



Email from USGS Director David Applegate to PEER

From: Applegate, David
Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2022 6:11 PM
To: Peter Jenkins
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] NWHC

Peter,

To respond to your question regarding the USGS National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) animal care and use program, our Ecosystems Mission Area provided funding for the NWHC to hire a contractor to lead the extensive internal review and prepare a Program Description that describes all aspects of the animal care and use program (policies, animal housing and management, veterinary care, and facilities) at the NWHC. This is an extensive document, and is the first step in applying for accreditation by the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC).

The next step is that the Program Description will be submitted to AAALAC for their review. AAALAC will then conduct their own comprehensive on-site assessment. The report and on-site assessment will then provide us with a roadmap towards accreditation.

We are making good progress on upgrading the NWHC facility. The USGS received \$55.5 million in our fiscal year 2021 appropriations for the first phase of construction of a new building for the NWHC. We expect the contract for the architect and engineering firm will be awarded soon, and the AAALAC standards are part of the design requirements to ensure the new facility meets these standards.

I want to emphasize that the NWHC holds itself to the highest standards in animal welfare. NWHC continues to maintain an Animal Welfare Assurance with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Animal Welfare and follows all Public Health Service Policies on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, which incorporates the U.S. Government Principles, the "Guide", and the AVMA Guidelines.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Jonathan Sleeman, Center Director and Institutional Official for the NWHC (jsleeman@usgs.gov).

Sincerely,

Dave Applegate

David Applegate, Ph.D. (he/him)
Director
U.S. Geological Survey