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ROTH'S REMARKS

CREW Provides National Leadership



Over two decades ago, CREW's strategic planning efforts landed on the concept of "Signature Conservation Projects", a term coined through the process and still used today. The philosophy behind it is the desire to focus our time and resources on playing a leading role and making a significant impact in the conservation of a narrowly defined group of species rather than spreading ourselves thin trying to do a little for each of the many species in need. The strategy requires discipline; two decades later, CREW has only four *Signature* Projects, but our achievements with our targeted species have been rewarding. Measuring success is always part of the strategic plan discussion, and there is no better way to demonstrate it than in the form of third-party validations. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) offers highly competitive National

Leadership Grant awards. Proposals are reviewed and scored by several esteemed colleagues working in zoos, aquariums, and/or botanical gardens. These reviewers understand the needs of our living collections and the challenges facing their long-term sustainability. In 2008, CREW was awarded its first National Leadership Grant for work on rhinos and small cats. Fifteen years later, CREW has received nine such grants spread across all four *Signature* Conservation Projects. Not only do these awards confirm our national leadership with our targeted species, but they also enable program expansion so that we can answer more questions, develop more technology, have more impact, and train more next-generation conservation scientists. Thanks to the CREW-IMLS partnership over the years, the future for rhinos, imperiled cats, exceptional plants, and bears is a little brighter.

