



For more information, contact:

Al Setka  
Director of Communications  
Great Ape Trust of Iowa  
515.243.3580  
515.720.7430 (mobile)  
[asetka@greatapetrust.org](mailto:asetka@greatapetrust.org)

## 100 Iowa science teachers asked to help shape Great Ape Academy

### *Educational tours for Iowa students slated in September and October*

Des Moines, Iowa – May 28, 2008 – Great Ape Trust of Iowa is inviting 100 science teachers from across Iowa to tour the world-class scientific research center in Des Moines this fall and help shape the future of Great Ape Academy, The Trust's pilot education program.

Also, Great Ape Trust has set aside a dozen dates in September and October for middle- and high-school students from across Iowa to visit and learn not only about the orangutans, bonobos and other types of great ape, but also the diversity of careers in science available in Iowa.

The education visits, limited to 25 students and five teachers and/or adult chaperones, are being offered to groups at a discounted price of \$500, half the cost of a 30-person tour offered with a Conservator's Membership to The Trust. Proceeds from the sale of educational tours will offset development costs of Great Ape Academy, The Trust's pilot education program. The discounted tours to Iowa school districts further illustrate The Trust's commitment to education.

To take part in the tour, students must be at least 10 years old. Dates for educational tours are Sept. 9, Sept. 11, Sept. 16, Sept. 18, Oct. 7, Oct. 9, Oct. 14, Oct. 16, Oct. 21, Oct. 23, Oct. 28 and Oct. 30. For more information, please e-mail [education@greatapetrust.org](mailto:education@greatapetrust.org).

### ***Teacher input will help further refine Great Ape Academy***

In Great Ape Academy's inaugural year, several hundred Des Moines middle school students visited Great Ape Trust and even more were introduced to great apes through classroom studies and after-school activities. Now, Great Ape Trust's scientific and administrative leaders want to

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hear from teachers about strategies they've used in their classrooms to stoke students' interest in science and inquiry-based learning, and how Great Ape Trust's mission might be best presented to students of all ages.

The teachers who have been invited to Great Ape Trust are subscribers to its monthly e-newsletter and some already are using it as a classroom resource. In addition, Great Ape Trust is extending the invitation to include other interested science teachers. The workshops are scheduled for Sept. 23, Sept. 25, Sept. 30 and Oct. 2, and include an introduction to programs in the orangutan and bonobo laboratories, followed by the in-depth discussion with The Trust's scientists and senior management team.

To sign up, contact Communications Editor Beth Dalbey at [bdalbey@greatapetrust.org](mailto:bdalbey@greatapetrust.org), or call her at (515) 243-3580, Ext. 410.

Great Ape Academy aims to increase youths' awareness of great apes and their conservation status, as well as pique their interest in science and other STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subjects. Science organizations have for several years warned that U.S. pre-eminence in science and technology is threatened by a lack of student interest in those subjects, and the nation could lose its competitive edge if the trend is not reversed.

Great Ape Trust Operations Director Jim Aipperspach said the perspective of Iowa teachers representing all grade levels is important as Great Ape Academy moves forward as a permanent part of The Trust's programming.

"We need a broad perspective to ensure success of Great Ape Academy," Aipperspach said. "They know what works in their classrooms, so it's appropriate that we draw on the tremendous resource Iowa science teachers collectively represent."

## ***GREAT APE TRUST BACKGROUND***

Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a scientific research facility in southeast Des Moines dedicated to understanding the origins and future of culture, language, tools and intelligence. When completed, Great Ape Trust will be the largest great ape facility in North America and one of the first worldwide to include all four types of great ape – bonobos, chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans – for noninvasive interdisciplinary studies of their cognitive and communicative capabilities.

Great Ape Trust is dedicated to providing sanctuary and an honorable life for great apes, studying the intelligence of great apes, advancing conservation of great apes and providing unique educational experiences about great apes. Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization and is certified by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). To learn more about Great Ape Trust of Iowa, go to [www.GreatApeTrust.org](http://www.GreatApeTrust.org).

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