



WOODLAND PARK ZOO

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

May 1, 2012

Summary of Operations

Attendance issues related to the record-setting cold and wet weather were an issue throughout 2011. A display of animatronic dinosaurs, brought in for one season, was a moderate success, although the weather limited the number of people viewing that exhibit as well. There was some recovery with good weather in August and in the fourth quarter, and attendance ended the year at 95 percent of the projected total: 1,094,514 visitors. As a result, admissions and other revenue sources driven by attendance ended behind budget. That was offset, in part, by a very successful concert season and other events aimed at spreading the zoo's audience throughout the year, including a new Autumn Fest on October weekends and a "Brew at the Zoo" event. Other new guest amenities included making electric scooters and binoculars available for rental, and offering penguin feedings for interested guests.

Because of the concerns about attendance, the zoo held expenses to 1 percent under budget. These reductions, coupled with a large philanthropic bequest received near the end of the year, allowed the zoo to end the year with positive net income. The final audited figures for 2011 will be available by the end of May.

A successful year in private fund-raising resulted in \$3.7 million for the planned new exhibit for tigers and sloth bears – which will be the largest new exhibit at Woodland Park Zoo in more than 15 years – as well as additional bequests that will support the zoo in the future.

The zoo is still in need of a long-term solution to the limits on transportation and access. A pilot shuttle service between the zoo and a Metro park-and-ride lot on the Eastside operated on Saturdays and Sundays during the summer, and was deemed an operational success. The shuttle is seen as among the variety of integrated improvements and operational changes needed to address this unmet, long-term need.

Although it is a regional institution with state-wide reach, the zoo does pay attention to the Phinney neighborhood in regular meetings of its Neighborhood Liaison Committee, a special evening at the zoo for the neighborhood, free concert tickets for those who live within two blocks of the zoo, and support for the Phinney Neighborhood Association and other neighborhood efforts.

A key to the zoo's operation in a variety of areas in 2011 included the hiring of three new members of the executive team: Jamie Creola, vice president for education; Fred Koontz, vice president for field conservation; and Jane Stonecipher, vice president for finance and business development. Those steps complete the restructuring of the zoo's leadership team, which began in 2010.

Capital Projects

The zoo's new West Entrance, completed in 2010, was recognized with a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council's Green Building certification system. The zoo's long commitment to environmental design and sustainability was recognized by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), at its annual meeting in September, with the Green Significant Achievement Award. It was the first time the AZA had given awards for environmental sustainability.

Additional work on the West Entrance included installation of a variety of enhancements to the guest experience: several paths that improve pedestrian safety and access on the zoo's west perimeter, a new "animal themed" Metro bus stop, a vehicle connection drive that reduces traffic circulation in the neighborhood as zoo guests search for parking, demolition of the old gate structures, removal of unnecessary concrete paving, and relocation of the perimeter fence to support the location of the new bus stop.

In addition, as part of the continuing commitment to reducing the zoo's carbon footprint, photovoltaic solar panels were installed on the Historic Carousel pavilion to produce electric power. This project was implemented in cooperation with Seattle City Light and Bonneville Environmental Foundation. The energy generated goes directly into the city's electrical grid and is well more than needed to power the carousel.

There was significant work done in preparation for the planned new Asian Tropical Forest (tiger and sloth bear, and other animals) exhibit. When completed, it will constitute a complete renovation of the area that now contains Asian bears and tigers. The area to be replaced is almost two acres and will represent the largest new project at the zoo since the development of the orangutan (Trail of Vines) exhibit in 1996.

The new exhibit will focus on innovative exhibitry, excellent animal husbandry, and sustainable features that will allow for long-term operation and maintenance savings. There will be additional focus on educational elements of the Asian Tropical Forest, around the theme "Share the Forest," which will allow messaging about species and habitat loss and conservation.

The zoo's Board of Directors approved a two-phased construction schedule and scope. The scope of work for Phase 1 construction will include improvements to the East-West portion of the zoo's main loop path, underground utilities, an exhibit of Asian small-clawed otters and a children's play area. Phase I construction is scheduled to start after Labor Day 2012 and open to the public May 1, 2013. Phase II, which will include tiger and sloth bear exhibits, is scheduled to open in 2014, depending on the success of fundraising activity.

The Seattle Design Commission reviewed and approved the project at concept, schematic and design development phases.

Field Conservation

There were significant activities in 2011 in the zoo's continuing effort to expand and grow its commitment to field conservation programs in the Pacific Northwest and around the world.

In March, Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn declared March 8-14 Woodland Park Zoo Field Conservation Week, in honor of two new events the zoo brought to Seattle. They included the first-ever summit of 12 conservation leaders from the zoo's Partners for Wildlife program, and the biannual conference of Zoos and Aquariums Committing to Conservation (ZACC,) an organization of scientists, field biologists, zoo and aquarium professionals, and other conservationists who are dedicated to establishing direct links between zoos and field conservation programs.

One of those programs – the raising and reintroduction of endangered western pond turtles – achieved its 20th anniversary in 2011 and was recognized when Gov. Christine Gregoire declared the week of July 25 as "Western Pond Turtle Recovery Project 20th Anniversary Week." Over the past 20 years, working cooperatively with the Oregon Zoo, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Woodland Park Zoo has helped restore the population of that species – once as few as 150 – to more than 1,500.

It is one of three species recovery programs in the Northwest in which the zoo is raising and reintroducing animals that are threatened with extinction.

In July and August, 1,000 endangered Oregon silverspot butterflies were released into protected habitat; the zoo also continued its efforts to raise and release Oregon spotted frogs.

In September, the zoo launched a new program called Quarters for Conservation. Zoo guests are given tokens when they enter and are allowed to use their token to vote for one of six conservation programs supported by the zoo. The token represents 25 cents from every zoo admission, and the votes help determine the level of support provided to those programs.

Initially, the choices included Northwest wildlife programs, tree kangaroos and habitat preservation in Papua New Guinea, Asian hornbills, snow leopards in Mongolia, African elephants, and orangutans in Borneo. The programs rotate every six months. Of the more than \$1 million dollars Woodland Park Zoo plans to spend on field conservation programs in 2012, votes cast between September 7, 2011 and December 31, 2011 have already contributed \$43,000 to saving animals and habitat.

Field Conservation continues to actively support the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program (TKCP) to preserve tree kangaroo habitat, and increase the availability of education, health care, and livelihood opportunities for the residents within the protected Conservation Area. In 2011, TKCP and the local residents have made great strides in accomplishing these goals, and in using long-term land-use planning strategies to appropriately manage the land shared with tree kangaroos.

In 2011, WPZ and TKCP met a matching challenge from Conservation International's Global Conservation Fund to raise a combined \$2 million to create the YUS Conservation Trust. This Endowment will help support operational costs as the local NGO is established, and allow TKCP to more easily support research and livelihood programs within the Conservation Area.

Animal Management

There were a number of additions to the zoo's animal collection in 2011.

Among the animals arriving from other zoos were an aplomado falcon, two North American porcupines, a reticulated python and a brown booby (seabird.) In addition, the zoo received a male North American elk, six Indian flying foxes, three ornate spiny-tailed lizards and several new species of snakes, including a dusky pygmy rattlesnake, lancehead and South American rattlesnake.

There also were some significant births and hatchings among the zoo's collection, including a female ocelot, seven Humboldt penguins, a snowy owl, two endangered Louisiana pine snakes and a Bennett's wallaby. The zoo's two female Chinese crocodile lizards gave birth to two litters of 11 babies in total. The crocodile lizard is an unusual reptile that gives birth to young after 9 to 12 months of gestation.

Three green aracari, a small (approximately robin-sized) toucan species, hatched sometime around December 25. This is the first breeding of this species at WPZ since 2005.

The zoo's collection also received a volunteer member when a hissing cockroach was found on zoo grounds and added to the invertebrate collection. Zoo animal-management staff believes the bug hitched a ride from Texas on or inside one of the animatronic dinosaurs featured at the zoo last summer.

There were some losses to the collection as well: a gray wolf, miniature donkey, clouded leopard, African lion, African wild dog and arctic fox.

Education

Increasingly, education programs at Woodland Park Zoo are aimed at creating the next generation of conservation stewards by connecting children to nature, intensifying the quality of their experiences when they come to the zoo, and increasing their knowledge and literacy about ecology so that they can take action and provide conservation leadership in the future.

In 2011, about one-third of our 1.1 million zoo guests experienced at least one of the following: Zoomazium's interactive program space, a zoo public program or an up-close animal encounter.

Zoomazium, which is aimed at young children, preschoolers and early learners up to about age 8, had more than 346,000 visitors. Of these, about 36,000 participated in one of the programs, and about 32,000 were able to touch an animal. Zoomazium, the first LEED Gold project in a North American zoo or aquarium, celebrated its fifth anniversary this year.

There was an increase in attendance at the zoo's various classes and camps, mostly in the spring and summer. More than 1,700 kids participated in camps, along with another 3,000 attending overnight or evening adventures.

Education staff took advantage of the zoo's animatronic dinosaur exhibit to provide talks and materials on extinction, survival and biodiversity – adding a very significant educational component to this attraction.

School-oriented programs continued to have an important focus on ecological literacy. Nearly 80,000 children and chaperones attended the zoo for school programs, with one third of these coming from King County schools with 30 percent or more students on the free or reduced-rate lunch program.

Students from those schools are able to attend the zoo for free, and with bus transportation provided, through proceeds of the King County Parks levy. The zoo also began a new program, Zoo Crew, focused on introducing new middle school audiences to the zoo, fostering ecological and science literacy in underserved populations, and inspiring conservation action among students and their communities.

WPZ provides professional- development opportunities for teachers. Of the 125 teachers who participated in 2011, 38 were able to travel to Borneo for field coursework. Also, 2011 saw the launch of the Advanced Inquiry Program, offered in cooperation with Miami University's Project *Dragonfly*, which will lead to a master's degree.

The zoo's Ready, Set, Discover program targeting middle-school students from 14 low-income King County schools was honored with receipt of the AZA's top education award. While the zoo has won AZA education awards previously, this was the first time it was awarded the top prize. Ready, Set, Discover is designed to develop science reasoning and inquiry skills in fourth and fifth-grade students using ecosystems as a focus. Over a two year period, 2,200 students participated in programs at the schools, in field sites, and at the zoo.