

Inspired Learning

Hands-on Discovery

A generation disconnected from nature threatens the future of conservation. If we don't act now to connect children to nature, who will care enough about wildlife and wild places to protect them in the future?

Green time is being replaced by screen time. With computers, cell phones, television and video games, the average six year old spends as little as 20 minutes a week outdoors! All children deserve regular, meaningful connections to nature, which result in benefits to physical and emotional health, stronger academic achievement, and greater likelihood of caring for the environment as adults.

Our zoo is the region's largest provider of conservation education and a national leader in the children-and-nature movement. Award-winning Zoomazium is the most advanced, sustainably built, all-weather experience for children's "nature play." With our broad reach, we invest more in education than most other zoos, we inspire and cultivate thousands of conservation stewards each year.

For these reasons, we aim to be the partner of choice for all Washington education providers.

A generation disconnected from nature threatens the future of conservation. That's why we must connect more kids to nature from the earliest stages of learning, harness the power of nature to teach science and math, and link learning more directly to conservation action. We must reach new and diverse audiences by expanding our school and community partnerships. And we must strengthen evaluation and research, both to improve our programs continuously and to share our best practices with informal learning institutions in Washington and nationally.

MORE **WONDER.**
MORE WILD.



AT A GLANCE

HABITAT

A year-round, "living classroom" where children of all ages deepen their appreciation for nature. Through nature play and hands-on experiences, learners increase their ecological and science literacy, and develop their potential as conservation stewards.

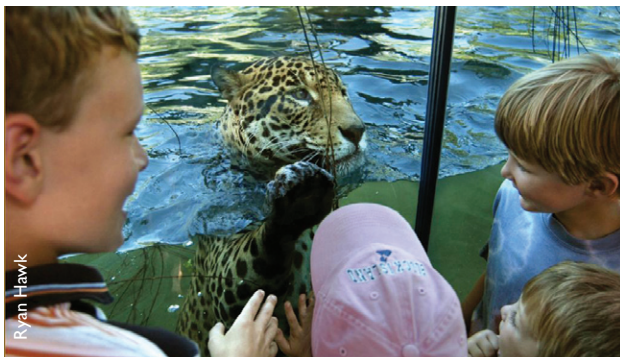
NUMBERS

Over 1.2 million life-long learners and over 100,000 students and teachers served annually

OPPORTUNITY

Your support enables the zoo to connect more children and families to nature; harness the power of nature to teach science and math; empower students, teachers and visitors to translate their learning into action; develop youth conservation leaders; and improve the our education and conservation programs.

PRIVATE FUNDING GOAL
\$12 million



Connect Children to Nature

What better place for children to develop empathy and respect for animals and nature than at the zoo? More than 70% of our visitors are families with children. Our early childhood programs, combined with Zoomazium and our awe-inspiring naturalistic exhibits, enable children to experience nature in many fun, safe ways.

To help caregivers and practitioners engage young learners more effectively, we must integrate new findings in early learning and brain science into all our programs. And Zoomazium, with 500,000 annual visitors (and growing!), must expand its nature-play offerings and integrate with our animal exhibits and public programs.

To ensure future generations will value nature, we are collaborating in a network of education leaders working on “No Child Left Inside” policy initiatives. At the state level, the zoo will build a strong network of parents and caregivers and provide them innovative tools to immerse kids in nature learning anywhere, anytime.

Use Nature to Teach Science and Math

The study of wildlife in context brings science to life. Learning opportunities — such as observing and recording wildlife behavior as would a field researcher, graphing and comparing grizzly bear weights over time, or using GPS and digital cameras to study landscape change — spark

students' imagination and interest in science. Unfortunately, most schools lack the ability to regularly offer such exciting, inquiry-based learning in the field. Informal educational institutions such as the zoo can and do. Our programs model the integration of ecological literacy and conservation action with STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) instruction. We do this by combining inquiry-based learning with advanced teaching methodologies, online resources and teacher development. As we widen our reach to more diverse students, teachers and youth centers, we will bring these subjects and careers to new audiences.



Link Learning to Action

Connecting people to nature with up-close animal experiences builds empathy for wildlife, but it is only a start. Learning that inspires action engages people in age-appropriate conservation dialogues to create understanding, then provides them tools to make a difference.

What sets our zoo apart at inspiring people to take action is a fully integrated program that combines expertise in experiential learning with social action theory, new technologies and research that demonstrates success.

To make the zoo experience even more transformative, we will diversify opportunities for animal and keeper

interactions in our visitor programs, expand our award-winning, first-person interpreter program, and link our exhibits to more hands-on conservation opportunities.

Empower Youth Conservation Leaders

During adolescence youth choose activities to be involved in and causes to support. Zoo Corps youth development programs empower diverse teens with the capacity and confidence to make environmentally responsible decisions, take conservation action and advocate for wildlife in their schools and communities. Zoo Corps and Zoo U programs will expand to provide more out-of-school programs to diverse middle and high school students to engage them in hands-on conservation projects, leadership opportunities and career mentoring.

Lead Informal Education Research

As one of only a handful of accredited zoos with a full commitment to program evaluation, our zoo is a leader regionally and nationally. Our research improves not only our zoo programs. It contributes to social science research on conservation behavior and action, and is shaping a national model of professional evaluator training.



Outdoor and hands-on, nature-based learning experiences such as those the zoo offers produce significant student gains in science, math, social studies and language arts.