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Inside Form

Hearings on 2 New Bills for Rhino & Tiger

Washington - February 5, 1998

Broad, bipartisan support was offered for two bills intended to boost tiger and rhinoceros protection at a recent House Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans subcommittee hearing.

Department of Interior Bruce Babbitt spoke at the hearing and offered the Clinton administration's "enthusiastic" support for the two measures.

The first bill, H.R. 2807, introduced by subcommittee Chairman Jim Saxton (R-NJ) would prohibit the sale, importation and exportation of products labeled as containing substances derived from rhinoceros or tiger.

The second bill, H.R. 3113, the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Reauthorization Act, introduced by Resources Committee Chairman Don Young (R-Alaska), would extend to the year 2004 authorization of \$1 million in appropriations to fund protection projects for those animals. In past years the funds have been used for projects to investigate poaching and illegal trade of the animals, and education, monitoring and training programs, among other things.

The two bills respond to drastic drops in the populations of the two animals, bringing them to near extinction. According to the Resources Committee, the black rhinoceros population has been decimated from 65,000 animals in 1970 to a current level of less than 2,500. And in tiger population, three species have become extinct, and of the remaining five breeds, the population has plunged from 100,000 animals in 1990 to less than 5,000 today.

While human population growth, competition for land and commercial logging have all contributed to the destruction of tiger and rhinoceros habitat, the major cause of the de-

cline in population has been the demand for mostly medicinal products that have tiger or rhino components.

According to the WWF, several alternatives to tiger and rhinoceros parts have been identified as equally efficacious for certain medicines, and efforts are underway to educate people on the different options.

"It is important to reach out to traditional users of this medicine to increase awareness and find culturally appropriate alternatives," WWF President Kathryn Fuller said at the hearing.

Both tigers and rhinoceros are protected under the 1977 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which seeks to protect animal and plant species threatened from trade impacts.

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BRF Receives Major Grant

Black Rhino Foundation, Inc. received a grant in the amount of \$30,000 this month from an anonymous donor. The donor specified the money go to Rhinowatch, the on-going black rhino monitoring project in Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe. This funding has provided a life-line for the project and it will allow us to continue to work throughout the coming year and plan ahead with confidence, stated Dr. Zoe Jewell, Rhinowatch. (accepting Matching Grants)

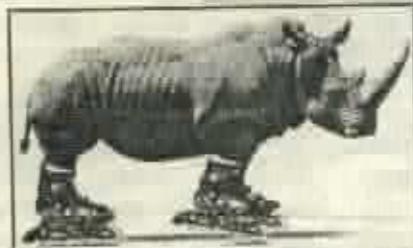
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Joe Explorer Vacation Pass Supports BRF

Watch for the BRF on the Outdoor Channel with Joe Explorer. Travel cheap and help the rhinos at the same time...

The BRF is proud to announce an exciting new partnership with Joe Explorer, a multifaceted travel company, based in La Jolla, CA. Through the Joe Explorer television program, Joe Explorer Vacation Pass, world wide web and travel publications, consumers will have the opportunity of making travel purchases related to the destinations experienced through each weekly show.

As a part of the television series, the BRF will receive 30-second commercials during the show which will promote the BRF, detail the plight of the rhino and



Built Ford Tough

"How do you stop a rhino from charging?"

Visa, Mercedes, Ford and now Dodge. Have you seen these T.V. commercials or print ads?

All 3 car companies have used the rhino in their new car or truck campaigns over the past year. Visa is still running a commercial showing safaris in Africa with local people asking over and over, "How do you stop a rhino from charging?" Actually, it's pretty funny. What's not funny is corporate America using the rhino in all its ads without contributing to a rhino conservation program. Mercedes wouldn't want to be associated with an extinct animal, now would it?

"Take away it's American Express Card!"

Websites: www.sosrhino.org



Poached Rhino

Tiger & Rhino Hearings

Can't

According to a source with WWF, H.R. 2807 would enhance CITES protections by providing federal officials with direct enforcement power. This source explained that the current burden of proof for confirming that products contain tiger or rhinoceros parts is on the government, which she says entails an expensive forensic review.

"H.R. 2807 stipulates that if a label on a product says that it contains rhinoceros or tiger parts, then a Customs Service or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service enforcement agent can prevent it from coming into the United States. The bill mandates that action by making the legal presumption, without any further scientific tests or analysis, that it violates the law. In essence, the bill is "truth-in-labeling" for these endangered species, and if manufacturers choose to sell these medicines without a reference to rhinos or tigers, then experts contend that consumers are not likely to purchase them," the Resources Committee says.

Colleen Schu
Environment
Weekly



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Educational Program Launched Students "wild" for rhinos!

Winnetka - On April 13, 1998 the BRF kicked off its long anticipated educational program. The 45 min presentation to the 4th and 5th graders of Crow Island School in Winnetka was met with enthusiasm and sincere interest from the students. We are thrilled that so many young people are already aware of what is happening to the rhino and have so many questions about the animal, in fact the Q&A session at the end of the slides was stopped before all the hands were called on. We could have gone on all morning! The rhino seems to be a very popular animal amongst this age group. I didn't have to do any convincing that this magnificent creature is worth saving.

This is part of a new educational program we are launching this year in an effort to raise awareness of the rhinos plight with the *next* generation.

The program consists of 3 parts.

Sperm Donor Wanted SOS Rhino Project

The right individual will be a male black rhino, age seven to 25 years, preferably a father. Docile, cooperative nature a plus. Call for an appointment to help preserve this endangered species.

When Brewster, the resident black rhino father at the Milwaukee County Zoo began his participation in genetic research, he wasn't exactly answering a personal ad. But the Rhinoceros Reproduction Program's current success may well depend largely on the strength of this fine candidate for the job.

While the short term goal of this important research is to gather and evaluate rhino semen, the long term objectives include cryopreservation of the seminal fluid as a genetic resource for the species. The success of this collection effort may become increasingly valuable in the future, as the black rhino

The slide presentation will inform the students of the rhinos place in history and why currently it's name is

I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember.
I do and I understand.

Confucius

found on the highly endangered list. After the presentation the kids will take part in a Penny Program in an effort not only to raise funds for the rhinos but to get the kids to actively participate in making a difference with a cause.

The students will learn how their pennies go from their classroom all the way to Zimbabwe and how they helped the rhino. Depending on the amount raised the classrooms will be able to adopt a rhino for a year and will receive a photograph and updates on its status.

The 3rd part of the program consists of a cultural exchange between the students in the U.S and the students in Zimbabwe - kids whose fathers are rhino scouts.

If you are a teacher of grades 4th - 8th and would like your class to participate in this program please contact us @ 847 501 4527.

Maggie Heydt

population has not yet stabilized in numbers.

That's where Brewster comes in. Together



with his mate, Barley, the pair has already produced two offspring, since their arrival from Zimbabwe in 1985. They are expected to produce another shortly. Notably, Brewster is fertile!

1250 Cherry Street
Winnetka, IL 60093

Sperm Donor Wanted

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And though being a proven stud is one thing, being cooperative is an entirely different matter. Through the care and patience of Dana Nicholson, Keeper of the Zoo, Brewster, like other zoo animals, has been trained to accept the collection of blood from his forelegs. This process has readied Brewster for the later collection of semen under the direction of Dr. Nan Schaffer, Principal Investigator (PI).

Dr. Schaffer continues to develop semen collection techniques which she hopes can later be introduced for regular use at other zoos as well. The procedure has been applied repeatedly to only two rhinos besides Brewster. One was an Indian rhinoceros the other, a black rhino. Neither, however, produced live sperm samples during the process.

Brewster is one of the first participants to actually contribute to a rhino sperm bank. That's exciting when you consider that zoologists have successfully used similar sperm banks as a resource for artificial insemination of other endan-

gered species such as the tiger.

But a project of this nature takes time and resources. That makes the arrival of a University of Wisconsin veterinary student, Karen Censoprano, important to the project. In conjunction with Dr. Schaffer, Karen worked to familiarize Brewster with the collection techniques, as consistency is believed to be very important.

Karen was supported, over the summer, by revenues from BRF T-shirts sold at the Milwaukee Zoo gift shop. Purchase of black rhino shirts as well as ongoing contributions to the Foundation, remain crucial to the continuation of this promising reproductive effort.

The future of the rhinoceros offers no guarantees. But your support of the Black Rhino Foundation helps the Milwaukee County Zoo remain proactive in its search for techniques to "help your horny friends."

10 Animals Die at New Disney Park

"Zoo deaths a fact of life," Disney says. But in the past 6 months 10% of all annual zoo deaths occurred at the new Disney Wild Animal Kingdom, including 2 rhinos.

A white rhino died under "routine" anesthesia for a medical examination and a black rhino died after eating an 18 inch stick and developing an infection.

Worst still is that 4 cheetah cubs died after being poisoned from a chemical found in anti-freeze and rust removers. How did that wind up in their formula?

The USDA is looking into the string of deaths. "They're isolated incidents. They're unfortunate, but animal deaths, like animal births, are a fact of life," Disney said. Zoos aren't legally required to report animal deaths to any agency. The International Species Information System estimates zoos average 107 animal deaths a year.