

The AAZK Excellence in Exhibit Renovation Award

The American Association of Zoo Keepers Excellence in Exhibit Renovation Award is presented by the AAZK Awards Committee. The purpose of the award is to recognize the integral participation of AAZK members in the renovation of existing animal facilities (exhibit or holding).

Qualifications

- An individual member of AAZK, a team from a zoological institution, or a chartered AAZK chapter, in good standing, are eligible to be nominated for this award.
- The nominee(s) **must** be members of AAZK, in good standing, at any membership level and work in any North American zoological institution or organization.
- Must have documented animal keeper involvement in the concept, design, and renovation of an existing animal exhibit, animal enclosure or off exhibit holding to improve the welfare of the animal(s).
- The renovated exhibit must be in full operation for at least one (1) year.
- The exhibit renovation shall be nominated by an individual at that same institution or organization.

Nomination Procedure

Complete the nomination form which includes the nominee's name and position, institution or organization's name, address, phone and Director.

Documentation required for Award evaluation:

- Prior to renovation: Exhibit/Holding drawings and/or digital photos
 - Two (2) no larger than 576px x 720px
- After renovation: Exhibit/Holding drawings or digital photos
 - Six (6) no larger than 576px x 720px

Narrative required for Award evaluation:

1. Species description and sex ratio
2. Exhibit or Animal Holding description prior to renovation (size, substrate, etc)
3. Goals and objectives of the exhibit/holding renovation
4. Keeper participation in the project from concept to completion, specifically detailing the existing exhibit/holding renovation to include:

- Degree of keeper involvement with **design** of the exhibit/holding renovation.
- Degree of direct keeper involvement with any **fundraising** associated with the exhibit/holding renovation.
- Amount and description of actual keeper participation in **demolition and construction** activities associated with the exhibit/holding renovation.
- Direct keeper contribution to **educational experience** (graphics, conservation message) of an exhibit/holding renovation.
- Summary of how the **goals and objectives** of the exhibit/holding renovation were achieved.

NOTE: Supportive documentation will not be returned.

Completed nomination packet (nomination form and supporting documents) may be submitted beginning January 1st and no later than the deadline: **MAY 1st** of each year.

Verification of the nomination requires a signature from the Director/CEO of the facility or their representative.

Nominee Evaluation

The evaluation of each nomination is broken down into four categories based on the general guidelines outlined for the award. The four categories are: Keeper Involvement, Exhibit Functionality, Exhibit Management and Visitor Point of View/ Other Information. Items the committee is looking for are the following:

KEEPER INVOLVEMENT

- Degree of keeper involvement with conceptual development of exhibit
- Degree of keeper involvement with facilitation of completion of exhibit, (fundraising, promotion, assist with construction)
- Contribution to educational experience (graphics, conservation message)
- Originality – is it something new and different, or has it been tried before?

EXHIBIT FUNCTIONALITY

- Versatility – indoor/outdoor, four seasons, protection from elements
- Accommodates and encourages animal's natural behavior – climbing structures, land area, height, water
- Hard (gunite, concrete) vs. soft (grass, dirt) environments – as to animal needs
- Sight lines valuable to animal as well as visitor – important to some animals (polar bear, chimps)
- Physical and visual barriers for animal's use, animal safety
- Flexible entrance/exits (hoofstock – more than one entrance)
- Ability to exhibit natural social grouping

- Breeding success

EXHIBIT MANAGEMENT

- How management of exhibit interfaces with other zoo divisions (grounds, maintenance – simple repair, paint)
- Keeper serviceability, overall maintenance of exhibit and surroundings
- Adequate drains and properly located
- Quality and versatility of holding areas – ease of separating animals, moving, breeding, sick
- Keeper sight lines – can you see animal when they come into holding or when shifting them between areas, keeper safety
- Ease of providing time change items (browse, logs, feed, novel objects)
- Environmental control (ease of seasonal adjustments – ventilation, heat)

VISITOR POINT OF VIEW/OTHER INFORMATION

- Educational experience (conservation message)
- Immediate and sustained viewer interest
- Sight lines – not see doors, drains, fencing – does it have esthetics?
- Bonus point – local awards, commendation, “wow” factor
- Include anything else pertinent to the renovated exhibit that you think is important

Selection Procedure

The Awards Committee members will independently review each nominee.