

# AGENDA

**Potter Park Zoo Advisory Board**  
1301 S. Pennsylvania Avenue ~ Lansing, MI 48912  
Telephone: 517.342.2776; Fax: 517.316.3894

The Board information packet is available on-line by going to [www.potterparkzoo.org](http://www.potterparkzoo.org), selecting "About," clicking on "Zoo Advisory Board" and clicking "March 12, 2025".

## POTTER PARK ZOO ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, March 12, 2025  
6:00 PM

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Approval of the January 08, 2025 Meeting Minutes**
3. **Limited Public Comment – *Limited to 3 minutes with no discussion***
4. **Late Items/Deletions/Consent Items**
5. **Action Items**
6. **Director's Report**
  - a. Finance Report – Cynthia Wagner
  - b. Admission Report- Cynthia Wagner
  - c. Director's Report – Cynthia Wagner
7. **New Business**
  - a. USDA & Permits Presentation – Sarah Foote
  - b. Avian Influenza – Cynthia Wagner
  - c. AZA DEI Update – Cynthia Wagner
  - d. Fundraising Presentation – Merritt Frey
  - e. FY 26 Congressionally Directed Spending Request – Cynthia Wagner
  - f. 2026 Admission Rates - Discussion
8. **Old Business**
  - a. Animal Health Facility Progress – Cynthia Wagner
  - b. Feline Primate Renovation & Grant Update – Cynthia Wagner
  - c. Stormwater Infrastructure Federal Grant Update – Cynthia Wagner
9. **Board Comments**
10. **Limited Public Comment - *Limited to 3 minutes with no discussion***
11. **Upcoming Meeting**
  - a. **Zoo Advisory Board Meeting April 9, 2025 at 6:00 PM**
12. **Adjournment**

Official minutes are stored and available for inspection at the address noted at the top of this agenda. Potter Park Zoo will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as interpreters for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting for the visually impaired, for individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon five (5) working days' notice to the Zoo. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Zoo by writing to: Zoo Director, 1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing, MI 48912, or by calling 517.342.2776.

**MINUTES – INGHAM COUNTY  
POTTER PARK ZOO ADVISORY BOARD**

**1301 S. Pennsylvania Avenue,  
Lansing, MI,  
January 08, 2025**

**BOARD MEMBER**

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Tennis, Commissioner Cahill, Chair Cheryl Bergman, Julie Pingston, Dr. Jack Kottwitz, Vice Chair Kyle Binkley, Dr. Richard Snider, Emily Linden, Mary Leys, Samantha Harkins and Caitlin O’Rourke

**ALSO PRESENT:** Cynthia Wagner, Zoo Director and Amy Morris-Hall, Potter Park Zoological Society Executive Director

**ABSENT:** Kasey Kent

**CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting called to order at 6:02 p.m.

**MINUTES:** The minutes were moved by Samantha Harkins and supported by Julie Pingston to approve the minutes of the October 9 and November 13, 2024 meeting as written, **Yes-11; No-0; MOTION CARRIED**

**LIMITED PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**LATE ITEMS/DELETIONS/CONSENT ITEMS**

None

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Resolution to Amend Resolution #24-409**

Director Wagner explained this Resolution is to amend the match amount for the federal grant that was awarded for Stormwater Infrastructure improvements. The formula used to calculate the match indicates the match is \$239,938 rather than \$191,950 as previously approved. Funds are available in the zoo fund balance to cover the entire match.

Moved by Julie Pingston and supported by Caitlyn O’Rourke to support the Resolution to amend Resolution #24-409, **Yes-11; No-0; MOTION CARRIED**

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Director Wagner reported the 2024 year to date financials are very preliminary as all expenses have not yet been recorded for the year. She reported the inventory amount may change as inventory will be completed next week in the AniMall. She also reported that she expects \$100,000 more in expenses in 2024. The original amount budgeted to put into fund balance in 2024 should go back into fund balance.

**ADMISSION & PARKING REPORT**

Director Wagner reported that admissions is up for the year, but that it is down for the month of December. She stated that general admission fluctuating slightly during the winter months does not affect revenue greatly due to decreased winter rates.

Executive Director Morris-Hall reported that the Society was evaluating the reasons for the lower Wonderland of Lights attendance. The 2024 Wonderland of Lights season had two less days than the previous year and the Toys for Tots night was held on a Sunday versus Saturdays as in previous years. The weather was likely an additional factor as it was very cold many days. Ms. Morris-Hall stated changes have already been made for the 2025 event calendar to address some of these things.

Julie Pingston asked if breaking 200,000 in admissions was a record and Director Wagner replied that to her knowledge it was the first time the zoo had been over 200,000 in total admissions.

### **ZOO DIRECTOR REPORT**

Major Elements Reported by Director Wagner:

- The Horticulture and Maintenance Supervisor has been accepted by Jamieson Sather and he will start in March.
- Several zoo staff have accepted positions on AZA SSP committees and in Professional Development Courses.
- Seasonal staff wages increase from \$14 to \$15 in 2025. In 2024 there were 34,239 hours of seasonal wages paid at a rate of \$14 per hour.
- Injury reports have declined for the 4<sup>th</sup> year.
- The Zoological Society will be partnering with Jungle Jordan to create engaging online content related to the animals at PPZ. The content will be recorded in May.
- The fall photo contest was very popular and great for community engagement.
- Conservation bookmarks raised \$4,833 for the PPZ conservation fund in 2024.
- The PPZ AAZK chapter held several successful conservation fundraising events in 2024 and is holding a new event in 2025, Tats for Bats.
- Zoo Nights with Lights sold out in December.
- The bongo calf is doing well and Maeve the youngest female bongo was transferred to another AZA facility based on SSP recommendations.
- The red panda cub Wiley is exploring the outside exhibit.
- The two Arctic foxes have been introduced and are doing well.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Population Management Report**

Director Wagner reported that participation in SSP programs for species housed at AZA zoos is now a requirement in the 2025 AZA standards. The Population Management Center (PMC) which is housed at Lincoln Park Zoo facilitates all research and breeding recommendations based on genetics. Every year the PMC will produce a report for each AZA facility that shows how they have participated or not participated. These reports will be given to AZA inspectors and taken into consideration during the accreditation process. The report included in the packet is an example of what the inspectors will be given. Fulfilled rates are not expected to be 100%, as you cannot guarantee animals will be successful breeding, but institutions must make every effort to meet the recommendations.

#### **Ticket Distribution Year End Report**

Director Wagner reported that the ticket distribution spreadsheet for 2024 shows that 1,394 tickets were distributed of which 117 have been redeemed so far. In 2023 1,115 were distributed and 339 were redeemed. Passes have an expiration of one year from the time they are issued.

#### **Feline Primate Architectural and Engineering Services Discussion**

Director Wagner stated they had received four bids for A&E Services for this project. One bid was eliminated as they did not include all services in the Not to Exceed (NTE) Cost. Another bid was eliminated as they changed how they submitted their cost, and the numbers were not accurate. The zoo team including the purchasing director interviewed the vendors of the two remaining bids and a final recommendation will be made to the building authority January 28. Director Wagner is still waiting to hear when the zoo will receive the funds from the state. That could delay the start of the project.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **Animal Health Facility Progress**

Brian Fisher reported that construction is on schedule with a planned completion date of July 2025. He stated the steel frame and roof were in the process of being installed and that the building was beginning to take shape. Kyle Binkley asked if the water line would change that date. Brian answered that the project is on schedule so far even with the water line replacement planned.

Cheryl Bergman asked what the donor recognition would look like and what levels would be recognized. Amy Morris-Hall stated the Society would be recognizing large donors how they had agreed upon when the donation was received and in addition would have a donor wall in the public viewing area to recognize every donor for this project. She described the wall and that there would be larger plaques for large donors and smaller mentions for donors of lesser amounts, but that every donor would be on the wall.

##### **Fundraising Update**

Executive Director Morris- Hall reported that Merritt Frey had started in the new fundraising position and is working on the three- and six-month plan. The goal is to continue to raise funds for the hospital. Merritt will attend a future board meeting to meet board members and discuss the plan.

Executive Director Morris-Hall reported the Society would be receiving a \$10,000 donation for the hospital and that they had been awarded a grant from the Michigan Arts and Culture Council for 18,000 for hospital equipment and 15,000 for Society operations.

**BOARD COMMENTS**

None

**LIMITED PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

DRAFT

**POTTER PARK ZOO  
BALANCE SHEET - PRELIMINARY  
AS OF FEBRUARY 28th, 2025**

**ASSETS**

CASH	\$ 3,188,869
DEPOSITORY CASH	15,554
IMPREST CASH	8,000
TAXES REC - CURRENT LEVY	1,398,547
IFT TAX RECEIVABLE	(12,378)
TAXES REC - DELINQUENT	42,717
ESTIMATED UNCOLLECTIBLE DELINQUENT TAXES	(18,601)
ACCOUNTS REC-OTHER	80
PROPERTY TAX RECEIVABLE	-
INTEREST RECEIVABLE	2,760
DUE FROM STATE	-
DUE FROM OTHER FUNDS	-
INVENTORY	173,782
INVESTMENT YIELD ADJUSTMENT	1
PREPAID EXPENSES	-

**TOTAL ASSETS**

<u>\$ 4,799,331</u>
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**LIABILITIES**

VOUCHERS PAYABLE	-
DUE TO ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY	(2,581)
TAX LEVY LIABILITY	19,600
SALES TAX PAYABLE	2,149
REFUND NOW	(61)
REFUND APPLY	(865)
ACCRUED PAYROLL	-
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	17,259
DEFERRED REVENUE - DELINQUENT TAXES	26,628
DEFERRED REVENUE - PROPERTY TAXES	-
DEF REVENUE -POTTER PARK	16,215

**TOTAL LIABILITIES**

<u>78,344</u>
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**FUND BALANCE**

UNSPENDABLE	173,782
UNRESTRICTED FUND BALANCE	4,547,205
	<u>4,720,987</u>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE**

<u>\$ 4,799,331</u>
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*NOTE: This is based on figures posted to fiscal year 2024 as of the current date. The county audit has not yet been completed. The county audit will provide a final financial statement once the audit has been completed.*

Prepared By: Eric J. Thelen

**POTTER PARK ZOO**  
**YEAR TO DATE BUDGET/ACTUAL REPORT - PRELIMINARY**  
**FOR 12 MONTHS ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2025**

	FEB 2025 YTD				FEB 2024 YTD ACTUAL	% DIFF LAST YR
	2025 BUDGET	ACTUAL - PRELIMINARY	BUDGET REMAINING	% OF BUDGET		
<b>REVENUES</b>						
PROPERTY TAX	\$ 4,895,756	\$ 4,733,071	\$ 162,685	96.68%	\$ 4,183,310	13.14%
UNALLOCATED PORTION OF TAXES (10 MONTHS)	\$ -	\$ (3,944,226)	\$ -	0.00%	\$ (3,486,092)	0.00%
ADMISSIONS	\$ 735,000	\$ 5,543	\$ 729,457	0.75%	\$ 15,178	-63.48%
CONCESSIONS, GIFT SHOP, VENDING	\$ 806,000	\$ 6,998	\$ 799,002	0.87%	\$ 16,463	-57.49%
PARKING FEES	\$ 180,000	\$ 140	\$ 179,860	0.08%	\$ 255	-45.10%
INTERACTIVE SITES	\$ 95,000	\$ -	\$ 95,000	0.00%	\$ -	#DIV/0!
INTEREST INCOME	\$ 40,000	\$ 2,363	\$ 37,637	5.91%	\$ 9,779	-75.83%
OTHER REVENUES	\$ (443,928)	\$ 49,711	\$ (493,639)	-11.20%	\$ 50,760	-2.07%
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$ 6,307,828</b>	<b>\$ 853,600</b>	<b>\$ 1,510,002</b>	<b>13.53%</b>	<b>\$ 789,653</b>	<b>8.10%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>						
<b>PERSONNEL SERVICES</b>						
Salaries & Wages - Full Time	\$ 2,134,176	\$ 282,198	\$ 1,851,978	13.22%	\$ 231,542	21.88%
Salaries & Wages - Seasonal	\$ 695,284	\$ 90,503	\$ 604,781	13.02%	\$ 66,704	35.68%
Benefits	\$ 1,284,760	\$ 173,865	\$ 1,110,895	13.53%	\$ 151,466	14.79%
<b>Total Personnel Services</b>	<b>\$ 4,114,220</b>	<b>\$ 546,566</b>	<b>\$ 3,567,654</b>	<b>13.28%</b>	<b>\$ 449,712</b>	<b>21.54%</b>
<b>CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURES</b>						
Supplies	\$ 503,000	\$ 25,817	\$ 477,183	5.13%	\$ 26,155	-1.29%
Animal Care	\$ 317,000	\$ 25,379	\$ 291,621	8.01%	\$ 47,473	-46.54%
Purchased Services	\$ 680,000	\$ 77,967	\$ 602,033	11.47%	\$ 91,624	-14.91%
Utilities - Telephone	\$ 23,125	\$ 1,768	\$ 21,357	7.64%	\$ 2,581	-31.50%
Rentals & Leases	\$ 6,000	\$ 2,550	\$ 3,450	42.50%	\$ 150	1600.00%
Other Expenses	\$ 140,400	\$ 37,140	\$ 103,260	26.45%	\$ 38,840	-4.38%
<b>Total Controllable Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 1,669,525</b>	<b>\$ 170,622</b>	<b>\$ 1,498,903</b>	<b>10.22%</b>	<b>\$ 206,823</b>	<b>-17.50%</b>
<b>NON-CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURES</b>						
Utilities	\$ 240,000	\$ 21,913	\$ 218,087	9.13%	\$ 24,048	-8.88%
Insurance	\$ 90,000	\$ 56,509	\$ 33,491	62.79%	\$ 53,410	5.80%
IT Support Expense	\$ 193,497	\$ 21,116	\$ 172,381	10.91%	\$ 8,607	145.35%
Other Expenses	\$ 586	\$ 147	\$ 439	25.01%	\$ 124	18.59%
<b>Total Non-Controllable Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 524,083</b>	<b>\$ 99,685</b>	<b>\$ 424,398</b>	<b>19.02%</b>	<b>\$ 86,188</b>	<b>15.66%</b>
<b>CAPITAL OUTLAY</b>						
Capital Improvements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!	\$ 44,722	-100.00%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 6,307,828</b>	<b>\$ 816,872</b>	<b>\$ 5,490,956</b>	<b>12.95%</b>	<b>\$ 787,445</b>	<b>3.74%</b>
<b>TOTAL CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 36,728</b>			<b>\$ 2,208</b>	
<b>FUND BALANCE AS OF 1/1/25</b>						
NON-SPENDABLE		\$ 173,782				
UNRESTRICTED		\$ 610,214				
		<u>\$ 783,995</u>				
<b>FUND BALANCE AS OF 02/28/25</b>		<b>\$ 820,724</b>				
<b>FUND BALANCE AS OF 02/28/25</b>						
UNSPENDABLE		\$ 173,782				
UNRESTRICTED		\$ 646,942				
		<u>\$ 820,724</u>				

NOTE: The Fund balance beginning balance is based on figures posted to fiscal year 2024 as of current date. The county audit has not been completed, and these figures may change. Financial Services will provide a final financial statement once the audit has been completed.

Prepared By: Eric J. Thelen

**POTTER PARK ZOO  
MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT  
FOR MONTH AND YTD FEBRUARY 28, 2025**

ADMISSION TYPE	2024	2025 Gate	2025 Online	2025 Total	BETTER (WORSE) THAN PY	2024 COUNT	2025 COUNT	BETTER (WORSE) THAN PY
<b>GENERAL</b>								
CHILD RESIDENT	236	50	0	50	(186)	320	83	(237)
CHILD NON-RESIDENT	348	54	6	60	(288)	459	127	(332)
CHILDREN - UNDER 3	283	65	2	67	(216)	324	113	(211)
ADULT RESIDENT	930	244	4	248	(682)	1,228	478	(750)
ADULT NON-RESIDENT	922	266	22	288	(634)	1,195	511	(684)
SENIOR/MILITARY RESIDENT	41	7	0	7	(34)	48	15	(33)
SENIOR/MILITARY NON-RESIDENT	37	3	0	3	(34)	45	8	(37)
GROUPS	0	0	0	0	0	43	0	(43)
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>2,797</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>(2,074)</b>	<b>3,662</b>	<b>1,335</b>	<b>(2,327)</b>
<b>MEMBERSHIPS/PROGRAMS</b>								
PPZ MEMBERS/RECIPROCAL	1,361	412	0	412	(949)	1,762	730	(1,032)
SOCIETY PROGRAMMING/EVENTS	353	347	0	347	(6)	574	591	17
MONDAY PROGRAM	151	63	0	63	(88)	199	81	(118)
ZIYN	208	39	0	39	(169)	285	77	(208)
OTHER (non-paying)	232	4	0	4	(228)	277	7	(270)
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>2,305</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>(1,440)</b>	<b>3,097</b>	<b>1,486</b>	<b>(1,611)</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>5,102</b>	<b>1,554</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1,588</b>	<b>(3,514)</b>	<b>6,759</b>	<b>2,821</b>	<b>(3,938)</b>

Wild Wanderers

ADMISSION TYPE	DESCRIPTION
CHILDREN RESIDENT	Children, Ingham County ages 3-16 (\$5 April - October, \$3 November-March)
CHILDREN NON-RESIDENT	Children, Out of Ingham County ages 3-16 (\$5 April - October, \$3 November-March)
CHILDREN - UNDER 3	All Children, any county under age 3 (Free)
ADULT RESIDENT	Adult of Ingham County ( \$7 April 1 - Oct. 31, \$4 November-March)
ADULT NON-RESIDENT	Adult Out of Ingham County ( \$13 April 1 - Oct. 31, \$4 November-March)
SENIOR/MILITARY RESIDENT	Seniors/Military of Ingham County ( \$5 April 1 - Oct. 31, \$4 November-March)
SENIOR/MILITARY NON-RESIDENT	Seniors/Military of Ingham County ( \$11 April 1 - Oct. 31, \$4 November-March)
PPZ MEMBERS	Visitors holding membership at PPZ - one time payment
SPECIAL EVENTS - PPZ	Admission included in event fee
SPECIAL EVENTS - COUNTY	Admission included in event fee
RECIPROCAL ZOO MEMBERS	Reciprocal Zoo memberships (Discount varies)
RECIPROCAL ZOO MEMBERS (100%)	Reciprocal Zoo Members (Free admission)
GROUPS	20 or more guests paying together (\$1 off per person)
MONDAY PROGRAM	Ingham County and City of Lansing Residents free 9-12 PM on non-holiday Mondays
OTHER (non-paying)	Any coupon related attendee



# POTTER PARK



## Director's Report March 12, 2025

### Staff

The first session of firearms training for Zoo Emergency Response members will be on April 8 and 9. There will be two more trainings this year.

Jamieson Sather's first day in the Horticulture and Maintenance Supervisory position is Monday, March 10.

There were 35 full-time staff that completed their CPR/AED/First Aid training in February. The Red Cross certification is good for two years and is taught by Rick Parker.

Annual Zoonotic Diseases training took place Tuesday, March 4 for all zoo staff that interact directly with animals or in animal exhibits. The training is taught by Dr. Ronan Eustace and is an AZA requirement.

### Membership

2024 Total Member Visits: 24,761

Adult: 13,901

Child: 8,686

Infant: 1,821

Senior: 328

2024 Average Active Members (not including children in households): 7,491

3,026 Households Purchased Memberships

### Volunteer Program:

2024	# of Individuals	Hours
Adult Volunteers	110	6,551
Teen Volunteers (Zoo Teen Program)	42	1,889
Group Volunteers	644	1,437
One Time Volunteers	31	80
Interns (Animal Care)	6	3,240
Interns (Society)	14	3,373
<b>Total</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>16,580</b>

The first prospective volunteer information event went well. The first event held on January 30 had 23 attendees and the event on February 22 had 15 attendees.

## **Communications – Heath Thurman**

### Annual Report

- We are in the process of collecting information for the 2024 Annual Report.

### Accessibility Initiatives

- We are enhancing accessibility by implementing alt text for images across our social media platforms and website. This effort aligns with our commitment to inclusivity and ensuring all audiences can engage with our content.

### Upcoming Projects

- Education & Event Artwork – Design work for educational materials and event promotions will begin in this month.
- Animal Bracketology Returns! – March will bring back our popular animal bracket challenge. Pazi will try to defend his title as the community’s favorite animal—who will take the crown this year?

### Jungle Jordan Collaboration

- Planning is underway for our collaboration with Jungle Jordan and the animal care team. A detailed game plan will be developed for our scheduled filming date on May 13, 2025.

### Social Media Highlights

- Viral Moment: Ragnar, our Canadian lynx, became a Facebook sensation last month! A video of him knocking down a snowman reached nearly 250,000 views and engaged thousands of followers.

## **Guest Services**

Guest Services is enhancing our sustainability efforts and reducing costs by eliminating duplicate credit card authorization receipts. All necessary transaction details will still be included on the initial POS receipt, ensuring a seamless experience for guests. This change is expected to save approximately \$600 annually while cutting down on paper waste. Small changes can make a big impact!

100% of proceeds from a special handmade inventory at the AniMALL gift shop go directly to Potter Park Zoo’s conservation efforts. Volunteers with Crafters 4 Conservation donate their time, talent, and materials to create unique gifts like crocheted memory games, mug rugs, gnomes, baby rattles, and more! In 2024, their efforts contributed \$937 to conservation!



## Conservation Engagement

The planning for a Night at a Living Museum is underway! This education event invites guests to visit the zoo after hours for free as part of the MSU Science Festival. This year, our event will be April 11 from 5-8 p.m. Hands-on activities are planned and placed around the zoo to give guests a unique experience doing science at the zoo! Guests participate in a vet med simulation, build their very own pollinator garden, and weigh out animal diets.

There will be some changes to the Zoo Teen program activities in 2025 to provide for a safer experience for all.

As a thank you for being a Potter Park Zoo member, members had registration access to Zookambi two weeks before it opened to the public February 17. We have a great camp season planned for 2025! We will offer both morning and afternoon sessions each week of Zookambi for kids entering grades 1-7. We will offer both morning and afternoon extended care as well.



Homeschool Zoo Crew is back for another semester with 41 students enrolled! Our 5-8-year-olds are exploring Human Impacts and Biogeology and the 9-14-year-olds are learning how to be Jr. Researchers.

### BIG Zoo Lesson:

September 24 through January 2025 - Completed

- 12 weeks
- 511 students
- Districts 6
- Counties 3
- Grants 2 schools 4 classes (Potterville and Riley Elementary, St. Johns)

Remaining weeks

- Feb – April 2025
- 9 weeks
- 17 classes
- 375 Estimated students
- 5 Districts
- 1 County (Ingham)

## DEAI

Ingham County's 26th Annual Diversity Luncheon was held at PPZ in the safari room on February 27<sup>th</sup>.

## FALCONERS

January kicked off our tenth year for the FALCONERS program. The program had its first event of the year Saturday, January 25. There were 22 people in attendance. Although the weather was cold, the families who made it out enjoyed their time in the zoo! Our next FALCONERS event is Saturday, Mar. 22, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

### Zoo in Your Neighborhood

A couple of frigid cold months with rainy weather brought low numbers for our ZIYN pass guests. We welcomed 38 total guests in January and 40 in February.

#### Overview of 2024:

- Total Passes: 1,644
- Total Guests: 5,785
- Avg of 3.5 people per pass

The CE&I Internship is now a paid part-time internship. Paid internships are important because they provide students with valuable work experience while also helping them support themselves financially, making opportunities more accessible to a wider range of individuals.

Mariah Martinez renewed her Autism Certificate for another two years through International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Services (IBCCES). This certificate recognizes professionals who have completed autism-specific training and certification to better understand and improve outcomes when working with individuals on the autism spectrum. The Student Mental Health Course recognizes professionals who have completed mental health training and certification to better understand and identify students who may have mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression.

Mariah Martinez was interviewed by Evan Winters and FALCONERS is featured in the January issue of Able Connection.

Work is continuing to on a new Accessibility Action Plan that evolved from the zoo completing the Arts and Culture Accessibility Self-Assessment through Open Door Arts. From this assessment we have already implemented staff learning about Medical ID Tags to better assist guests who are having a medical emergency. A medical identification tag gives responders or those assisting with an emergency important information in case the person needing help is unresponsive. The tags may offer a valuable clue as to the cause of the person's sudden illness.

### **Animal Care**

Zookeeper Nick Tap's last day was February 14. Paige has accepted the position and will start the week of March 10<sup>th</sup>.

There's a new Joey in town! Maple, one of our wallabies, has been seen with a joey in her pouch.



Exciting news—our northern tree shrews are growing fast! Since their initial weigh-in, they've more than tripled in weight and are exploring their exhibit.

The bongo calf is doing well and after the social media naming contest, is named Ahadi. Uzuri, bongo, is likely pregnant with another due in a few months. Both of these bongo births were breeding recommendations made by the Eastern bongo SSP.

Dezi, tufted deer, has moved to the emu exhibit and the emu will be in the old wolf/tufted deer yard once renovations are completed.

Zookeeper Adrianna was elected Vice-Coordinator for the Western Tufted Deer SSP! As Vice-Coordinator, Adrianna will help support the SSP (Species Survival Plan) by assisting in leadership duties and stepping in when needed to ensure the program runs smoothly.





# Lansing Rivers and River Trail Cleanup

Saturday, June 7, 2025 10AM - 3PM

Headquarters: Potter Park Zoo



REIMAGINE • REDISCOVER • RECONNECT

*Our 5th twice-yearly event!*

## PARTNERS AND EVENT SPONSORS



## VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS



## EVENT EXHIBITORS





United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Marketing and  
Regulatory  
Programs

Washington, DC  
20250

January 13, 2025

The Honorable Andrew R. Garbarino  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2344 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Garbarino:

Thank you for your letter of October 1, 2024, co-signed by your colleagues, concerning the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

We at USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) share your concern for the welfare of animals, and appreciate your support of accredited zoos and aquariums with whom we share a common goal: animal health and welfare. To that end, we strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for all animals regulated under the AWA.

To a zoo or aquarium that has otherwise met or exceeded AWA standards of care, a citation for an animal injury may seem excessive. However, our Agency's statutory authority makes us responsible to the facilities we regulate, the animals we are charged to safeguard, and to the U.S. taxpayers who fund our activities. Our responsibility is to ensure that all AWA-protected animals are treated in accordance with the law.

For our Animal Care (AC) program, the critical issue remains ensuring the humane treatment of vulnerable animals. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your questions:

**1. How is APHIS prioritizing its inspection workload, especially in light of a limited inspector workforce, and difficulties in retention and recruitment? How is risk management used in determining priorities? Does APHIS prioritize inspection of facilities with a documented history of serious, repeat noncompliance, and if so, how, and what enforcement actions have been taken? How are facilities with good, longstanding records of compliance recognized and incentivized?**

Our Agency's goal is to bring facilities into compliance, using inspector communication, outreach and education (such as Tech Notes and other publications), or enforcement. With regard to the size of the inspector workforce, to the extent available resources allow, we are implementing retention and recruitment strategies to build on current staffing.

We manage our AC inspection workload with a risk-based system that allows for more frequent inspections at facilities that have demonstrated noncompliance, with fewer inspections at those that have demonstrated consistent compliance. When determining inspection schedules AC inspectors also consider travel logistics; facility size and complexity; and the potential need for a team inspection, field specialist, or security.

In situations where enforcement may be necessary, the Agency first issues an "Official Warning, Violation of Federal Regulations" (APHIS Form 7060). Additional enforcement actions include administrative action (license suspension, license revocation, or civil penalties) and referral to the Department of Justice.

Facilities accredited with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums that have good, longstanding records of compliance are inspected with the lowest inspection frequency.

**2. What specific policies does APHIS have in place for animal injuries that do not involve human errors or interactions, including instances when an animal is injured due to natural negative interactions that occurred because of socializing practices? How does APHIS appropriately balance physical safety and welfare while also ensuring animal social needs are met, even if that carries an element of risk?**

APHIS recognizes that balancing physical safety, animal welfare, and social needs may result in an element of risk. However, we also expect facilities to minimize risks based on thorough planning and vigilance.

If an animal is injured due to natural negative interactions resulting from socialization practices, we may issue a citation depending on the specific circumstances. For instance, if prior documentation shows that specific animals are socially incompatible and have a history of negative interactions, but are still in contact, we are likely to issue a citation.

To ensure that we can enhance our support of regulated facilities, we are currently assessing our guidance for AC inspectors on citations for animal deaths. We understand that even facilities with long histories of compliance can face challenges, and we want the best possible outcomes for the animals and the facility. When an animal injury leads to death, we conduct an inspection, talk to the regulated facility, and review the facility's records. Sometimes, a death is a natural occurrence or unpreventable. However, if there are reasonable precautions a facility could have taken to prevent an animal death, we will issue a citation and work to educate the facility on corrective action.



**3. What training, mentoring, and professional development are required by APHIS to ensure consistency in inspection outcomes and inspector interpretation of the AWA? How does APHIS ensure consistency in its appeals decisions?**

We recognize that there are opportunities to improve inspection consistency. To that end, we have recently increased the duration of new inspector training from one month to six months. We have also improved training materials and increased job-shadowing opportunities before new inspectors conduct independent inspections. To maintain consistency between inspectors and facilities, AC officials collaborate with their supervisors to resolve questions. We also have inspectors work in teams when engaging with challenging species or facilities.

Our appeals decisions undergo independent appeals panel review to ensure consistency and fairness. Staff on the appeals panels cannot be involved in the appealed inspection nor be located in the inspector's chain of command. To further improve consistency of appeals, APHIS is conducting an internal review of the appeals process.

**4. How does APHIS communicate policy changes to its inspector workforce? How does APHIS communicate policy changes to its licensees? Do you see potential benefit in exploring educational partnerships with the community of regulated facilities?**

We communicate policy changes to AC inspectors through formal notices, a weekly newsletter, Inspection Guide updates, and Tech Notes. We communicate major policy changes to licensees through stakeholder announcements that are available via email subscription and on our website: [Stakeholder Announcements | Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(usda.gov\)](#).

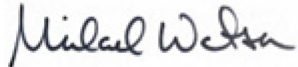
Our Agency has formed educational partnerships with regulated facilities and associated groups, including participation in APHIS-sponsored educational symposia. We also speak at several conferences, including those for the Zoological Association of America and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, to provide updates about regulated facilities. We continue to seek additional opportunities for partnership with our licensees.

The Honorable Andrew R. Garbarino

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If you or your staff have additional questions or concerns, please contact Christopher Needham, our Agency's Legislative Director, at (202) 799-7027 or at [Christopher.M.Needham@usda.gov](mailto:Christopher.M.Needham@usda.gov). We are sending a similar response to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Watson". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Michael Watson  
Administrator  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

## AZA DEI Update

Hello everyone. I'm sending this message as a colleague and friend, as AZA President and CEO, and with consent from the AZA Board of Directors.

The past few weeks have been full of fast-paced change, which for many has been challenging, difficult, or disappointing.

Many are experiencing real and immediate personal, professional and emotional effects, and especially those who have worked to support the values reflected in the AZA Strategic Plan – through words like diversity, equity, access, and inclusion. Your work has made us and our community better, and it and you are appreciated. Our next steps must be full of concern and empathy for colleagues, informed by clarity of thought and fulsome conversation, and fueled by determination for mission.

Dr. Lonnie Bunch, Smithsonian Secretary, and leader in envisioning and building the National Museum of African American History and Culture, said this in announcing the closure of the Smithsonian Institution's Office of Diversity –

*We will continue to use every tool at our disposal to find and nurture excellence in our workforce. We will continue to expect and demand that our workplace is free from discrimination and harassment, and we will adhere to our long-held principles of fairness and equality. We have long told the stories and embraced the experiences of all Americans, and we will keep doing so in line with our mission.*

Dr. Bunch's words call us back to mission. Moving forward, in addition to caring for one another, we intend to focus on mission – how we can best position ourselves to continue and support our work. Not where we are, today, but where we want to be, tomorrow. Better in caring for staff and animals. Better in providing engaging experiences for guests. Better in conserving wildlife and wild places. More understanding, empathetic, and compassionate. Presenting all people with a greater equality of opportunity, and an expanded sense of belonging.

In the coming months, we will be exploring and working to accomplish these things. Please join us at Mid-Year Meeting in Palm Desert, California, and at Annual Conference, in Tampa, Florida, and in dozens of conversations that will occur before, between, and after these meetings. **All are welcome, and we will be honored by your presence and enriched by your contributions.**

Together, we are AZA, and it is in our nature to celebrate life in all its beauty and diversity. That is unchanging.

And in the meantime, we are carefully considering the evolving social and operating environment and positioning our community for continued progress without needlessly exposing fellow accredited facilities and members to political hostility and financial impacts. Immediately, we are taking these steps:

- The Board is instructing the Accreditation Commission to suspend enforcement of Standard 7.9 (Diversity, Equity, Access and Inclusion), allowing us the space and grace to consider next steps without jeopardizing any member's accreditation status.
- We have formed a small working group of members of the Accreditation Commission, Diversity Committee, and AZA staff, tasked with reviewing Standard 7.9 and making recommendations to the Board for its prompt consideration.
- We are encouraging open dialogue within and between AZA committees and networks, and looking forward to robust discussions during the Diversity Summit at Mid-Year Meeting.

Thank you, and we hope to see you soon, in Palm Desert, and this September, in Tampa, where all will be welcome, safe, and respected.

Very best.

Dan Ashe

# FY 26 CDS Request - Potter Park Revitalization

## Funding Need

At more than 100 years old, the Potter Park aging infrastructure is in critical need of restoration and revitalization. An investment in this historical community asset will ensure it is here for years to come as well as resolving many safety concerns caused by aging facilities. This project would involve exciting changes to the park that will bring in many new visitors and create a safe recreational area for all community members.

## Community Need

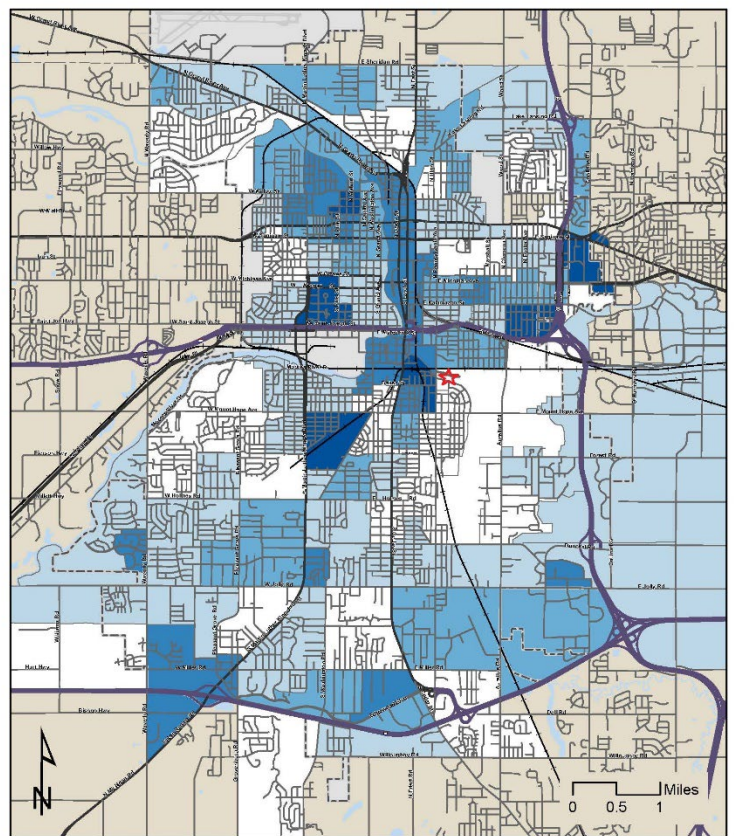
Potter Park is a major thoroughfare for river trail users in the greater Lansing community as it connects Michigan State University and south Lansing to downtown Lansing. The restrooms, playground and pathways are used daily by community members utilizing the river trail for recreation and moving between Lansing area destinations.

The park including pavilion event spaces are used frequently by community members including school groups and non-profits to gather and hold community events. As Potter Park is centrally located in Lansing, it is a wonderful meeting location for individuals throughout Lansing whether they bike, walk, drive or utilize public transportation to the park.

## Community Benefit

The neighborhoods north and west of Potter Park are all above 51 percent low-medium income individuals as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Many of these neighborhoods are within walking distance of the park. In addition, the park is located along the CATA transportation line with a bus stop just south of the park entrance making it a highly accessible recreation location for Lansing residents.

The zoo is a significant economic presence in the greater Lansing area. Improvements to



City of Lansing CDBG Eligible Areas FY 2024

0% - 50%
51% - 70%
71% - 80%
81% - 90%
91% - 100%

★ Potter Park

Created by: A. Skelton, I1 GIS  
Date: 10 August 2023  
Source: HUD, State of Michigan, City of Lansing  
www.a11y.com

facilities will increase usage by the community and provide the resources to support increased use.

- More than 215,000 guests visited the park and zoo in 2024 with an estimated 70 percent of those being local.
- Annual zoo operational spending and visitor purchases outside of the zoo directly support and sustain 119 jobs each year.
- In addition to these direct jobs, the indirect and induced purchases made by households and businesses as part of this spending are expected to support another 56 jobs.
- From a broader economic perspective, this analysis estimates that zoo operational spending generates over \$13.2 million to the regional gross product each year.
- In total, the zoo contributes to over \$23.1 million in total economic output to the area through its operational spending.

## **Project Description**

The proposed project is listed below. This could be scaled back depending on the amount of funding allocated.

### **Potter Park Revitalization Project - \$3,250,000 (Grant Request = \$2,600,000, Zoo Match = \$550,000, City of Lansing Match = \$100,000)**

#### *Potter Park Historic Pavilion Restoration – \$1.5 Million*

The historic pavilion, located in Potter Park and built in 1921, needs significant restoration. This enclosed pavilion is the largest community event space in the park as well as the maintenance shop for the zoo. River trail and park recreational users utilize the public restrooms located in this pavilion year-round. Renovations are critical for the pavilion to remain a community asset for years to come. Funds would be used to correct structural failures in the foundation, stairs and floor as well as improve the accessible public restrooms.

#### *New Playground in Potter Park – \$800,000*

The current playground in Potter Park is in a state of severe decline. A renovation project would include ensuring the playground is a safe recreation destination for the community and is able to be used by children of all ages and abilities.

#### *New Walking Paths in Potter Park – \$550,000*

A safe walking path connecting the Tiger Den pavilion and playground to the river trail needs to be created as one does not currently exist. The current walking path between public bathrooms is in disrepair and needs to be replaced.

#### *Pavilion Renovations - \$400,000*

The two small pavilions located near the playground and adjacent to the river trail are used regularly by community members including school groups and local non-profits for events and recreation. These pavilions need replacement as the structures are in disrepair.

## Potter Park Zoo Admission Prices

### Ticket Pricing

#### April – October

- Resident Adult – \$8.00
- Non-Resident Adult – \$15.00
- Resident Senior (60+)/Military – \$6.00
- Non-Resident Senior (60+)/Military- \$13.00
- All Children (ages 3-12) – \$5.00
- All Children Under 3 – FREE

#### November – March

- All Adults – \$5.00
- All Children (ages 3-12) – \$4.00
- All Children Under 3 – FREE

\*Resident refers to anyone living in Ingham County.

\*Kids under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

\*Residents are admitted on non-holiday Mondays from 9 a.m. to noon for FREE.

#### Parking is charged Apr. 1 through Oct. 31

### Parking

\*Resident – \$3.00

Non-Resident – \$5.00

Resident Annual Pass – \$35.00

Non-Resident Annual Pass – \$45.00

School Bus – FREE

Resident and Non-Resident Annual Parking Passes cover vehicle entrance for Ingham County Parks such as Potter Park, Burchfield Park, Hawk Island, Lake Lansing Park-North, and Lake Lansing Park-South through December 31 of the year purchased.

*\* Resident refers to anyone living in Ingham County*

*\* Oversize vehicle rates same as all other vehicles*

### Hours

#### April 1 through Labor Day

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays & weekends

#### After Labor Day through Oct. 31:

9 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends

#### November 1 – March 31

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily

## Admission Rates

### John Ball

Summer (May 25 – Sep. 2)

Mon-Thurs vs. **Fri-Sun**

- Adults: \$21.95/**24.95**
- Seniors (62+): \$16.95/**18.95**
- Youth (3-12): \$16.95/**18.95**
- Children (2 & Under): Free
- College Students: \$16.95/**18.95**
- Military: \$16.95/**18.95**

Fall (Sep. 3 – Nov. 24)

- Adults: \$19.95
- Seniors (62+): \$14.95
- Youth (3-12): \$14.95
- Children (2 & Under): Free
- College Students: \$14.95
- Military: \$14.95

### Detroit

- General: \$27
- Youth/Senior: \$24
- Online Calendar (Price varies by Month + Day) \$14-24

Parking (Non-Members) - \$8

### Binder Park

- Adult (19-64): \$18.75
- Child (11-18): \$18.75
- Child (2-10): \$15.75
- Seniors (65+): 16.75

Parking - \$3.50

### Fort Wayne

- Adults (13+): \$15
- Child (12 & Under): \$13
- Infant (1 & Under): Free

### Toledo

Lucas County

- Adults (12-59): \$32
- Children (2-11): \$29
- Seniors (60+): \$29

Non-Lucas County

- Adults (12-59): \$30
- Children (2-11): \$27
- Seniors (60+): \$27

Parking (Varies by location) - \$5-\$19







