

**PRESS RELEASE AUG. 5, 2008**

**THIS IS TO BE RELEASED TO DEAL WITH THE EXCESSIVE AMOUNT OF MIS-IMFORMATION WHICH HAS BEEN IN THE MEDIA. IT IS TO BE READ IN ITS ENTIRITY OR NOT AT ALL.**

**FIRST THE ENCLOSURE HOUSED 3 BENGAL TIGERS AROUND 3 YEARS OLD WHICH WERE HAND RAISED ON THE FACILITY FROM PARENTS HERE.**

**THE INDIVIDUAL ,AN INTERN WHICH IS A FAMILY MEMBER ENTERED THE ENCLOSURE ON HIS OWN TO TAKE PICTURES FOR A CUSTOMER. WE DO NOT AT THIS TIME KNOW WHY HE WAS IN THE ENCLOSURE AS IT IS A CLEAR VIOLATION OF POLICY WHICH IS BOTH WRITTEN AND VERBAL.**

**THE ONLY PERSONS WHICH SAW WHAT HAPPENED CLEARLY STATED THAT HE SLIPPED AND FELL AND THAT THE CATS HAD NOT ATTACKED IN ANYWAY. IT IS ALSO FIRMLY BELIEVED HE WAS UNCONSHIOUS WHEN A FEMALE TIGER APPROACHED GRABBED HIM BY THE NECK AND DRAGGED HIM TO WHAT SHE WOULD HAVE FELT WAS SAFETY. CONTRARY TO REPORTS SHE WAS NOT HOLDING HIM IN WATER BUT WAS RATHER HOLDING HIS HEAD ABOVE WATER BY HIS NECK. DAKODA NEVER MOVED OR MADE A SOUND AND APPEARED TO BE UNCONSHIOUS. WHILE THERE IS NO DOUBT BEING DRAGGED BY A 300 POUND ANIMAL WITH 2 INCH CANINES CONTRIBUTED TO HIS INJURIES GREATLY THERE IS ALSO NO DOUBT HE WOULD HAVE NOT SURVIVED AN AGGRESSIVE ATTACK INVOLVING HIS NECK. ALSO ONLY ONE CAT WAS EVER INVOLVED. FIRST STAFF ENTERING FOUND THE FEMALE ATTEMPTING TO DRAG HIM OUT OF A 5 FOOT DEEP POOL OF WATER. STAFF CALLED 911 UPON REALIZING THE PROBLEM BEFORE EVER MAKING IT TO THE SCENE COMPLETLEY. STAFF FOLLOWED STANDARD RADIO CALLS AND VERY QUICKLY WERE ABLE TO USE CO2 TO MOVE THE CATS INTO SAFE RANGE AND REMOVED DAKODA. ALL STAFF PERFORMED BRAVELY AND WITHOUT REGARD FOR THEMSELVES, NOT BEING SURE IF THIS WAS A FULL ATTACK**

**OR NOT. WE COULD NOT THINK UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES HOW ANY STAFF COULD HAVE RESPONDED BETTER. CONTRARY TO STORIES THE ZOO BEGAN CLOSING IMMEDIATELY UPON DAKODA BEING SAFELY PLACED ON THE HELICOPTER. THE ZOO WAS CLOSED HOURS EARLY AND ONLY SKELETON STAFF REMAINED TO GET THE LAST VISITORS FROM THE FACILITY. ALMOST ALL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WERE IN SPRINGFIELD AT THE HOSPITAL LONG BEFORE WE CLOSED NORMALLY. WE ARE REOPENING TODAY AS THIS IS WHAT DAKODA WOULD HAVE WANTED AND WHAT HIS FAMILY WANTS. WE ALSO HAVE A MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY TO ALL THE OTHER ANIMALS ON SITE. WE ARE WAITING FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AS TO DAKODAS CONDITION. WE WILL BE COOPERATING WITH AUTHROITIES IN EVERYWAY TO BRING THIS INVESTIGATION TO A CLOSE. AT THIS TIME WE BELIEVE IT WAS SIMPLY A TRAGIC ACCIDENT AND WE ARE NOT CONSIDERING AT THIS TIME TO PUT DOWN THE CATS AS DAKODAS FAMILY HAS MADE IT CLEAR THIS IS NOT WHAT HE WOULD HAVE WANTED.**

**ALL FACILITY STAFF**