



AAZK BOWLS FOR RHINOS

AAZK's Bowling For Rhinos® (BFR) fundraiser is in its 16th year. To date these single-night events organized by rhino keepers across the country have raised over \$2.4 million. The success of this program is attributed to the many AZA member zoos whose participation ranges from public relations to donations to staff actually bowling at the event. Directors, keepers, maintenance, and other staff and their families all bowl together at these events, strengthening their personal ties to the zoo and each other.

BY PATTY PEARTHREE

All funds raised through BFR events go directly to three conservation areas: Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya (with Black and White Rhinos); Ujung Kulon in Java, Indonesia (with Javan Rhinos); and Way Kambas and Bukit Barisan Selatan in Sumatra, Indonesia (with Sumatran Rhinos). Not only is AAZK working to save four of the five remaining rhino species, but also everything from orchids to elephants in some of the most unique habitats in the world!

Nearly 50 zoos participate in BFR. In 2005, the top 10 money-raising AAZK Chapters in the United States and Canada were:

- Oklahoma City Zoo
- Detroit Zoo
- Puget Sound (Woodland Park Zoo)
- Utah's Hogle Zoo
- Point Defiance Zoo
- Dallas Zoo
- Philadelphia Zoo
- Portland (Oregon Zoo)
- Greater Houston
- Honolulu

A total of over \$116,400 was raised by these 10 chapters.

BFR events allow participating zoos to shine in the conservation world. Zoos just need to get creative and energized. For example, a zoo could recruit a local company to match dollar-for-dollar the funds raised by zoo employees.

Anything your zoo can do to help your local AAZK Chapter be more successful in BFR will certainly help us all achieve conservation successes. Also, AAZK works closely with the International Rhino Foundation (IRF) in support of the North American Save the Rhino Campaign. Keepers are encouraged to extend their enthusiasm for rhinos and organize zoo events year-round.

Blue Rhino®, "America's Number One Brand of Propane Tank Exchange," became a sponsor of Bowling for Rhinos® in 2004 by pledging \$20,000 per year to AAZK conservation efforts. Blue Rhino® uses a blue cartoon of a White Rhino for its logo. Demonstrating its conservation commitment, it is "giving back" to rhinos in the wild by pledging publicity support and employee participation in BFR events. If you attend a BFR event this year, you very well may be served burgers from a Blue Rhino® gas grill!

In recognition of distinguished achievement by individuals in BFR fundraisers, there are now four trips awarded each year to experience first hand the projects supported by BFR. The two top fundraisers win a trip to Lewa (sponsored by Lewa Wildlife Conservancy), and two win trips to Indonesia (sponsored by the International Rhino Foundation). The 2005 prizewinners were:

- Chrislyn Newton – Oklahoma City Zoo
- Crystal Derusha – Utah's Hogle Zoo
- Jessica Scallan – Tulsa Zoo
- Alex Vasquez – Dallas Zoo

In addition, all BFR participants can visit Lewa at reduced rates with trip leaders who donate their time. Lewa provides a special safari, and trip proceeds are invested in conservation at Lewa.

Rhinos did not go extinct with the Millennium as some predicted. AAZK and AZA working together are making a difference.

For more information on Bowling For Rhinos® or trips to Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, please contact:

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