



Michael Werikhe

**A**MERICANS WERE ONCE again touched by the magic of Michael Werikhe, better known as the rhino man and recognised worldwide for his tireless efforts to save the endangered black rhino.

This soft-spoken man, who has carried his conservation crusade around the globe, has also become one of Kenya's most popular ambassadors, creating an honest curiosity about his homeland. His travels have also generated a great deal of interest in the East African Wild Life Society.

Thanks to the Goldman Environmental Foundation, sponsor of Werikhe's November trip, supporters in five states were able to meet Werikhe personally and hear him talk about his favourite subject - the plight of the black rhino.

Werikhe, a 1990 winner of the prestigious Goldman Environmental Foundation Award, met with 24 other recipients in San Francisco to discuss worldwide environmental problems. The thread that these unique individuals, from more than 20 countries around the world, have in common is their commitment to conservation related causes. They met to share their views and exchange ideas in hopes of finding solutions to some of our more pressing environmental problems.

Not being one to waste an opportunity, Werikhe extended his trip to include visits to San Diego, Phoenix in Arizona, Portland in Oregon and Bainbridge Island, Washington where he talked about his passion. And, as is his nature, he made time to visit schools, talking with children about their role as future caretakers of the environment.

He also managed a trip to Fort

# Michael Werikhe in the USA

*Story and photos by Evelyn Bloom*

Lauderdale, Florida to attend the opening of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) where he served as an observer for the EAWLS. Werikhe, accompanied by EAWLS member, Nancy Neenad, lobbied for continued international trade regulations for certain animals threatened with extinction.

In San Diego he spoke to 80 supporters at the San Diego Zoo. The event, co-sponsored by EAWLS and the American Association of Zookeepers, San Diego Chapter (AAZK) raised US \$480 - money that Werikhe requested go to the Ngare Sergoi Rhino Sanctuary in Kenya for badly needed vehicle repairs.

In Arizona he visited three schools, spreading his 'gospel of conservation'. He had an especially warm reception on a visit to an environmental college, where he lunched with a fellow Kenyan, Professor Wafulu Okumu.

He visited three more elementary schools in Portland, was interviewed on a local radio talk show and mingled personally with a crowd of nearly 100 visitors near the rhino exhibit at the Metro Washington Park Zoo. He later spoke to 65 attendees at 'Zooniversity', a wildlife conservation lecture series sponsored by the zoo.

On his last day he participated in a mini-walk and talk on Bainbridge Island. **A Word of Appreciation** to those that helped make Michael Werikhe's trip a

success. The Goldman Environmental Foundation, sponsor of his trip to the US; Keith Tucker, EAWLS chief representative; Bob Dillon and AAZK for coordinating his San Diego stop; Nancy Neenad, EAWLS member, for coordinating his Arizona stop; Grant and Barbara Winther, EAWLS Washington representatives and Sue Harader, EAWLS corporate member, for coordinating his Washington stop; Dr Marti Rhea, EAWLS corporate member and Pat Goodrich, EAWLS member, who were instrumental in coordinating his Portland stop; Dan Salt with British Airways, without whom last minute changes would not have been possible; and finally to EAWLS members Karen



Michael Werikhe and visitors to the Metro Washington Park Zoo.

Kane, Leslie Schultz and Rosemary Borne for volunteering their time and effort. ●

Michael Werikhe would like to add thanks to Evelyn Bloom, one of the most active EAWLS representatives, whom organised the Oregon section and was in contact with British Airways and the other representatives over all Michael's arrangements.