

THE NATIONAL ZOO OF TODAY AND TOMORROW—AN INNOVATIVE CENTER FOCUSED ON THE CARE AND CONSERVATION OF THE WORLD'S SPECIES

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HEARING  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE  
ADMINISTRATION  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS  
SECOND SESSION

—  
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**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2014**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:43 a.m., in Room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Candice S. Miller [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Miller, Harper, Gingrey, Schock, Nugent, Brady, Lofgren, and Vargas.

Staff Present: Sean Moran, Staff Director; Peter Schalestock, Deputy General Counsel; Yael Barash, Legislative Clerk; Bob Sensenbrenner, Senior Counsel; Mary Sue Englund, Director of Administration; Erin Sayago, Communications Director; John Clocker, Deputy Staff Director; Kyle Anderson, Minority Staff Director; Matt Pinkus, Minority Senior Policy Advisor; Matt DeFreitas, Minority Professional Staff; Khalil Abboud, Minority Deputy Counsel; Thomas Hicks, Minority Senior Counsel; Mike Harrison, Minority Chief Counsel; Greg Abbott, Minority Professional Staff; and Eddie Flaherty, Minority Chief Clerk.

The CHAIRMAN. I now call to order the Committee on House Administration's hearing regarding the Smithsonian National Zoological Park. The hearing record will remain open for 5 legislative days so that members might submit any materials that they wish to be included therein.

The CHAIRMAN. And a quorum is present, so that we will proceed.

This hearing is for the committee to receive an update on the current health and management of the National Zoo, as well as to discuss the important science and research activities regarding endangered species and the National Zoo's overall contribution to the world's conservation efforts.

I certainly want to thank the panel of witnesses that we have here for taking time to appear before the committee today. Each of our witnesses has dedicated years to the pursuit of science, conservation, and the passion to share knowledge of the world's species with others around the world.

The Smithsonian, based in our Capital, is the largest museum and research complex in the world. It includes 19 exceptional museums and galleries, as well as numerous scientific research cen-

ters, and today we will be examining one of the most popular Smithsonian facilities, the National Zoo, which is home to one of our Nation's and the world's most unique and fascinating living collections.

The zoo was created actually by legislation signed into law by President Cleveland on March 2nd of 1889, and so it has a unique roll as a Federal zoo, supported by the taxpayers. It is a zoo truly provided for and by the people. Within its unique role as the Federal zoo, the National Zoo receives the majority of its funding from Federal appropriations. This funding is one of the many ways our Nation exercises our commitment to stewardship and the pursuit of knowledge.

It is the Congress' role to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are allocated responsibly and the commitment to stewardship behind those dollars is being met. This role has become increasingly important as the zoo works to manage its resources, to maintain the health and the safety and overall welfare of the animals in the zoo's care, as well as visitors, employees, and their volunteers.

Actually, last week, I have a monthly cable show, and I had as my guest Dr. Murray, who is the chief veterinarian for the zoo, and I told her she had the coolest job, I thought, in the entire Capital here. But it was very interesting talking to her about the care of all of these animals. She mentioned that the National Zoo is actually working with the Detroit Zoo, which I am so very proud of, working with a technique that they are using to monitor the heart rate and the rhythm in gorillas, and that some of the information you are learning there actually has transference to humans. It was very, very interesting.

I look forward, certainly, to hearing from the director of the National Zoo on how his team has pulled together and met the challenges of being a world-class zoo. It is clear to anyone who visits that the animals at the zoo are incredibly well cared for. And while there have been some recent news stories regarding animal deaths, the deaths, first of all, are most often of natural causes, and many animals are exceeding their normal lifespans.

Zoology, like all things, is never perfect. Sometimes an unfortunate incident happens. And the zoo, I believe, has demonstrated their ability to respond and to identify problems and to implement improvements. Overall, the National Zoo has been successful in maintaining the health of the animals in their care at the very highest of levels as demonstrated by their repeated accreditation by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. This accreditation reflects the high standards of animal care set by the zoo and its staff.

For the last 125 years, the National Zoo has improved its facilities, the living collection, its participation in the worldwide scientific community, and focused on advanced species-savings research.

The National Zoo encompasses a 163-acre zoo park, as well as a Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute campus in Front Royal in Virginia, which maintains a research-based collection on 3,200 acres. The National Zoo's mission is to provide engaging experience with animals and to create and share knowledge that saves wildlife and habitats, and its vision to save species from extinction.

Through a coordinated effort, both the National Zoo Park and the Front Royal campus care for approximately 2,000 animals, representing over 400 species, of which 50 are threatened or endangered. The National Zoo is a national treasure providing a unique experience, allowing visitors the opportunity to roam and to see animals from all different regions of the world and discover all sorts of species that inhabit our Oceans, our lakes, our trees, and our sky.

The National Zoo sees up to 2million visitors annually who have access free of charge—I think that is an important thing to note, again, free of charge—and the zoo works to engage the local, national, and international communities by preserving wildlife and teaching the responsibility we all share for its conservation.

The Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute campus in Front Royal, Virginia, has an equally, if not more important role. The Front Royal campus is home to various endangered species and is the nexus as well for the Smithsonian's global efforts to conserve species as well as to train current and future generation of conservationists.

So today we look forward to receiving an update from the leaders of the National Zoo and its primary research arm, the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, and discuss with them how Federal funding is being used, the zoo's operations and plans for the future, as well as hear from the directors on the important and noteworthy conservation research and science activities undertaken by the zoo.

And we will also hear from the president and CEO of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, a group which has established high professional standards to review a multitude of areas beyond the quality of animal care, conservation, and research, such as viability of the zoo's governing authority, physical facilities, safety, staffing, and guest services.

Zoos make the journey to learn about various species accessible and offer us the opportunity to see an animal firsthand. They also provide the chance for us to encounter an animal that we never knew even existed. Zoos offer us all the knowledge to learn about the world around us and be caretakers for what is entrusted to us, and that is something I believe that is beyond value.

So again this committee is looking forward to hearing from our three witnesses, and at this time I would like to turn to the ranking member for his opening statement. Mr. Brady.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for scheduling today's hearing on the Smithsonian National Zoological Park.

The visiting season in Washington has already begun and this means more visitors to the zoo's outstanding facilities on Connecticut Avenue. And while the public does not see it directly, the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, a part of the zoo's complex located in Front Royal, Virginia, continues its groundbreaking research and educational activities on conservation and the preservation of endangered species.

On this committee we are always concerned about the safety of visitors, the staff at the zoo, and the safety and care of the animals and the collection, and the level of Federal funding to support that. We have been assured that Federal cuts imposed by the sequestration and other legislation would not impact care of the animals,

and I look forward to hearing our witnesses today to address that important issue.

We have periodically approved construction projects to meet the zoo's challenging needs, and we have regularly reminded the Smithsonian Board of Regents of the necessity of keeping admission to the Smithsonian facilities, including the zoo, free to the American people. I remain strongly committed to that priority.

I welcome today's witnesses and look forward to your testimony.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Are there any other members that wish to provide an opening statement? Yes, the gentleman from California is recognized.

Mr. VARGAS. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

My comment, and I would like to hear from you during your testimony, if possible, or I will ask you a question later, is I think you are doing a great job and we at the San Diego zoo are very proud of it. We think it is the best zoo in the world. I am sure others would argue about that. And we have been members forever. And that is why I was so scandalized when the Copenhagen zoo killed Marius, a healthy giraffe, and then fed it to the lions, and then later on killed four other lions. And I think that was outrageous.

I would like to know, though, from you if it was something that was necessary, one; and secondly, why didn't we help if we could, some zoo in the United States. They said that no one would take them. And I would like to hear a little bit about that. I think it has captured our imagination in a very negative way.

And again, I thank you for the opportunity to speak. Thank you, Madam.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman very much.

Any other members have an opening statement? If not, before I formally introduce our witnesses and begin, I am going to take a moment of personal privilege here because I am like everybody else, I am addicted to this panda webcam, looking at Bao Bao, and who just yesterday ventured outside of her mother's yard for the first time, and I asked my staff to get the video clip of that. We will see if it works.

[Video shown.]

Look at that. Unbelievable. There she is. Well, all right, we don't want to go on too long with this clip. You like the clip? All right, great.

Mr. BRADY. Looking at everybody here.

The CHAIRMAN. I read that on the airplane coming here yesterday and I said, oh, my gosh, we are going to have this hearing tomorrow, we have got to see the clips of Bao Bao going outside. Okay, at any rate, that gives you a sense of some of the wonderful, wonderful things they are doing at the zoo.

Let me formally introduce our witnesses now. And first of all, Dennis Kelly, of course, is the director of the Smithsonian's National Zoo. He is responsible for overseeing the 163-acre facility in the Rock Creek Park, as well as the 3,200-acre Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute campus in Front Royal, Virginia. He is also responsible for managing the zoo's research programs and oversees education programs coordinated by the zoo's nonprofit membership organization, Friends of the National Zoo, and in 2011

he was elected to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums Board of Directors.

Then we will hear from Dr. Steven Monfort, who was appointed as the director of the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute in January 2010. The facility, headquartered in Front Royal, Virginia, serves as the focal point for the Smithsonian's effort to use science-based approaches to conserve species and train future generations of conservationists around the world. He has spent his entire career working within the zoological community and has been with the Smithsonian since 1986, serving in many roles, including veterinarian, research scientist, educator, conservationist, and executive-level administrator.

And then we will hear from Mr. Jim Maddy, who is president and CEO of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. He previously served 9 years as the president of the National Park Foundation, president of the League of Conservation Voters, and was the first executive director of the Western Governors' Association. He also currently serves as the chairman of the board of directors for the Center for Clear Air Policy. As president and CEO of the AZA, Mr. Maddy has raised a positive profile of the AZA accredited zoos and aquariums as drivers of tourism and economic development, as leaders in animal care and welfare, and as key players in the conservation of wildlife and wild places.

So we do have all of your written testimony, and again we appreciate you all attending today. And we will start with Mr. Kelly.

**STATEMENTS OF MR. DENNIS KELLY, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL PARK, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION; DR. STEVEN MONFORT, DIRECTOR, SMITHSONIAN CONSERVATION BIOLOGY INSTITUTE, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION; AND MR. JIM MADDY, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS**

**STATEMENT OF DENNIS KELLY**

Mr. KELLY. Madam Chair, Ranking Member Brady, and members of the committee, thank you so much for this opportunity to talk about the zoo, about the Conservation Biology Institute, and to talk about our stewardship of an important living collection of animals, and our vital research and conservation efforts.

Simply put, our job, our mission, our role is to save species. However, our number one priority, day in, day out, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, is the welfare of the animals in our collection and human safety. We use five distinct oversight processes to ensure great animal care and safety, including a robust Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, annual inspections and guidance from the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, advice and inspections from OSHA, an annual Smithsonian safety and health inspection, and as you will hear from Mr. Maddy, accreditation by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Last December we had several public reports about animal welfare issues at the National Zoo. The issue actually began last summer when a volunteer notified me about her concerns about animal welfare decisions at the Cheetah Conservation Station department. I immediately directed our Animal Care and Use Committee to in-

investigate. The IACUC, as we call it, concluded last fall that some of the volunteer's concerns had merit, and they made 25 observations and recommendations. I agreed with 24 of those observations and recommendations, and it is important to note that the animal care team had already addressed or were in the process of implementing appropriate changes. There were no egregious surprises.

Now, it is my judgment that some of the problems in Cheetah Conservation Station resulted from staffing imbalances that temporarily stressed our system. So in late 2013, I initiated a three-part program I called Speed Up, Slow Down, and Rebalance, and that program has provided relief to animal care staff.

Human resources staff, at my direction, has given high priority to filling vacant animal keeper, biologist, curator, veterinarian, and nutritionist positions, and already seven new animal care hires or promotions have been completed, and 10 more recruitments are in process. So I assure you that we provide great care for our animals and we operate safely.

As part of the Smithsonian, the zoo and the Conservation Biology Institute do rely on Federal appropriations for the majority of our funding needs. However, in order to realize our mission to operate a safe environment and to maintain our role as a leader in animal care, we must and will grow alternative funding sources. Since my appointment 4 years ago, we have focused on raising more resources from private research grants and government research grants and contracts to fund our research and conservation. We have focused on philanthropy from private and corporate donors. And we have generated income from sales of food and merchandise and stuffed panda bears and even a new carousel.

So I am pleased to report that all of these sources of revenue have grown over the last 4 years, and while these sources can supplement our Federal appropriation, they cannot replace it. And as Secretary Clough and the regents often remind me, my job is to raise more revenue from these alternative sources in the future.

The National Zoo and the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute play a crucial role in one of the Smithsonian's four grand challenges, and that is understanding and sustaining a biodiverse planet. We are guiding this mission by three leadership strategies. Number one, we are saving species through science. Number two, we are training the next generation of conservation biologists. And number three, we are providing a world-class educational experience and a great visitor experience right here in Washington, D.C. In just a moment, Dr. Monfort is going to speak about the first two of those strategies, but I am going to conclude my testimony with a few words about our plans for a great public experience here at the zoo in Washington.

Did you know that the National Zoo is the favorite destination in Washington for families with children? Now, I never want to give up this hard-won leadership position because we can use this position to deliver an effective, efficient, informal and formal education message for learners of all ages. We coordinate this conservation message with K through 12 STEM curriculum, and to stay relevant and efficient we are using both Federal and private funding to modernize our exhibits and our animal care infrastructure.



During the last 10 years we have invested more than a quarter of a billion dollars in our beloved institution. That sounds like a lot of money and it is, but we are 125 years old, and as Madam Chair said, and we still have a ways to go to upgrade these important facilities. And we are using Federal and private sources and technology to expand our reach around the country and around the world. Unique assets like panda-cam, sponsored by Ford Motor Company Fund, engage and delight millions of virtual visitors around the globe, while at the same time educating and inspiring global audiences about conservation and saving species.

The zoo's highest priority is and always will be the welfare of our animals in our care and the safety of our visitors and staff. So I am excited and grateful for our Federal support for collection stewardship, scientific research and conservation, professional training, and a great family experience.

Mr. Vargas, I will be happy to address your question in the Q&A, if that is appropriate.

Mr. VARGAS. Thank you.

Mr. KELLY. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Kelly.

[The joint statement of Mr. Kelly and Dr. Monfort follows:]

**Smithsonian Institution**

Joint Statement

Dennis W. Kelly, Director, Smithsonian National Zoological Park

Steven Monfort, PhD, Director, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute

Hearing on National Zoo Collections Stewardship

Committee on House Administration

U.S. House of Representatives

April 2, 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee to testify about the Smithsonian National Zoological Park and the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and our stewardship of our important living collection of animals, and our research and conservation efforts in support of our mission to save species from extinction. In 1889, Congress directed the Smithsonian to create a national zoo in the District of Columbia “for the advancement of science, the instruction and recreation of the people.” Now, 125 years later, the National Zoo cares for more than 1,800 animals representing 297 species from all over the world, many of them critically endangered.

**Stewardship of Collections**

Our collective staff works hard to build and grow our reputation as a leader in our profession, especially regarding animal welfare issues and the safety of our staff and visitors. As stated in our strategic five-year plan, human safety and animal welfare are our top priorities in every aspect of our mission. In support of those priorities, we created internal and external processes that test and reinforce our commitment to excellent animal welfare and safety. For example, over the last decade, we expanded the role of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee beyond the statutory requirement of inspecting research animals. Today, this committee covers all animals at the National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute. We use the resources of the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service on both a formal and informal basis to get their advice, guidance and support for independent evaluation of our animal facilities, processes, policies and practices. We work with the United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration to evaluate and test our safe work practices. On an annual basis, the National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute staff works closely with the Smithsonian Office of Safety, Health and Environmental Management to complete a detailed review and inspection of all facilities on both campuses for safe working conditions. With the Smithsonian Safety Office, we have instituted Zoo- and Institute-wide Job Hazard Analyses; these department-specific Analyses are posted in all work areas and reviewed annually with all staff in the area. We believe this Job Hazard Analysis process is a leading best practice in our profession.

We enthusiastically participate in the accreditation process of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). This accreditation process, completed every five years, covers all aspects of modern zoological practices at the highest standards in the world. I am pleased to tell you that we were just reaccredited in September of 2013. Following a year-long process, the five-day accreditation inspection of the Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute by a team of four non-Smithsonian zoological professionals focused heavily on both animal welfare and on human safety. The recommendations of an AZA inspection team are always taken very seriously by Smithsonian leaders. We act on them immediately. Moreover, Smithsonian and Zoo leaders encourage and support the active participation of our staff in AZA animal and safety programs. Dozens of National Zoo staff spend many hours every month as animal program studbook keepers; animal population management committee members, advisors and chairpersons; species survival plan committee members, advisors and chairpersons; taxonomic advisory group members and advisors; Association committee members and chairpersons, including the Association special safety committee; Accreditation commission members and chairpersons; and participation on the Association board of directors. This investment in the national and global management of captive species enables the National Zoo to help set the research and conservation agenda for our profession, and insures that animals and species are available to the National Zoo and SCBI, now and in the future for research and, in some cases, for reintroduction to the wild.

As part of the Smithsonian Institution, the National Zoological Park and the Conservation Biology Institute rely on Federal appropriations for the vast majority of our funding needs. Under the leadership of Secretary Wayne Clough, the National Zoo leadership team has worked hard to reduce our dependence on Federal appropriations by creating and growing three alternative funding sources: Private and government grants and contracts, especially to fund conservation biology research efforts; Philanthropy from private and corporate donors, especially for specific exhibitions; and Earned income, especially from sales of food, merchandise, parking and other activities enjoyed by visitors to the National Zoo. These non-Federal sources of income supplement our Federal support, but they cannot replace it. I am pleased to report that all three of these alternative sources of revenue have grown over the last four years.

With all this good news to share, we are also mindful of the animal welfare issues that were discussed publicly at the end of 2013. In 2013, a volunteer notified the Zoo Director and the Associate Director of Animal Care Sciences of her concerns about animal welfare decisions in the Cheetah Conservation Station department of the Zoo. Under my direction, the Facilities subcommittee of the Zoo's Animal Care and Use Committee looked into these concerns. The subcommittee investigated the volunteer's concerns and found that many had merit. The subcommittee made 25 recommendations for changes to processes, procedures and staffing. We are grateful that these issues were brought forward, and the recommendations have led to improvements across the Zoo. Twenty four of the recommendations were already being implemented at the time the concerns were made public. Some of the problems that arose reflected some staffing imbalances that, while temporary, did put stress on the system. The decisions that led to staffing imbalances were made by me and the National Zoo leadership and in recognition of the problems that arose, I ordered the implementation of a three-part program to insure animal welfare and human safety called "Slow Down – Speed Up (hiring) – Rebalance (keeper

workload)" in December 2013. As part of the Slow Down aspect, unit managers were given the authority to suspend for 90 days all non-husbandry and non-safety activities of animal keepers, veterinary and nutrition staff. The non-critical functions include research support and/or public engagement activities such as keeper talks, behind-the-scenes tours, and optional non-Zoo outreach committee assignments. With the support of Smithsonian leaders, the Zoo and Smithsonian human resources staff have given high priority to filling vacant Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute animal keeper, biologist, curator, veterinary and nutrition positions. As a result, seven new animal care hires or promotions have been completed and ten additional recruitments are now in process. Finally, senior curator staff is undertaking a workload analysis of keeper and biologist duties, to ensure that animal care and safety duties are in balance with public outreach duties, research time and training needs. That analysis is in process.

#### **Leadership Strategies**

The National Zoo and its Conservation Biology Institute play a crucial role in one of the Smithsonian Institution's four grand challenges: "Understanding and sustaining a biodiverse planet." In 2013, the leadership of the National Zoo adopted a five-year plan entitled "Our Plan to Save Species;" much of our testimony today is based on that plan. The plan is published on the Zoo's website at [http://nationalzoo.si.edu/AboutUs/Mission/NZP\\_Our\\_Plan\\_to\\_Save\\_Species.pdf](http://nationalzoo.si.edu/AboutUs/Mission/NZP_Our_Plan_to_Save_Species.pdf). Our current efforts to achieve our ambitious plans include three leadership strategies:

**Saving species through science:** Building on our past successes and leveraging the unique scientific resources of the Smithsonian Institution, we are advancing the discipline and practice of conservation biology. Our current focus is on seven key disciplines are: Animal Reproduction, Husbandry, and Welfare; Endangered Species Conservation and Reintroduction; Wildlife Health and Emerging Animal Diseases; Animal Movement and Migratory Connectivity; Biodiversity Genomics, Forensics and Evolutionary Genetics; Biodiversity Monitoring and Assessment; and Climate and Carbon Science. The Smithsonian is an important leader and innovator in each of these areas.

Over the last decade, the Smithsonian National Zoological Park and Conservation Biology Institute have made many significant discoveries, breakthroughs and contributions to conservation biology and saving species. Critical breeding successes have included the giant panda, Sumatran tiger, Micronesian kingfisher, dama gazelle, Przewalski's horse, black footed ferret, clouded leopard, sloth bear, Andean bear, African lion, cheetah, Cuban crocodile and kiwi. Discoveries have included the identification of the elephant herpes virus which may be the cause of one-third or more juvenile elephant deaths around the world; the Chytrid fungus which is causing an extinction threat to as many as one-third of all frog species on the planet, and breakthroughs on cryopreservation of gametes of important species ranging from elephants to pandas to sea-corals. Scientists from the Conservation Biology Institute operate in 25 countries around the world, working closely with colleagues from the State Department, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, US Department of Agriculture and States' Agricultural veterinarians, the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to identify barriers to conservation, including foreign animal disease threats, zoonotic disease, habitat loss, human/animal conflict and more.

With the support of the Congress, the Administration and private and corporate donors, the leaders of the National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute have completed almost a quarter of a billion dollars of upgrades and renewals to the facilities at both the Rock Creek and Front Royal campuses. Visitors now experience award-winning new exhibits such as American Trail for seals, sea lions, bald eagles, wolves and Elephant Trails, where three more elephants will join our herd. Staff, visitors and animals are safer with the upgrade of fire protection and security systems. Visitor amenities are vastly improved to accommodate growing numbers. Most importantly and core to our mission, new breeding facilities for cheetah, clouded leopard, red panda, kiwi and more were constructed, enabling us to understand and save these important species. Using non-Federal resources, the Zoo has made a multi-million dollar upgrade of its restaurants; added a solar powered carousel celebrating endangered species -generating about \$500,000 per year for the Zoo's mission; and we are in the process of upgrading Zoo parking at minimal cost to the Federal budget.

With the strong leadership of the Smithsonian Regents, and the stability of multiple funding streams (including Federal funding), the National Zoo and its Conservation Biology Institute are well-positioned to continue to make significant, important contributions to our Mission to save species from extinction and understand and maintain biodiversity on our planet.

**Informal education and great visitor experience:** Survey data demonstrates that the Zoo is the favorite Washington-area destination for families with children. We use this leadership position to deliver an effective, efficient and informal education message for learners of all ages. We coordinate our conservation and science education with current grade K-12 STEM curriculum. Using both Federal and private funding, we are modernizing our exhibits and animal care infrastructure for both efficiency and effectiveness. In the last ten years, we invested more than \$250 million to make our exhibits and infrastructure better for animals and our visitors, while reducing energy and resources expense. Finally, we use Federal and private resources and technology to expand our reach to national and international audiences. Taxpayer dollars fund a large portion of our exhibit construction, and have made possible major renovations such as the Panda House, Seal and Sea Lion pools and Elephant Conservation Center. Unique assets like the 'panda-cam,' sponsored by the Ford Motor Company Fund, engage millions of virtual visitors around the globe and educate them about our important conservation efforts.

**Training the next generation:** For decades, the National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute have provided training for people who now assume important leadership roles around the world. Over 6,000 undergraduates, graduates and professionals have trained in key elements of conservation biology in Smithsonian facilities and dozens of affiliated countries. The latest successful manifestation of this effort is the Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation on the 3,200 acre Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute campus in Front Royal, Virginia. The new, \$25 million LEED-Gold certified school campus was built by leveraging Federal funds with State of Virginia financing as well as private donations. Enrollment in undergraduate and graduate and professional courses is growing. The multi-purpose facility is becoming financially self-sustaining, as it can be used to host meetings, retreats and internal seminars for other Federal and State agencies, private companies and groups. Through our strong partnership with the Zoo's membership organization, Friends of the National Zoo, our award-winning summer and school vacation camps and classes grow in popularity, optimizing revenue opportunities

and providing financial support. Finally, with Smithsonian support and resources from the Friends of the National Zoo, we continue to build exciting, impactful educational engagement programs through both social media outreach and our website, which we are working to rebuild.

**Conclusion**

The National Zoo's highest priority will always be the welfare and safety our visitors and staff and of the animals in the collection, and we maintain the highest standards to ensure that. Federal and private support enables the National Zoo to be a leader in collections stewardship, scientific research, visitor education and professional training. Thank you for the opportunity to tell you about the great work we do.

The CHAIRMAN. We now turn to Dr. Monfort.

Dr. MONFORT. Madam Chair, distinguished members, thank you so much for the opportunity today to appear before the committee to testify about our efforts to save species through science and to train the next generation of conservation professionals.

You may not know that in the late 1960s the National Zoo established one of the world's very first stand-alone zoo-based research departments and we cofounded an entirely new discipline of science known as zoo biology, a discipline that was specifically aimed at using science to improve animal management, reproduction, and welfare. Today, in fact, science-based management is considered the gold standard of practice for all modern zoos, and that transformation of the zoo profession can be traced directly to a lineage of National Zoo scientists and the generation of colleagues that they mentored and placed in positions worldwide.

Additionally, in the early 1980s, our scientists helped usher in another entirely new discipline of science called conservation biology. And this is a discipline that is based on the premise that biological diversity and the functioning of ecosystems are of benefit to current and future human societies. Before the first textbooks in this discipline were even published in the late 1980s, the National Zoo and its scientists had already begun reintroducing golden lion tamarins back into the Atlantic coastal rain forest of Brazil. And today this remains as one of the greatest success stories in modern zoo and conservation history, joined by other programs that were led or assisted by National Zoo scientists, including programs like the black-footed ferret, the California condor, the Florida panther, and others.

Today, roughly 20 percent of the world's accredited zoos in Europe and America have dedicated research departments, but only a very small number of those actually employ full-time Ph.D.-level scientists and conservationists. Through our generous Federal appropriations, we employ 33 Federal Ph.D.-level scientists and veterinarians, and by effectively leveraging our Federal appropriations with grants and philanthropy we are able to support an additional 14 non-Federal scientists, 25 postdoctoral fellows, and 70 graduate students.

All told, the National Zoo has more than 200 scientific personnel involved in understanding and sustaining a biodiverse planet working with partners in more than 25 countries worldwide.

Saving species is hard work and it requires fundamental knowledge about the complexity and diversity of species biology, and the truth is, that knowledge is sorely lacking for hundreds of species that already are reliant upon human care in zoos. The time to save a species is not when they are down to their last couple of dozen animals, which was the case for species like the Przewalski's horse, the black-footed ferret, and California condor.

Conservation success really requires a combination of things: trained scientists, access to animals, funding, of course, and appropriate facilities designed specifically to study and manage wildlife species before they become threatened.

At the Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute, we are creating a whole host of new alliances. We are pursuing aggressive animal management strategies and investing in

conservation science to achieve significant and expanded conservation outcomes. Our science ranges from saving species in human care, but also includes conserving key wildlife habitats, to understanding animal migration patterns, and even identifying disease pandemics that threaten both humans and wildlife alike.

Our scientists have made many important discoveries, including the identification of the elephant herpes virus, which is known to cause up to one-third of juvenile elephant mortality around the world, the Chytrid fungus, which is potentially responsible for up to a third of amphibian species becoming extinct across the planet, and we possess the world's foremost wildlife reproduction laboratories that have done things like helped us produce Bao Bao, of course, but other species, like elephants and even sea corals.

But savings species also requires the commitment of well trained professionals, and over the past 40 years the National Zoo has pioneered training of more than 6,000 trainees worldwide, many of whom have gone on to become leaders in the conservation field in more than 30 countries worldwide.

Now, in partnership with George Mason University, we are very proud of our Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation, which is located on our 3,200-acre campus in Front Royal, Virginia, and this program builds on our legacy and reflects our philosophy that the best way to prepare for an uncertain future is to foster a new, a better equipped, and highly motivated generation of conservation professionals that will work to conserve the living natural resources that we all need to survive ourselves.

This is the core principle of the discipline of conservation biology and the role that is emerging within zoos worldwide. And we believe that it is the achievements of our trainees that will provide the best hope for long-term success in achieving our mission of understanding and sustaining biodiversity for the benefit of all of us.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, very much.

And we now turn to Mr. Maddy for his testimony.

#### **STATEMENT OF JIM MADDY**

Mr. MADDY. Thank you, Chairwoman Miller and Ranking Member Brady, for the opportunity to testify before the committee today about the AZA accreditation process.

AZA's 224 accredited zoos and aquariums annually see more than 182 million visitors. Collectively, they generate more than \$21 billion in annual economic activity and support more than 204,000 jobs across the country.

Let me just pause and say that when I look up at the dais, I see elected officials. I see Members of Congress, and members of the committee, but I also see the Georgia Aquarium, the Detroit Zoo, and the Philadelphia Zoo, and the Happy Hollow Zoo in San Jose. So it is a pleasure to be here and have the opportunity to speak about the National Zoo.

Over the last 5 years, AZA-accredited institutions supported more than 1,000 field conservation and research projects that cost about \$160 million annually, and our members are operating those programs in over 100 countries. In the last 10 years, these accredited zoos and aquariums formally trained more than 400,000



schoolteachers supporting science curricula with effective teaching materials and hands-on experiences. School field trips and programs annually connect more than 15 million students with the natural world. This is very important, because a recent National Research Council study found that people learn as much as 95 percent of their science in informal settings such as AZA accredited zoos and aquariums.

At the heart of the AZA mission is the accreditation process that we are here to talk about and focus on today, which ensures that only those zoos and aquariums that meet the highest standards can become members of AZA. In the past 40 years, hundreds of inspectors have devoted more than 200,000 hours to the accreditation process. The AZA accreditation process is rigorous and unbiased. It is a lengthy evaluation involving self-evaluation, onsite inspection, and peer review, and it really has stood the test of time.

The standards are continuously evolving, getting stronger as we learn more about the needs of the animals in our care. Accreditation helps to develop public confidence through a thorough, measured, and documented audit that establishes whether an institution meets or exceeds current professional standards and as established by the association.

This is accomplished by a periodic comprehensive review and site inspection conducted by zoological experts in operations, animal management, and veterinary medicine. Once granted, AZA accreditation is a publicly recognized badge signifying excellence in and commitment to animal management and welfare, veterinary care, ethics, physical facilities, staffing, conservation, education, safety and security, finance, and support organizations. Conversely, denials of accreditation should lead to improvements in identified areas and a concurrent increase in cooperation and support from governing bodies and other organizations.

Each institution that goes through accreditation does so with the understanding that the process is confidential. In keeping with that standard operating procedure, I want to briefly describe how the overall AZA accreditation process works.

First, we carefully select the Accreditation Commission members who have the expertise to evaluate each zoo and aquarium. These are experts and leaders in their field, have been for many years. They are educated and experienced in zoo and aquarium operations, animal management, and veterinary medicine. There are 12 experts on the Accreditation Commission. The commission evaluates every zoo and aquarium to make sure it meets the highest standards for animal management and care, including living environments, social groupings, health, and nutrition. The commission also ensures that animals are provided with enrichment which stimulates each animal's natural behavior and provides variety in their daily routines. We evaluate veterinary programs, their involvement in conservation research, education programs and their safety policies and procedures.

Because a zoo or aquarium needs a strong foundation in order to continue to meet those high standards, we also look at finances. We look at the operation of the governing authority and any support organizations, such as the Friends of the Zoo.

Every candidate for accreditation fills out a detailed questionnaire that is a self-evaluation process that comes to professional staff in my organization, which reviews that and comments on that. After the Accreditation Commission studies that application, the team of inspectors visits the zoo or aquarium in person. Each team includes at least one veterinarian, along with animal and operations experts as well. They produce a written and detailed report. The commission meets twice a year to consider all of those candidates for accreditation, and when they meet, the director of the institution appears before the commission to answer questions and resolve issues.

They examine the application, the supporting documents submitted by the zoo or aquarium inspection team's report, and any information received from outside individuals and organizations, including U.S. Department of Agriculture and often other Federal agencies that have had opportunities to comment on the zoo.

The zoo and aquarium senior officials must appear before that Accreditation Commission. Each zoo and aquarium must keep up with these changes to remain AZA accredited. As I explained to the gentleman at the table and other members of our association, if you just keep doing what you are doing, 5 years later you won't be accredited because the standards are constantly evolving and constantly getting stronger.

I want to conclude by saying that the National Zoo is highly respected within the AZA community and among the public for its leadership in scientific research, its commitment to conservation. It is unique among AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums, as the chair mentioned, in that it truly belongs to all Americans by virtue of being a member of the Smithsonian family.

I also want to commend Dennis Kelly for his outstanding leadership at the National Zoo. Dennis is a member of the AZA Board of Directors as an expert voice on a range of issues, particularly including conservation and safety. Dr. Monfort also is a member of the association and is a leader in our scientific endeavors and our science committees.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter. I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Maddy follows:]

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Testimony

of

**JIM MADDY  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS**

before the

**COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION**

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

on

**The National Zoo of Today and Tomorrow - an Innovative Center Focused on the Care and  
Conservation of the World's Species**

April 2, 2014

Thank you Chairwoman Miller and Ranking Member Brady for the opportunity to testify before the Committee today about the AZA accreditation process.

My name is Jim Maddy and I am the President and CEO of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Founded in 1924, the AZA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation. AZA's 224 accredited zoos and aquariums annually see more than 182 million visitors, collectively generate more than \$21 billion in annual economic activity, and support more than 204,000 jobs across the country. Over the last five years, AZA-accredited institutions supported more than 1,000 field conservation and research projects with \$160,000,000 annually in more than 100 countries. In the last 10 years, accredited zoos and aquariums formally trained more than 400,000 teachers, supporting science curricula with effective teaching materials and hands-on opportunities. School field trips and programs annually connect more than 15,000,000 students with the natural world. This is very important as a recent National Research Council study found that people learn as much as 90% of their science in informal settings such as AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums.

AZA and its member institutions work in concert with Congress, the Federal agencies, conservation organizations, the private sector and the general public to conserve our wildlife heritage. In particular, AZA and its member institutions have a long-standing partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Our collaborative efforts have focused on:

- Engaging in endangered species recovery and reintroduction (For example: black-footed ferrets, California condor, Mexican and red wolves, whooping cranes);
- Supporting multinational species conservation funds and state wildlife grants; and
- Collaborating on partnership opportunities involving wildlife refuges, migratory birds, freshwater fisheries, illegal wildlife trade, amphibians and invasive species.

At the heart of the AZA's mission is its accreditation process, which ensures that only those zoos and aquariums that meet the highest standards can become members of the AZA. The AZA accreditation process is a rigorous, unbiased, and lengthy evaluation involving self-evaluation, on-site inspection, and peer review. The standards are continuously evolving and getting stronger as we learn more about the needs of the animals in our care.

AZA accreditation helps to develop public confidence through a thorough, measured, and documented audit that establishes whether an institution meets or exceeds current professional standards as established by the AZA. This is accomplished by a periodic comprehensive review and site inspection conducted by zoological experts in operations, animal management, and veterinary medicine. Once granted, AZA accreditation is a publicly recognized badge signifying excellence in, and commitment to, animal management and welfare, veterinary care, ethics, physical facilities, staffing, conservation, education, safety and security, finance, and supportive bodies. Conversely, denial of accreditation should lead to improvements in identified areas and a concurrent increase in cooperation and support from governing bodies and other organizations.

Accreditation looks at all aspects of a zoo's operations, including:

- animal care including living environments and daily enrichment
- veterinary programs - including preventative medicine
- financial stability
- risk management
- conservation education programs
- conservation efforts
- safety for animals, staff, and visitors
- staffing levels and training of staff
- governing authority
- guest services

Each institution that goes through accreditation does so with the understanding that the process is confidential. In keeping with that standard operating procedure, I want to briefly describe how the overall AZA accreditation process works. First, the AZA carefully selects the expert Accreditation Commission members who evaluate each zoo and aquarium. These experts are leaders in their fields and have many years of experience and education in zoo and aquarium operations, animal management, and veterinary medicine. There are twelve experts on the Accreditation Commission.

The Accreditation Commission evaluates every zoo or aquarium to make sure it meets AZA's standards for animal management and care, including living environments, social groupings, health, and nutrition. The Accreditation Commission also ensures that animals are provided with enrichment, which stimulates each animal's natural behavior and provides variety in their daily routine.

The Accreditation Commission evaluates the veterinary program, involvement in conservation and research, education programs, safety policies and procedures, security, physical facilities, guest services, and the quality of the institution's staff. Because a zoo or aquarium needs a strong foundation in order to continue to meet high standards, accreditation also evaluates each institution's finances, its governing authority, and its support organization.

Every candidate for accreditation fills out a detailed questionnaire which includes copies of their policies, procedures, records, lists, and reports. The application takes many months to complete and six months to study and evaluate. After the Accreditation Commission studies the application, a team of inspectors visits the zoo or aquarium in person. Each team includes at least one veterinarian along with animal and operations experts.

The inspectors spend several long days at the zoo or aquarium visiting every area, interviewing staff, checking records, and examining the physical facilities and the animal collection. The inspectors then write a detailed report about everything they saw and evaluated and submit it to the Accreditation Commission.

The Accreditation Commission meets twice a year to consider all candidates for accreditation. They examine the application, the supporting documents submitted by the zoo or aquarium, the

inspection team's report, and any information and comments received from outside organizations and individuals.

The zoo or aquarium's senior officials must go to the Accreditation Commission's meeting to answer questions. Finally, the Accreditation Commission decides whether or not to grant accreditation. It does not matter if an institution is new or was previously accredited, standards are high and not every candidate receives accreditation.

AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums are constantly evolving and standards are continuously being raised. Each zoo or aquarium must keep up with these changes to remain AZA-accredited. To prove it, they must go through the entire accreditation process every five years, and they are expected to meet the AZA accreditation standards every day. AZA believes that nothing is more important than assuring the highest standards of animal care and our accreditation process is the best way to accomplish that goal.

Accreditation is what differentiates AZA institutions from other holders of wildlife - fewer than 10% of the approximately 2,800 animal exhibitors licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture are AZA accredited. AZA-accreditation and certification is mandatory for all AZA member organizations. Once earned, it confers best-in-class status, an important message for local, state, and federal government and the visiting public.

I want to conclude by saying that The National Zoo is highly respected both by the AZA community and the public for its leadership in scientific research and commitment to conservation. It is unique among AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums in that it truly belongs to all Americans by virtue of being a member of the Smithsonian family. I also want to commend Dennis Kelly for his outstanding leadership at The National Zoo. Dennis is a member of the AZA Board of Directors and is an expert voice on a range of issues, including conservation and safety, within the AZA community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter, and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate all of the witnesses, and I think I will start with Dennis Kelly.

Mr. Kelly, I had the opportunity to visit the zoo with you not too long ago, and it is just a remarkable place. And as we mentioned at the outset, it is unique because the funding comes from the Federal Government.

I am just wondering, do you think that changes your vision for a zoo? I mean, if you were running a zoo that was not federally financed, how does that change, perhaps, your master plan and how you do things there at the zoo as well? And a two-part question, because really showing the Bao Bao, and I am glad you mentioned in your opening comments about Ford Motor Company, a Michigan company who is very, very engaged. They are sponsoring the panda exhibit. I know they just recently gave you a new truck.

I just mention that as one of the many, many corporate citizens and sponsors, donors the National Zoo, and average, everyday citizens as well. And so really, even though you are getting the money from the Federal Government, the amount of money that you are raising privately is also really quite remarkable and a tribute, I think, to the leadership that you have exhibited at the zoo. So perhaps you could talk a little bit about the financing part of that.

Mr. KELLY. Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair, for that question.

First, I have run another zoo, Zoo Atlanta, in the past. And here, as in this role, I feel a particular responsibility to each and every citizen of the United States, every taxpayer. So the work we do is in cognition of it has to be as relevant to the family in Rock Creek or in Cleveland Park, but it also has to be relevant to families in Kansas and Hawaii and California. And so our work is focused on science, it is focused on conservation, it is focused on training the next generation, as well as interpreting it to the visitors who come to Washington and experience the zoo.

So every decision we make is in cognition that our owners are every American citizen. In that regard, we reach out to people like Ron Kagan at the Detroit Zoo and we cooperate with him on his efforts. For example, you mentioned research on gorilla heart disease, and that collaboration is very valuable. We are collaborating with not just zoological colleagues, but colleagues in China, for example, with direction of the State Department and the Fish and Wildlife Service, to actually make sure that there are more pandas like Bao Bao born.

Having said that, we are consciously aware of the fact that we should and must leverage Federal resources, so collaborations with great partners like Ford Motor Company, like Microsoft, like the Coca-Cola Company, even international companies potentially like international airlines that want to build a presence, but also contribute to our mission, we find those to be powerful and leveraging, and we think that is a good way to use the taxpayer dollars. So you will see more of that in the future—leveraging. And my colleagues at the San Diego Zoo and Detroit Zoo are using the same strategies. But we think it is a win-win for conservation. At the end of the day, we all want to save species.

The CHAIRMAN. You know, you mentioned Microsoft, and that also brought me back to something that you had mentioned, that the zoo is the number one destination in D.C. for groups of families

with children. And just because of the webcam, the panda-cam that has been such an incredible success, could you just talk a little bit about how you are utilizing technology to be able to enhance the experience for folks that just, you know, can't afford to come to Washington, D.C.? But really, again, a zoo is such a National treasure, how can we get that kind of information out to teachers, teacher resources, or what have you. Perhaps you could expand on that a bit.

Mr. KELLY. Great question. We are actually utilizing Federal resources. So we have more critter cams than any other zoological institution in the world. That is because of our Federal support and Federal infrastructure. So panda-cam is one. It is interesting that the very first critter cam was actually the naked mole rat, and that is still today our—

The CHAIRMAN. The what?

Mr. KELLY. The naked mole rat. The naked mole rat is a fascinating creature that we have been studying for years.

The CHAIRMAN. One of my personal favorites, I know.

Mr. KELLY. But the naked mole rat camera was the very first one. But it is interesting because the naked mole rat lives to be about 30 years old and it is one of the few species in which cancer has never been detected. It lives its life underground, it is a mammal, and yet we have never detected cancer. But that camera is the way to tell that story. So collaborating with people like Microsoft and Discovery Channel and Smithsonian Channel is a way that we are building that awareness of conservation.

And if my might, Mr. Maddy and AZA have done work with Microsoft in a unique way, that, if I may, get him to explain how Microsoft has partnered with accredited zoos.

The CHAIRMAN. Sure.

Mr. Maddy.

Mr. MADDY. We are actively involved with Microsoft now, with a family-friendly game called Zoo Tycoon. The original version of that, very popular, millions and millions of families have purchased that and played that game. The zoo in the game did not meet our accreditation standards, and so it was a lot of fun over the last couple of years to work with Microsoft engineers and others to redesign the game so that all of the animal care practices, all of the animal welfare practices, the veterinary care, and everything else in this simulation actually simulates the best standards of animal care and welfare as a learning tool. A lot of fun, and hopefully a meaningful educational experience for millions of families.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good. I am sort of boring in on these questions because, you know, we are here, we work here every day and we see these fantastic facilities that we have here in the Nation's Capital. And I come from southeast Michigan that was number one in everything you didn't want to be number one in during the very painful economic transition, and our kids just can't afford to hardly get on a bus and come to a field trip anymore. I use that as sort of an example of how we are, in all of the Smithsonians, really trying to reach out around the country and the world, really, to bring this experience.



And with that, and that is why I mentioned, I thought it was worth noting, just saying that there is no fee for people to come into the zoo. I think that is such an important thing.

And I would ask the next question to Dr. Monfort about Front Royal, because I think you only open it to the public on a very limited basis. I am not sure how often. But I know you are thinking about opening it a bit more. And as you mentioned, all of the Ph.D.s that you have there, and all the science and research that is going on there, and I guess this is my question. I am assuming that one of the reasons it is not open to the public more is because you think it might impact in some way your work, your very important work that you are doing there. So what is your thought going forward on having any more public availability to go there, or again, using electronic access to be able to really open it up as much as you possibly can?

Dr. MONFORT. That is a great question.

First of all, the facility is very unique in that we are a science-based facility, so the structures that we build are built for functionality, for the ability to do naturalistic breeding. Animals that need herd setups can be in herds or social groupings. Or in order to conduct science, we have special facilities that are built just for, say, carnivores, or for hoofed animals, for example. In many cases those research projects are being conducted in a way that having a lot of visitation might disturb the research that is going on.

Having said that, we do work very hard to try and open our facility when it is possible. One of the ways we have done that is through our new partnerships. So when we did our master plan about 7 or 8 years ago, we created partnership zones, and the idea, the result of that ended up being initially our partnership with George Mason University, and now we have a school there which attracts, you know, quite a number of people that come there for both undergraduate education and professional continuing education, but also for holding special events, and things of that nature.

We have a new partnership with NEON, which is the National Ecological Observatory Network, and so we are one of only 20 core sites in the United States, part of that program where they are collecting information on the ecology of North America. So that is also attracting a lot of new collaborators and new people.

And our master plan does include having a small visitor center there. And first thing I would say, if you haven't been, please come. We would love to show it off to you. It is a really fascinating facility. It was a calvary remount station back in the early 1900s, so it has some really great history. And there are people that want to come in and learn about the history, they want to learn about the programs we are doing, and we think we can do that with some guided tours. We do actually provide guided tours by docents now. And so we are working to open it up, but we want to maintain the core mission, which is science, and make sure that whatever we do to open it up doesn't interfere with that primary mission.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. I am glad you mentioned about the docents. That is one of the things that I found certainly at the zoo, at all of the Smithsonians, at the Library of Congress, or whatever.

Before I came to this job actually, I was the official historian of Michigan and we had the historical center in downtown Lansing. I am going to tell you, we could never have run that operation and they can't today without the volunteers and without the docents. It is just remarkable the passion that these folks feel and how great they get at their jobs, and they do a wonderful job.

Just my last question. I know I am a little over my time here. But to Mr. Maddy, just listening to you go through as you mentioned the very lengthy, rather exhaustive accreditation process that your organization has, and does anyone ever lose their accreditation? Maybe you don't want to mention anyone specifically, it would seem like that would be an uncommon thing, but yet going through that kind of, as I say, an exhaustive process that you have, certainly some people probably just—some organizations, facilities, just don't make it.

Mr. MADDY. Yes. Unfortunately, it is—well, fortunately it is rigorous, and it is every 5 years. Being accredited isn't forever. It is until the next accreditation inspection and review process.

But, yes, the Accreditation Commission meets every 6 months, roughly. They hear on average 25 cases each time they meet. That is roughly 50 a year. And typically in a year there will be institutions whose accreditation is suspended for a year, we call that tabling, because there are outstanding concerns that have not been fully addressed. And from time to time institutions are not, even with a year's grace, are not able to overcome those concerns and they do lose their accreditation.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

I recognize the ranking member, Mr. Brady.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

First of all, for full disclosure, I always wanted to be a director of the zoo in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. But I would be doing it a little bit differently. I would have my khaki uniform, with my short pants and the crop, the camouflage Jeep, and I would have an animal with me everywhere I go. I don't know whether it would be that naked rat, but a cub or whatever, because every time I see, like, our director of the zoo, or not necessarily him, but a lot of the people that work at the zoo, they always have a cub or something. That is a great promo. I mean, nothing better than that, than the show and tell.

And the only time I leave my office to vote or go to the hearings on this committee or other committees is when there is zoo day. And I go over there, and the last time I saw the little chimpanzee and they had the lion cub. I mean, that is a great promo. You ought to think about that, or maybe you need an assistant, you know, at the end of my life here. It seems the only uniform you guys have here is beards, which is fine. I could grow a beard.

But I just got a couple of little questions. We had that terrible problem with the deaths of the animals and somebody had mentioned early on that it might have been budgetary. But I also hear it wasn't budgetary. They wanted to blame it on the sequester, whatever. But it was maybe administrative issues. Have we addressed that? I mean, can you tell me, you know?

Mr. KELLY. Yes, sir. We have, like every agency, are responsible for managing our resources as carefully as possible. I made deci-

sions to make sure we stay within our budget and made a number of cuts that didn't impact frontline animal care. And it was as we were raising more money, but we want to be as lean an operation as possible. So I actually, after having arrived 4 years ago, I reduced staff in administration, in communications, in various departments. I have never cut frontline staff.

Having said that, the budget that we have now provides for us to continue having great animal care and grow our basis. Budget uncertainty is the worst thing in running an institution like ours, and now that we have budget certainty we can move forward and build upon that basis. I would also add that, you know, I am close to the Philadelphia Zoo. I take great advice from your director, Vic Dewan. I consider him a—

Mr. BRADY. Don't tell him I want to be the director, please. He won't let me back.

Mr. KELLY. I am afraid the secret is out. But Vic is a great example of what we are emulating, is to build upon a strong Federal base and utilize selling of more stuffed panda bears and carousel rides, and plow that back in such a way that we can support the research mission going forward and actually leverage it.

Mr. BRADY. Mr. Maddy, you mentioned something about the Department of Agriculture. They did a test. They gave us a clean bill of health in the zoo prior to those animals' deaths, you know, the problem that we had with the animals that were killed. I mean, did they miss something?

Mr. MADDY. No, I don't think so. The U.S. Department of Agriculture inspects 3,000 facilities that display animals for the public to see, and it is not the multiple-personnel, multiple-day kind of inspections. It is a different kind of inspection. But, no, I don't think they missed something here, because the conditions under which the National Zoo is holding and caring for its animals, it meets our standards, it meets USDA standards. But there is mortality in the collection every day because it is a living collection.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you. One last question. I have a major peeve with our zoo. We lost our elephants. You walk into the Philadelphia Zoo, you see a great big sculpture of an elephant, but we don't have any elephants. I have four grandchildren. Two of them saw elephants. The other two, being younger, won't get a chance in Philadelphia to see my elephants. I want to come down and let them see the elephants in your zoo.

I would imagine that was an area issue, we weren't big enough to have them. I think we sent them out to Arizona, you know. You have, like, four of them now, right?

Mr. KELLY. Yes, sir. We have four elephants, and we are actually taking on three more that are being transferred to us from the Calgary Zoo, all with private funding. The important thing is every zoo, every well-run, accredited zoo needs to make choices and decisions about the animals that they can care for best. At your Smithsonian National Zoo we made a decision almost a decade ago that we were going to focus on a species that needed help, Asian elephants, so we committed a lot of resources, a lot of taxpayer resources and private resources and land to build a world-class Asian elephant facility.

Meanwhile, we decided not to be the polar bear conservation, in the polar bear business, but Philadelphia Zoo is, and so that is an example of the tradeoff that we make. I think Vic Dewan is making and the board of the Philadelphia Zoo are making those tough decisions, but that doesn't preclude elephants from coming back to Philadelphia when the right space and the right time—

Mr. BRADY. Yeah, we are looking to enlarge, you know. Again, I want to bring the two grandchildren who never saw a live elephant, I want to bring them down here to see them. When I visited your zoo a few years ago they brought me back to see the elephants and there was a mother and a daughter and a bull. You can't get near the bull. You know, nobody can get near the male elephant. And they brought us into this room and we went back there and they sat us there, and here they came.

Well, the first thing I did was look for the exit. They are massive. They are magnificent animals. So I would like to see us get them back, but meanwhile you get another customer to come to your zoo.

Thank you all. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentleman. And just before we go to Mr. Vargas, we had the same thing at the Detroit Zoo with our elephants. Well, our director made the decision, you know, they were standing on concrete so many hours in the day. They were getting arthritis in their legs and all these different kinds of things. And it was very traumatic for the community when we lost our elephants, but we understood the decision that he made. So as you say, the directors have to make their decisions.

The chair recognizes Mr. Vargas from California.

Mr. VARGAS. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I appreciate it. Come to San Diego. We have them all. We have the elephants. We have the polar bears. We have naked rats and mice. In fact, all our animals are naked. We don't have the naked guy. That guy is in New York.

I am very much in favor of zoos. I have lived in New York, and they have the Bronx Zoo, which is a magnificent zoo also. And I have been to your zoo here, which is magnificent. And of course we have the best one, the world famous San Diego Zoo, which really is—it is a jewel in San Diego. We love it. It is fantastic. We also have the wild animal parks.

Mr. BRADY. Excuse me. Philadelphia has the first zoo.

Mr. VARGAS. And a wonderful zoo.

And my daughters—in fact, you have a beautiful picture here I want to make sure I share with her—I have a 10-year-old daughter and a 17-year-old. My 10-year old loves the giraffe, and we have a picture at home of my wife and I actually feeding the giraffes at the wild animal park. We had a chance to do that a number of years ago.

And I thought it was outrageous what the Copenhagen Zoo did. You know, it certainly struck a chord I think in everybody's heart around the world that sees these animals as gentle giants. And then how they did it. They dissected it in front of children and fed it to these lions. And no disrespect to the lions. In fact, some of those lions lost their lives in a very inglorious way themselves.

I know that the Europeans have a different view than we do with respect to the purity of lions and animals and they didn't want to

have inbreeding going on. Of course, there are other ways to do that. There are contraceptives that they can use with the animals. There are ways that they can move them so they don't have to kill the animals.

But I have to say, I mean, it just seemed outrageous what they did. Could you comment on that? My daughter was so upset about that: Are they going to do that to our giraffes? And I assured her that they wouldn't do it, and I hope that my assurances are correct. I mean, in San Diego, I have to tell you, I am confident in San Diego we wouldn't do that. We wouldn't do that. The outcry would be absolutely outrageous, so many of us that belong to the zoological society there would be absolutely outraged. We wouldn't allow that to happen.

Mr. KELLY. And you are correct. In fact, we have a written policy at your Smithsonian National Zoo, I approve every euthanasia. And we do euthanize animals when they are suffering, just as you would your dog or your cat. It is our written policy, and I would never approve at Smithsonian National Zoo that we would euthanize an animal for population management purposes as was done at the Copenhagen Zoo.

You are exactly correct. In Copenhagen and in that part of Europe they have a different philosophy about how to manage animals. It is based in science, but it is against our culture to use that same policy. And in fact at the National Zoo we do use contraception, we do use social separation as a way to manage that.

You mentioned in the early part of the hearing that they could have sent those animals to other zoos. There were other zoos in Europe that offered to take them, and the director chose not to take that option. I can't get in his head. I know him, but I don't know why he didn't take that option.

Mr. VARGAS. That is something that I have never seen it here in the United States. That is something that I imagine wouldn't happen. We also have, for good or ill, we do have also reserves or areas where people take animals. I mean, people unfortunately have wild animals in their homes, and every so often they are discovered and they are taken from them and they are put in these places where they preserve them. I mean, we wouldn't do this, right, we wouldn't go around trying to figure out how to kill these animals for no reason? Are there any zoos in the United States that would follow the Copenhagen model? Can anyone answer that?

Mr. MADDY. Not that I am aware of.

Mr. VARGAS. Not that you are aware of.

Okay. I mean, it is interesting because zoos are controversial, as everything is. We had a very wealthy individual in San Diego donate a lot of money to the university, at one of the universities, to set up a school for engineers, and someone criticized him for that. So I know now that whatever you do it will be criticized. I mean, this is his philanthropy, and he was criticized for it. So everything is controversial in my opinion now.

That being said, zoos I think are wonderful places where children learn about animals, to respect them, respect nature. They are willing later on to make sacrifices themselves, to give money to preserve animals in the wild, also to preserve them through zoos. I think they are wonderful places. But to have this sort of thing hap-

pen I think sets us all back, and I hope that within your groups as you speak among your peers that that word would get out to others, that I think it was very damaging to zoos around the world.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you all very much for coming. The zoo is a fantastic thing. And, you know, as has been mentioned and I appreciate the questions, the very insightful questions about sometimes we hear about the death of the animals. And I was just reading an article that appeared here today, the headline is, "Why are baby animals dying at the National Zoo." But when you read the article, it is not anywhere really as what the headline is really saying. Here is the one line here. "The national kingdom is a rough, brutal, and fatal place even in controlled environments like zoos and even for species that are cute and cuddly."

And I mentioned to you that I had the great opportunity of having Dr. Murray, your chief veterinarian, on my cable show last week, and she was talking about the bear sloths, where the mother bear had ate, was it one or two of the—two? But she mentioned to me if this was in nature, all of them would have been gone.

So it really is for us, I think, to keep reminding folks of the kind of business that you are in, and sometimes these sensational stories, we have to put them in perspective. But I certainly appreciate your comment about the Copenhagen Zoo.

And just one other issue that I thought was sort of—when I came to visit you last, it was just several days after you had recaptured Rusty the red panda. Talking about social media, that had to be the biggest social media event going on in Washington, D.C., when Rusty escaped. And so I now know how Rusty got out of his enclosure, because if you go there, along the back is all this real high, black bamboo, and they theorized that there was a real heavy rain the day he got out and the black bamboo must have come down a little. Man, that thing saw his way out, and he was gone. They finally picked him up in Dupont Circle or somewhere. He was off.

The amount of hits that you had, somebody said there were 30 million hits about where is Rusty the red panda. It was on all the national talk shows. I just mentioned that in closing because I think that was a very vivid demonstration, indicative of how the people certainly of Washington, D.C., and our Nation's Capital and throughout our country feel about our National Zoo and our zoos and what a national treasure they are and how important it is. And before I close I see Mr. Maddy waving his finger.

Mr. MADDY. Just very quickly, Madam Chair. Thank you. And I will take you back to the comments of Mr. Brady at the beginning. Zoo Day this year is in late May. We will be in the Rayburn House Office Building. We will be downstairs in the courtyard, in the cafeteria. I would guess that if last year is any guide there will be several thousand of your colleagues and your staff there enjoying a wildlife experience in an unusual way, and we hope that all of you will join us then.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you for reminding us of that certainly, and I know Mr. Brady will be there in his khaki shorts and his outfit, with his whip there. So he will be ready.

At any rate, we thank you so much. This committee looks forward to continuing to work with the zoo, of course the entire

Smithsonian. So if there are issues that you would like to talk to us about or other ways that this committee can, as we are exercising our oversight responsibilities, help amplify a very positive message as well, that is part of our jurisdiction and our desire as well.

And so without objection, all members will have 5 legislative days to submit to the chair additional written questions for the witnesses if there are any so that they can be made part of the record.

And with that, the hearing is adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:42 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

