

**J. E. OOSTERHUIS, DVM  
VETERINARY CONSULTING SERVICES**

James E. Oosterhuis, DVM  
Veterinary Consulting Services  
P.O. Box 130  
Ramona, CA 92065-0130

Phone: 619-972-1948  
Email: jeo.dvm@cox.net

10 September 09

Mr. Dean Treichel  
Supervisor  
Valley Zoo  
P.O. Box 2359  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J2R7  
Canada

Dean,

Thank you for the opportunity to examine your Asian elephant, Skanik (aka Lucy) today. It was a pleasure to work with Dr. Ness, his staff and the Elephant staff. The staff has done an excellent job with her since my other examination of her seven years ago. At that time, she was over weight and had some foot issues that were debilitating for her. Your staff should be commended for developing a husbandry program that has reduced her weight and increased her health and overall fitness with a daily exercise program.

Unfortunately, Dr. Ness's current concerns regarding her respiratory problems are well founded. Her mouth breathing and the need to catch her breath at times are very abnormal for an elephant. They are obligatory nasal breathers, so seeing this, combined with the nasal sounds that she produces when she does breathe through her trunk, are quite alarming. Also, when she was sedated today, she produced nasal sounds that I have never heard in my 37 year veterinary career that covers over 60 elephant sedations and anesthetic procedures.

Examination of her trunk with a 3 meter endoscope today by equine specialist, Dr. Ingram, demonstrated that her nasal passages are severely constricted. There is an inflammation of the membranes and a build up of exudate that compromises her ability to breathe properly. At this time, the reason for the constrictions is unknown.

Despite these problems, Skanik continues to be a sweetheart of an elephant. She is calm and comfortable around her keepers, and strangers do not seem to bother her at all. Also, I did not observe any behavioral issues with her today—despite my examination of her, a lengthy foot care session and then the sedation and scoping of her trunk.

I'm sending this letter to you in advance of my complete report because I know that you are going to have a meeting next week with some folks that are insisting that you send Skanik to some other facility. Her current respiratory problems preclude any thought of moving her and in fact it would be life threatening for her to be placed under that kind of stress. It is my opinion that it would unethical for any veterinarian to recommend moving her and in fact would be malpractice to sign a health certificate for her at this time.

The full report of my inspection of Skanik will be sent to you as soon as I have it finished. It will include the complete description of my findings regarding Skanik and the current deficiencies that I see in your indoor facilities, my assessments and recommendations.

In the mean time, if you have any questions, don't hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,



James E. Oosterhuis, DVM