



August 2, 2021

Susie Santo, President and CEO
Visit Wichita Administration

Via email: ssanto@visitwichita.com, mhofrenning@visitwichita.com, jsawatski@visitwichita.com, lsebastian@visitwichita.com

Dear Ms. Santo and the Visit Wichita Administration,

A concerned viewer recently notified us of a [Visit Wichita / Experience Wichita](#) promotional video, which shows children petting ring-tailed lemurs at the 0:24 mark (as well as petting an infant serval at 0:23,) both of which are harmful practices that are frowned upon by animal experts. The North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA) respectfully asks that you reconsider promoting such exploitive practices due to health and safety concerns.

- **While it may seem amusing on the surface, public contact with exotic species is harmful and dangerous to all involved.** There are a number of reasons why monkeys in particular should not be used this way, including the high risk of disease transfer (including Covid-19) and injury to both the animals and the humans.
- **Primate bites are not a question of “if”, but of “when.”** Primates can never be domesticated. Monkeys typically find public interactions frightening and aggressive outbursts are expected.
- **Posing with primates at such photo opportunities perpetuates their exploitation.** True sanctuaries prohibit such “selfies” as they promote the inappropriate use and handling of primates.

NAPSA is a coalition of ten of the leading primate sanctuaries on the continent. In our sanctuaries, we care for over 800 primates, many of whom were privately owned as pets or entertainers before they reached sanctuary, and whose owners surrendered them after aggressive outbursts.

An increasing number of attractions have forsworn events with live monkeys, in response to protests, negative publicity and increased awareness about the [harms of primates in entertainment](#).

The Visit Wichita website mentions the importance of keeping the community safe, but endangering the health and safety of humans and animals in Wichita via exploitive animal encounters is a contradiction of that. Please consider editing such segments out of Visit Wichita’s promotional materials for the sake of all involved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Erika Fleury'.

Erika Fleury
Program Director