing the Notebooks. Each set of application materials must be contained in a three-ring binder (notebook). Notebooks no thicker than 3”- 4” should be used, and as many as necessary may be used to complete a single set of materials. Facilities needing multiple binders for a single set of materials should label them “Copy 1 Part 1,” “Copy 1 Part 2,” “Copy 2 Part 1,” “Copy 2, Part 2,” etc.

Submitting the Application on Compact Disc. Facilities wishing to do so may use compact disc in conjunction with the traditional notebook for submittal of large groups of attachments or for single attachments more than a few pages in length. The application should be assembled similarly to the methods described above under *Supporting Materials* and *Preparing the Notebooks*, with the following modifications:

A three-hole punched zipper sleeve containing the CD(s) should be placed at the front of each notebook, immediately followed by a hard copy of the application form, with original signatures. For attachments placed on CD, create a folder for each section (for example, “*Governing Authority*,” “*Staff*,” “*Finance*,”), and place a copy of each attachment that pertains to that section into the section folder, naming it as the item number to which it pertains (for example, the attachment for item F-4 should be named “F-4 Contingency

Plan”, and placed into the “*Finance*” folder, etc.). Acceptable formats for submittals on CD are *Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Adobe Acrobat (PDF), Power Point, and JPEG*. If you desire to use a format not listed here, please check with AZA first to be certain it is acceptable. Each CD should be labeled “Non-member SSP Application, *Facility Name*,” and “Copy 1,” “Copy 2,” etc. Facilities needing multiple CDs for a single set of materials should label them “Copy 1 Part 1,” “Copy 1 Part 2,” “Copy 2 Part 1,” “Copy 2, Part 2,” etc.

Shipping. Upon completion, the entire application package should be sent to the Coordinator of the SSP for which the Non-member is applying.

APPROVAL PROCESSING (listed in order of occurrence)

SSP Benefit. All Non-member participants must benefit the SSP species or population (see *Benefit to the SSP*, page 7).

Primary Reviewer. The Primary Reviewer is the Coordinator of the SSP (or her/his designate) to which the Non-member is applying. The Primary Reviewer receives a complete set of the facility’s application materials and serves as chief examiner on behalf of the SSP and the WCMC. The Primary Reviewer works in conjunction with the Visiting Committee and is present (or available by conference call) at the facility’s review by WCMC. The Primary Reviewer may serve as a member of the Inspection Team.

Initial Review. Within eight weeks of submittal of each completed application package, an initial review will be conducted by a representative from the AZA Conservation Department and the Primary Reviewer to determine basic accuracy in preparation of materials, completeness of the overall application package, and to identify potential issues for the consideration of the Visiting Committee. Once the application is reviewed and completeness determined, the inspection can take place.

Visiting Committee Selection. The Visiting Committee will include at least two individuals and must encompass: demonstrated expertise with the taxon/taxa under consideration for SSP participation; AZA inspector training; individual membership in AZA; and veterinary expertise (AAZV-member veterinarian). The Visiting Committee will be selected by the SSP & submitted to AZA Director, Conservation & Science for review to ensure all necessary elements of expertise are included. The Primary Reviewer may or may not serve on the Visiting Committee.

Scheduling the Inspection. As soon as a complete application is submitted and an inspection team confirmed, the Non-member will be notified. The inspection will be scheduled shortly thereafter by the Primary Reviewer in consultation with the Non-member’s Owner/CEO/Director and the other members of the inspection team.

THE INSPECTION

During the inspection, the Visiting Committee is acting on behalf of the WCMC, the SSP, and the AZA Board of Directors. Inspectors will usually tour the grounds and facilities as a group, and individually return to areas of particular interest or expertise thereafter. During this time they interview staff members, view records, and make note of positive and negative impressions. During the site visit, the team will also meet with members of the governing authority and key personnel. The full cooperation of the facility's staff will greatly assist the process. Inspections are generally conducted in one to three days.

NOTE, currently approved Non-members: it is important to note that the WCMC will consider as major issues any concerns identified in past inspections that remain present.

NOTE, all applicants: should the inspection team have a concern affecting the comfort or welfare of an member of the facility's collection, it will be considered a major issue by the WCMC.

Gifts. Members of the Visiting Committee may not accept any gifts or privileges offered by the facility.

Inspectors' Expenses. The applicant facility bears the expenses of the Visiting Committee, and every effort will be made to hold expenses to a reasonable minimum. The SSP may require that an applicant submit a deposit of up to \$1,000 to the SSP for use towards Visiting Committee expenses. The SSP Coordinator will be responsible for administering the deposit through their dedicated fund and reimbursing the inspectors. SSPs that do not have a dedicated fund may create one by contacting the AZA Conservation Department. If Visiting Committee expenses exceed the deposit, the facility will be invoiced for the balance; if less, a refund will be issued. Deposits may be waived if agreed upon by the SSP and all members of the inspection team.

Interviews. An opportunity for the Visiting Committee to interview staff *in confidence, without supervisors or management present*, should be provided. The Committee will also interview members of the facility's governing authority (or its owner) at some point during the visit.

Media Coverage. It is inappropriate to schedule media coverage during the inspection.

Private Work Area. A dedicated workspace should be made available to the Committee while it is on site. The Visiting Committee members need ample time and space to discuss, in private, various aspects of the facility's operation,

review their reports, and to compile the final List of Concerns prior to the exit interview with the Owner/CEO/Director.

Records. All records of the facility must be readily available and staff members must be on hand to answer any questions posed by the inspectors.

Social Events. While it is helpful for the applicant to arrange for a luncheon or dinner so that the Visiting Committee can meet staff members and members of the governing authority, the Visiting Committee should not be expected to participate in social functions beyond those required for the orderly discharge of its duties and responsibilities.

CONCLUSION OF INSPECTION

Exit Interview. The inspection shall conclude in an exit interview with the facility's Owner, Director or CEO. [NOTE: It is *strongly recommended* that the facility's Director or CEO be present for the exit interview. However, should unavoidable circumstances dictate, the Owner/CEO/Director may send a designated representative.] The Owner/CEO/Director may have staff present at the exit interview. During the exit interview the Visiting Committee will discuss the general impressions (positive and negative) formed by the team during the inspection. The facility's accomplishments will be discussed along with the list of *major* and *lesser* concerns that must be addressed for the facility to be considered in compliance with standards.

List of Concerns. During the exit interview, the Committee shall provide the Owner/CEO/Director with a written list of any items found to be of concern (this list shall also be provided to the WCMC as part of the written report). The list will include both *major* concerns and *lesser* concerns. The facility should address all concerns in preparing for the review by WCMC. A facility should strive to complete as many items on the list of concerns as possible prior to the review. However, consideration will be given to the amount of time a facility has between the exit interview and the review, and the amount of time believed reasonable to complete each concern. Items that cannot be completed prior to the review should be covered by an action plan with estimated completion dates. NOTE: The WCMC is the final authority and may have concerns that do not appear on the List of Concerns and, if so, may ask questions accordingly during the review.

Written Response to the List of Concerns. The Owner/CEO/Director must submit a written response to the List of Concerns. The response must be submitted by the deadline set by the WCMC Vice Chair for Non-member Participation. The deadline will occur approximately 4-6 weeks before the review. The response should list each concern, followed by a description of how that concern is being addressed. The response should include documentation where possible (photos, copies of contracts, agreements, policies, etc.). However, photos should not be embedded into the document itself. Rather, photos should be sent as separate JPEG files and a key supplied as to what each photo depicts, or should be captioned. The response should be as concise as possible (not including documentation, where appropriate). The response should be submitted by e-mail in electronic format to the Primary Reviewer, *including all attachments and photographs*, and followed-up thereafter with a signed hardcopy sent by regular mail. Photos may be submitted on CD if too numerous to submit by e-mail. NOTE: Failure to have taken corrective measures, or to present solid plans for doing so, will affect the outcome of the case.

Process Evaluation Form. Each applicant is provided an opportunity to evaluate the overall process and the Visiting Committee's effectiveness immediately after the inspection. The Director, Conservation and Science will provide the facility's CEO/Director a short e-mail evaluation form requesting input regarding the overall process and the performance of the Visiting Committee. Returning the form is optional, but helps WCMC to better evaluate the effectiveness of the overall process. Information contained in the form shall be shared with WCMC and may be shared with the Visiting Committee to assist them in enhancing their performance in future inspections.

WCMC'S EVALUATION

Preparing for the Review. The review will be held at the WCMC meeting for which the application is submitted. The Primary Reviewer must be available, in person or by phone, and prepared to verbally update WCMC on any additional progress made *since the written response to the List of Concerns was submitted*. The collective information from both the written and verbal reports will be considered, along with application materials, the inspection report, and other current information, in determining the outcome. Failure to take corrective measures, or to present solid plans for doing so, will affect the outcome of the case.

The Review. Reviews are closed sessions, and are attended by WCMC members and advisors and AZA staff. Reviews may also be attended, on occasion, by members of the AZA Board of Directors, members of the Visiting Committee, the SSP Coordinator, and the Primary Reviewer.

Once a decision is reached, the WCMC Vice Chair for Non-member Participation will inform the Primary Reviewer and the facility's Owner/CEO/Director of the outcome. A copy of the full Visiting Committee Report will be provided at that time, and an official letter noting the decision and reiterating points of discussion will be sent to the facility in approximately four weeks.

WCMC's Decision. WCMC's decision will be based on what exists at the time of the inspection and the final review—not on future plans.

WCMC may take one of the following actions:

- A. *Grant Approval:* WCMC will grant approval when it is reasonably satisfied that the applicant facility meets the requirements of an approved Non-member SSP Participant. WCMC may, however, request progress reports on any items it wishes the facility to address, require an interim or special inspection, and revisit the decision as often as necessary to assure itself that the facility continues to meet all conditions and requirements of approval during the five-year period.
- B. *Table Approval:* WCMC may table a facility's materials if it determines that certain conditions must be met or additional information submitted before the facility can be considered as meeting Non-member SSP Participant standards. In addition, WCMC must believe that the facility is capable of meeting those standards within one year. The Vice Chair for Non-member SSP Participation shall write the facility's Owner/CEO/Director and the Primary Reviewer, advising of WCMC's action and concerns. The facility is then given up to one year to meet the standards and return for a second review to demonstrate how the concerns of the Visiting Committee and WCMC have been addressed. At the conclusion of one year, WCMC must act to certify or deny. A follow-up inspection may be required in some cases as a condition of coming off the table. Processing shall terminate for applicants not responding in the time allotted, and it shall become necessary to assess benefit to the SSP and submit a new application and materials should approval be desired again in the future. If an institution is tabled, the year of tabling shall be deducted from the institution's subsequent five-year approval cycle if the institution receives approval at the end of the tabled year.
- C. *Deny Approval:* WCMC will deny approval when a facility does not meet the minimum requirements to be recognized as an approved Non-member SSP Participant at the present time and, in its opinion, would require in excess of one year to successfully do so. The Vice Chair for Non-member SSP Participation shall write the facility's

Owner/CEO/Director and the Primary Reviewer noting the reason(s) for denial. Facilities denied approval may reapply one year *after the date of denial*. Submission of a new application and materials shall be necessary. Benefit to the SSP must be shown (see *Benefit to the SSP*, page 7).

WHEN IT'S TIME TO PROCESS AGAIN

The granting of approval is for five years, and expires at the end of that period. Approved Non-member SSP Participants must successfully complete the entire process again before the end of that period to avoid a lapse in approval. ***Non-member Participants and the SSP Coordinators are expected to keep track of their own expiration dates.*** SSPs will be reminded twelve months in advance of approval expiration, but should not rely on this reminder as a method of tracking an expiration date. With the reminder from the AZA Conservation Department, each SSP Coordinator will be supplied with a current set of application materials dated to correspond with the year in which they are scheduled to submit their application. ***It is important that the yearly edition of the approval materials being used by a facility match the year in which the application is to be submitted.*** The yearly edition is noted at the front of each booklet, and also in the page heading.

Determination of a Non-member's benefit to the SSP will only be utilized for initial inclusion in the SSP, not during subsequent five-year renewals. If a Non-member is effective at improving the SSP population, the impact will decrease over time and the Non-member should not be penalized and excluded later for helping at an earlier point.

LONG TERM EXPECTATIONS

Approval is mandatory for participation in AZA SSP Programs. Individual membership in AZA by the Owner/CEO/Director must be maintained as a condition of approval. All Non-members must process at least once every five years and are subject to any new or higher standards, policies, guidelines, or resolutions adopted by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association. Even though a facility may have been approved previously, there is no guarantee that approval will be granted during subsequent inspections. Standards are subject to continuous review and enhancement. Once approved, a facility is expected to continuously advance its professional operation and constantly maintain, or surpass, all professional standards.

GENERAL POLICIES

AZA Membership. Individual membership in AZA by the Owner/CEO/Director must be maintained as a condition of approval.

Owner/CEO/Director Vacancy. When a vacancy occurs in the position of Owner/CEO/ Director an approved Non-member Facility must notify WCMC in writing, and a follow-up letter must be submitted to WCMC every six months thereafter reporting the status of the search until such time as the position is filled. An Approved Non-member that is without the services of an Owner/CEO/Director for longer than one year may be subject to loss of approval.

CEO/Director Vacancy Occurring Immediately After Receiving Approval. If a CEO/Director vacates his or her position at the facility within ninety days of receiving approval, WCMC may, in its discretion, require written biannual progress reports, or may require that the facility reprocess again at the earliest opportunity to do so under the six-month rule.

Owner/CEO/Director Requirement For Facilities Not Currently Approved. Any facility not currently approved may not apply for approval if it is without a *permanent*, full-time Owner/CEO/Director. Materials may not be submitted under the leadership of an *Interim* or *Acting* Owner/CEO/Director.

Change of Governance. A change in governance refers to a change of the governing authority, such as from a governmental agency to society or vice versa. If a change in governance occurs, a letter or affidavit from the CEO or chairperson of the new governing authority is required stating the intention to be signatory to the facility and to abide by the AZA Code of Professional Ethics and Charter & Bylaws.

Change of Location. In the event of a relocation, an approved Non-member Facility must reprocess for approval as soon as the new location is officially open. An application must be received by the submission deadline that falls immediately prior to, or following, the opening.

Change of Ownership. A change in ownership refers to the sale or formal transfer of ownership of a facility. In the event of a change in ownership of an approved Non-member Facility, the facility must reprocess for approval within 12 months, regardless of when its approval is scheduled to expire. A letter or affidavit from the Owner, CEO or chairperson of the purchasing or receiving organization is also required pledging to uphold and abide by Accreditation Standards, including the AZA Charter & Bylaws, Code of Ethics, Acquisition and Disposition Policy, and other related policies. The letter must also indicate the new owner's intent to submit materials applying for approval within the required time period. The letter must be sent to WCMC within 30 days of final sale or transfer.

Change of Scope. Approved Non-member Facilities must notify WCMC in writing in the event that a change in the scope of its facility occurs (by the opening of a new exhibit of significant proportions, or an exhibit that changes the overall scope of the facility, such as an aquarium in a zoo, or land-based animals in an aquarium, etc.). WCMC may assign a team to conduct an inspection. Cost of such inspection shall be borne by the approved Non-member Facility concerned.

Complaints. If a complaint from a member of the general public, the facility's staff, or a professional colleague is received regarding an approved Non-member Facility, WCMC will take steps to determine the situation and, based upon its findings, will make recommendations to the facility accordingly.

Elephant Management and Care - Requesting A Variance Under the AZA Standards. Facilities requesting a variance under the AZA Standards For Elephant Management and Care should submit that request in conjunction with their application for approval. The request should be in the form of a letter detailing the variance being requested, and including all necessary documentation. The Primary Reviewer assigned to the case will discuss the requested variance with the inspection team, and the team will consider the variance during the actual inspection. The team will include a separate report and opinion regarding the variance as an attachment to the Visiting Committee Report. WCMC will take action on the request at the time of the facility's approval review. **NOTE:** institutions not currently approved must be in full compliance at the time the application is made.

Incidents Involving Injury or Welfare. Should an incident occur at an approved Non-member Facility involving serious injury or affecting the welfare of a member of the public, staff, or collection, a written report should be submitted to WCMC and the SSP as soon as possible explaining what happened and noting what actions are being taken by the facility as a result. WCMC will determine if a special inspection or other action is necessary and will notify the facility in writing once a decision has been made.

Facilities Under Construction. Facilities currently being constructed may apply for approval prior to the opening date; however, the on-site inspection will not take place until the facility is officially open and a permanent, full-time Owner/CEO/Director has been on board for at least six months.

Facilities Within Facilities. In order to be approved, a facility that is a part of a larger facility (such as a university, museum, or botanical garden) must be distinct enough to be separately identified. When approval is granted in such cases, it will apply only to the facility concerned and not to the non-zoological activities of the larger organization or in fields in which the Association has no

expertise.

Interim and Follow-Up Inspections. Approved Non-members must be visited by an SSP representative at least once a year, with that representative providing a summary report to the appropriate TAG and to WCMC. Failure by the SSP to annually review the institution and submit a report could result in removal of the Non-member's approval as a participant. WCMC or AZA Board of Directors may, at its discretion, assign an individual or team to conduct an interim or follow-up inspection at any time during the five-year approval period. While on site, that individual or team may, at their discretion, inspect all or portions of the facility. Cost of such inspection shall be borne by the approved Non-member facility as a requirement of maintaining approval.

Multiple Facilities Under One Authority. If two or more facilities are under the same ownership and governing authority, are located adjacent to each other, and a single entrance fee covers public admittance, they may apply for approval as a single facility. In such cases, the facility(s) should first submit a request in writing for the consideration of the WCMC. All facilities are subject to inspection. Should WCMC determine that the facilities do not meet the above criteria, processing as separate facilities will be necessary.

Rescinding Approval. WCMC may rescind approval at any time if it concludes that standards are not being consistently met and maintained.

Extensions of Approval. Approval is for five years. Under *extenuating or special circumstances*, extensions of approval may be granted to extend current approval by six months or one year. A facility desiring an extension must submit a request in writing to the WCMC *as soon as possible* to avoid a potential lapse in approval, including a full explanation as to why the extension is being requested. The WCMC may require a site visit to assess the facility's ability to maintain approval standards during the period being considered for extension. The site visit must take place prior to any decision being made by the WCMC. The WCMC will thereafter make a determination, and the Non-member will be notified. [NOTE: *Missing a deadline will not be considered an acceptable reason for extension of approval.*]

COMMONLY FOUND CONCERNS & PRIMARY CONSIDERATIONS

Currently approved Non-members: it is important to note that should the inspection team determine that concerns identified in past inspections are again present, this will be considered a major issue by the WCMC.

All applicants: should the inspection team have a concern affecting the comfort or welfare of an animal, it will be considered a major issue by the WCMC.

Acquisition and Disposition. The Visiting Committee shall ascertain the facility's acquisition and disposition policy adheres to, at minimum, to AZA's Acquisition and Disposition policy, and that the policy is being followed.

Collection. The Visiting Committee shall consider the size *and* nature of the living environments provided the collection, and whether the physical *and* psychological well-being of the collection is being met. The scope of the facility's enrichment program will be closely reviewed. A facility must comply with all wildlife laws.

Collection Health Care. A facility's animal health care program must be under the direction of a licensed veterinarian, an appropriate number of persons must be employed in the animal health care program, and the extent of professional services provided the collection must be adequate.

Collection Security. The security program employed by the applicant facility shall be sufficient to provide appropriate protection to the animal collection. WCMC shall base its judgment with respect to security on the operation, location, size, and physical facilities.

Dangerous or Venomous Wildlife. Facilities maintaining collections of venomous animals must have an appropriate supply of sera available and policies/procedures in place for the safe handling of those animals. Likewise, procedures must be in place to reduce the risk of injury by potentially dangerous animals. The Visiting Committee will closely review the alarm system and emergency procedures.

Finance. The facility's financial health will be reviewed and considered in terms of meeting the needs of the facility for the five-year period of approval. Contingency plans will be reviewed.

Governing Authority. The governing authority must be supportive of the facility's decision to abide by the AZA Code of Ethics, Acquisition & Disposition Policy, Accreditation Standards, and Charter & Bylaws, and must recognize and support the facility's goals and objectives.

Master Plans, Policies, and Procedures. Master plans, written policies, and procedures should be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as necessary

Physical Facilities. The physical condition of the facility will be closely observed, and maintenance programs reviewed.

Record Keeping. The Visiting Committee will carefully review the facility's animal record-keeping system.

Safety. The Visiting Committee will review the facility's safety programs employed for the protection of its employees, visitors, and the animal collection. Inspectors will look for potential safety hazards in both public and restricted areas.

Staff. A key element of a facility's operation is maintaining a staff sufficient in qualification and number. Effective communication, working relationship and training are important.

OBJECTIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE

There are objective points of reference against which the quality and performance of the applicant facilities shall be measured. It is understood that not all facilities can be expected to excel in all points of reference equally. However, it should be noted that *animal care* standards are of prime importance.

1. Operations/Administration

- a. physical facilities and allocations of sufficient space
- b. duties and qualifications of the facility's staff
- c. function and organization of the facility
- d. fiscal responsibility
- e. maintenance
- f. public relations
- g. security
- h. trustee organization, policy, and delegation of authority
- i. salaries/fringe benefits
- j. public and staff safety
- k. relationship of support organizations
- l. other considerations

2. Animal Management and Health Care Program

- a. staff
- b. quality and suitability of collections
- c. care of collections, sanitation, and veterinary services
- d. enrichment program for all animals
- e. size and quality of enclosure and holding areas
- f. facility collection plan
- g. acquisition/disposition policy and practices
- i. record-keeping and marking systems
- j. research
- k. identification services for the public
- l. other considerations

3. Future Plans

- a. new construction
- b. maintenance/renovation
- c. master plan

ACCREDITATION (AND CERTIFICATION) STANDARDS

The AZA Accreditation documents address most of these issues in detail and may be used as a reference. Accreditation materials can be found on the AZA Web site at http://www.aza.org/Accreditation/Accred_Cert_Info/