KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK--AND ANSWER--BEFORE YOU START A RESCUE ORGANIZATION

Dennis Desmond, of the former Northern VA Reptile Rescue

ORGANIZATION

1. What is my mission statement and what are my goals and objectives?
2. How large of an organization do I want to create?
3. What are my liability and insurance requirements?
4. What are the zoning restrictions/limitations?
5. What will my neighbors, local businesses, local leaders think of my operation?
6. Will I be public or private?
   a) Will I want to incorporate, become an LLC, a non-profit, or remain a hobbyist?
   b) Will I need to establish a board of directors, if so, when, who, how?
   c) Will I need a mentor or sponsor?
7. Where will I conduct operations (home, remote location, rental space)
8. Do I have room for expansion, do I want to expand?
9. How will I seek improvement, get education and training, gain expertise?

OPERATIONS

1. How can I obtain permits, certification, training, and meet the required city, county, state or federal laws/requirements?
2. How will I fund my rescue (donations, out of pocket, corporate, or sales)
3. Will I use volunteers or family?
4. How will I align my organization with other rescues or animal welfare organizations, societies or groups?
5. How will I conduct marketing and advertising to:
a) The Public

b) Animal welfare/humane/rescue organizations

c) Law Enforcement

d) The Media

6. What is my message to the above (what themes, thoughts or beliefs do I want to convey?)

7. Where will I handle intakes and drop offs? (Actual location versus remote location).

8. How will I handle intakes?

   a) Emergencies

   b) Routine

   c) Communications methods (email, phone, snail mail, walk ins)

   d) Quarantine versus short term versus long term

   e) Fostering

MISSIONS/FUNCTIONS

1. What will I rescue? (Exotics versus natives).

2. Will I do rehabilitation?

3. How will I keep rescues/rehabs/residents?

4. How will I handle the adoption/placement/release or euthanasia of animals for which I am responsible?

5. In what peripheral activities will I engage? Training, education, display, pick up/removal?
INFRASTRUCTURE

1. What are my space/storage requirements for:
   a) Animals
   b) food items
   c) dry goods and supplies (durable versus disposable)
   d) medical supplies

2. How will the public access my facility

3. How can I restrict/permit access to visitors? Neighbors? Children?

4. What are my security requirements?
   a) Internal versus external
   b) Physical versus electronic
   c) Emergency procedures (natural/manmade, electrical, water, wind, fire)
   d) Evacuation procedures
   e) Escape prevention and mitigation
   f) Recovery and restoration