



Bowling for Rhinos

*Matt Mills
Keeper
Oregon Zoo
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It all started in 1987 with the Kansas City Chapter. The \$1,500 raised by the keepers in KC went to support a 10,000 acre rhino sanctuary in the heart of Kenya called Ngare Sergoi, which would rapidly grow into Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. Bowling For Rhinos was already booming when the first nationally sponsored AAZK events occurred in 1990, raising over \$138,000. In 1994 we expanded to support Ujung Kulon National Park on the island of Java in Indonesia, then again in 2009 to support Kenyan cheetah research. Thirty years later our relationships with our conservation partners have grown enormously. In 2019, 80 chapters worked together to raise \$461,530.11, bringing our total to \$8,251,194.59 million. Our combined efforts support conservation in three national parks and two critically endangered species of rhino in Indonesia with the International Rhino Foundation, over 1.5 million acres and countless community programs with Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, and a field station for cheetah research and conservation with Action For Cheetahs in Kenya. Whether your Chapter bowls, runs, climbs, bakes, sales, or sails, Bowling for Rhinos couldn't exist without your annual support. If your Chapter isn't —ing for Rhinos yet, 2020 is the year to start! We're rolling out some big changes to help us celebrate 30 years of (official) excellence, all designed to make BFR easier and more rewarding for everyone who understands the importance and exquisiteness of rhinos in the wild.



Deadlines

May 1st and November 15th. These are the only two dates you need to remember for Bowling for Rhinos. What's special about those dates? May 1st is the deadline for the \$25 registration fee and the Event Information Form. November 15th is the deadline for all funds and financial forms to be turned in to AAZK, along with the Trip Nomination Form. The Event Information Form and Trip Nomination Form are now digital forms that are quick and easy to fill out. The link to the Event Information Form, due May 1st, can be found under the Bowling For Rhinos tab on AAZK.org. The link to the Trip Nomination Form, due Nov. 15th, will be sent out in your Registration Confirmation e-mail. Some Chapters will be happy to see that nominations for fundraising trips have moved back to the fundraising deadline, allowing them to nominate their top fundraisers, if they wish. If your Chapter knows of a project focused on research and conservation benefiting rhinos, their ecosystems, or the communities supporting them, we encourage you to nominate that project for the Conservation Resource Grant. Nominations are due November 15th.

continued on next page

May 1

deadline for the \$25 registration fee and the Event Information Form

Nov. 15

deadline for all funds and financial forms to be turned in to AAZK

30

years celebrating BFR

1987

year of the first BFR

80

Chapters participating in BFR events in 2019

\$8,251,194

total raised to date for BFR

100%

Volunteer participation



Trips

The Bowling for Rhinos Program is very excited to announce a big change to the way five trips are awarded. In order to be eligible for the trips, Chapters must complete the Event Information Form and pay the Registration Fee by May 1st, and complete the Trip Nomination Form and submit final event funds and financial forms to AAZK by November 15th. Mark these dates on your calendar now, failing to meet them will disqualify your Chapter from any trip opportunities. Four of the five trips, two to Kenya hosted by Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and two to Indonesia hosted by International Rhino Foundation, are meant to reward fundraising efforts. Changes to the way these trips are awarded are what we're very excited about! First, the two highest fundraising Chapters will each be awarded a trip. Second, the remaining Chapters will receive one ticket into a lottery for meeting the deadline requirements, and one ticket for every \$1000 they raise. Two tickets will be drawn at random and the next two trips will be awarded to these Chapters. Finally, any Chapter that did not already win a trip will have an equal chance of winning the Anna Merz Rhino Champion Award, which includes a trip to Lewa. All Chapters that meet the deadlines listed above are eligible for this trip and have an equal chance of winning. This award is meant to recognize an individual's commitment to BFR, and is not tied to fundraising.

Another recent change to the trip program is when the trips to Indonesia and Lewa occur. Due to weather concerns, staffing availability, and the business considerations of our conservation partners, the Bowling For Rhinos Program will be implementing a predetermined window for the Bowling For Rhinos trips. The trips to Indonesia, provided by The International Rhino Foundation, will be scheduled in late June to early July. The trips to Kenya, provided by Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, will be scheduled in late September to early October. The specific dates of the trips will vary from year to year, but having a narrower window of travel will allow trip winners to better plan for their trip.



Resources

The final update we are really proud to share is the BFR Program Resources for Chapters Drive. This is a digital drive that Chapters can access using a link sent out with the Registration Confirmation e-mail. The drive is a place where the BFR Program can share resources with Chapters to help make BFR events even better. The drive currently contains the BFR Event Kit, artwork, information on the Conservation Resource Grant, and information from our Conservation Partners. It also contains the two page articles from The International Rhino Foundation, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, and Action for Cheetahs in Kenya found in this issue of the *Animal Keepers Forum*. These articles have been designed in a way to be appealing to the eye and help your Chapter communicate why the work of our Conservation Partners is so important. Your Chapter can use these articles to help promote your event and gather sponsors and funds. We will be adding more artwork, videos from our CPs, and resources throughout the year.

All of us on the Bowling For Rhinos Program are incredibly proud of the hard work and dedication to rhino conservation every Chapter has shown in the past 30 years. It is truly extraordinary that we have all worked together to raise just over 50 cents a minute for the last three decades to keep rhinos, their habitats, and the communities that depend on them safe for future generations. Since BFR is 100% volunteer operated we are able to send every single dollar raised to our conservation partners; 45% to IRF, 45% to Lewa, 8% to ACK, and 2% for the recipient of the Conservation Resource Grant. To help us celebrate 30 years of phenomenal teamwork, our friends at Peppermint Narwhal helped us design the shirt you see on the cover of this issue. It is available for purchase on the AAZK website, and the design can also be used at your events. We hope you enjoy it, and the other major changes for 2020, as much as we do.



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