



# **Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries**

## **Operations Standards**

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### Version Updates:

New and amended content released April, 2023

- G-2 Ownership of Sanctuary Property and Contingency Planning – new preferred practice
- G-5 Ethics and Grievance Procedures - amendment of one bullet point to include core values of diversity, equity, inclusion, access as a part of a written code of ethics
- F-1 Budget and Financial Reports - amendments and addition of new preferred practice to clarify reserve as cash or other current asset and emphasize the need for an operating reserve strategy
- E-1 Education and Advocacy – addition of one new preferred practice to recommend the adoption of plant-based food organizational policy

New and amended content released June, 2024

- F-4 Insurance and Risk Management – clarification to one bullet point regarding the types of insurance coverages required for Verification and Accreditation; addition of one new preferred practice to recommend volunteer accident insurance, where available, for sanctuaries which utilize a volunteer workforce
- G-5 Ethics and Grievance Procedures – removal of one preferred practice which was redundant
- E-1 Education and Advocacy – clarification to one bullet point to require that education programs do not misrepresent, objectify, or degrade sanctuary animals

## INTRODUCTION

The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) will designate an organization as “verified” or “accredited” based upon its substantial compliance with the standards listed below.

GFAS notes that there may be other acceptable ways of meeting the intent of each standard, aside from those detailed below, and that in some instances there may be legal, cultural or other significant barriers to meeting GFAS requirements.

The standards are considered mandatory, but GFAS will consider specific exceptions to some of the listed requirements (e.g., manner of record keeping, legal requirements that impact a sanctuary’s acquisition policy, etc.). GFAS encourages sanctuaries to offer feedback on the standards and to explain any reasons why it believes it cannot meet a particular standard, or why the standard is not applicable

and/or appropriate to its situation. Sanctuaries are also welcome to indicate a timeline for meeting a standard if the standard is not yet met at the time of application for Accreditation or for Verification.

The exceeding of the standards is encouraged. In addition to meeting these standards, an organization is expected to comply with all applicable international, national, state/province, and local laws and regulations.

Some standards refer to written documents that a sanctuary should have. A list of required documents for GFAS Accreditation and Verification, with the corresponding standard, can be found on the GFAS website at <https://www.sanctuaryfederation.org/accreditation/how-to-apply/application-documents/>.

### **Definitions**

**Sanctuary.** GFAS recognizes that some organizations operate valid rescue and rehabilitation programs with a goal of releasing wildlife to the wild pursuant to IUCN and/or other international or national standards. For those animals, lifetime sanctuary care may not be part of the organization's mission. While the care for these animals may be provided on an interim basis only, the organization is still expected to meet the standards below with regard to all animals in its care and for purposes of these standards it will be identified as a "sanctuary."

**Director.** Several standards make reference to a sanctuary's "Director." GFAS recognizes that a sanctuary may use a different title, and the term "Director" is intended to reference the sanctuary's Sanctuary Director, who may be called an Executive Director or Chief Executive Officer, etc.

**Personnel.** GFAS also recognizes that sanctuaries may rely on volunteers for certain functions, including some aspects of animal care (such as food preparation). Standards referencing "personnel" may take into account appropriately qualified and trained volunteers as well as employees.

## PERSONNEL

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### GENERAL STAFFING

#### S-1. General Personnel Considerations

**The sanctuary has a sufficient number of personnel to provide humane care and safety, with clear management structure and defined job duties.**

- Personnel, including compensated staff and volunteers, are qualified and trained for their assigned job duties, including health and safety procedures.
- There is a clear management structure within the sanctuary, with defined roles, responsibilities, authorizations, and restrictions, which is communicated to all personnel.
- Any volunteers or interns allowed to work with or around animals do so only when under appropriate supervision.
- A suitably experienced caregiver is always available to care for the animals in the event of personnel changes.
- Qualified personnel are available at all times.
- There are job descriptions for key personnel (sanctuary manager and/or executive director).

**Preferred Practices:**

- ✓ Cross-training of personnel: at least two people are trained in each aspect of animal care.
- ✓ A personnel member is always on site to respond to an emergency.
- ✓ There are written job descriptions for all positions.

#### S-2. Animal Care Standard Operating Procedures

**The sanctuary has standard operating procedures that are reviewed regularly and updated as needed.**

- Written standard operating procedures (SOPs) are accessible to relevant personnel at all times.
- The SOPs contain a detailed outline of all daily procedures and policies relating to animal (including veterinary) care and safety.
- SOPs should, where applicable, address species-specific disease transmission concerns and response.

### **Preferred Practice:**

- ✓ SOPs may include but are not limited to daily or other scheduled protocols as appropriate for shifting animals, locking and/or inspecting enclosure and facility gates, fences, and doors, cleaning enclosures, diet and feeding schedules and policies, enrichment preparation and use, animal introduction plan, and response in the case of a serious animal aggression incident.

### **S-3. Personnel Training**

**Training and supervision are carried out in a manner to ensure the highest quality of care and safety for all animals and personnel.**

- New personnel participate in a training period suitable to the species with which they will be working, under appropriate supervision before working directly with the animals.

#### **Preferred Practices:**

- ✓ The sanctuary director ensures that plans for continuing education to improve animal care and management techniques are in place.
- ✓ Continuous in-house staff training and development (including availability of relevant literature) is offered to employees, and volunteers as appropriate, including such topics as: animal husbandry, animal welfare, health and safety, first aid, action in emergencies or escapes or illness, safety procedures, emergency euthanasia, basic sampling for health monitoring and diagnosis, food hygiene, disease prevention.

## **SAFETY POLICIES, PROTOCOLS AND TRAINING**

### **S-4. General Personnel Safety**

**All personnel have a thorough understanding of the risks of working with animals and are appropriately trained in safety procedures.**

- Personnel are ALWAYS accompanied by at least one other trained individual when working with or near dangerous animals.
- All personnel working with animals are trained to recognize and respond appropriately to threat displays and other behaviors that could signal an impending attack, scratch or bite.
- All personnel are trained in and understand the use of personal protective equipment.

### **S-5. Communication System**

**The sanctuary has a reliable communication system in place.**

**Preferred practice:**

- ✓ A reliable communication system may utilize pagers, 2-way radios, cell phones, intercoms, or other electronic devices.

**S-6. Disaster Preparedness Plans and Protocols**

**The sanctuary has appropriate written disaster preparedness plans in place, and needed information is posted.**

- The written plan covers events such as fire, weather/environmental disaster, civil unrest (as applicable), and injury, and is provided to all personnel.
- Emergency information is posted in appropriate locations.
- Personnel participate in ongoing training for disaster preparedness, and drills (practices) are conducted regularly. Records of these drills are maintained.
- Drills are evaluated to ensure that procedures are being followed, that the sanctuary's communication system is effective, that training is effective, and that improvements to protocols are made where appropriate.

**Preferred practices:**

- ✓ Posted emergency Information may include contacts and phone numbers of the local police department, fire department, attending veterinarian, sanctuary director, supervising staff members, location of nearest hospital and other important information.
- ✓ Records of drills include a listing of all personnel who participated in training.
- ✓ Drills are held a minimum of every six months. While live-action drills are preferable, drills can include a combination of tabletop exercises and active drills.
- ✓ A detailed outline of communication lines, procedures and locations of all exits and entrances to the sanctuary are clearly defined and known by all personnel. This information is reviewed for needed updates periodically. Maps are posted throughout the sanctuary indicating the best evacuation route.
- ✓ All emergency plans are coordinated with local community emergency services as appropriate including fire, police, hospitals, and ambulance services. Appropriate community personnel and agencies are aware that animals are housed at the sanctuary.

**S-7. Escaped Animal Protocol**

**A detailed and appropriate written escaped animal protocol is in place and understood by all personnel.**

- When dangerous animals are housed, the protocol is shared with local emergency services where present, such as the fire and police departments.

- The protocol includes the following:
  - A clearly defined chain of command in an emergency situation;
  - A protocol for communicating to personnel about the escaped animal and what actions to take to protect themselves and others.
- When dangerous animals are housed, clear plans and routes for personnel safety are plotted and displayed throughout the sanctuary.
- All escapes are recorded and detailed reports made.
- Personnel participate in ongoing training for actions to take in response to animal escape, and drills are conducted regularly. Records of these drills are maintained.
- Drills are evaluated to ensure that procedures are being followed, that the sanctuary's communication system is effective, that training is effective, and that improvements to protocols are made where appropriate.

**Preferred practices:**

- ✓ Records of drills include a listing of all personnel who participated in training.
- ✓ Drills are held a minimum of every six months, and can include a combination of tabletop exercises and active drills.

### **S-8. Firearm Policy and Training**

*(Note: Not applicable for sanctuaries that do not need or use firearms)*

**The sanctuary has a written firearm policy covering appropriate use by trained personnel.**

- A written firearm policy exists in compliance with all applicable laws.
- Personnel qualified to use firearms are identified and made known.
- Firearms, ammunition, where provided, are available for immediate use, used by licensed and trained operators only, cleaned and maintained and tested as recommended by the manufacturer, and kept securely under lock and key when not in use or under maintenance.
- All staff qualified and licensed to use firearms undergo training and periodic refresher training and practice, including a review of current sanctuary protocols and policies. Such training is recorded.

**Preferred practice:**

- ✓ It is recommended that sanctuaries housing dangerous animals have a firearm on site to protect personnel and the general public in the event of animal escape, consistent with this standard.

### **S-9. Human First Aid**

**Appropriate first aid supplies are available and accessible, a written first aid plan is in place, and personnel are trained.**



- First-aid stations are readily and easily accessible and are located throughout the sanctuary.
- A written first aid plan is provided to all personnel, which at a minimum includes the following:
  - Instructions on the provision of emergency response and the procedures to be followed in the event of any significant incident involving harm to a human.
  - Locations of the nearest hospitals/care facilities and instructions on how transport to a hospital should be managed, and by whom;
  - How any incidents should be reported, and to whom;
  - What kind of incident or accident form should be completed, and to whom it should be given;
  - Locations of first-aid stations or kits, and if present, eye wash stations, automated external defibrillators (AEDs), and any other emergency response equipment;
  - Identification of the personnel trained in human first aid.

### Preferred practices:

- ✓ A list is maintained of the contents of first-aid stations and kits, there are designated personnel assigned to check inventory regularly, and first-aid stations and kits are restocked as needed.
- ✓ While in-person first aid training, such as by the Red Cross or other NGO, is preferred, it is recognized that this may be difficult in some remote locations. In such instances, at a minimum an online or other recorded first aid training course should be made available to personnel.
- ✓ First aid training includes at least two individuals trained and currently certified in CPR, with the identification of those individuals made known to all personnel.

## PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

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### PF-1 Overall Safety of Facilities

**The premises, tools, equipment, animal care records, and hazardous materials are appropriately kept clean and safe.**

- The sanctuary is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all personnel, visitors and animals, and conforms to health and safety practices as outlined under applicable national and state/province laws and regulations (e.g., the Occupational Health and Safety Administration [“OSHA”] in the United States or an equivalent international/national occupational safety organization/agency).
- Premises (buildings and grounds) are kept clean and in good repair in order to protect personnel, volunteers, visitors and animals from injury and to facilitate appropriate animal care.
- Materials and equipment are safely stored when not in use, and there is an effective system in place for regular inspection and maintenance of tools and equipment.

## **PF-2 Life Support**

**There are adequate and reliable utilities, with back up where available.**

- Adequate and reliable electric power, potable water, water supplies and plumbing are available on the premises.
- An emergency power system, such as a generator, is in place in the event of a power outage.

## **PF-3 Hazardous Materials Handling**

**Hazardous materials are appropriately handled and disposed of, protective clothing and other equipment in isolation units are not used elsewhere, and waste is taken care of appropriately.**

- All personnel utilizing hazardous materials are appropriately trained in the use of, and made aware of the potential hazards of using these materials.
- Protective equipment and clothing are utilized where required, such as working with hazardous chemicals and potentially infectious animals.
- Provision is made for the safe and legal accumulation, removal and disposal of animal and food wastes, bedding, trash and debris.
- Disposal facilities are provided and operated to minimize rodent and insect infestation, odors, and disease hazards.

### **Preferred practices:**

- ✓ The sanctuary makes best efforts to avoid the risks of releasing parasites, diseases or non-native plants through effluent water and other routes.
- ✓ SDS sheets are kept in the area where materials are stored.
- ✓ All hazardous materials are labeled with the name of the contents, appropriate hazard warnings, and the name and address of the manufacturer as provided on the Material Safety Data Sheets (SDS Sheets) or equivalent, if used in the country in which the sanctuary is based.
- ✓ Employees are made aware of, have access to, and understand how to interpret SDS sheets.

## **PF-4 Security: Animal Enclosures**

**Proper security measures are in place to safely contain animals at all times, and there is 24-hour monitoring capability in place.**

- The sanctuary has 24-hour systems in place to minimize the risks of theft, malicious damage or release of animals by intruders entering the grounds. This can include staff on site, security guards, security cameras, alarm systems, etc.
- The sanctuary has a system in place designed to ensure that only qualified staff are allowed into certain areas of the sanctuary. For enclosures that have restricted access, including all enclosures for dangerous animals, gates and doors to enclosures are securely locked so as to prevent unauthorized openings.
- An adequate number of clearly visible safety signs are displayed at each enclosure as needed.

### **PF-5 Perimeter Boundary and Inspections, and Maintenance**

**The perimeter boundary is designed to discourage unauthorized entry, with suitable exits.**

- The perimeter boundary, including access points, is designed, constructed, inspected, and maintained to discourage unauthorized entry and as an aid to the safe confinement of all the animals within the sanctuary.
- Exits through any perimeter fence are suitably located and adequately designated and secured.
- Each exit from the sanctuary is kept clear and is capable of being easily opened from the inside to allow the release of staff.
- All such gates are capable of being closed and secured to prevent the escape of animals and entry of unauthorized animals and visitors.
- Safety signs on any electrified section of the perimeter fence are easily visible.

### **PF-6 Security: General Safety Monitoring**

**Appropriate fire extinguishers and alarms are in place and in working order, weather is monitored, and all physical features of the sanctuary are designed and maintained to ensure the safety of the animals.**

- Adequate fire extinguishers and alarms are installed, regularly tested, maintained in good working order and the staff is trained in their use. The sanctuary monitors weather for warnings of severe temperature extremes and weather patterns.
- Steps have been taken to protect animals as much as possible from fire, flood, and other natural hazards. This includes not storing more than the daily ration of bedding or hay in the same building in which animals are housed.
- All electrical, heating, and cooling equipment is installed and maintained in such a way that they do not present a hazard to animals, and their safe operation cannot be disrupted by the animals.
- Tools and other portable equipment are not left unattended in places where they could cause animals harm.

## **PF-7 Insect and Rodent Control**

**An appropriate, effective, humane and safe rodent control program is in place as needed.  
Insects are safely controlled as needed.**

- An insect and humane rodent control program is in place in all appropriate areas, including storage areas for food items. Consideration should be given to the toxicity of the products in use and the threat they may pose to sanctuary animals, native wildlife and personnel.

**Preferred practice:**

- ✓ Whenever possible, less toxic or non-toxic agents such as silica gel, diatomaceous earth or insect growth regulator products are given preference.

## **PF-8 Record Keeping**

**Records are maintained appropriately as required by local, state and national regulations  
and as necessary for good husbandry, management and veterinary care.**

- Detailed individual and group records are maintained as necessary for good husbandry, management and veterinary care. All nationally required records are kept, as well as records required by GFAS to meet other standards. Records include but are not limited to:
  - acquisition and disposition documents;
  - inspection reports, as applicable;
  - other documentation as applicable.

**Preferred practice:**

- ✓ Records are backed up, either in duplicate hard copy or electronically.

# **GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE**

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## **GOVERNING AUTHORITY**

*Note: The term “Board of Directors” is used in this section to reference the governing authority for the sanctuary. In some instances, another term may be used (e.g., “Trustees”).*

## **G-1. Nonprofit / Non-Commercial Status**

**The sanctuary or its governing organization has a national legal nonprofit status, or is operated by a national or local government.**

- A facility and/or its governing body (if the facility is a program of one or more organizations) satisfies one of the following:
  - A sanctuary, or its governing organization has obtained national nonprofit status in the country of governance or operation and is in good standing. For example, sanctuaries located in or operated by organizations in the United States or its territories should have 501(c)(3) status, and sanctuaries located in or operated by organizations in the United Kingdom should have registered charity status.
  - A facility (such as a wildlife rescue center) is operated as a non-commercial entity by a national or local government.

## **G-2. Ownership of Sanctuary Property and Contingency Planning**

**The sanctuary owns or has a valid written use agreement for the property on which it operates.**

- Property use and facility operations comply with all national, regional and local laws and regulations.
- If property is leased, and in other circumstances where property is not owned, the sanctuary should have a written contingency plan describing the steps to take to relocate or transfer its animals to another appropriate facility at the end of the lease, or upon an unexpected termination of the lease.

### **Preferred practice:**

- ✓ If property is leased, a long-term (3 years or longer) contractual lease is in place, with a termination clause requiring sufficient notice (a minimum of 6 months) to allow the sanctuary to relocate or transfer its animals to another appropriate facility that has committed to providing their lifetime care.

## **G-3. Succession Planning**

**The sanctuary has a written succession plan should the director or other key management become unable to continue their positions.**

- The succession plan should include an emergency plan outlining who will carry out the key responsibilities in the event of a sudden and unexpected absence by the director or other key management in both short- and long-term scenarios.

#### **G-4. Board of Directors/Trustees or Equivalent**

**The Board of Directors/Trustees, or equivalent body, organizes itself and carries out its duties in an appropriate, legal and responsible manner.**

- The Board is supportive of the sanctuary abiding by GFAS standards.
- The Board has regularly scheduled meetings, and minutes are kept. Bylaws (or an equivalent document), in accordance with applicable law, have been developed and adopted as the general policies and rules that govern the sanctuary and define the Board's composition and structure.

**Preferred practices:**

- ✓ Board membership includes a diverse range of experience, and a majority of Board members are independent of management.
- ✓ The Board has organized itself in a manner that allows its duties to be carried out in a timely and responsible manner and in accordance with all relevant non-profit regulations. The Board has a written position description describing the responsibilities of its members, and members are knowledgeable of their legal obligations and accept responsibility for self-regulation, accountability, ethical practice of the sanctuary, and sound financial management and oversight.

#### **G-5. Ethics and Grievance Procedures**

**The sanctuary's policies and actions of the Board and staff reflect adherence to a high standard of professionalism and ethics.**

- The following policies have been adopted by the Board and made accessible to all personnel:
  - A written code of ethics for the sanctuary that addresses the core values of: integrity, openness, accountability, service, charity, diversity, equity, inclusion, and access and reinforces standards of professional behavior. All personnel associated with the sanctuary have been provided with access to the code of ethics and have agreed to adhere to it.
  - A written Conflict of Interest policy prohibiting any Board member, director, or key employee from approving or voting on a transaction in which he or she has a monetary or other interest. Members of the Board of Directors and the director, as well as key personnel as appropriate, are asked to sign written acknowledgements of receipt of the policy and have disclosed potential conflicts of interest.
  - A written anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy, specifically referring to any protected class under law.
  - A written grievance process that is clearly communicated to personnel and volunteers to communicate the procedure for reporting a concern regarding workplace-related issues, including ethics complaints; includes an alternate pathway if the normal person to whom one should take concerns is non-responsive or the focus of the concern; and allows for fair, prompt and meaningful resolution.
  - A written "whistleblower" policy, consistent with applicable law, that protects personnel from retaliation when coming forward in good faith with information about illegal or fraudulent activities or violation of adopted policies and protocols of the organization. Such policies and

protocols include but are not limited to matters of financial mismanagement, accounting and concerns about animal care and the safety of both animals and humans.

- The whistleblower policy identifies to whom (such as personnel, board members, or designated outside parties) personnel should report any such information.
- Business and related activities, including outreach and interactions with other sanctuaries, are conducted in a professional manner, with honesty, integrity, compassion and commitment, realizing that an individual's behavior reflects on the sanctuary and greater humane communities as a whole.

### **G-6. Required Licenses and Permits**

**The sanctuary has all legally required organizational licenses and permits (or other necessary government approval) to operate.**

- Licenses and permits to operate include documents such as USDA exhibitor licenses for facilities in the U.S., state livestock board licenses for equine rescues, certificates to operate from national wildlife agencies, etc.

### **G-7. Strategic Planning**

**The sanctuary has at least a three-year strategic plan in writing.**

- The strategic plan should contain a description of primary goals and activities to achieve those goals.
- The sanctuary has a long-term financial plan in writing that projects future revenue and expenses, consistent with the priorities set out in the strategic plan.

## **FINANCIAL RECORDS AND STABILITY**

### **F-1 Budget and Financial Reports**

**The sanctuary has an annual operating budget, keeps accurate and complete financial records, and has a well-managed operating reserve or other current asset(s) in place in an amount appropriate to the sanctuary's core operating needs.**

- An annual operating budget exists and reflects estimated future expenditures and revenue. The budget is approved by the Board of Directors/Trustees or equivalent.

- Detailed, accurate periodic financial reports are kept on file. The sanctuary produces on a regular basis (at least annually) the following financial statements:
  - A Statement of Financial Position (also known as the Balance Sheet);
  - A Statement of Activities (also known as the Statement of Revenues and Expenses, or Operating Statement, or Income Statement, or Profit and Loss Statement).
- Any legally required financial filings (such as the Form 990 in the United States) are kept on file with other sanctuary documents and are available for public review, as required by law.
- Funds are available to cover a minimum of three months of basic operating costs (minimum of one month for Verification) essential to the proper care and welfare of the sanctuary animals.
  - Current assets are items which can be converted into cash quickly and be used for the sanctuary's immediate needs. Current assets may include assets such as cash and cash equivalents

### **Preferred practice:**

- ✓ The sanctuary has a written reserve policy that defines adequate operating reserve level, defines how operating reserves are calculated, and provides the rationale which led to these conclusions. The policy defines methods by which the operating reserve will be replenished if it is used, or for any reason drops below the policy-mandated minimum threshold at any point during the year.

## **F-2 Banking Responsibilities and Financial Transactions**

**The sanctuary maintains a bank account, keeps personal and sanctuary business separate, and properly records all contributions, transactions, and loans to the sanctuary.**

- Any loan documents are signed and maintained in the accounting record. Repayment schedules are developed and followed.
- All contributions from donors are properly documented and promptly deposited. Donors are provided with receipts as required in accordance with applicable laws or regulations.

## **F-3 Fundraising Activities and Disclosures**

**Fundraising is conducted in a legal, ethical and transparent manner.**

- Fundraising activities do not distress or disrupt animals' normal activities and do not negatively impact their welfare.

### **Preferred practices:**

- ✓ All fundraising and soliciting materials are accurate, do not exaggerate financial needs or incorrectly claim sole credit for joint efforts, correctly reflect the sanctuary's mission and use of solicited funds, and do not threaten to betray the mission by making misleading and unprofessional statements (e.g., claiming animals will have to be euthanized if donations are not received immediately).



- ✓ The sanctuary ensures proper stewardship of charitable contributions, including timely reports (e.g., tax filings, annual reports, reports required by funders) on the use and management of funds. Restricted funds are expended in accordance with donor's intentions. Explicit consent by the donor is obtained before altering restrictions or conditions of a gift.
- ✓ Fundraising expenses are reasonable, and total fundraising expense is disclosed on financial reports and any required tax filings.

### **F-4 Insurance and Risk Management**

**The sanctuary has adequate insurance coverage where available, and visitors and volunteers are made aware of the risks of being on sanctuary property.**

- Where available, this includes General Liability insurance and, for Accreditation only, Directors & Officers insurance.
- Visitors and volunteers are made aware of the risks of being on sanctuary property.

**Preferred practice:**

- ✓ Methods for informing visitors and volunteers of risks of being on sanctuary property include signage at entrances, language in a sign-in book for all visitors, and waiver/release forms that are signed.
- ✓ For sanctuaries which utilize a volunteer workforce, Volunteer Accident insurance is recommended, where available.

## **EDUCATION, PUBLIC ACCESS, AND ADVOCACY**

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### **E-1. Education and Advocacy**

**Education programs promote a humane ethic, respecting and protecting of all aspects of the individual welfare of the animals involved, and ensuring public safety.**

- An education program is conducted in accordance with a written Education and Outreach Policy that articulates and evaluates program benefits, under the direction of qualified personnel.
- Wildlife is not taken out of enclosures/habitats or off the grounds of the sanctuary for use in the education program.
- Animals may be incorporated into education programs utilizing non-invasive educational methods/tools, such as audio-visual presentations, webcasts, or other forms of multi-media. In

such cases, they are treated in a respectful, safe manner that does not misrepresent, objectify, or degrade them, does not cause them distress, and does not put animals or humans at risk.

- Sanctuary personnel are appropriate advocates for animal protection and welfare, and the sanctuary does not adopt policies in opposition to animal welfare.

**Preferred practice:**

- ✓ The education program is evaluated periodically for effectiveness and content, ideally on an annual basis.
- ✓ Sanctuaries, irrespective of species focus, adopt a policy of serving only plant-based food at sanctuary sponsored or hosted events.

## **E-2. Public Access, Viewing, and Tours**

**Access by the visiting public is always supervised and conducted in a careful manner that minimizes the impact on the animals and their environment, does not cause them stress, and gives them the ability to seek undisturbed privacy and quiet.**

- Tours, if conducted, are for educational purposes consistent with the sanctuary's education policy and not for entertainment, are under direct supervision of sanctuary personnel, and are of a size that allows for close monitoring.
- Tours should not include wildlife destined for release.
- All tours prohibit the public from any physical contact with wildlife or any feeding of wildlife that involves direct contact (either by hand feeding or by using a tool to place food into an animal's mouth).
- Personnel do not deviate from normal sanctuary protocols in order to provide a display for the public, including normal protocols for diets, feeding schedules, and methods of feeding, and do not engage in any activity, including promotion, media, and social media, that portrays wildlife as tractable. For domesticated species, animals are not displayed in an exploitative manner.

**Preferred practices:**

- ✓ Animals are assessed, and those that are easily stressed are excluded from tours.

## **ACQUISITION, DISPOSITION, AND RESEARCH**

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### **ADR-1 Acquisition**

### **Acquisition of animals by the sanctuary is legal and ethical, with ultimate responsibility for acquisitions clearly defined.**

- The sanctuary has relevant legal documentation (including any required permits and licenses) for, and is in legal possession of, all animals in its care.
- The sanctuary has a written policy governing its acquisition that includes substantially the following provisions:
  - Animals are only accepted if the sanctuary has the resources to provide appropriate care and acceptance will not jeopardize the health, quality of care or maintenance of animals currently housed at the sanctuary.
  - All acquisitions of animals by the sanctuary are consistent with its mission and in the best interest of the individual animals (for example, it may be in the best interest of a rescued infant animal to be placed at another qualified sanctuary if no appropriate surrogates are available).
  - Acquisition of animals occurs through donation or rescue. No commercial trade in sanctuary animals occurs (included, but not limited to, the sale of animals, animal parts, by-products, or offspring), and the sanctuary does not knowingly engage a third party to purchase an animal on its behalf. *(Note: if animals have been purchased, or if the sanctuary has a policy in place that allows purchase under certain circumstances, the sanctuary must provide GFAS with this information, indicating why such purchases are consistent with the sanctuary's mission and why they do not sustain or promote the commercial exploitation of the species.)*
  - No acquisition results from the intentional breeding of animals for or at the sanctuary. An exception may be made for rehabilitation and release centers engaged in a bona fide breeding-for-release-program of endangered species with available release sites within the state/province, conducted with specific conservation goals, in accordance with local, state/province, national, and international law and regulations.
- Documentation necessary to transfer ownership or obtain custody is in place.

#### **Preferred practice:**

- ✓ Other acquisition records to be kept as part of the permanent record for each animal may include:
  - Permits as required to satisfy local, state, federal and international law.
  - Importation papers or other declaration forms where applicable (e.g., CITES certificates).
  - Titles and other appropriate documents establishing a paper trail of legal acquisition are maintained whenever possible. When such information does not exist (the sanctuary maintains confiscated wildlife), an explanation is provided regarding such animals.
  - Health certificates as required by the appropriate national and local government agencies (such as the USDA Interstate and International Certificate of Health Examination in the United States).

## **ADR-2     Disposition**

### **Disposition of animals is legal and ethical, and steps are taken to ensure that any disposition is in the animal's life-long best interest.**

- Appropriate disposition includes:
  - Adoption or fostering of domestic animals;
  - Return of wildlife to the wild;
  - Euthanasia consistent with GFAS standards.
- Animals are not disposed of at auctions or to breeders, dealers, brokers, “kill buyers”, or slaughterhouses.
- The sanctuary has a written policy regarding disposition.
- Detailed records of disposition are maintained.
- With regard to deceased animals:
  - Personnel conduct themselves in such a manner that is respectful during disposition activities, including consideration of the effect of an animal's death on its social group;
  - Body parts are never to be sold, traded or donated (exceptions may be made for accredited research or educational facilities);
  - Disposition by cremation is recommended for species considered valuable in the illegal trade;
  - Disposition of deceased animals meets the requirements of all acceptable practices along with applicable local, state, national, and international regulations and laws.

#### **Preferred practices:**

- ✓ Other acceptable reasons for disposition, when movement of animals to another sanctuary does not compromise the welfare of that individual or the other animal(s) with which s/he will be housed, include:
  - health concerns that cannot be adequately addressed by the sanctuary, where another accredited sanctuary or qualified facility is better equipped to provide care for the animal
  - another accredited sanctuary or qualified facility can provide a better long-term environment (such as creating a suitable social group of conspecifics).
- ✓ Other reasons for disposition include financial insolvency or closure of the sanctuary.
- ✓ Animals are not transferred to individuals, sanctuaries, or other facilities that lack the appropriate expertise and/or resources and/or facilities to care for them appropriately. Before transfers, the sanctuary is convinced that the recipient has the expertise, records management capabilities, financial stability and facilities required to properly care for the animals.
- ✓ For sanctuaries engaged in rescue, rehabilitation and release of animals, subject to all pertinent regulations and laws, animals are released within native ranges, in accordance with local, state, national and international regulations.
- ✓ If an animal shows signs of self-mutilation and/or apathy, is uncontrollable, has a highly aggressive disposition, and/or is suffering physically or psychologically, and if the sanctuary cannot remedy the situation, then, if possible, the animal is transferred to another accredited sanctuary or other qualified facility, if it appears that environment will better suit the animal.

### **ADR-3     Ethics in Research**

**Any research conducted does not negatively impact animal welfare.**

- Research does not interfere with the normal daily activities of individual animals.
- Research does not cause pain or distress.
- An exception may be made, with approval of an appropriate decision-making body of the sanctuary, if:
  - It is determined that the health and welfare interests of the individual animal are best served by participating in a new treatment study;
  - There is reason to believe that outcome of the study will be a tangible benefit for the individual animal involved.
  - Samples may be taken during routine examinations, routine cleanings of enclosures, or during a necropsy.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

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### **HR-1.     Personnel Manuals**

**The sanctuary has current manuals for staff, volunteers, and interns that are reviewed regularly and updated as needed.**

- The sanctuary has a written personnel manual that includes information pertaining to topics including: personnel practices, employee benefits, leave of absence, sick leave, personal appearance and conduct, environmental concerns, filing complaints, and performance evaluation.
- If the sanctuary has a volunteer and/or intern program, it has prepared manuals outlining volunteer and/or intern responsibilities.
- Manuals are accessible to the relevant personnel at all times.