

PRESS RELEASE

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New IMLS grant to fund *Coexisting With Carnivores* project Funding will provide more carnivore ecology education to help prevent human-carnivore conflict in Issaquah

SEATTLE—The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the primary source of federal support for the nation's approximately 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums, has announced a \$321,000 grant for ***Coexisting With Carnivores***. The three-year grant will allow Woodland Park Zoo to establish a community-based science education and conservation model that equips residents in Issaquah, Wash. to coexist safely with carnivores.



"As centers of learning and catalysts of community change, libraries and museums connect people with programs, services, collections, information, and new ideas in the arts, sciences, and humanities. They serve as vital spaces where people can connect with each other," said IMLS Director Dr. Kathryn K. Matthew. "IMLS is proud to support this work through our grant making as they inform and inspire all in their communities."

Issaquah and the neighboring communities of east King County lie at the intersection of expanding urban settlement and iconic wilderness. Surrounded by forested mountains on three sides and Lake Sammamish to the north, the area is also home to abundant wildlife including some of Washington's most charismatic carnivores: black bears, coyotes, bobcats and cougars. At the interface of urbanization and wilderness, there is sometimes human-animal conflict.

Through *Coexisting With Carnivores*, 6th grade middle school students and Issaquah residents will have opportunities to gain knowledge of carnivores and their roles as part of healthy local ecosystems. The zoo will apply its expertise in carnivore ecology and build on its successful, four-year partnership with the Issaquah School District. This robust partnership makes it possible for Issaquah School District's 6th grade Life Science students to develop their science inquiry, civic literacy, and leadership skills as they investigate solutions for living with the carnivores in their east King County communities. The culmination of the program is a town hall style event where students share findings from their scientific investigations on how carnivores use resources in the Issaquah area to meet their needs. The students also provide evidence-based recommendations that assist the community in making carnivore positive choices.

Woodland Park Zoo and the City of Issaquah will facilitate a community engagement program, *Our Community, Our Carnivores*, as a part of the project to broaden the impact beyond the school audience by providing opportunities for engagement, dialogue and collaborative problem solving by all segments of the community.

"*Coexisting With Carnivores* is a wonderful example of how zoos can play vibrant roles in their communities. This grant will allow us to reach every 6th grade student in Issaquah, a community that is on the wildland-urban interface," said Woodland Park Zoo President and CEO Alejandro Grajal, PhD. "As our region continues to boom, it is critical that families learn how to coexist with wildlife and appreciate nature around them. This grant allows us to continue our successful work with local schools and also have a deeper engagement with our communities about this important issue."

"Woodland Park Zoo's educational programs have helped instill a lifelong appreciation for wildlife among young people in our region," said U.S. Rep. Dave Reichert (R-WA). "This grant will enable the zoo to directly connect with students in my district and bring their programming to the Issaquah community. By capturing students' curiosity and teaching them how they can

help preserve and protect wildlife areas, Woodland Park Zoo is preparing future generations to be leaders in conservation."

Coexisting With Carnivores is a project of Woodland Park Zoo's [Living Northwest](#) program, that supports field conservation projects in the Pacific Northwest.

About WPZ

Woodland Park Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums and certified by the rigorous American Humane Conservation program. The Humane Certified™ seal of approval is another important validation of the zoo's long-standing tradition of meeting the highest standards in animal welfare. Woodland Park Zoo is helping to save animals and their habitats through more than 35 field projects in the Pacific Northwest and around the world. By inspiring people to care and act, Woodland Park Zoo is making a difference in our planet's future ecological health and sustainability. Visit www.zoo.org and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

About IMLS

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is celebrating its 20th Anniversary. IMLS is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Our mission has been to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. For the past 20 years, our grant making, policy development, and research has helped libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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