

WZACS Rocks on ! September News of the new WZACS in South Asia

Sally Walker

“WZACS Rocks !” seems to have been adopted as the unofficial name of the South Asian Zoo Association campaign to distribute the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy throughout South Asian zoos and also to spearhead activities and programmes which are inspired by or in keeping with its recommendations. Last issue we described some of the current activities of zoos in our region in relation to WZACS. There is some more news, including the response of people who have received it. The biggest news is of the Report on the book release ceremony which took place at Central Zoo, Nepal.

Brief Report on the book release ceremony of Building a Future for Wildlife: The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation (WZACS) Strategy in Nepal

Wildlife Action Group (WAG) has organized the book release ceremony program at Visitor Hall, Central Zoo, Lalitpur on June 30th, 2005. The book release ceremony was for Building a Future for Wildlife: The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy in Nepal. Central Zoo was also a collaborator in the release which was organised by Dr. Ravi Aryal who is an employee of the Law Ministry in Nepal.

More than 40 intellectuals including media persons and individuals from different fields were gathered in Central Zoo of Kathmandu for this book release ceremony. Environmentalists, Lawyers, Experts, Students, NGOs, INGOs and Government Officers from Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation of Nepal with other concerned people were invited for this program. The program started at 11:15 am with the opening speech by Chairperson of WAG, Ms. Salina Poudyal who welcomed all the invitees and emphasized the role of zoos and aquariums in conservation sector. She also addressed the importance of efficient conservation practices that can't be obtained only from individual level but requires a joint effort essential for co-operation and co-ordination between different NGOs, INGOs and government level.

Mr. R.K. Shrestha, Director of Central Zoo of Nepal, released the book and delivered his address on the importance of WZAC Strategy for conservation program. He is hopeful for its success and assured for proper implementation of WZAC strategy in Central Zoo of Nepal and also claimed that this strategy will bring a revolution in current conservation practices in different zoos all around the world.

After releasing the strategy, WAG Founder/Member and CITES Law Expert Dr. Ravi Sharma Aryal had made a detailed Power Point presentation on this strategy. He went thoroughly from the beginning of the chapter to the end and explained each and every chapter with different examples. Every person listened with full of enthusiasm. He emphasized the major goal of zoos and aquariums that should focus to integrate all aspects of their conservation activities and role of scientific decisions for wildlife conservation.

He also highlighted the recommendation that training should be expanded for different conservationists at the field level too. Formal and informal conservation education program plays a vital role, he said.

He opined that networking is essential, so effectiveness in communicating conservation issues is a fundamental step in global conservation. He also said that messages should be actual, positive, proactive and optimistic. He suggested that the communication strategy followed by the zoo should be monitored, evaluated and shared for better communication.

Dr. Aryal has also mentioned that zoos and aquariums represent a unique mix of technical and interpretative expertise for legal and environmental ethics, and by developing strong collaborative mentality with a broad spectrum of partners, zoos and aquariums can substantially increase and enhance their conservation ideas.

He concluded by thanking Dr. Peter Dollinger, Executive Director of WAZA, Ms. Sally Walker, Hon. Director of Zoo Outreach Organization and Director, SAZARC for providing this opportunity. He also mentioned that WAG could work in Nepal as a sister organization for such activities for Zoo Outreach Organisation.

The program was completed successfully. Secretary of WAG thanked all the gathering for accepting WAG's invitation. At the end of session, WAG entertained all invitees with refreshments and distributed books, posters & cards. Some extra copies were provided to the Central Zoo Library. Report submitted by Rita Aryal, Secretary, Wildlife Action Group, Nepal, Tel: 00-977-1-4434183.