

## **From the President**

### **AAZK Announces New Distribution of BFR Funds**

#### **Historical Background**

Bowling for Rhinos (BFR) was officially recognized by the AAZK Board of Directors as a national event of this Association in 1990. AAZK entered into a non-binding agreement to funnel BFR funds to the Ngare Sergoi Rhino Sanctuary (NSRS) via the Ngare Sergoi Support Group. The NSRS was established with funding from Anna Merz by the Craig Family in Kenya. Over time, the NSRS evolved into the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (LWC), managed by CEO Ian Craig. Since its inception, LWC has partnered with local tribal groups, wildlife sanctuaries, and the Kenyan Wildlife Services to form the Northern Rangeland Trust in Kenya.

In 1994 AAZK began transferring BFR funds directly to LWC. This also marked the year when AAZK established that the first \$100,000 of annual BFR funds realized would be sent to LWC. At that time, all BFR funds were designated for Lewa and to fund the annual BFR winners' trips to LWC. A proposal was made in 1994 to include Indonesian rhino conservation to the BFR program. The proposal was approved by the AAZK Board of Directors for the 1995 Bowling for Rhinos event. All funds in excess of \$100,000 would go to Indonesian rhino conservation via Minnesota Zoo's Adopt-A-Park (AAP) program.

The AAP program was working extensively on conservation projects in habitat that included Indonesian species of rhinos. The intention was to support rhino conservation by providing funding to these parks where critically endangered rhinos existed. In 1996, Ujung Kulon National Park in Java was added to the BFR program. In 1997, the leaders of the AAP program and the International Rhino Foundation (IRF) agreed to share these BFR funds through a non-binding, informal agreement that would expand BFR funding to Bukit Barisan Seletan National Park in Sumatra. Way Kambas National Park was added to the BFR program in 2003. During the period of 2002-2007, the AAP would send their share of BFR funds directly to IRF for these Indonesian programs, but AAZK continued to observe AAP and IRF as two separate beneficiaries of BFR.

In 2006, the AAZK Board of Directors revised the distribution of BFR funds in where the first \$150,000 realized were forwarded to LWC. All remaining funds were to be forwarded to IRF and their partners in Indonesian rhino conservation, including the AAP program.

On October 2, 2007, the AAZK Board of Directors received a proposal from IRF and the BFR Coordinator to eliminate the practice of sending two separate checks to both the AAP program and IRF, since AAP was already turning over their share to IRF. The AAZK Board of Directors, after discussions with both the AAP Director and IRF, agreed to this proposal for 2008. However, it was also decided that the AAZK Board of Directors would make a complete analysis of the BFR program and the allocation of BFR funds during the business year of 2008.

### **A New Administrative Directive of the AAZK Board of Directors**

Based on the analysis of the Bowling for Rhinos program and the allocation of BFR funds, the AAZK Board of Directors decided to make the following change to AD 7.02-1 in the AAZK Operations Manual, effective in 2009:

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (LWC) is the original beneficiary of the Bowling for Rhinos event and therefore AAZK shall endeavor to provide primary funding to LWC on an annual basis by segregating the first \$160,000 (US Funds) raised from a BFR event to directly benefit LWC. In the event that the \$160,000 (US Funds) target *is not* achieved, LWC shall receive any and all BFR funds raised from the event in that calendar year.

Once (if) the \$160,000 plateau has been achieved, AAZK shall divide the remainder of BFR funds based upon percentage under the following distribution guidelines to the following entities adopted and ratified by the AAZK Board of Directors:

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| International Rhino Foundation    | 50% |
| Lewa Wildlife Conservancy         | 40% |
| Cheetah Conservation Fund – Kenya | 8%  |
| AAZK Inc Conservation Resources   | 2%  |

All funds are to be held on account in the name of AAZK Inc., but are restricted from distribution to any other means. Monies on deposit shall be forwarded to the adopted entity in a manner specified by the conservation entity and disposition of funds shall be subject to a full and complete financial annual accounting report forwarded to AAZK Inc. by the recipient.

AAZK Inc shall hold title to 2% of the BFR funds raised in excess of \$160,000 (US Funds) and shall keep said funds on deposit until June of the year following the BFR events. During that time, AAZK shall advertise in acceptable media the availability of conservation funds for distribution to recognized conservation projects. Affiliation or partnership with AAZK is not required, but preference may be given to AAZK Members or Conservation Partners. Preference for funds distribution shall be given in the following manner:

In-situ Rhino Conservation and Research  
Ex-situ Rhino Conservation and Research  
In-situ Community, Educational or Medical Programs (Africa or Asia)  
In-situ Species Conservation (unrestricted)

All funds shall be distributed by vote of the AAZK Board of Directors, with recommendation and research performed by the AAZK Conservation Committee, from the AAZK Conservation Resource account by June 30 of each calendar year. If AAZK Inc. does not receive any funding application(s), does not choose to fund any application(s), or if funds remain on account, those funds will be deposited in the following year's BFR account for pool distribution according to the listed percentages.

## **Justification**

The AAZK Board of Directors invested significant time and resources in setting the future direction of BFR. Many factors went into the decision-making process, and we are unanimously pleased with the direction that has been set. First, we wanted to insure that our initial commitment to LWC remained secure. By setting aside the first \$160,000 for LWC, we insured that the original \$150,000 + \$10,000 from the Blue Rhino sponsorship remained designated for LWC. Additionally, another 40% of the remaining funds will strengthen our commitment to LWC.

Secondly, by removing the AAP program from the equation, the AAZK Board of Directors felt it presented the opportunity to increase BFR's impact in conservation and meet some past requests and recommendations of the AAZK membership. AAZK remains committed to IRF and the preservation of rhino species worldwide. We have not decreased the funding originally designated for IRF, but rather we are re-investing funds that were designated for the AAP program. Fifty percent of all remaining BFR funds (after the original commitment to LWC) are designated for IRF. IRF has also been encouraged to apply for the new AAZK Conservation Resources grant.

The addition of the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) - Kenya as a beneficiary of BFR funds was given careful consideration. CCF has established a long history of conservation partnership with AAZK Inc. and its Chapters. A couple years ago, one chapter presented a proposal to the AAZK Board to institute a second national fund raising event to support CCF. The Board conducted a survey of AAZK Chapters to determine if Chapters felt they could successfully support two national fund raisers. While some Chapters felt they could host two national fund raisers, others expressed they would need to choose between the two. Not wanting to negatively impact our flagship conservation project, the Board decided not to endorse a second national fundraiser, although we encouraged Chapters wanting to support CCF to do so.

By adding CCF to the beneficiary list of BFR funds, we felt it addressed the membership's desire to support another long-term conservation partner of this Association. Additionally, CCF-Kenya operates in areas surrounding LWC. The AAZK Board felt that by strengthening the conservation effort in areas surrounding LWC, we were ultimately making LWC stronger as well. Finally, by adding another internationally recognized and well-respected conservation organization such as CCF to the BFR team, we feel we have added even more credibility and fund raising power to the tremendously successful BFR program.

One of the original visions of BFR was to use the program for the protection of all rhino species. By designating 2% of BFR Funds (after the commitment to LWC) to the new AAZK Conservation Resources Fund, we intended to open the door for support of Indian (one-horned rhinos). The matrix for fund distribution of the 2% will be weighted towards in-situ rhino conservation and research, including one-horned rhinos. The AAZK Board of Directors feels the new Administrative Directive supports the original vision of supporting all species of rhinos.

The best conservation programs involve long-term commitment. Since 1990, AAZK's Bowling for Rhinos has been one of the world's most successful conservation programs, raising over 3 million dollars for rhino conservation and all species that share rhino habitat. AAZK remains committed to its conservation partners, specifically LWC, IRF, and CCF. To reaffirm, 100% of BFR funding is being spent on conservation programs, with 98% designated specifically for conservation projects within rhino habitat. The remaining 2% of uncommitted funds is weighted heavily to favor rhino conservation programs, and will hopefully allow us to support conservation of the one remaining species of rhino not currently supported by BFR. We feel the new Administrative Directive strengthens the BFR program, supports the original vision of BFR, and will provide the opportunity for the continued growth and success of BFR. Feel free to contact me at [shane.good@aazk.org](mailto:shane.good@aazk.org) or Executive Director Ed Hansen at [zke@cox.net](mailto:zke@cox.net) with any questions regarding BFR and the new Administrative Directive. Finally, I want to personally thank BFR Coordinator Patty Pearthree for the incredible work she performs in leading this national fundraiser, and all of the Chapters and individual members of AAZK who make this annual event one of the world's most successful conservation programs.

Sincerely,

Shane Good  
President, AAZK Inc.