



# GROWING OUR REACH AND IMPACT

Woodland Park Zoo's Strategic Plan 2015-2018

## VISION

Woodland Park Zoo envisions a world where people protect wildlife and conserve habitats to help create a sustainable future. As a leading conservation zoo, we empower people, in our region and around the world, to create this future—in ways big and small.

## MISSION

Woodland Park Zoo saves animals and their habitats through conservation leadership and engaging experiences, inspiring people to learn, care and act.







# OVERVIEW

## *Our proven successes chart the course to a future of even greater impact...*

Since the public-private partnership that manages Woodland Park Zoo took effect in 2002, nearly 15 million visitors have passed through the zoo's gates to experience the wonders of wildlife. In our formal programs, more than 1,000,000 school children and teachers, with increasingly diverse learning styles and socioeconomic backgrounds, have discovered the joys of learning about nature, science, and species conservation in the Puget Sound area's largest living classroom and in their own school classrooms. And, thanks to nature adventures in our award-winning Zoomazium, more than 350,000 early learners and caregivers each year have benefited from a great start to lifelong emotional, social and cognitive development.

During this time, we've also saved wild heritage and helped people benefit from their natural resources in sustainable ways by establishing innovative collaborations with local communities and organizations here and around the world. More than 1,250,000 acres of critical habitat are now the focus of conservation solutions as a result of investing \$13 million and our own zoo animal expertise in 52 long-term wildlife projects and an additional 50 strategic seed grant projects. In the Northwest alone, to help recover at-risk species populations, we've bred or reared more than 14,000 native frogs, turtles and butterflies and released them back into protected natural areas.

As a reflection of national and global priorities for saving species and improving population health, our animal collection has grown to include more than 40 endangered or threatened species, as has our expertise in conservation medicine and animal care. Our 1,000 animals thrive in award-winning, naturalistic landscape exhibits which immerse more than 1 million people each year in the wonders of wildlife and inspire many to take direct conservation action at the zoo and at home.

### *Today, Woodland Park Zoo is recognized as a standard-setter among top zoos and aquaria in the U.S.*

Behind our effectiveness are the impactful experiences people enjoy. Of 537 zoo visitor groups surveyed in 2014, 98 percent reported "the zoo experience met or exceeded their expectations." And in a 2014 zoo public affairs survey, 96 percent of Seattle area residents surveyed reported that "the zoo is a good learning experience for children."

By any measure, such results on our mission—to inspire people through conservation leadership and engaging experiences to learn, care and act—reflect outstanding returns on investment and we are proud of our achievements. However, so much more remains to be done.

## STRATEGIC GOALS 2015-2018

Woodland Park Zoo is evolving to meet current and future needs, shaping and epitomizing the purpose of conservation zoos in the 21st century. With a significant rise anticipated for the Puget Sound region's population, we must dramatically increase our reach and impact to serve a growing community. But there is an even greater reason we must do so. In a world of dwindling habitats and climate adaptation for all animals, including humans, we must engage millions of people in a transformational challenge: learning to share the planet's finite resources sustainably with other species.

As a leading conservation zoo, improving the zoo experience to help meet local and global environmental challenges requires holding a steadfast gaze on our vision—a world in which people protect wildlife and conserve habitats for all species. To focus people on this vision, and empower them as active partners in our mission, we will make strategic investments in six goal areas. Together they integrate expansion and innovation in some areas, focus and refinement in others—all reinforcing each other strategically to create a more sustainable future for wildlife and people.

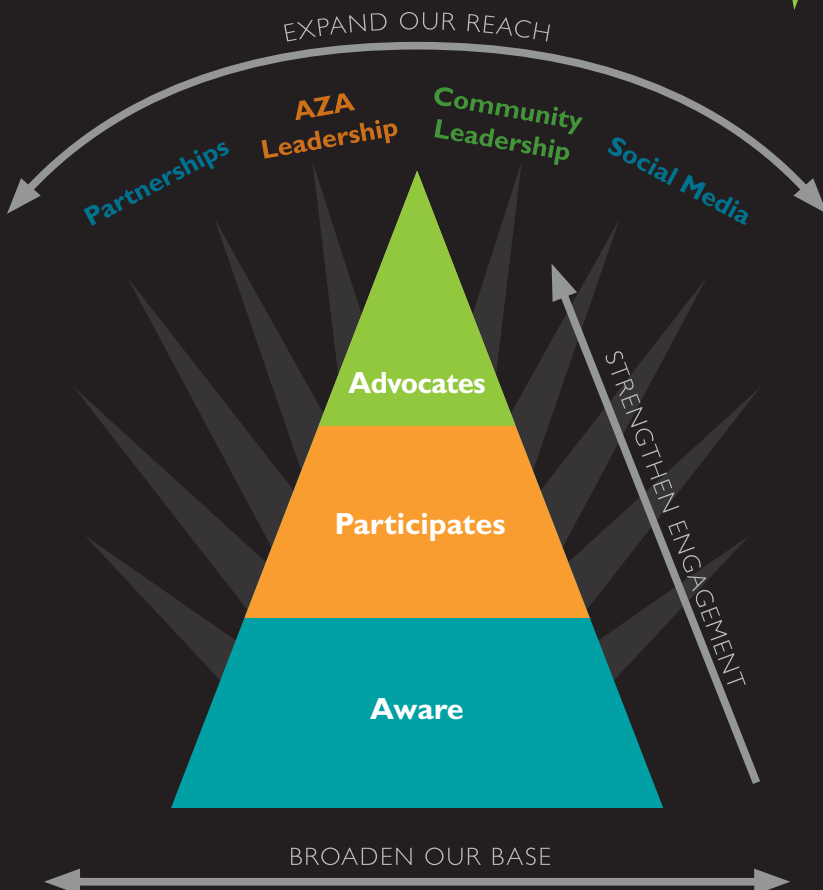
1. Build the Guest Experience of the Future
2. Advance Animal Well-being and Species Conservation
3. Grow Our Conservation Actions and Impact
4. Empower People Through Conservation and Science Education
5. Accelerate the Reach and Awareness of Our Mission
6. Strengthen Our Organization

\* Woodland Park Zoo: 2014 visitor exit survey report and FM3 Public Opinion Research Company: WPZ 2014 survey results.

# THEORY of CHANGE

## HOW WE MEET OUR MISSION

*Engaging zoo experiences inspire people to learn and care about species and ecosystems, fueling a desire to help. As the number of inspired visitors and their networks grow, the more action is taken and support provided which the zoo re-invests in animal care, science learning and conservation programs. More healthy and biodiverse ecosystems are sustained, and more species are saved.*



## HOW WE MAXIMIZE OUR IMPACT

*We provide opportunities for people to get involved wherever they are on our pyramid of engagement, and to move upward. Infrequent and new visitors first benefit from greater awareness. Frequent visitors and members often take a more active role in our work. Those who become close supporters lend their strong voices as advocates for sustainable solutions for people and wildlife.*



# BUILD THE GUEST EXPERIENCE OF THE FUTURE

**GOAL:** *Fun and interactive zoo experiences inspire guests to learn, care and act. Key to improving performance on our mission is engaging more members of our community. More personalized, customized, and participatory experiences will better meet the diverse learning needs of our growing community, remove obstacles to participation, and inspire a broader range of guests to get involved in conservation action.*

- Enrich the guest experience with new animals, exhibits and experiences that align with diverse audiences' interests in nature, conservation and science learning.

*Exhibit priorities include opening the state-of-the-art Banyan Wilds exhibit, creating breeding facilities for key endangered species, refreshing Zoomazium, adding a new butterfly experience, expanding our presentation animal program, re-opening the popular Night Exhibit, and re-designing key Asian tropical forest zones.*

*Expand our popular presentation animal programs to year-round offerings, to increase youths' empathy for, and compassion toward, animal life.*

*Increase zoo accessibility and enjoyment with the new Guest Experience Plan, in which new wayfinding, interpretation and amenities provide more comfortable, trouble-free zoo journeys for all guests.*

- Deepen all guests' connection to animals by increasing fun, participatory programs, interactive experiences, and new media platforms, contributing to effective conservation storytelling and strong relationships that help wildlife.

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ Growth of guests to 1.4 million, reflecting an average increase of 35,000 annually (over the four-year plan).
- ✓ Improved, broader connections with our community, from pre-K to millennials to seniors, as well as along ethnic, linguistic, geographic and socioeconomic lines.
- ✓ Higher guest participation in, and satisfaction with, zoo experiences (5 percent increase in reports of "exceeds expectations" within the four-year plan).
- ✓ 500 additional presentation animal programs have been offered each year; 30,000 more annual guests have experienced them.
- ✓ Expanded involvement in volunteer programs has created more opportunities to engage the community directly in achieving the zoo's mission.
- ✓ New projects have been fully funded, and completed on time and on budget.







# IMPROVE ANIMAL WELL-BEING AND SPECIES CONSERVATION

**GOAL:** *Thriving zoo animals are the heart of creating a sustainable future for wildlife. Encountering such compelling animal ambassadors, visitors learn why they should care, and are then inspired to help save wildlife. As an animal care leader, we will develop and implement strategies that sustain zoo animal populations, continuously improve their well-being, and contribute to our understanding of wildlife health. Our multi-faceted approach will ensure positive outcomes for animal welfare, behavior, reproduction, and population health in zoos and in the wild. Closer links between our zoo ambassadors and our education and conservation initiatives will ensure that guests understand the crucial conservation role of all animals in our care.*

- Strengthen the zoo's support of long-term national and global priorities for sustaining animal populations in zoos. Improve existing facilities and develop new ones to accommodate increased breeding, especially for animals of high conservation concern.
- Improve animal well-being with expanded behavioral husbandry, a more comprehensive, year-round browse program, and consistently high standards for all animal facilities to support best practices.
- Increase our capacity to provide excellent zoo animal and wildlife health care. Research partnerships for nutrition, behavior, health, and conservation medicine will enhance our ability to ensure animals thrive and elevate our leadership in species conservation on zoo grounds and in the field.

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ New and improved breeding and housing facilities have been completed for amphibians, Asian turtles, tropical birds, Matschie's tree kangaroos and snow leopards.
- ✓ The collection of species for the animal presentation program has increased and diversified.
- ✓ Expanded husbandry and training, nutrition and health programs have improved all categories of animal welfare.
- ✓ New enrichment plans and an expanded, year-round browse program have been implemented; increased natural behaviors have resulted in better animal welfare and guest experiences.
- ✓ Increased science collaborations have resulted in more research presented and published.
- ✓ Wait times for animal patients and transactions have shortened.
- ✓ Backlog of animal facilities work orders has been reduced by 25 percent.





# GROW OUR CONSERVATION ACTIONS AND IMPACT

**GOAL:** *On a planet of finite resources, peoples' everyday choices can help, or hinder, the ability of all species to meet their needs sustainably. To improve our performance in creating "living landscapes" that meet the needs of people and wildlife, we must engage more collaborators and audiences in effective conservation actions; focus our staff's expertise on field projects that benefit most from their knowledge; and continue to model environmental sustainability for our entire community.*

- Implement new conservation, consumer, and awareness campaigns, supported by well-researched WPZ positions on wildlife issues in Washington state and our world, including illegal wildlife trade, climate change, and palm oil consumption to engage more people in actions that demonstrably save wild animals and habitats.
- Focus our support on wildlife projects that link to our exhibits and animal expertise. Increase our leadership and hands-on collaborations while engaging current and new partners and communities in dialogue and citizen action.
- Match zoo staff expertise and resources with conservation needs in the field. Create structures for cross-team collaborations that benefit our Partners for Wildlife, Living Northwest and Wildlife Survival Fund programs.
- Meet or exceed our 2020 sustainability goals, demonstrating ROI to mission and finances. On the pathway to carbon neutrality, improve key facilities with solar arrays and heat recovery, closed vessel composting and composting toilets, and better exhibit filtration systems.



## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ Field Conservation programs have become more strategic, effective, focused and fundable.
- ✓ More audiences have participated in our conservation action priorities, and with more repeat participation.
- ✓ Wildlife populations and acres of habitat protected have increased.
- ✓ Legislation that achieves gains for wildlife and habitats has been passed.
- ✓ A Conservation Summit for Partners for Wildlife/Living Northwest has been held biannually.
- ✓ More zoo staff have directly engaged in field conservation.
- ✓ Effective awareness and action campaigns have increased the number of invitations to partner with allied organizations and the number of speaking requests for zoo experts.
- ✓ Conservation funding from individuals, foundations, and public sources has increased annually by 5 percent (20 percent over the four-year plan).
- ✓ Carbon use has been reduced to 4,100 metric tons; water use to 55,000 ccf; and landfill waste to 80 metric tons per the approved reduction goals in our zoowide Sustainability Plan.





# EMPOWER PEOPLE THROUGH CONSERVATION AND SCIENCE EDUCATION

**GOAL:** *In Washington state, students in pre-K through 12th grade struggle to meet science and math standards. So, we're harnessing the power of our 92-acre living classroom to help them succeed, making our living collection, curricula, and expert educators more accessible to diverse learners and teachers. As a recognized leader in environmental and science education, from pre-school to graduate school we will create and deliver even more innovative and participatory engagements that build lifelong science literacy, foster empathy, and inspire a broad range of people to learn with, and support, the zoo and its mission.*

- Build lifelong science literacy and empathy for all species to inspire individuals to create a sustainable future for people and wildlife.

*Maintain and develop priority in- and out-of-school pre-K-12 programs in King County by applying Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).*

*Increase zoo learners' exposure to the fields of science and conservation, ensuring that hands-on discovery and engagements respond to diverse needs (early learners, schools, millennials, and adult and senior learners). Continue scaling up programs in the Washington Informal Science Education consortium and make science learning available to more diverse students through new strategic partnerships and funding opportunities.*

- Contribute to informal science education research. Lead a collaborative study on increasing empathy through children's connections to animals.

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ We have engaged more diverse audiences in science and conservation learning through mission-based programming on and off grounds.
- ✓ A 20 percent increase in visitors' and students' understanding of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and conservation practices has been achieved.
- ✓ A project-based learning model to address science learning and conservation issues in the community has been implemented.
- ✓ An Early Learning framework to build nature play, school readiness, and parent/caregiver education on site and in the broader community has been designed and its effectiveness tested.
- ✓ A national model has been developed by WPZ and Association of Zoo & Aquariums collaborators to measure our collective impact for increasing peoples' empathy for animals through up-close interactions with them.
- ✓ Zoo-based evaluation capacity has been improved, strengthening our impact on strategic priorities and fundraising.







# ACCELERATE THE REACH AND AWARENESS OF OUR MISSION

**GOAL:** *Our huge audience and potential for broader reach in our caring community are among the zoo's unique advantages for improving wildlife and habitat conservation. To achieve that, we will grow and sustain an engaged community of visitors and supporters, expanding our reach, positively influencing public understanding of our mission, and increasing the number of people actively participating in it.*

- Capitalizing on the zoo's unique ability to connect people and animals, strengthen our base of support by increasing attendance and loyalty among those most likely to further interact with our mission.
- Create new pathways (traditional and digital) to engage diverse audiences in our mission, increase the number of people involved and nurture champions who amplify and authenticate our brand by sharing their compelling stories.
- Expand awareness of how the zoo's mission works and the influence of its brand. Prioritize data-driven impact stories on the science of animal care, environmental learning and conservation.
- Raise the zoo's profile as a leader in animal care, learning, and for the greater Association of Zoos & Aquariums and wildlife conservation community.



## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ A new research agenda, communication tools, and partnerships have ensured that previously underserved audiences, including millennials and populations for whom English is a Second Language, are engaging in and shaping our priorities.
- ✓ Audiences/visitors are more engaged and loyal as defined by membership growth and greater participation in conservation action campaigns, social media and online experiences.
- ✓ A technology committee has evaluated user content and delivery mechanisms to ensure that zoo experiences meet diverse audiences' needs and deepen connections to our mission between visits.
- ✓ Deeper understanding of the zoo's mission and its effectiveness has been achieved among guests, public officials, and community leaders through focused outreach to thought leaders and board development.
- ✓ Our zoo is a sought-after leader in our community and in the Association of Zoos & Aquariums on animal care, environmental learning and wildlife policy.
- ✓ Night Exhibit has integrated new interpretive technology.





# STRENGTHEN OUR ORGANIZATION

**GOAL:** *Each of our 350 employees and 700 volunteers strives for a simple, common goal—to make every guest’s zoo experience an inspiring and meaningful one. Inspiring people to learn about and take action on behalf of wildlife requires seamlessly weaving together an array of expertise, encompassing biological and veterinary science, conservation and animal care, teaching and learning, architecture and landscape design, research, customer service and community building, to name a few areas. To grow our reach and impact, we must prioritize stronger alignment of our talents and programs, effectively leveraging all our assets—people, dollars and brand—to work as One Zoo.*

- Generate the financial resources, including earned, contributed, and public dollars, to fully implement our strategic plan commitments.
- Be a well-managed, safety-first zoo that supports our One Zoo culture. More comprehensively recruit, hire, and retain talented employees and volunteers who align with our mission; invest resources in their development to meet continually evolving business demands; and compellingly recognize and reward their achievements.
  - Cultivate better integrated and matrixed working relationships through the four Cs—Communication, Connectedness, Collaboration, and Community—to achieve top performance and a unified vision and culture.
  - Develop an internal communications strategy that more effectively aligns organizational department, team, and individual behavior around our shared purpose, thus achieving greater clarity and collaboration.



## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ Facility maintenance priorities have been met with Seattle Park District finances responsibly invested in the zoo.
- ✓ Stronger operating revenue, increased state and federal resources, and a new philanthropy campaign have been achieved, resulting in a fully funded capital development program.
- ✓ Net income has been achieved annually to build an operating investment fund and reserve fund.
- ✓ Retention of key positions has been achieved by increasing participation in training and development and by offering more pathways for internal promotion.
- ✓ More cross-team learning opportunities and new technology projects have strengthened our ability to innovate collaboratively and creatively.
- ✓ Every employee and volunteer has achieved greater empathy and understanding of others’ contributions — how the whole zoo works.
- ✓ A more cohesive internal communications program encompassing more effective surveys, recognition, and appreciation has strengthened our One Zoo culture.



# CAPITAL AND FACILITIES OUTLOOK 2015-2018

As a beloved institution and major Puget Sound community resource since 1899, Woodland Park Zoo is committed to serving all people as a vital link to nature's wonders in our increasingly modern society. Stewarding and improving the structural integrity of our 92 acres requires respect for our roots while also renewing and revitalizing facilities, innovating in naturalistic exhibitry, improving our beautiful grounds, and continuing to model sustainability for our entire community. To improve the zoo experience for a growing community, our infrastructure must accommodate the increasing needs of our animals, staff, and 1.4 million annual visitors by 2018.

The following categories of improvements, for animal exhibitry and the surrounding infrastructure that makes great zoo experiences possible, are consistent with the zoo's Long-Range Physical Development Plan and new Guest Experience Plan.

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

|  | YEAR      |
|--|-----------|
| <i>Banyan Wilds (completed)</i>  | 2015      |
| <i>Breeding facilities for key endangered species:</i>                   | 2015-2016 |
| <i>amphibians</i>  |           |
| <i>Asian turtles</i>   |           |
| <i>tropical birds</i>  |           |
| <i>Matschie's tree kangaroos</i>   |           |
| <i>snow leopards</i>   |           |
| <i>Zoomazium/Butterflies</i>   | 2016      |
| <i>Presentation animal expansion and upgrades</i>                        | 2017      |
| <i>Night Exhibit</i>   | 2018      |
| <i>Redefine and repurpose a portion of Asian Tropical Forest Phase I</i> | 2019+     |

## CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Funded by the Seattle Park District

| Buildings and Structures | Site                           | Animal Facilities                   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Architectural</i>     | <i>Infrastructure</i>          | <i>Exhibits</i>                     |
| <i>Mechanical</i>        | <i>Paving and Pathways</i>     | <i>Holding</i>                      |
| <i>Electrical</i>        | <i>Horticulture</i>            | <i>Fences and other Containment</i> |
|                          | <i>Signage and Furnishings</i> | <i>Hippo Pool *</i>                 |

*\*Not eligible for Seattle Park District funding*





Photos by: Dennis Dow, Mat Hayward and Ryan Hawk  
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# OUR VALUES

## COMMITMENT

To realize our vision and remain steadfast in our purpose, we must understand and dedicate ourselves to the mission of Woodland Park Zoo. We are building a lasting legacy of appreciation and support for the animal and natural world by motivating, inspiring, and exciting others through our programs, messages and activities.

## CARING AND RESPECT

Genuine respect for the diversity of life is intrinsic to our mission. We demonstrate compassion for each other and ensure the highest standard of care is given for the well-being of the animals in our care. We value diversity among people from all walks of life and will respect differences among ourselves and in others.

## TEAMWORK

We recognize the value of both individual and collective contributions to achieving zoo goals. We encourage a spirit of cooperation and teamwork that provides opportunities for staff, volunteers, Board members, and partners to participate openly. Each of us works to further the best interests of the organization above those that serve functional or individual needs.

## INNOVATION

We are a learning organization that encourages creative thinking and innovation while taking a balanced approach to risk-taking. We develop and share innovative practices and knowledge with others. We pursue a sensible entrepreneurial approach in the pursuit of excellence in all facets of our work.

## INTEGRITY

The trust of others is essential to our enduring success. Our conduct demonstrates irrefutable integrity, ethics, accountability, professionalism, respect for others, and honesty in all our actions.

## SERVICE

Quality service is fundamental to the nature of our work. We commit to provide excellent service to one another and the supporters, visitors, and community at large, while providing stewardship of this cherished public facility. Within the communities we serve we are recognized for quality visitor experiences and commit to this service excellence.

## FUN

The zoo is a place for fun. We are committed to providing an engaging, enjoyable, and high quality experience. We share a positive work atmosphere that promotes creativity, camaraderie, and provides an enjoyable and balanced work environment.