PR – Rhino Relocation

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla., Nov. 6, 2006 - Veterinarians and animal welfare experts from Disney's Animal Kingdom returned today after successfully transferring two endangered white rhinos from Animal Kingdom to a wildlife preserve in AfricaAfrica. This was the first ever reintroduction of white rhinos from the United States to Africa. The two white rhinos, both born at Disney's Animal Kingdom, joined four other white rhinos at a the Ziwa Sanctuary in Uganda, to re-establish a rhino population — extinct in Uganda since 1972 when white rhinos were a casualty of civil unrest in the region. There are just over 11,000 white rhinos remaining in the world.

           "We are very proud to continue to work for the preservation and sustainment of such a wonderful species. Walt Disney himself had a profound love and appreciation for conservation and we are proud to carry on his legacy through this work," said Dr. Beth Stevens, Vice President of Disney's Animal Kingdom. "This transfer represents an amazing partnership with the Government of Uganda and Rhino Fund Uganda."

            The rhinos, Nande and Hasani, were born in 1999 and 2001 respectively at Disney's Animal Kingdom. Nande, a female, weighs approximately 3800 pounds and Hasani weighs approximately 3500 pounds. They left on their 30 hour journey to the Ziwa Sanctuary in Uganda, Africa on Monday, August 21st with two animal care experts and a veterinarian from Disney's Animal Kingdom.

 "This is a lifetime accomplishment for all of us," said Joseph Christman, who traveled with the two white rhinos and is animal operations manager at Disney's Animal Kingdom. "Both Hasani and Nande made the journey fantastically. This closes the circle. Both of their parents came from Africa, and now Nande and Hasani are coming back to help sustain the species in their parents' native land."

            This transfer was conducted in partnership with permits from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Uganda Wildlife Authority and the Government of Uganda. Nande and Hasani will spend the next couple months being slowly integrated into the more than 17,000 acre sanctuary. Disney World's collaborative commitment to conservation and rhinos goes beyond this first-ever rhino transfer as well. Additionally, the Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund has supported more than $100,000 in Rhino protection and research projects in partnership with non-profit organizations throughout the world. For more information on Disney's Wildlife Conservation Fund visit http://www.disneywildlifefund.com/.

      Disney's AnimalKingdomTheme Park is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). With its more than 200 accredited members, AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation and your link to helping animals in their native habitats. For more information, visit www.aza.org.

PHOTO: A Disney animal keeper prepares an endangered white rhino to be transferred to a wildlife preserve.