GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
LANSING

MARLON I. BROWN, DPA
ACTING DIRECTOR

Kim Salsbury
The Creature Conservancy
4950 Ann Arbor Saline Rd
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

November 09, 2023

RE: License #: SD810389776
Investigation #: 2024C0434001
The Creature Conservancy

Dear Ms. Salsbury:

Attached is the Special Investigation Report for the above referenced facility. Due to the violations identified in the report, a written corrective action plan is required. The corrective action plan is due 15 days from the date of this letter and must include the following:

- How compliance with each rule will be achieved.
- Who is directly responsible for implementing the corrective action for each violation.
- Specific time frames for each violation as to when the correction will be completed or implemented.
- How continuing compliance will be maintained once compliance is achieved.
- The signature of the responsible party and a date.

If you desire technical assistance in addressing these issues, please feel free to contact me. In any event, the corrective action plan is due within 15 days. Failure to submit an acceptable corrective action plan will result in disciplinary action.

Please review the enclosed documentation for accuracy and contact me with any questions. In the event that I am not available and you need to speak to someone immediately, please contact the Grand Rapids licensing unit at (616) 356-0100.

Sincerely,

James VandenHeuvel

James P. VandenHeuvel, Licensing Consultant
Bureau of Community and Health Systems
Unit 13, 7th Floor
350 Ottawa, N.W.
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
(616) 901-3730

enclosure

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
BUREAU OF COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SYSTEMS
SPECIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

License #:	SD810389776
Investigation #:	2024C0434001
Complaint Receipt Date:	10/03/2023
Investigation Initiation Date:	10/03/2023
Report Due Date:	12/02/2023
Licensee Name:	The Creature Conservancy Zoo
Licensee Address:	4950 Ann Arbor-Saline Rd Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Licensee Telephone #:	Unknown
Administrator:	Kimberly Salsbury
Name of Facility:	The Creature Conservancy
Facility Address:	4950 Ann Arbor Saline Rd Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Facility Telephone #:	(517) 243-3351
Original Issuance Date:	08/10/2018
License Status:	REGULAR
Effective Date:	09/07/2023
Expiration Date:	09/06/2025
Capacity:	60
Program Type:	CAMP SITE - DAY

II. ALLEGATION(S)

	Violation Established?
The camp received a “D” Rated Environmental Health Inspection.	Yes

III. METHODOLOGY

10/03/2023	Special Investigation Intake 2024C0434001
10/03/2023	Special Investigation Initiated - Letter
10/04/2023	Contact - Telephone call received
10/06/2023	Contact - Telephone call made
10/26/2023	Inspection Completed On-site
11/07/2023	Inspection Completed-BCAL Sub. Compliance
11/09/2023	Corrective Action Plan requested and due by 11/24/23
11/09/2023	Exit Conference by Telephone with Kimberly Salsbury

ALLEGATION:

The camp received a “D” Rated Environmental Health Inspection.

INVESTIGATION:

On 10/3/23, the department received an email from Washtenaw County Health Department, Environmental Health Division (WCHD-EHD) sanitarian Joy Hansell with an attached environmental health inspection dated 6/9/23 with a “D” Rating which means “This facility has been determined to be in substantial non-compliance with applicable rules. Approval is not recommended.”

On 10/4/23, I interviewed Ms. Hansell by telephone. She stated the day camp facility septic system has not been approved for the proposed increase capacity of the day camp from 30 to 60 campers because the licensee has not requested an addition review and obtain the appropriate septic system approvals for the increased use. I explained the licensing process for day camp sites with capacity modifications. Ms. Hansell explained the Washtenaw County Health Department

procedures for environmental health addition reviews for usage of sewer systems. She stated WCHD-EHD Public Health Engineer, Jennifer Conn would provide a more thorough description of the reason why the camp site received a “D” Rating.

On 10/6/23, I interviewed Ms. Conn by telephone. Ms. Conn stated the camp has not submitted an addition review for the septic system expansion. She stated it is likely the current septic system cannot accommodate the increased flow usage. Ms. Conn stated Ms. Hansell inquired about the increasing the day camp’s capacity from 30-60 children. Ms. Conn stated she has reached out to the camp facility to have them apply for an addition review, which involves the WCHD-EHD staff to inspect the sewage system. Ms. Conn stated the facility initially told her they did not want the system inspected until spring, however they reversed course on Tuesday, October 3 and have decided to move forward with the addition review.

I reviewed a follow up email from Ms. Conn that included the Washtenaw County “regulation for the Onsite Management, Treatment, and Disposal of Wastewater” and the “Michigan Criteria for Subsurface Sewage Disposal” dated April 1994. Ms. Conn wrote “The facility is currently inspected annually by a third-party inspector as part of our Operation and Maintenance (OMC) program. I’ve attached inspections from 2021 and 2023 (they failed to have the system inspected in 2022). Based on those inspections, there were 4392 ‘events’ (which represent doses to the drain field) over 744 days. That averages out to 5-6 events per day. The system sends a dose of 450 gallons for every event. 5-6 does per day comes out to 2,300-2,700 gallons per day. The system was only designed for 2,000 gallons per day.” Ms. Conn also wrote “When I complete my addition review I will check the number of events to see if current use is in line with what was previously reported. I will auger into the drain field to see if the system is showing signs of stress or failure. An extra 450 gallons per day is significant, especially considering the system appears to be operating above it’s design already.”

I reviewed the attached third-party inspection reports dated for 2021 and 2023. The report dated 6/15/21 with cover letter from Washtenaw County Health Department written by Senior Sanitarian Denise Bernbeck reads “On June 15, 2021, this office received the required annual report on your alternative wastewater disposal system from your Certified Operation and Maintenance Provider (COMP). A review of this report indicates that the wastewater disposal system is operating in unsatisfactory conformance with the permit requirements and Washtenaw County Regulation for the Management, Treatment, and Disposal of Wastewater.” The observations included the following: “This report identifies the east drain field as being web, and black below the tile, in different areas of the field. It was determined that this disposal field serves the vet building and the kennel. The disposal field serving the education/office buildings (west) appears dry. This situation seems the opposite from the 2020 report. Covid-19 has likely impacted the use of both these systems. The east disposal field serving vet/kennel will likely need replacement in the next 1-3 years.” The 2023 report dated 8/15/23 with cover letter from WCHD-EHD John Pelukas read “On August 7, 2023 this office received the required annual report on

your Residential-Alternative Wastewater disposal system from your Certified Operation and Maintenance Prover (COMP). A review of this report indicates that the wastewater disposal system is operating in satisfactory conformance with the permit requirements and the Washtenaw County Regulation for the Management, Treatment, and Disposal of Wastewater."

On 10/26/23, I conducted an unannounced inspection at the Creature Conservancy. I interviewed owner of the facility, Steve Marsh. Mr. Marsh stated he is aware of the concerns about the septic field by the WCHD-EHD. However, he doesn't interact a great deal with the children's camp program. He stated Ms. Salsbury leads the children's camp program. I observed the septic systems drain fields. Mr. Marsh stated he understands the two drain fields are used for separate purposes. One of the drain fields is for the wastewater from the kennel building and one of the drain fields is for the education and office building. I observed the two drain fields areas to be a large field with grasses. Mr. Marsh stated the large berm located adjacent to the kennel drain field has runoff water during spring melt and rain that makes the drain field wet. He stated this is why they were interested in having the inspection occur in the fall rather than springtime. Mr. Marsh stated they are considering methods for reducing run-off into the drain field by moving the berm area and leveling some of the land around the drain field. Mr. Marsh stated they will cooperate with the WCHD-EHD in developing the best solution for managing the drain fields. Mr. Marsh stated day camps occur in the summertime and it's a significant source of revenue for the creature conservancy. In addition, it's a popular program offered by the organization with camps filling up. He stated this is why they were looking at options for expanding the capacity of the day camp. I asked if the camp used porta-johns during the summer season. He stated they did not use any porta johns. Mr. Marsh and I contacted Public Health Engineer, Ms. Conn by telephone to discuss next steps for the operation. Ms. Conn stated the organization needs to submit the "application for addition review". Once this is done, then the WCHD-EHD will conduct an onsite inspection and provide feedback on the suggested increased capacity.

On 11/7/23, I received an email from camp director, Kim Salsbury. Ms. Salsbury wrote "I wanted to update you about the drain field inspection. At this point, the field has been labeled as stressed, therefore we cannot up our camp numbers unless we are looking to 1) repair, replace drain field and 2) use a temporary solution for bathrooms, and 3) conduct another inspection in the spring of 2024. We are looking into renting a bathroom trailer facility to place on our campus. We are looking at a model that will accommodate up to 250 guests and renting the facility for the duration of camps. This will be our plan for the 2024 camp year. In 2025, we are looking to shut down our kennel facility and transition our second camp to this facility. There are two bathrooms and several sinks in this facility to accommodate the camp needs. We also plan to have the drain field completed by the camp season in 2024."

On 11/8/23, I received an email from WCHD-EHD public health engineer Jennifer Conn. The email provided an update on the addition review inspection by the WCHD-EHD. Ms. Conn wrote “I went to inspect the drain field on Friday, November 3. Unfortunately, my inspection showed the drain field serving the Creature Conservancy is under stress and in imminent failure. Part of the drain field was completely saturated and sledged, indicating wastewater is not making it through the system as it should be. I denied their request to increase the camp population from 40 to 60 as the drain field cannot handle any additional loading at this time. I provided Kim at the Creature Conservancy with a list of next -steps to better evaluate their system, as at this point it cannot be determined if the stress is due to hydraulic overloading (too much water) or something else (such as high -strength waste water from the animal services). Hopefully the system will recover and they can expand in the future, but at this time the sewage system is not operating satisfactory.”

I reviewed the original addendum report dated 7/12/23. The report identified the purpose of the addendum as a request to modify the capacity of the day camp PROGRAM and day camp SITE to capacity of 60 campers. On 7/12/23, an onsite inspection occurred at the facility. The approval was contingent upon the availability of bathrooms with the statement “The campsite has two single bathrooms within the education building available for campers, three single use bathroom areas in the large animal barn, and two proposed porta-johns. The bathrooms with the proposed porta-johns would support the increased capacity.” A modification of the capacity was updated on 7/12/23 to the capacity of 60.

APPLICABLE RULE	
R 400.11309	**Sewage, garbage, and other solid waste.**
	(1) Sewage and other water-carried wastes shall be disposed of through a municipal sewer system where such a system is available. Where a municipal sewer connection is not available, liquid waste shall be discharged into an approved private system. The private system shall not create a nuisance; pollute a stream, lake, or other body of water; or contaminate a water supply or bathing place and shall comply with applicable local health department requirements.

ANALYSIS:	Interviews, record reviews, and observations reveal the septic system did not support the increased wastewater use therefore, stressing the septic system. The camp site was not approved by the local county health department to operate with an increased capacity without use of portable bathrooms. The camp did not operate with portable bathrooms during the summer camp season in 2023. The camp operated with a wastewater septic system that did not comply with local health department requirements.
CONCLUSION:	**VIOLATION ESTABLISHED**

On 11/09/23, I conducted an exit conference by telephone with Ms. Salsbury. I reviewed the findings of the report. Ms. Salsbury stated she understand the findings and will be working to develop a written corrective action plan within the timelines.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

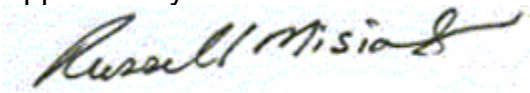
Upon submission of an acceptable correction action plan, I recommend the status of the license remain unchanged.



11/09/23

James P. VandenHeuvel Date
Licensing Consultant

Approved By:



11/9/23

Russell B. Misiak Date
Area Manager