

To all AZA Elephant TAG/SSP Institutional Representatives:

On behalf of the AZA Elephant TAG/SSP Steering Committee, we hope that the new year is starting off well for you and your zoo. As we start 2011, the TAG/SSP would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your zoo's continued dedication to elephant care and conservation and to thank you for your continued support of the Elephant TAG/SSP. In the coming year, you and your fellow Elephant TAG/SSP partners are anticipating many exciting events. Several TAG/SSP elephant care facilities are expecting births and are working on new and improved elephant care facilities.

In 2005, AZA elephant care facilities made a collaborative commitment to work in partnership and to speak with a unified voice to enhance the long-range plan for elephant care, management, conservation and research in AZA. In the last six years, we have made significant strides as a result of this collaborative AZA elephant care and conservation movement – progress for which AZA Elephant TAG/SSP institutions should, individually and collectively, be proud. Congratulations to you all!

2011 promises to be another busy and productive year for our elephant programs. Let me take this opportunity share with you interesting and important elephant-related activities planned for 2011, including:

- The *AZA Standards for Elephant Management and Care* are in the final stages of revision after the institutional review and comment period, and will be made available to all Elephant TAG/SSP partners in the next few weeks.
- The *AZA Elephant TAG/SSP Regional Collection Plan, 3rd edition* was revised by the Steering Committee, Advisors and IRs in late 2010, and is currently being reviewed by WCMC.
- AZA, in partnership with the International Elephant Foundation (IEF), recently announced its support for 18 elephant conservation projects for 2011. In the coming year, IEF will provide more than \$230,000 to support elephant conservation around the world, adding to the \$1.8 million total invested in conserving elephants since IEF's inception in 1998. IEF receives a majority of its funding from AZA-accredited elephant care facilities. Thank you for your continued institutional support of *in situ* and *ex situ* elephant conservation and research.
- A successful future in elephant conservation and care in AZA zoos requires an action plan for success. In May the TAG/SSP Steering Committee, Advisors, AZA staff and invited guests will convene to review the 2005 *Elephant TAG/SSP Strategic Plan and Vision*, and will revise previous goals, as well as develop new goals, for the future.
- AZA, in partnership with IEF, recently distributed the updated *Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpesvirus Research and Tissue Request Protocol*. Elephant care facilities have a unique opportunity to contribute to the body of scientific knowledge about elephants. EEHV testing and detection techniques and cutting-edge recommended treatments continue to evolve specifically because of the scientific investigation ongoing at accredited zoos and reputable elephant care facilities around the world. The information learned through this research will ultimately lead to effective detection, treatment and

control of EEHV in elephants. Thank you for your continued institutional support of EEHV research. If your facility is currently not supporting EEHV research, please consider participating in the future.

- A consortium of elephant care institutions received an IMLS grant to study welfare in zoo elephants using a wide range of data including physiological and behavioral measures, and environmental, husbandry, and historical data. The results of this project will highlight the changes that have occurred over the last decade to improve our elephant care programs and will provide current information on issues that we may need to further investigate. Your institution's participation is critical to the success of the project, so in advance, thank you for your efforts on this important collaborative project.
- The National Elephant Center's (TNEC) Board of Directors is carefully considering the opportunity to secure the best possible location that provides the flexibility required to create a new vision for elephant care and conservation. In the coming months, you will receive further details about TNEC.

Several elephant-related conferences and workshops will occur in 2011 as well.

- **24-25 January** - The 7th annual Endotheliotropic Elephant Herpes Virus (EEHV) Workshop for Elephant Managers, Veterinarians and Researchers was recently hosted by the Houston Zoo, International Elephant Foundation and the Elephant Managers Association.
- **22-24 February** - The AZA Elephant TAG/SSP will be convening at the AZA Population Management Center (PMC) in Chicago in February 2011. This 2.5 day meeting will include masterplanning and population modeling for both the Asian Elephant and African Elephant SSPs. The population modeling exercises will allow us to determine the best ways to achieve sustainability for our SSP programs. This meeting is open to all Elephant TAG/SSP IRs and Advisors.
- **12-17 September** – AZA Elephant TAG/SSP reporting meeting will be held at the AZA Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Date and time to be determined.
- **6-9 October** – Elephant Managers Association Annual Conference will be hosted by Monroe County's Seneca Park Zoo in Rochester, New York. A pre-conference trip to African Lion Safari, Cambridge, Ontario, will be offered on 5 October 2011.
- **10-15 October** – International Elephant Foundation Conservation and Research Symposium will be hosted by the Rotterdam Zoo.

Thank you again for your continued support of the AZA Elephant TAG/SSP. Please feel free to share this email within your zoo. If you have any questions or would like further information about activities described in this email, please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the TAG/SSP Steering Committee.

Best Regards,

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