

Amphibian Ark 2013 and beyond....

2013 has proved to be an exciting and challenging year for Amphibian Ark as we continue to follow our vision of *Amphibians Safe in Nature*. In the past 12 months, we have seen our partners around the world taking action to help amphibians, including substantial efforts in getting animals back into the wild, just one measure of success of ex situ programs. While keeping our commitment to addressing the captive component of the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP), we have begun to look more closely helping our partners increase the overall effectiveness of their programs. Our model programs database is ever expanding with successful projects.

Building capacity in range countries is one of our top priorities at Amphibian Ark. During 2013, we conducted or will be assisting with ex situ training workshops in Panama, Costa Rica, Peru and the US, including the new Amphibian Academy. We have reached nearly 200 of students from as far away as Madagascar, Chile and Hong Kong. We have begun our system of on line tutorials that will allow future students to access valuable background material prior to attending a training course, thus allowing our instructors more time for mentoring and more focuses instruction. We are continuing to seek additional funding for Amphibian Conservation Needs Assessment (ACNA) workshops for Bolivia and the Philippines, with great thanks to Columbus and Chester Zoos for their commitments toward these workshops. AArk Taxon Officer Kevin Johnson is working with our software consultants to develop an online assessment system for the future that we feel will be extremely valuable. In addition, we continue to expand our reach through the seed grant program, model partner database and other outreach.

In 2013, we were lucky to enlist the volunteer services of Rachel Rommel formerly of the Houston Zoo to help us with community outreach and education, and also Danny Beckwith, a creative genius who continues to help with amazing designs along with audio-visual work. Joe Mendelson, Director of Herpetological Research at Zoo Atlanta, has officially joined our staff as Development and Research Officer, helping to draft funding proposals and also to work with ASA counterparts to activate the research aspects of the ACAP. As we continue to work toward helping existing programs reach new levels of success, we recognize the need to have a solid strategy for the next 5 years of Amphibian Ark. We are still in great need of funding and other means of support. Utilizing a new, informal "financial and strategic advisory board," we have begun to answer the questions concerning what AArk will look like in 5 years and what do we plan to accomplish but also a fundamental question that keeps AArk motivated, "why are we doing this?" The results of our discussions are laying the framework for our next iteration of the organization.