Executive Summary Statement of The Wild Animal Sanctuary Board of Directors
March 21, 2020

Like nearly every person in the country, if not the world, every person associated with The Wild Animal Sanctuary is being affected by the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Like everybody else, we are seriously concerned about our own health and the health of loved ones and neighbors—especially those who are most vulnerable to the virus.

And like Americans of every walk of life, we also have creatures from the animal world totally dependent on us for their very survival and quality of life. But beyond our beloved pets for which we would do almost anything to see them thrive, there are untold numbers of animals in shelters, pet shops, laboratories, places of learning, in agriculture and, closest to our heart, sanctuaries, that also need to be remembered in this difficult time.

The Wild Animal Sanctuary, through the generosity and support of hundreds of thousands of people over a span of forty years has become the largest sanctuary in the world dedicated to rescuing captive-born large carnivores. That they were born into captivity can be traced solely back to a human being. That they are now living the lives of dignity that is their due, can also be traced back to countless human beings that know the inherent value and worth of such incredible creatures and have chosen to monetarily or otherwise support the Sanctuary’s work. In other words, it truly does “take a village” to rescue and care for our animals and all animals living in captivity.

The Wild Animal Sanctuary may legally consist of a Board, an Executive Director, paid employees and selfless volunteers, but ethically it belongs to the community at-large, just as so many other animals (domestic and wild) do. These animals cannot be forgotten.

We realize the current situation is ever-changing and our government leaders and lawmakers are scrambling to keep up with things and stay ahead of the virus. Drastic steps are being taken to slow the spread of the virus; steps Americans have never had to undertake before. But in this rush, we believe most non-pet animals are being forgotten, and risk suffering or even dying.

Due to people buying unprecedented amounts of food from their grocers, The Wild Animal Sanctuary is already suffering from greatly reduced amounts of food needed to feed its ~550 animals, most of which are carnivores that can only survive on a raw meat diet. Monetary donations are beginning to slow and that trend is only expected to grow as more people are laid off or left without a job due to constraints placed on businesses.

Therefore:

We strongly encourage the governor’s office, while enacting measures to protect humans, also be a voice for the truly voiceless and possibly isolated: animals totally dependent on human beings for their very survival.

We ask those public servants responsible for public policy to keep in mind the needs the Sanctuary and other organizations that care for animals. It is important that employees and volunteers can continue to travel to care for these animals, and to remind the compassionate people of the State of Colorado that thousands of animals still need their help.

In most cases, we believe the need for continued monetary donations are the most useful at present due to the need to purchase food for the animals on the open market.

Please know that our thoughts, prayers and best wishes are with everyone who is dealing with the pandemic, and like every person in the country, we look forward to the end of it with minimal loss of life and disruption.