Walt Disney World News

Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge Marks 10 Years of Conservation Leadership

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla., May 17, 2011 – While guests may visit Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge to experience the more than 200 animals from 30 different species roaming across 46 lush acres, the generosity of those guests has also funded conservation projects that extend far beyond the savannahs of the resort hotel.

Since Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge opened its doors ten years ago, the merchandise shops at the resort hotel have cumulatively raised more than $390,000 in donations from guests for the Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund (DWCF), more than any other resort location.

The Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund was established on Earth Day in 1995 as a global awards program for the study and protection of the world's wildlife and ecosystems. It provides annual awards to U.S. nonprofit conservation organizations working alongside their peers in other countries. Many of the recipient organizations concentrate their activities on "biological hotspots" – areas rich in plant and animal life at risk of imminent destruction.

The DWCF mission resonates with guests who visit Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge, now a AAA Four-Diamond rated resort hotel that was designed with environmentally-conscious guests in mind.

"Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge demonstrates the importance of understanding our guests," said Kevin Myers, vice president of resort operations at Walt Disney World Resort. "We knew when we built Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge, there was a segment of guests with a passion for the environment who would want to stay in a resort hotel whose design focused on animals, culture and conservation in addition to having amenities traditionally associated with a deluxe hotel."

Funds raised from guests at Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge have gone toward important DWCF efforts around the world, from protecting lions in Africa to projects closer to home, including efforts to protect the Northern Jaguar in Mexico and last year's rapid response grants to rehabilitate thousands of sea turtles along Florida's Gulf Coast that were affected by a winter cold snap.

Myers points out that a commitment to conservation and the environment extends to each of the 24 resort hotels Walt Disney World Resort. All are certified Green Lodges by the Florida Green Lodging Program.

That commitment to the environment in lodging and the especially strong conservation themes that run through Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge are all part of an environmental legacy handed down by Walt Disney himself.

In fact, during the grand opening ceremonies for Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge ten years ago, the late Roy E. Disney remarked, "They [Walt Disney and Roy O. Disney] would have been thrilled with what has been created here and would have thought it a wonderfully appropriate addition to their company."

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