



For more information, contact:

Al Setka
Director of Communications
Great Ape Trust of Iowa
515.243.3580
515.720.7430 (mobile)
asetka@greatapetrust.org

Great Ape Trust scientists lecture at international chimp conference

Des Moines, Iowa – Two researchers from Great Ape Trust were among a field of distinguished scientists lecturing at *The Mind of the Chimpanzee* conference, an international multidisciplinary symposium on chimpanzee cognition and conservation that concluded earlier this week in Chicago.

Participating in a program on reasoning and communication, Dr. Duane Rumbaugh, lead scientist *emeritus* at Great Ape Trust delivered his presentation, *A Salience Theory of Learning and Behavior*.

“Animal’s behavior frequently is far richer and more creative than their specific and reinforced training should support,” said Rumbaugh. “Salience Theory circumvents many constraints of other perspectives that are based on stimulus-response-reinforcement-habit models. It is intended to unify behavior from instincts through cognition and creativity.”

Dr. Benjamin Beck, director of conservation at Great Ape Trust was also a presenter at *The Mind of the Chimpanzee* conference and discussed *Ape orphans: Welfare, conservation and ethics*.

“Habitat conversion and commercial hunting have resulted in a glut of young great ape ‘orphans’ which, if they are lucky, end up in well-run range country sanctuaries,” says Beck. “There are currently more great apes in sanctuaries than in all

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of the world's zoos, and their highly evolved cognitive abilities present unique welfare and ethical challenges.”

The Mind of the Chimpanzee conference was held March 22-25 at Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago. For more details about the conference, go to www.ChimpMindConference.org.

GREAT APE TRUST BACKGROUND

Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a scientific research facility in southeast Des Moines dedicated to understanding the origins and future of culture, language, tools and intelligence in great apes. When completed, Great Ape Trust will be the largest great ape facility in North America and one of the first worldwide to include all four types of great ape – bonobos, chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans – for noninvasive interdisciplinary studies of their cognitive and communicative capabilities.

Great Ape Trust is dedicated to providing sanctuary and an honorable life for great apes, studying the intelligence of great apes, advancing conservation of great apes and providing unique educational experiences about great apes. Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization and is certified by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

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