

Ashe County Commissioners have decided to allow the New River Zoo to reopen after two animal attack incidents forced it to close.

There are a couple of catches to the Commissioners' decision, however.

Owner Keith Stroud must increase his insurance from \$1 million to \$2 million, get accredited by the Zoological Association of America, and pass inspections by county animal control officials and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. According to McMillan, county inspections should be over within two weeks, but the USDA inspection may take longer. It is unclear when the zoo will reopen to the public.

The zoo, which opened initially in 2001, first closed in October when a leopard bit a woman on the arm. The zoo reopened in March only to close May 31 after a coatimundi escaped and bit a 5-year-old boy. New River Zoo is located in Fleetwood and is home to more than 60 species.