



**2011 annual plan to the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation  
December 2, 2010**

Public Comment period: **December 2, 2010 through January 2, 2011**  
Please direct comments: Attention: Annual Plan to [webkeeper@zoo.org](mailto:webkeeper@zoo.org)

This annual plan for Woodland Park Zoo for 2011 is submitted to the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation as specified by the Zoo Operations and Management Agreement between the City of Seattle and the Woodland Park Zoological Society. The purpose of the annual plan is to briefly describe and highlight major programs and programmatic changes, capital improvements or other key issues for the coming year.

**Public Participation and community comments:** Submitted annually in the fourth quarter, the plan is available for review and comment on the zoo website, [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org), as well as in hard copy at the zoo's administrative offices, 601 N. 59<sup>th</sup> St. Copies are provided as well to the zoo's [Neighborhood Liaison Committee](#), which consists of representatives of the neighboring community councils and other groups.

**Overview and major goals:** This is the third year of zoo operations during the nation's severe economic recession, and a continued emphasis on managing resources and cost containment. In the past two years, the zoo has reduced staff, suspended employee benefits and closed an exhibit as a way to cut operating costs. This budget does not currently contemplate further reductions. Rather, in 2011, there will be attention to new revenue sources, including a one-season-only exhibit of animatronic dinosaurs, three tasting events for the public and a new autumn festival.

The zoo's new West Entrance was completed in 2010, but some capital work remains for 2011 to better identify the West Entrance from Phinney Avenue North. That work is scheduled for completion by May 1, 2011. Other capital projects for 2011 are modest, although planning will continue on the next new animal exhibits at the zoo, a replacement of the 50-plus year old exhibits of Asian bears and tigers. The zoo has selected a design team for that project, and private fundraising is progressing.

In March, the zoo will bring to Seattle a major conference of field conservation scientists for a week-long convention. The event will include the zoo's Partners for Wildlife conservationists as well as about 200 field scientists who are members of the Zoos and Aquariums Committing to Conservation (ZACC) group.

As part of its continuing, evolving commitment to conservation, the zoo in 2011 will begin a "Quarters for Conservation" program. For each admission fee, 25 cents will be earmarked for the zoo's field-conservation programs, and guests will have a say in how the money is directed.

As they enter the zoo, visitors will be given a token which they can use to “vote” for the conservation project of their choice. A portion of the proceeds will be used in the way zoo guests specify.

The zoo’s operations budget for 2011 will not be final until approved by the Zoo Society Board of Directors at its meeting in December. The proposed budget calls for operating revenues of \$32.4 million; expenses are expected to grow to \$32.9 million. These figures are about 5 percent higher than the 2010 budget. Increased health-care costs represent a significant portion of the increase in expenses. The zoo is able to run a deficit budget because of grants that were received in previous years but not yet expended. Complete details will be included in the final draft of this report in January.

As part of the zoo’s two-year cycle for consideration of admission-price increases, the cost of adult admissions will increase by 50 cents for children and adults beginning Jan. 1, and another 50 cents for adults on May 1. The new rates will be \$11.50 for adults and \$8.50 for children ages 3 to 12 beginning Jan. 1. From May 1 to Oct. 1, the summer rates will be \$17.50 for adults and \$11.50 for children. There also will be a minor increase in membership prices in 2011. Parking rates will increase by 25 cents to accommodate the city of Seattle’s increase in parking taxes.

In 2011, based on recommendations of a citizens’ committee, the zoo will institute some new measures to reduce the impact of parking and transportation and promote zoo access through transit. These include wayfinding and pathway improvements from Phinney Avenue to the West Entrance, improvements to the bus stop and a shuttle service on peak summer days.

**Capital Projects:** Design work will continue on the proposed new Tiger & Asian Bear exhibits.

An updated fuel tank will be put in place in the maintenance yard (southeast corner of the zoo) to provide eight days of back up fuel for our emergency generators. This project has been discussed with Parks Department staff.

About 10 animatronic dinosaurs will be placed, and a dinosaur gift store opened, just east of the West Entrance plaza. This exhibit will be for one season only. A separate charge of \$3.00 is planned for entry to this exhibit.

In cooperation with Seattle City Light and the Bonneville Environmental Foundation, the zoo will install photovoltaic solar panels on four of the south-facing roof sections of the Carousel Pavilion. The system is projected to produce 9.36kW. Installation is scheduled for completion during the first quarter. There will be an interpretive component demonstrating the value of small, residential-scale solar installations.

**Education programs:** The zoo’s education programs are integral to the overall mission of inspiring and cultivating an informed community of conservation stewards. From early learners to adults, on and off zoo grounds, the zoo’s developmental approach to lifelong learning is to foster empathy for nature, build conservation knowledge and skills, and increase people’s personal ownership for action that benefits wildlife and habitat.

In 2011, the Connecting Children to Nature initiative will offer a wide array of programs for children and caregivers that provide opportunities for exploration and play in nature as well as

nurture respect and caring for animals. The programs include classes and camps, including early childhood programs for toddlers and their caregivers/parents; overnight and evening adventures; programming in Zoomazium, and, pending funding, outreach to underserved audiences, particularly in the area of early childhood education.

Science education programs include expanded opportunities for Washington students and teachers to access quality, hands-on, experiential education programs. Programs include:

- School-to-Zoo programs funded by King County levy funds, including Forest Explorers for first through third grades, which bring science kit concepts to life through learning experiences on zoo grounds.
- Wild Wise outreach programs and field trips at community centers and schools throughout King County (and at a few select locations around the state) which engage students in observations and discovery of Washington's wildlife.
- Up CLOSE outreach programs which bring animal experiences to schools and community centers throughout King and South Snohomish counties.
- Ready, Set, Discover outreach programs involving low income schools in the Kent School District over a two year period. Funding is being sought to continue the program for the 2011-2012 school year. And, depending on the outcome of testing and evaluation, the program will be used as a model for other school districts focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) disciplines.
- A new Masters program at the zoo in partnership with Miami University of Ohio will support development for 140 educators by intensifying skills training in inquiry-based learning and field investigation.

In addition to experiences on the zoo grounds, in-depth community and youth engagement programs will provide children, youth and adults with the skills and experiences necessary to be conservation stewards and empower them to become future conservation leaders. These programs include:

- The zoo's volunteer program, numbering more than 600 adults, provides assistance in a variety of ways, including working as docents, speakers and assistants in animal and other units.
- Backyard Habitat workshops/classes for adults in spring and fall. A newly created Backyard Habitat exhibit will be the launching point for numerous programs and classes designed to break down barriers to conservation action.
- A new program aimed at middle-school age children, as a companion to the zoo's highly successful Zoo Corps program.

**Conservation and sustainability:** Increased emphasis on conservation, sustainability, in the Northwest and in other areas of the globe, is a continuing part of the zoo's mission.

In March, Woodland Park Zoo will host the annual convention of Zoos and Aquariums Committing to Conservation, (ZACC), an organization of scientists and others from accredited zoos and aquariums. The convention will coincide with a summit of Woodland Park Zoo's Partners for Wildlife participants, field conservationists funded by the zoo with projects around the world. The same week, the zoo will introduce residents of Seattle and the Puget Sound region to many of the concepts discussed by the scientists in its annual spring fundraising event, *thrive!* In 2011, for the first time, *thrive!* will be a breakfast event held in downtown Seattle.

In 2010, zoo staff completed a five-year sustainability plan to help achieve the zoo's ambitious goals for reduction in the use of energy and water, as well as waste reduction. While the zoo has already achieved significant savings in water and energy use, the goals call for:

- A 7 percent reduction in energy use, below 1990 levels, by 2012, and a 20 percent reduction by 2020.
- 30 percent reduction in water use by 2020.
- 50 percent reduction, by 2020, in solid waste going to the landfill.

Also in 2011, the zoo will celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its program of raising and reintroducing western pond turtles, which has proven to be a very successful program of saving an endangered Northwest species. The zoo is now participating in three other programs to preserve and reintroduce native Northwest species.

**Animal care and management:** Significant additions to the animal collection are anticipated in 2011, along with a new visitor experience.

The zoo expects to add a male wapiti (Roosevelt elk) to Northern Trail and increase the number of bats in our colony at the Adaptations Building.

Among bird species, the zoo expects to add a new ostrich in the African Savanna. The zoo is exploring additional involvement in the Saharan Conservation Fund efforts to save the North African sub-species of ostrich.

Other birds include various new species for the marsh in the Temperate Forest. We also will add a white-rumped shama thrush to the conservation aviary and Steller's sea eagles will become part of the Northern Trail exhibit.

Reptiles and amphibians to be added include a Strawberry poison dart frog, new turtle species (yet to be decided) and *Uromastix* or spiny-tailed lizard, a spectacularly colored lizard. Also, a number of new invertebrates will be added to "Bug" World.

Members of the public currently are offered an opportunity, for a fee, to feed penguins in the new Humboldt penguin exhibit during the winter season, parrots year-round in Willawong Station and the summer season giraffe feeding experience. These all help bring people up-close to animals to help encourage learning opportunities. Beginning in the summer, the zoo will initiate a new experience in which visitors will be able to feed browse to the zoo elephants. The experience will include additional keeper talks about elephant conservation.

This operating plan will allow Woodland Park Zoo to maintain its role as a treasured community institution and gathering place, as well as its commitment to excellent animal care, education and conservation, through conditions that continue to be very challengingly economically.