

PRESS RELEASE

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Zoo steps up its commitment to saving wildlife by eliminating single-use plastic bottles on grounds *Zoo's conservation movement continues in a stand for oceans and wildlife*

SEATTLE—In partnership with food concessionaire Lancer Hospitality and gift shop operator Event Network, Woodland Park Zoo has eliminated the sale of single-use plastics for beverages including water, juice and soda.

BYOB: Guests can lend a helping hand to wildlife by bringing their own reusable bottle or purchasing a stainless steel bottle at the ZooStores. Fountain drinks sold at the zoo's restaurants and snack stations are now served in compostable cups instead of plastic bottles. All of the zoo's vending machines have been replaced with all-can beverages.



Aluminum cans are viewed as a preferred alternative to single use plastic bottles or boxed water. As a material, aluminum is infinitely recyclable, recycled most often, recycled locally and takes as little as 60 days to turn into a new can or bottle. Guests who bring their own reusable bottle can fill them with water at three reusable bottle filling stations. In the coming months, more reusable bottle filling stations will replace many of the existing water fountains on zoo grounds.

More than 30 years ago, Woodland Park Zoo eliminated plastic straws on zoo grounds. "The impact plastic has on our oceans and beaches is astounding and wreaks devastation on every living being that relies on these ecosystems," said Woodland Park Zoo President and CEO Alejandro Grajal, PhD. "Phasing out single-use plastic bottles from our grounds is the right thing to do and is a significant step forward in uniting all our choices and all our voices to help save every animal remaining on our planet. Our 1.3 million annual guests are eager participants in a collective impact that empowers all of us to create a broad movement for conservation."

Each year, as many as 30 billion water bottles are disposed of in U.S. landfills, where they take nearly five centuries to break down. Plastic bottles that don't go to landfills often end up on beaches and in oceans where the debris breaks down into smaller and smaller bits known as microplastics. According to Zero Waste Washington, microplastics are found in every depth of the water column all around the world, including Antarctica, and are ingested by marine life, working their way up the food chain. Plastic marine debris affects more than 600 species.

As a stepping stone, the zoo and Lancer Hospitality have partnered with [Green Sheep](#), which produces screw-top aluminum bottled water, made from 70% recycled aluminum content and sourced within the U.S. As a 1% for the planet company, 1% of each sale goes back to Woodland Park Zoo's conservation efforts such as the Living Northwest program which focuses on field projects in the Pacific Northwest.

"Eliminating single-use plastic bottles at Woodland Park Zoo means that 120,000 plastic beverage bottles annually will no longer enter the waste stream," said Zosia Brown, PhD, who oversees Woodland Park Zoo's resource conservation and sustainability program. "This translates to roughly 2,500 pounds of reduction in plastic waste at the zoo, with associated savings in haulage fees."

Seattle boasts one of only a few pristine, protected mountain watersheds in the country that provide tap water. Every day, Seattle Public Utilities pumps out 120 million gallons of drinking water from the Tolt and Cedar Rivers to 1.4 million people in the greater Seattle area. "We want to encourage our guests to move away from a linear throwaway culture toward one of re-use. There is no need to purchase water in plastic bottles because we have access to

outstanding drinking water right here at home,” said Brown. “We encourage our community to stand with us for oceans and wildlife by ditching the single-use plastic bottle and tapping our greatest resource.”

To align itself with Woodland Park Zoo’s mission of saving wildlife and inspiring everyone to make conservation a priority in their lives, Event Network has been working on phasing out plastic from the zoo’s gift shops in 2018; this includes everything from bottles and packaging on toys to even the toys themselves with a goal of no more plastic. In 2017, the gift shops at the zoo sold a total of 2,084 stainless steel bottles—a 520% increase over stainless steel bottle sales in 2016. “This underscores how thirsty our community is to make lifestyle changes—big or small—that have a positive impact on our planet,” said Brown.

As the region’s premier zoo and in keeping with Seattle’s climate partnership goals, Woodland Park Zoo aspires to raise the bar of environmental performance and become the community’s most hands-on, living showcase of sustainability. This commitment is demonstrated every day through a number of initiatives including: Zoomazium’s building and living roof which became the first project among zoos nationally to receive Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED); the zoo’s on-site composting program which annually transforms 820 tons of manure from its herbivore animals and animal bedding into Zoo Doo; one of the largest community solar projects in Washington, Phinney Ridge Community Solar, which in 2014 funded the installation of 60kW of new solar panels on the roofs of the zoo’s Rain Forest Food Pavilion and Commissary buildings; solar panels on the zoo’s Historic Carousel; the award-winning Humboldt penguin exhibit, which reuses all of its water on site through a combination of rainwater capture, mechanical filtration, biofiltration and geothermal heating; and public Light & Charge stations for electric vehicles as part of a \$1.2 million investment by ReachNow, the mobility branch of the BMW Group.

Zoo hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily through April 30. For more information or to become a zoo member, visit www.zoo.org or call 206.548.2500.

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. Each year, the zoo engages more than a million visitors of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and walks of life in extraordinary experiences with animals, inspiring them to make conservation a priority in their lives and a difference in our planet’s future ecological health and sustainability. Visit www.zoo.org and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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