

RHINO KEEPERS ORGANIZE IN NEW ASSOCIATION

The need for a "Rhino Keeper Association" became apparent with increased interest and involvement in the Rhino Keeper Workshops. The first workshop was hosted by Disney's Animal Kingdom in 1999. This workshop, which is now a biennial event, is a gathering of rhino keepers and other experts discussing captive rhino husbandry, reproduction, *in-situ* and *ex-situ* research projects, and other rhino related topics. Over the past year a group of dedicated rhino keepers have worked diligently to create this organization. In March 2006, this group came together and ratified a set of by-laws and adopted a code of ethics. Now the Rhino Keeper Association (RKA) is a working organization.

RKA'S GOALS ARE TO:

- Promote and advance the knowledge of rhino husbandry
- Improve communication among rhino keepers and other rhino experts worldwide
- Disseminate accurate and scientifically-based information on all five rhino species
- Implement a Rhino Keeper Professional Development Program.
- Participate and promote *in-situ* and *ex situ* rhino research
- Encourage communication between researchers and conservationists in the field with professionals in the zoological community
- Continue the Rhino Keeper Workshop by providing assistance to hosting institutions.

The RKA board has instituted a scholarship program to enable keepers to participate in the upcoming Rhino Keeper Workshop in Australia in May 2007. Thus far, there is \$12,000 in scholarship funds available. Check the RKA Web site for more information (www.rhinokeeperassociation.org).

The RKA Web site will provide rhino keepers and enthusiasts with reliable, up-to-date information on rhinos in captivity and the wild for dissemination.

In the coming months all AZA institutions housing, (or have plans to house) any of the five species of rhinos should have received the first issue of RKA's newsletter, *The Crash*. RKA members will receive this quarterly electronic newsletter intended to facilitate communication among rhino keepers and other rhino professionals. The first issue of *The Crash* describes the formation and purpose of RKA, membership, and future plans, including the 2007 workshop.

FOR QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT:

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Or any RKA current board member listed on the RKA Web site.

ADAM FELTS IS PRESIDENT OF THE RHINO KEEPER ASSOCIATION

