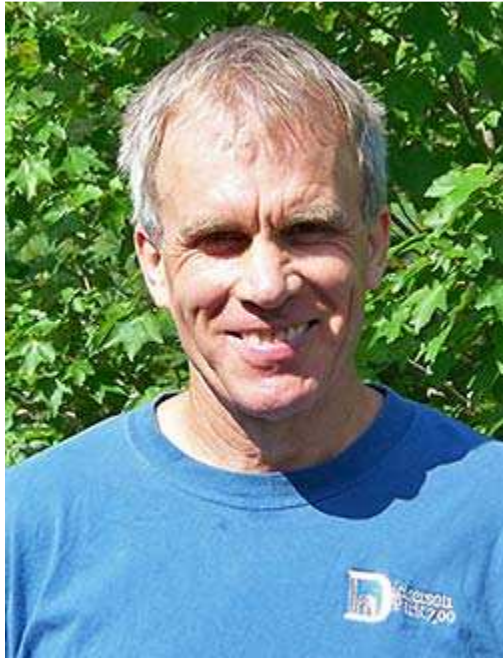


October 11, 2013

News Release

For Immediate Release

Updated information related to zoo fatality



As released earlier today, Dickerson Park Zoo is mourning the death of a longtime zookeeper in an accident this morning.

At approximately 8:45 a.m., Springfield Police and emergency responders were dispatched to Dickerson Park Zoo in response to an accident that occurred in the zoo's elephant barn. Senior zookeeper and elephant manager John Phillip Bradford, 62, and other staff were working with a 41-year-old female elephant, named Patience, when the elephant made a sudden movement, fatally injuring Bradford. Bradford, a 30-year employee of the zoo, died as a result of his injuries. His family has been notified. No other zoo employees were injured.

"This is very sad day for the Zoo family, as well as our community as a whole," said Mike Crocker, Director of Dickerson Park Zoo and Assistant Director of the Springfield-Greene County Park Board.

Counselors and chaplains are assisting staff.

The zoo remains open to visitors, although the elephants are not currently on exhibit.

Dickerson Park Zoo has notified the proper authorities of the incident, including the US Department of Agriculture, (USDA) which issues animal exhibit licenses, and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, through which the zoo has had full accreditation since 1986.



Dickerson Park Zoo follows all [AZA standards for elephant management and care](#) (pdf). Elephants are the only species the AZA has developed specific guidelines for elephant care, and Dickerson Park Zoo's elephant handling program, as well as the zoo as a whole, was most recently accredited by the AZA in September 2012.

The AZA noted in the report:

"The zoo's indoor and outdoor elephant areas far exceed the recommended stall and habitat space. The facilities and program provide a complex and stimulating physical and social environment. During the inspection visit, natural behavioral activities, positive social interactions and appropriate activity levels were witnessed with all of the animals."

Zookeepers had been keeping a close eye on Patience and the other female elephant, Moola, following the Oct. 4 death of the zoo's matriarch elephant, Pinky, who died as a result of kidney disease. No disciplinary action will be taken with the animal. The animal will not be euthanized.

The zoo is focusing on offering support to staff members, who are grieving the loss of a co-worker.

"We're unbelievably sad right now, " said Bob Belote, Director of the Springfield Greene County Park Board. "Our Parks family and our Dickerson Park Zoo family is very close, so a loss like this is really painful for all of us."

Media members are kindly asked to allow zoo staff members to grieve, and to send ALL media inquiries to:

- Cora Scott, Director of Public Information and Civic Engagement, City of Springfield, 417-380-3352.

- Melinda Arnold, Friends of the Zoo Public Relations and Marketing at Dickerson Park Zoo, 417-848-0162, or 417-833-157, ext. 104.
- Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Public Information Administrator, Springfield-Greene County Park Board, 417-224-5510.

Resources (all PDF)

- [Dickerson Park Zoo's most recent \(September 2012\) Accreditation report](#) from the Association of Zoos & Aquariums
- AZA Standards for Elephant Management and Care, pages 26-55 of the [AZA Accreditation Standards and Related Policies](#)
- The [AZA policy on Maximizing Occupational Safety of Elephant Care Professionals at AZA-accredited and AZA-certified Facilities](#)