

"I love the coldest, snowiest days here because everyone grows closer. People come out of their houses, smiling and greeting one another on the street. It feels as safe as Mayberry and as beautiful and sentimental as a holiday greeting card," wrote Sara Saldi.

"It's not how much snow we get. It's how we handle it. Our city never closes. We clean up and get going where others can't," says Philip Wiggle.

Of course, problem-solving is second nature here in the birthplace of "brainstorming," a creative thinking process developed by a local advertising executive, Alex Osborn, that soon spread worldwide. Buffalo nurtures the idea with an annual creativity conference, that has drawn hundreds of think-outside-the-box folks for 43 years.

One problem minimized: The tell-your-grandchildren-about-it-someday blizzard that dumped 25 inches of snow in a day last Nov. 20 and gave even indefatigable Buffalo pause.

Most people would be calling the moving vans if they spent seven hours of a snowstorm trapped in a subway station like Monica Huxley. But Huxley, who hadn't lived in Buffalo yet a year, wrote to USA TODAY that the helpful camaraderie among strangers led her to love her new hometown.

MacGregor was among 200 who huddled in the Christmas wonderland of the tree-decorated Hyatt hotel lobby. She recalls:

"About 11:30 p.m., ladies from the hotel's housekeeping brought around lots of blankets and told us that we should each find a Christmas tree to sleep near. They then kept the tree lights on and turned the hall lights off. We slept like little kids in a big 'sleepover' underneath the trees."

Warzel was trapped on downtown streets for nearly 20 hours, including a stretch where a "lady went car to car passing out Ho-Hos." Nancy Lynch was assured that her son, trapped at school, was housed for the night by the welcoming parents of the school neighborhood; Ellen Kern, caught for "just 4½ hours on Maple Road in my car," marveled as strangers offered coffee and brushed snow from the windshields.

"For a big city, it's very small," says Kern.

Adds Nancy Lynch: "When people do small nice things for one another, they tend to want to reciprocate. When the cycle is repeated over and over again over the years, you end up with a City with Heart."

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION RE-AUTHORIZATION ACT

**HON. WAYNE T. GILCREST**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 14, 2001*

Mr. GILCREST. Mr. Speaker, as the new chairman of the House Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans, I am pleased to introduce legislation to reauthorize the African Elephant Conservation Act of 1988.

Prior to the passage of this landmark conservation law, the population of African elephants plummeted from 1.3 million animals to less than 600,000. The primary causes of this catastrophic decline were the illegal poaching of elephants and the insatiable international

demand for elephant ivory. Without immediate action, it was clear that this flagship species of the African continent would continue its march toward extinction.

In response to this crisis, the Congress passed the African Elephant Conservation Act. In addition, President George H. Bush used the authority of this law to prohibit the importation of all carved ivory into the United States and to persuade the convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora [CITES] to place the African elephant on its Appendix I list. Through this listing, a worldwide commercial ban on all products derived from the species was established in January of 1990. Due to these actions, the price of ivory, the trade in ivory, and the poaching of elephants all decreased almost immediately.

A key component of this law was the establishment of the African Elephant Conservation Fund. Under the terms of the fund, the Secretary of the Interior is charged with the responsibility of reviewing and approving meritorious conservation projects. To date, 113 conservation projects that affect elephant population in 22 separate countries have been funded. In total, \$11.9 million in federal money has been obligated for these projects, matched by \$51.7 million in non-federal funds.

In recent years, money has been spent to aerial monitor elephants in Kenya; assess the impact of elephants on plant and habitat biodiversity in South Africa; control elephant crop damages in Ghana; financially assist the African elephant specialist group; study forest elephants in the Central African Republic; supplement anti-poaching activities in Zimbabwe; and track the origin of African elephant ivory.

While the population of African elephants is no longer declining, and, in fact, is growing in Southern Africa, the job of conserving this magnificent species is far from over. The number of worthwhile unfunded projects far exceeds those receiving aid and the African Elephant Conservation Fund remains the only dedicated source of funding for this species in the world. The authorization of appropriations for the act expires on September 30, 2002 and the goal of my legislation is to extend the highly effective conservation law for an additional 5 years.

It is essential that we not allow this irreplaceable species to disappear from this planet. During the last reauthorization process, the administration testified that "The principles embodied in this act are sound. They provide a catalyst for cooperative efforts among the governments of the world, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work together for a common goal—the conservation and continued healthy existence of populations of African elephants. This is not a hand out, but a helping hand".

I urge my colleagues to join with me in support of the African Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2001.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE ASIAN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION RE-AUTHORIZATION ACT

**HON. JIM SAXTON**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 14, 2001*

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, 4 years ago, I introduced the Asian Elephant Conservation Act. I took that action because I was startled to learn that there were less than 40,000 Asian elephants lived in the wild. Furthermore, nearly 50 percent of those elephants lived in various national parks in India, while the remaining animals were scattered in fragmented populations throughout 12 other countries in South and Southeast Asia.

The primary reason for this serious decline in population was the loss of essential habitat. It is no secret that elephants and man are in direct competition for the same resources. In most cases, it was the elephants who lost in those confrontations.

In addition, Asian elephants are poached for their bones, hide, meat, and teeth; they are still captured for domestication; and conflicts between elephants and people are escalating at an alarming rate. Furthermore, it was clear that millions of people were not aware of the plight of Asian elephants and that range countries lack the financial resources to help conserve this flagship species. Without an international effort, the future of the Asian elephant was in serious jeopardy.

In response to this problem, I, along with a number of other Members, proposed the establishment of an Asian elephant conservation fund. This concept was modeled after the highly successful African elephant conservation fund, and the fundamental goal of my legislation was to obtain a small amount of Federal assistance for on-the-ground conservation projects.

In testimony before my subcommittee, eight witnesses indicated strong support for my bill and their belief that it would be an effective way to assist Asian elephants. One of those witnesses, Dr. Terry Maple, the president of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association, stated that,

This bill will provide competitive financing where it is needed most—in the wild to support protection, conservation, and management of threatened Asian elephants.

In addition, noted wildlife biologist, Doug Chadwick advised the subcommittee that

To pass an Asian Elephant Conservation Act would be one of the most farsighted and yet practical things we could do the benefit of Americans, people throughout Asia, and the world we share.

Fortunately, this important legislation was overwhelmingly approved by both bodies, and it was signed into law on November 19, 1997.

Under the terms of P.L. 105-95, the Congress could appropriate up to \$25 million to the Asian elephant conservation funds until September 30, 2002. In fact, some \$1.9 million in Federal funds has been allocated and those moneys have been matched by an additional \$1.1 million in private donations. Those funds have been used to underwrite 27 conservation grants in 9 different range countries.