

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, selecting "About," clicking on "Zoo Advisory Board" and clicking "October 8, 2025".

POTTER PARK ZOO ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

**Wednesday, October 8, 2025
6:00 PM**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of the September 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes**
- 3. Limited Public Comment – *Limited to 3 minutes with no discussion***
- 4. Late Items/Deletions/Consent Items**
- 5. Director's Report**
 - a. Finance Report – Cynthia Wagner
 - b. Admission and Parking Reports - Cynthia Wagner
 - c. Director's Report – Cynthia Wagner
- 6. New Business**
 - a. Animal Health Facility Grand Opening – Cynthia Wagner and Amy Morris-Hall
 - b. Major Gifts Fundraising Presentation – Merritt Frey
- 7. Old Business**
 - a. Feline Primate Design Project Update – Cynthia Wagner
 - b. Animal Health Facility Progress – Cynthia Wagner
 - c. Water Main Replacement Update – Cynthia Wagner
 - d. Stormwater Infrastructure Project – Cynthia Wagner
- 8. Board Comments**
- 9. Limited Public Comment - *Limited to 3 minutes with no discussion***
- 10. Upcoming Meeting**
 - a. Zoo Advisory Board Meeting November 12, 2025 at 6:00 PM
- 11. 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,
September 10, 2025**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Cahill, Chair Cheryl Bergman, Samantha Harkins, Julie Pingston, Kasey Kent, Mary Leys, Caitlin O’Rourke, and Dr. Jack Kottwitz

ALSO PRESENT: Cynthia Wagner, Zoo Director and Amy Morris-Hall Executive Director of the Zoological Society

ABSENT: Commissioner Tennis, Vice Chair Kyle Binkley, Dr. Richard Snider and Emily Linden

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

MINUTES: The approval of the minutes as written from July 9, 2025 was moved by Kasey Kent and supported by Commissioner Cahill. **Yes-7; No-0; MOTION CARRIED**

LIMITED PUBLIC COMMENT

None

LATE ITEMS/DELETIONS/CONSENT ITEMS

None

Commissioner Cahill left meeting at 6:04

ACTION ITEMS

None

FINANCIAL REPORT

Director Wagner reported that earned revenue was down \$137,000 from 2024 due to decreased admissions which also impacts gift shop sales and food sales. She stated additional tax revenue had come in so the total revenue for 2025 was up by \$40,000 compared to 2024. She stated expenses were down compared to 2024 and they would continue to work to keep expenses down to help with decreased revenue including limiting seasonal hours when possible. She stated that August did help with revenue as it was up compared to 2024 and they would be keeping an eye on September.

ADMISSION & PARKING REPORT

Director Wagner reported that admissions was up for August 2025 compared to 2024 which was the first month this year it was up. She stated that year to date is down 5.5% for paid admission. She reported that several zoos were reporting decreased admission YTD on an AZA list serves and that she had compiled that information for reference.

ZOO DIRECTOR REPORT

Major Elements Reported by Director Wagner:

- Doppsee, the female black rhino, was euthanized August 28th. Discussion ensued regarding Doppsee's treatment.
- There are now 44 Blanding's turtles that have hatched as part of the head starting project PPZ is involved in.
 - Dr. Kotwitz asked if the DNR requires a specific ratio of males and females when incubating the eggs. Director Wagner replied she would find out the answer to that question.
- Camel rides are done for the year. The contract with the camel vendor is good for one year. Director Wagner stated she would reach out to the vendor to confirm if they planned to continue in 2026.

Julie Pingston arrived at 6:31 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

Pass Distribution Report

Director Wagner shared the reports included in the packet show the passes that were redeemed as well as distributed. In 2024 1,574 passes were distributed and 464 were turned in so far. In 2025 875 have been distributed to date and 91 have been turned in.

OLD BUSINESS

Feline Primate Design Concept

Director Wagner shared the final concept that they had decided to move forward with. The outside will be two exhibit yards, one for snow leopard and one for tiger with an additional off exhibit yard for snow leopard. The inside will include larger exhibits for lemur and spider monkey, new space for Pallas's cat that was previously indoor snow leopard and a new tamarin exhibit that will be a tall focal point when entering.

Animal Health Facility Progress

Director Wagner stated the opening of the hospital has been pushed back again and that the grand opening will likely be in November. The date will be set once the final date is set to hand over the keys to the zoo for moving in. Director Wagner discussed the possibility of doing the grand opening during Wonderland of Lights since it had gotten pushed back so far. Discussion ensued about this possibility, and the board agreed a Wonderland of Lights grand opening could be fun.

Stormwater Infrastructure Federal Grant Update

Director Wagner stated they are continuing to move forward with this project. The design firm is working on surveying and mapping the area where work is being planned. She also shared that their EPA grant representative was working with them on a waiver for the required match.

Fundraising Update

Executive Director Morris-Hall reported many new things happening regarding fundraising including monthly social media posts highlighting the zoo's new species sponsorship program, the legacy society, and monthly giving program. Michigan State University Federal Credit Union is the first organization to take advantage of the species sponsorship program and they are sponsoring the North American river otters for one year.

Executive Director Morris-Hall also reported Home Depot has also been very helpful to the zoo providing materials to repair the otter bridge as well as a group of volunteers to assist our maintenance team with the repairs. She also stated the zoo was contacted by Dr. Spencer Newman, who was mentored by Dr. Hiram Kitchen. Dr. Newman donated to the animal health facility in honor of Dr. Kitchen, who consulted on zoo animals in the 1970s.

The fund development team is working on sponsorship materials and a prospect list for the Feline/Primate Building renovation. More information will be coming soon.

BOARD COMMENTS

LIMITED PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

**POTTER PARK ZOO
BALANCE SHEET
AS OF SEPTEMBER 30th, 2025**

ASSETS

CASH	\$ 2,078,322
DEPOSITORY CASH	495,746
IMPREST CASH	8,000
TAXES REC - CURRENT LEVY	-
IFT TAX RECEIVABLE	(11,620)
TAXES REC - DELINQUENT	36,886
ESTIMATED UNCOLLECTIBLE DELINQUENT TAXES	(18,602)
ACCOUNTS REC-OTHER	80
PROPERTY TAX RECEIVABLE	-
INTEREST RECEIVABLE	2,760
DUE FROM STATE	89,763
DUE FROM OTHER FUNDS	-
INVENTORY	173,782
INVESTMENT YIELD ADJUSTMENT	(18,794)
PREPAID EXPENSES	-

TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>\$ 2,836,322</u></u>
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LIABILITIES

VOUCHERS PAYABLE	-
DUE TO ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY	28,674
TAX LEVY LIABILITY	19,600
SALES TAX PAYABLE	15,146
REFUND NOW	-
REFUND APPLY	-
ACCRUED PAYROLL	-
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	115,059
DEFERRED REVENUE - DELINQUENT TAXES	22,737
DEFERRED REVENUE - PROPERTY TAXES	-
DEF REVENUE -POTTER PARK	15,618

TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u><u>216,833</u></u>
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FUND BALANCE

UNSPENDABLE	173,782
UNRESTRICTED FUND BALANCE	2,445,708
	<u>2,619,489</u>

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	<u><u>\$ 2,836,322</u></u>
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Prepared By: Eric J. Thelen

POTTER PARK ZOO
YEAR TO DATE BUDGET/ACTUAL REPORT
FOR 9 MONTHS ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

	2025 BUDGET	SEPT 2025 YTD ACTUAL - PRELIMINARY	BUDGET REMAINING	% OF BUDGET	SEPT 2024 YTD ACTUAL	% DIFF LAST YR
REVENUES						
PROPERTY TAX	\$ 4,895,756	\$ 4,836,231	\$ 59,525	98.78%	\$ 4,523,715	6.91%
UNALLOCATED PORTION OF TAXES (5 MONTHS)	\$ -	\$ (1,209,058)	\$ -	0.00%	\$ (1,130,929)	6.91%
ADMISSIONS	\$ 735,000	\$ 756,796	\$ (21,796)	102.97%	\$ 812,537	-6.86%
CONCESSIONS, GIFT SHOP, VENDING	\$ 806,000	\$ 775,138	\$ 30,862	96.17%	\$ 855,114	-9.35%
PARKING FEES	\$ 180,000	\$ 154,140	\$ 25,860	85.63%	\$ 164,415	-6.25%
INTERACTIVE SITES	\$ 95,000	\$ 76,392	\$ 18,608	80.41%	\$ 97,148	-21.36%
INTEREST INCOME	\$ 40,000	\$ 61,189	\$ (21,189)	152.97%	\$ 67,427	-9.25%
OTHER REVENUES	\$ (251,978)	\$ 147,704	\$ (399,682)	-58.62%	\$ 154,969	-4.69%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 6,499,778	\$ 5,598,533	\$ (307,813)	86.13%	\$ 5,544,395	0.98%
EXPENDITURES						
PERSONNEL SERVICES						
Salaries & Wages - Full Time	\$ 2,134,176	\$ 1,451,012	\$ 683,164	67.99%	\$ 1,429,387	1.51%
Salaries & Wages - Seasonal	\$ 695,284	\$ 727,446	\$ (32,162)	104.63%	\$ 729,751	-0.32%
Benefits	\$ 1,284,760	\$ 825,745	\$ 459,015	64.27%	\$ 824,839	0.11%
Total Personnel Services	\$ 4,114,220	\$ 3,004,203	\$ 1,110,017	73.02%	\$ 2,983,977	0.68%
CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURES						
Supplies	\$ 503,000	\$ 360,297	\$ 142,703	71.63%	\$ 427,058	-15.63%
Animal Care	\$ 317,000	\$ 187,385	\$ 129,615	59.11%	\$ 203,753	-8.03%
Purchased Services	\$ 680,000	\$ 560,066	\$ 119,934	82.36%	\$ 573,818	-2.40%
Utilities - Telephone	\$ 23,125	\$ 12,806	\$ 10,319	55.38%	\$ 16,059	-20.26%
Rentals & Leases	\$ 6,000	\$ 10,186	\$ (4,186)	169.76%	\$ 4,730	115.33%
Other Expenses	\$ 140,400	\$ 88,569	\$ 51,831	63.08%	\$ 101,891	-13.07%
Total Controllable Expenditures	\$ 1,669,525	\$ 1,219,308	\$ 450,217	73.03%	\$ 1,327,308	-8.14%
NON-CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURES						
Utilities	\$ 240,000	\$ 179,892	\$ 60,108	74.96%	\$ 167,755	7.23%
Insurance	\$ 90,000	\$ 56,647	\$ 33,353	62.94%	\$ 72,410	-21.77%
IT Support Expense	\$ 385,447	\$ 160,519	\$ 224,928	41.64%	\$ 197,519	-18.73%
Other Expenses	\$ 586	\$ 440	\$ 146	75.03%	\$ 371	18.59%
Total Non-Controllable Expenditures	\$ 716,033	\$ 397,498	\$ 318,535	55.51%	\$ 438,055	-9.26%
CAPITAL OUTLAY						
Capital Improvements	\$ -	\$ 159,699	\$ (159,699)	#DIV/0!	\$ 127,668	25.09%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 6,499,778	\$ 4,780,708	\$ 1,719,070	73.55%	\$ 4,877,008	-1.97%
TOTAL CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE	\$ -	\$ 817,826			\$ 667,387	
FUND BALANCE AS OF 01/01/25						
NON-SPENDABLE		\$ 237,675				
UNRESTRICTED		\$ 393,555				
		<u>\$ 631,230</u>				
FUND BALANCE AS OF 09/30/25		\$ 1,449,056				
FUND BALANCE AS OF 09/30/25						
UNSPENDABLE		\$ 173,782				
UNRESTRICTED		\$ 1,275,274				
		<u>\$ 1,449,056</u>				

NOTE: The Fund balance beginning balance is based on figures posted in the 2024 Ingham County Audit.
Prepared By: Eric J. Thelen

Ingham County Budget Status Report - Feline & Primate Renovations - Project 31700

Total by Account

		2025 REVISED BUDGET Sep-25	ACTUAL Sep-25	REMAINING BUDGET	PERCENT OF BUDGET
REVENUES:					
539000	STATE GRANT REVENUE	10,000,000.00	89,762.80	(9,910,237.20)	0.9%
	Other Revenues	10,000,000.00	89,762.80	(9,910,237.20)	0.9%
TOTAL REVENUES		10,000,000.00	89,762.80	(9,910,237.20)	0.9%
EXPENSES:					
TOTAL EXPENSES BEFORE CAPITAL OUTLAY		-	-	-	#DIV/0!
BALANCE BEFORE CAPITAL OUTLAY		10,000,000.00	89,762.80	(9,910,237.20)	
Capital Outlay					
976000	BUILDING ADDITIONS/IMPROVEMENTS	10,000,000.00	89,762.80		0.9%
	Leasehold Improvements	10,000,000.00	89,762.80	-	#DIV/0!
TOTAL EXPENSES		10,000,000.00	89,762.80	89,762.80	0.9%
TOTAL CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE		-	-		

Prepared By: Eric J. Thelen

Ingham County Budget Status Report - Stormwater Infrastructure Improvement - EPA - Project 31800

Total by Account

	2025 REVISED BUDGET Sep-25	ACTUAL Sep-25	REMAINING BUDGET	PERCENT OF BUDGET
REVENUES:				
539000 FEDERAL GRANT REVENUE	959,752.00	-	(959,752.00)	0.0%
698020 RESERVED FB USED	191,950.00	-	(191,950.00)	0.0%
Other Revenues	1,151,702.00	-	(1,151,702.00)	0.0%
TOTAL REVENUES	1,151,702.00	-	(1,151,702.00)	0.0%
EXPENSES				
818000 CONTRACTUAL SVCS - PROFESSIONAL	1,151,702.00	38,624.02	(1,113,077.98)	3.4%
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,151,702.00	38,624.02	38,624.02	3.4%
TOTAL CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE	-	(38,624.02)		

Prepared By: Eric J. Thelen

POTTER PARK ZOO
MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT
FOR MONTH AND YTD SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

ADMISSION TYPE	2023	2024	2025 Gate	2025 Online	2025 Total	BETTER (WORSE) THAN PY	2023 COUNT	2024 COUNT	2025 COUNT
GENERAL									
CHILD RESIDENT	967	786	874	12	886	100	9,253	9,285	8,204
CHILD NON-RESIDENT	1,170	922	999	29	1,028	106	12,066	13,095	12,732
CHILDREN - UNDER 3	611	972	596	12	608	(364)	7,085	7,541	7,581
ADULT RESIDENT	2,480	2,657	2,944	58	3,002	345	23,534	24,926	22,910
ADULT NON-RESIDENT	2,440	2,461	2,919	127	3,046	585	24,409	28,290	29,743
SENIOR/MILITARY RESIDENT	361	432	320	7	327	(105)	2,584	3,203	2,600
SENIOR/MILITARY NON-RESIDENT	478	522	409	16	425	(97)	3,710	4,627	3,918
GROUPS	848	531	620	0	620	89	20,977	23,077	21,296
SUBTOTAL	9,355	9,283	9,681	261	9,942	659	103,618	114,044	108,984
MEMBERSHIPS/PROGRAMS									
PPZ MEMBERS/RECIPROCAL	1,961	2,525	2,480	0	2,480	(45)	16,984	21,705	22,105
SOCIETY PROGRAMMING/EVENTS	1,124	3,457	1,061	0	1,061	(2,396)	15,316	16,708	13,799
MONDAY PROGRAM	430	520	482	0	482	(38)	5,232	7,327	6,725
ZIYN	328	530	486	0	486	(44)	3,854	4,584	4,272
OTHER (non-paying)	2,315	559	1,006	0	1,006	447	4,728	5,761	5,526
SUBTOTAL	6,158	7,591	5,515	0	5,515	(2,076)	46,114	56,085	52,427
GRAND TOTAL	15,513	16,874	15,196	261	15,457	(1,417)	149,732	170,129	161,411
Wild Wanderers		38	35	0	35	(3)	0	2,234	1560

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 ZOO
MONTHLY PARKING REPORT
FOR MONTH AND YTD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

ADMISSION TYPE	2024	2025 Gate	2025 Online	2025 Total	BETTER (WORSE) THAN PY	2023	2024	2025
ANNUAL RESIDENT PASS	0	1	0	1	1	291	246	209
ANNUAL NON-RESIDENT PASS	0	0	0	0	0	31	37	24
PPZ MEMBER DELUXE/PREMIUM	373	423	0	423	50	1,989	2,769	3,143
DAILY RESIDENT PARKING	2,055	2,561	21	2,582	526	15,835	17,632	16,076
DAILY NON-RESIDENT PARKING	1,892	2,029	40	2,069	177	19,385	20,315	19,564
EVENTS	116	120	0	120	(4)	827	1,518	1,543
ANNUAL PASS RESIDENT ENTRY	8	348	0	348	340	589	1,136	2,037
ANNUAL PASS NON-RESIDENT ENTRY	287	4	0	4	(283)	201	632	80
WAIVED ANNUAL PASS	0	2	0	2	2	41	41	54
OTHER (non-paying)	85	61	0	61	(24)	2,279	796	1,169
TOTAL	4,816	5,549	61	5,610	785	41,468	45,122	43,899

ADMISSION TYPE	
ANNUAL RESIDENT PASS	
ANNUAL NON-RESIDENT PASS	
RESIDENT DAILY PASS	
NON-RESIDENT DAILY PASS	



Director's Report October 8th, 2025

The annual flu clinic at the zoo will be held Tuesday, Oct. 14, from 9 to 11 a.m. in the Safari room.

Many of the zoo and society staff were able to attend the AZA annual conference in Tampa, FL. They spent the week learning the latest in many topics, including:

- Animal Management, Health & Welfare
- Business operations
- Conservation
- Fundraising & Membership
- Education
- Public Relations & Marketing
- Volunteer & Intern Engagement
- Workplace Culture, Staff Engagement, & Professional Development



The Society worked as a team to prepare two dinners for the Haven House this past month! Equity and Engagement Program Manager, Mariah Martinez, became a volunteer at the Haven House so the Society could prep meals for the Haven House. Staff had such a great time and they will be doing it again this winter! What is the Haven House? Haven House has provided temporary shelter for homeless families since 1983. Not only do they support their clients with basic needs such as shelter, food, clothing, and personal needs items, but they have developed programs that will make an impact on the lives of families after they have left the shelter. They also work to prevent homelessness for families whenever possible

Conservation Engagement

Our popular Homeschool Zoo Crew program is starting up again, welcoming homeschool families for a series of hands-on, wildlife-themed learning adventures. Each session provides participants with the opportunity to learn more about our animals and explore various conservation topics. This is another opportunity for us to inspire the next generation of wildlife advocates!

Big Zoo Lesson has started for the 2025/2026 school year. This year, we're thrilled to have a full schedule ahead—24 weeks and 46 classes! That's 24 opportunities to spark curiosity, share our conservation mission, and inspire the next generation of wildlife advocates.

Events

Tickets for the 2025 Boo at the Zoo event are now on sale! The event will be held on the from October 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26 12-5 p.m.



Potter Park Zoo was featured in a recent blog, [Unique Things To Do in the Fall in Greater Lansing](#) by Choose Lansing!

Here's an excerpt from the blog:

Potter Park Zoo in Lansing is open year-round, but fall is one of the best times to visit. As autumn leaves turn shades of red and gold, you can stroll the zoo's scenic paths and see your favorite animals in a festive, colorful setting.

The fundraiser at PF Chang's Sept. 9 for FALCONERS raised over \$500, almost double the amount from our last fundraiser at the Lansing restaurant!

In September, the FALCONERS program had their annual Olive Garden dinner for the families that participate in the program. There were 50 families (187 participants) that came out and enjoyed a delicious meal all sponsored by the Olive Garden in Okemos. The next big event is Friday, Oct. 17 Sensory Friendly Boo at the Zoo! We have over 400 participants already registered. It is usually our biggest FALCONERS event of the year.

Throughout the month of September, we had many guests continue to use zoo passes to access the zoo. Over 480 individuals were able to visit the zoo because of this great program. We expect even more individuals in October as we enter Boo at the Zoo season.

The outreach season for ZIYN is complete and our volunteers went on 21 outreaches and educated 527 members of the community! The program allows us to reach a wide range of audiences from various cities in the mid-Michigan area. The libraries we partner with are always grateful for the programs and excited to have us back every year. Our largest program had 85 participants!

Ingham County & Lansing City residents can receive free admission Saturday, Oct. 4, by showing a valid ID to verify residency when purchasing tickets at the gate.

Spartan Day of Service was Saturday, October 4 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

College students with a current college ID can receive free admission Sunday, Oct. 5.

The final Twilight Adventures night of the season will be Thursday, Oct. 9, from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Potter Park Zoo hosted a large private event for CMH (Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties) Sept. 13 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. with approximately 500 guests.

Guest Services

Pursuing collaborations for next year for partnerships in the food and retail areas including:

- Working with Education Intern, Emma Reich, to create a menu display for the Savanna Grill and online that ties into the zoo's conservation efforts, highlighting various initiatives like single-use plastics, recycling, animal conservation, and others.
- Collaborating with the zoo's Communication Specialist, Krystle Holleman, to enhance sales of specific offerings in the AniMALL gift shop with product pre-release messaging and enhanced holiday gift guide input.
- Adding in-person animal adoptions to a select few of the plush offered in the AniMALL gift shop for next year. Currently working Erin O'Rourke, Fund Development Specialist, who organizes the current online adopt program to establish options for our retail environment. Through the upsell of an adopt package offering at the cash register, guests will be able to leave with a last-minute and unique gift option for themselves or someone they are gifting to that directly supports animals here at Potter Park Zoo. This should prove helpful during the holiday shopping season or for those last-minute shoppers!

Food and Retail donation collections for conservation efforts here at the zoo are doing well, with YTD numbers currently at:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|--------------|
| • YTD Straws 4 Conservation | \$189.25 | (757 Straws) |
| • YTD TIPS 4 Conservation | \$499.77 | |
| • YTD Bookmarks | \$6,602.00 | |

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
Straws	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$41.25	\$38.50	\$68.00	\$39.00	\$2.50
Tips	\$2.15	\$0.00	\$10.88	\$42.94	\$92.33	\$73.80	\$120.16	\$98.24	\$59.27
Bookmarks	\$14.00	\$67.00	\$454.90	\$725.00	\$1,908.00	\$774.00	\$926.04	\$1,176.00	\$557.23

Fall-winter staffing challenges continue: Typical to this time of year, we see an end to many seasonal positions or consistent availability of staff as many in our seasonal workforce return to school, but good weather and incentive days bring fluctuating crowd levels. While hiring and training continue in anticipation of these trends, we are also moving some people into new work areas. For example, some admissions and parking attendants are being cross-trained to work in retail and food areas to keep their hours up, and in our attempt to minimize the turnover of trained personnel before the needs increase significantly for the BOO @ the ZOO and Wonderland of Lights events.

Animals



PPZ sent over 300 tadpoles to Puerto Rico to be released in coordination with the Puerto Rican Crested Toad Conservancy.

Emmett the elk has been separated from the herd for the rutting season. You will see him in the bullpen most days.





Piping plovers in the second stage of development before being released. *Image credit: Jeremy Marble, University of Michigan News*

Piping plover: Saving Great Lakes shorebirds and shorelines

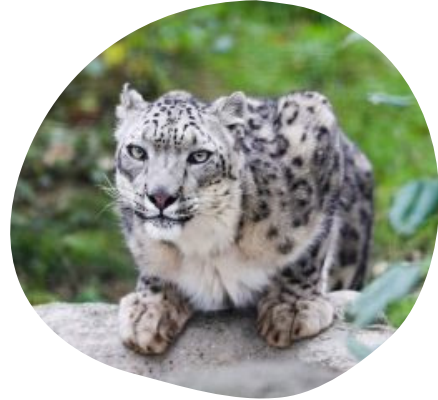
The University of Michigan recently published a feature on the decades-long efforts to save the endangered Great Lakes piping plover. The piece highlights how collaborative conservation strategies—including habitat restoration, captive rearing, and monitoring—are helping this tiny shorebird make a steady comeback after near extinction in the region.

We're proud to share that our own **Sarah Foote** was featured in the article, recognizing her contributions to this important work. You can read the full story here: [Saving Great Lakes Shorebirds and Shorelines](#)

Click the button below to watch the full video (including Sarah rocking a Potter Park Zoo shirt!)

[Watch Now!](#)

MAJOR GIFTS UPDATE



9/30/2025

OVERALL YEAR TO DATE: APPROX. \$102,537

So far this year, the major gifts pool has donated approximately \$102,537. This includes any gifts over \$1,000, except for funds from foundation or the capital campaign. Much of these funds come from a personal requests, the spring appeal mailing, corporate gifts, and event sponsorships. With the year end giving season ramping up soon and the first steps on the feline/primate fundraising nearly possible, we plan to see that number increase.

NEW CORPORATE GIVING: \$22,500

New corporate supporters so far this year: Emergent, LAFCU, MSUFCU, and AF Group. These donors, along with a returning lapsed corporate donor Home Depot, gave more than \$22,500.

UPGRADES: \$10,000

At least 8 supporters upgraded to or within the major gifts category, resulting in more than \$10,000 in additional support compared to their previous giving. Most of this increase came from outreach to increase donor connections (e.g., calls, tours, etc.).

EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

The year to date total of \$102,537 includes \$35,470 in in-hand event sponsorship. An additional \$20,000 in sponsorships are committed.

DONOR CONNECTIONS: 89%

Increased the number of major donors we have a personal connection with by 89% (26 to 49).

TERMS AND GENERAL GOALS

- General donors: \$1-499. These important donors are NOT included in this major gifts analysis but serve as the pool or basis from which we build the major gifts work. '25 goal: \$41,000
- Mid-level donors: \$500-999: These donors are loyal and generous but are NOT included in this major gifts analysis unless they upgraded to the major gift level (\$1,000+). In the future, we may shift this to \$250-999 because we are weak when it comes to this important group where we build the relationship which may move to major giving in the future. '25 goal: \$15,000.
- Major-level donors: \$1,000+ donors. These donors – both individuals and corporate – ARE the focus of this analysis. We provide much more personalized stewardship (e.g., regular updates, tours, etc.) to this group and personalized funding requests. '25 goal: \$86,500 for individuals/\$40,000 corporate and \$47,000 for event sponsors.
- Foundation grants: Generally speaking, foundation grants are not part of our major gifts work and so they are not included in this analysis. '25 goal: \$90,000.

MAJOR GIFTS PIPELINE

As mentioned on page one, \$20,000 in event sponsorships are committed but not yet received. This will allow us to exceed our budget goal. Another \$5,000 event sponsorship request is pending, as are two foundation asks (1 pending, 1 planned).

On the non-event corporate side, we have at least six requests for Species Sponsorships (\$2,500-10,000) or programmatic support pending or planned for the last quarter.

For individual donors, the big year-end special appeal is slated for November. We also have several larger individual donation requests planned for the final quarter and several bequests scheduled to arrive. We are also prepping for the feline/primate capital asks during quarter four.