

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 "December 10, 2025".

POTTER PARK ZOO ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, December 10, 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. Action Items
 - a. Resolution – Vermont Systems Inc. contract extension
6. Director's Report
 - a. Finance Report – Cynthia Wagner
 - b. Admission Report - Cynthia Wagner
 - c. Director's Report – Cynthia Wagner
7. New Business
 - a. Major Gifts Fundraising Presentation – Merritt Frey
 - b. Animal Health Facility Wrap Up and Next Steps – Cynthia Wagner
 - c. 2026 Meeting Dates
 - d. Zoo UAW Maintenance On-Call – Cynthia Wagner
8. Old Business
 - a. Feline Primate Design Project Update – Cynthia Wagner
 - b. Water Main Replacement Update – Cynthia Wagner
 - c. Stormwater Infrastructure Project – Cynthia Wagner
9. Board Comments
10. Limited Public Comment - *Limited to 3 minutes with no discussion*
11. Upcoming Meeting
 - a. Zoo Advisory Board Meeting January 14, 2026 at 6:00 PM
12. Adjournment

**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.

	DEPARTMENT: Parks Department and Potter Park Zoo
PREPARED BY:	MEETING DATE(S): 01/26 Human Services and 01/20 Finance
FOR COMMITTEES: <input type="checkbox"/> Law & Courts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Services <input type="checkbox"/> County Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance	
SUBJECT: Resolution authorizing an amendment to Resolution #19-044 for a contract extension with Vermont Systems, Inc.	

ACTION REQUESTED:

The current contract with Vermont Systems, Inc. which provides point-of-sale services for the Ingham County Parks and Potter Park Zoo will expire April 29, 2026. A decision was made by the Ingham County Parks and Potter Park Zoo to request a contract extension for an additional 5-year period.

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Resolution authorizing an amendment to Resolution #19-044 for a contract extension with Vermont Systems, Inc. for an additional 5-year period. The point of sale system has streamlined the admission process at parks and zoo as well as allowed for inventory management and data collection. Changing systems at this time would be a significantly increased expense due to the cost of new equipment, software and transfer of all data. The staff time required to learn and implement a new system is not feasible at this time.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

Increase, strengthen, support and coordinate community partnerships, relationships and collaborative efforts.

DEPARTMENT MISSION RELATION:

The point of sale system helps the zoo and parks to provide a quality guest experience.

THIS ACTION RELATES TO AN ACTIVITY WHICH IS:

☐ MANDATED _____ ☒ NON-MANDATED _____

COST/FUNDING RECOMMENDATION:

Total Request/Contract Amount: Parks \$129,816 Zoo \$125,442

Line item: Ingham County Parks (208-75200-PAZO1) Potter Park Zoo (258-692.000818.000-30000)

☒ Included in Current Fiscal Budget ☐ Budget Transfer ☐ Has No Financial Impact

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

☐ RECOMMENDED ☐ NOT RECOMMENDED ☐ ALTERNATIVES:

GOVERNING/ADVISORY BOARD APPROVAL DATE: _____
 CONTROLLER'S OFFICE: _____ DATE: _____

Introduced by the Human Services and Finance Committees of the:

INGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE AN AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION #19-044

WHEREAS, the current contract with Vermont Systems Inc. which provides point-of-sale services for the Ingham County Parks and the Potter Park Zoo will expire on April 29, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Vermont Systems has met the needs of the parks and zoo for ticket and merchandise sales; and

WHEREAS, changing systems at this time would be a significant increased expense due to the cost of new equipment, software and transfer of all data; and

WHEREAS, the Ingham County Parks and Potter Park Zoo wish to extend the contract for an additional 5-years; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorizes amending Resolution #19-044 to enter into a five-year contract extension with Vermont Systems, Inc. as listed below:

Zoo

Year	Annual Maintenance & Support Paid to Vermont Systems	Credit Card Terminal Lease Fees Paid to Vermont Systems	Total
Year 1	\$14,898	\$9,230	\$24,128
Year 2	\$15,494	\$8,880	\$24,374
Year 3	\$16,113	\$8,880	\$24,993
Year 4	\$16,758	\$8,880	\$25,638
Year 5	\$17,429	\$8,880	\$26,309

Parks

Year	Annual Maintenance & Support Paid to Vermont Systems	Credit Card Terminal Lease Fees Paid to Vermont Systems	Total
Year 1	\$16,038	\$8,870	\$24,908
Year 2	\$16,680	\$8,520	\$25,200
Year 3	\$17,346	\$8,520	\$25,866
Year 4	\$18,040	\$8,520	\$26,560
Year 5	\$18,762	\$8,520	\$27,282

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners is hereby authorized to sign any necessary contract documents on behalf of the County after approval as to form by the County Attorney.

**Potter Park Zoo Advisory Board
Meeting of December 10, 2025**

Motion to support a Resolution authorizing an amendment to Resolution #19-044 for a five-year contract extension with Vermont Systems Inc.

MOVED BY

SUPPORTED BY

To recommend forwarding the attached resolution to the Board of Commissioners which was supported by the Potter Park Zoo Advisory Board with the passage of this motion.

POTTER PARK ZOO
YEAR TO DATE BUDGET/ACTUAL REPORT
FOR 11 MONTHS ENDING NOVEMNER 30, 2025

	NOV 2025 YTD						
	2025 BUDGET	ACTUAL - PRELIMINARY	BUDGET REMAINING	% OF BUDGET	NOV 2024 YTD ACTUAL	% DIFF LAST YR	
REVENUES							
PROPERTY TAX	\$ 4,895,756	\$ 4,837,361	\$ 58,395	98.81%	\$ 4,523,224	6.94%	
UNALLOCATED PORTION OF TAXES (1 MONTH)	\$ -	\$ (403,113)	\$ -	0.00%	\$ (376,935)	6.94%	
ADMISSIONS	\$ 735,000	\$ 806,662	\$ (71,662)	109.75%	\$ 852,576	-5.39%	
CONCESSIONS, GIFT SHOP, VENDING	\$ 806,000	\$ 852,596	\$ (46,596)	105.78%	\$ 952,304	-10.47%	
PARKING FEES	\$ 180,000	\$ 172,538	\$ 7,462	95.85%	\$ 189,979	-9.18%	
INTERACTIVE SITES	\$ 95,000	\$ 76,392	\$ 18,608	80.41%	\$ 97,148	-21.36%	
INTEREST INCOME	\$ 40,000	\$ 79,324	\$ (39,324)	198.31%	\$ 76,018	4.35%	
OTHER REVENUES	\$ (251,978)	\$ 148,594	\$ (400,572)	-58.97%	\$ 167,867	-11.48%	
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 6,499,778	\$ 6,570,353	\$ (473,689)	101.09%	\$ 6,482,181	1.36%	
EXPENDITURES							
PERSONNEL SERVICES							
Salaries & Wages - Full Time	\$ 2,134,176	\$ 1,760,923	\$ 373,253	82.51%	\$ 1,665,959	5.70%	
Salaries & Wages - Seasonal	\$ 695,284	\$ 869,875	\$ (174,591)	125.11%	\$ 837,838	3.82%	
Benefits	\$ 1,284,760	\$ 1,022,552	\$ 262,208	79.59%	\$ 988,579	3.44%	
Total Personnel Services	\$ 4,114,220	\$ 3,653,350	\$ 460,870	88.80%	\$ 3,492,375	4.61%	
CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURES							
Supplies	\$ 503,000	\$ 421,843	\$ 81,157	83.87%	\$ 465,358	-9.35%	
Animal Care	\$ 317,000	\$ 266,177	\$ 50,823	83.97%	\$ 228,432	16.52%	
Purchased Services	\$ 680,000	\$ 685,487	\$ (5,487)	100.81%	\$ 678,070	1.09%	
Utilities - Telephone	\$ 23,125	\$ 20,364	\$ 2,761	88.06%	\$ 18,356	10.94%	
Rentals & Leases	\$ 6,000	\$ 10,186	\$ (4,186)	169.76%	\$ 4,880	108.71%	
Other Expenses	\$ 140,400	\$ 117,583	\$ 22,817	83.75%	\$ 109,529	7.35%	
Total Controllable Expenditures	\$ 1,669,525	\$ 1,521,639	\$ 147,886	91.14%	\$ 1,504,625	1.13%	
NON-CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURES							
Utilities	\$ 240,000	\$ 219,905	\$ 20,095	91.63%	\$ 205,282	7.12%	
Insurance	\$ 90,000	\$ 80,824	\$ 9,176	89.80%	\$ 77,547	4.23%	
IT Support Expense	\$ 385,447	\$ 174,750	\$ 210,697	45.34%	\$ 221,136	-20.98%	
Other Expenses	\$ 586	\$ 586	\$ (0)	100.03%	\$ 494	18.59%	
Total Non-Controllable Expenditures	\$ 716,033	\$ 476,065	\$ 239,968	66.49%	\$ 504,459	-5.63%	
CAPITAL OUTLAY							
Capital Improvements	\$ -	\$ 179,870	\$ (179,870)	#DIV/0!	\$ 140,542	27.98%	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 6,499,778	\$ 5,830,924	\$ 668,854	89.71%	\$ 5,642,002	3.35%	
TOTAL CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE	\$ -	\$ 739,429			\$ 840,179		
FUND BALANCE AS OF 01/01/25							
NON-SPENDABLE		\$ 237,675					
UNRESTRICTED		\$ 393,555					
		\$ 631,230					
FUND BALANCE AS OF 11/30/25		\$ 1,370,659					
FUND BALANCE AS OF 11/30/25							
UNSPENDABLE		\$ 173,782					
UNRESTRICTED		\$ 1,196,877					
		\$ 1,370,659					

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

**POTTER PARK ZOO
BALANCE SHEET
AS OF NOVEMBER 30th 2025**

ASSETS

CASH	\$ 1,498,304
DEPOSITORY CASH	24,729
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	22,846
DUE FROM OTHER FUNDS	-
INVENTORY	173,782
INVESTMENT YIELD ADJUSTMENT	(18,794)
PREPAID EXPENSES	85,648

TOTAL ASSETS

	\$ 1,804,020
--	--------------

LIABILITIES

VOUCHERS PAYABLE	-
DUE TO ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY	36,244
TAX LEVY LIABILITY	19,600
SALES TAX PAYABLE	13,540
REFUND NOW	-
REFUND APPLY	-
ACCRUED PAYROLL	-
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	17,693
DEFERRED REVENUE - DELINQUENT TAXES	22,737
DEFERRED REVENUE - PROPERTY TAXES	-
DEF REVENUE -POTTER PARK	15,853

TOTAL LIABILITIES

	125,667
--	---------

FUND BALANCE

UNSPENDABLE	173,782
UNRESTRICTED FUND BALANCE	1,504,572
	1,678,353

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE

	\$ 1,804,020
--	--------------

Prepared By: Eric J. Thelen

POTTER PARK ZOO
MONTHLY PARKING REPORT
FOR MONTH AND YTD ENDING OCTOBER 31, 2025

ADMISSION TYPE								
	2023	2024	2025	BETTER (WORSE) THAN PY	2023	2024	2025	BETTER (WORSE) THAN PY
ANNUAL RESIDENT PASS	0	1	0	-1	291	247	209	-38
ANNUAL NON-RESIDENT PASS	0	0	0	0	31	37	24	-13
PPZ MEMBER DELUXE/PREMIUM	492	678	596	-82	2,481	3,447	3,739	292
DAILY RESIDENT PARKING	2,521	3,702	2,616	-1086	18,356	21,334	18,692	-2,642
DAILY NON-RESIDENT PARKING	1,857	2,408	1,907	-501	21,242	22,723	21,471	-1,252
EVENTS	0	142	124	-18	827	1,660	1,667	7
ANNUAL PASS RESIDENT ENTRY	216	340	322	-18	805	1,476	2,359	883
ANNUAL PASS NON-RESIDENT ENTRY	5	3	3	0	206	635	83	-552
WAIVED ANNUAL PASS	18	2	0	-2	59	43	54	11
OTHER (non-paying)	111	10	2	-8	2,390	806	1,171	365
TOTAL	5,220	7,286	5,570	-1716	46,688	52,408	49,469	-2,939

ADMISSION TYPE	
ANNUAL RESIDENT PASS	
ANNUAL NON-RESIDENT PASS	
RESIDENT DAILY PASS	
NON-RESIDENT DAILY PASS	
OTHER (non-paying)	

POTTER PARK ZOO
MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT
FOR MONTH AND YTD OCTOBER 31, 2025

ADMISSION TYPE	2023	2024	2025 Gate	2025 Online	2025 Total	BETTER (WORSE) THAN PY	2023 COUNT	2024 COUNT	2025 COUNT	BETTER (WORSE) THAN PY
GENERAL										
CHILD RESIDENT	201	266	327	9	336	70	8,454	9,551	8,540	(1,011)
CHILD NON-RESIDENT	539	457	426	29	455	(2)	13,605	13,552	13,187	(365)
CHILDREN - UNDER 3	396	462	306	4	310	(152)	7,481	8,003	7,891	(112)
ADULT RESIDENT	1,718	2,486	1,781	86	1,867	(619)	25,252	27,412	24,777	(2,635)
ADULT NON-RESIDENT	1,262	1,123	1,243	95	1,338	215	25,671	29,413	31,081	1,668
SENIOR/MILITARY RESIDENT	125	187	173	4	177	(10)	2,709	3,390	2,777	(613)
SENIOR/MILITARY NON-RESIDENT	204	299	260	6	266	(33)	3,914	4,926	4,184	(742)
GROUPS	504	447	953	0	953	506	21,481	23,524	22,249	(1,275)
SUBTOTAL	4,949	5,727	5,469	233	5,702	(25)	108,567	119,771	114,686	(5,085)
MEMBERSHIPS/PROGRAMS										
PPZ MEMBERS/RECIPROCAL	1,661	1,399	2,370	0	2,370	971	18,645	23,104	24,475	1,371
SOCIETY PROGRAMMING/EVENTS	10,162	16,774	6,869	1,516	8,385	(8,389)	25,478	33,482	22,184	(11,298)
MONDAY PROGRAM	630	1,422	480	0	480	(942)	5,862	8,749	7,205	(1,544)
ZIYN	234	276	433	0	433	157	4,088	4,860	4,705	(155)
OTHER (non-paying)	440	245	296	0	296	51	5,168	6,006	5,822	(184)
SUBTOTAL	13,127	20,116	10,448	1,516	11,964	(8,152)	59,241	76,201	64,391	(11,810)
GRAND TOTAL	18,076	25,843	15,917	1,749	17,666	(8,177)	167,808	195,972	179,077	-16895

Wild Wanderers

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 ATTENDANCE REPORT
FOR MONTH AND YTD NOVEMBER 30, 2025

ADMISSION TYPE	2023	2024	2025 Gate	2025 Online	2025 Total	BETTER (WORSE) THAN PY	2023 COUNT	2024 COUNT	2025 COUNT	BETTER (WORSE) THAN PY
GENERAL										
CHILD RESIDENT	202	204	219	0	219	15	8,656	9,755	8,759	(996)
CHILD NON-RESIDENT	268	441	267	1	268	(173)	13,873	13,993	13,455	(538)
CHILDREN - UNDER 3	163	261	180	0	180	(81)	7,644	8,264	8,071	(193)
ADULT RESIDENT	741	955	881	0	881	(74)	25,993	28,367	25,658	(2,709)
ADULT NON-RESIDENT	820	915	812	7	819	(96)	26,491	30,328	31,900	1,572
SENIOR/MILITARY RESIDENT	99	89	32	0	32	(57)	2,808	3,479	2,809	(670)
SENIOR/MILITARY NON-RESIDENT	48	55	35	0	35	(20)	3,962	4,981	4,219	(762)
GROUPS	185	0	387	0	387	387	21,666	23,524	22,636	(888)
SUBTOTAL	2,526	2,920	2,813	8	2,821	(99)	111,093	122,691	117,507	(5,184)
MEMBERSHIPS/PROGRAMS										
PPZ MEMBERS/RECIPROCAL	1,087	1,000	1,070	0	1,070	70	19,732	24,104	25,545	1,441
SOCIETY PROGRAMMING/EVENTS	3,640	2,906	2,262	89	2,351	(555)	29,118	36,388	24,535	(11,853)
MONDAY PROGRAM	98	106	148	0	148	42	5,960	8,855	7,353	(1,502)
ZIYN	147	233	157	0	157	(76)	4,235	5,093	4,862	(231)
OTHER (non-paying)	216	504	47	0	47	(457)	5,384	6,510	5,869	(641)
SUBTOTAL	5,188	4,749	3,684	89	3,773	(976)	64,429	80,950	68,164	(12,786)
GRAND TOTAL	7,714	7,669	6,497	97	6,594	(1,075)	175,522	203,641	185,671	-17970

Wild Wanderers

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



Director's Report December 10, 2025

Animal Health Facility Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting

The Animal Health Facility is now open! A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Thursday, November 6, 2025 followed by public tours on Saturday.

Over 100 guests attended including donors, elected officials, board members and staff members. Representative Hope presented a tribute for the opening of the hospital. Saturday, we hosted an open house for the public, with tours and interactive activities for kids—including Potter the Otter and Rick the Rhino, of course!

Thank you to everyone who made this project a success!



Staff

A Thanksgiving lunch was provided by the Society and prepared by Rick Parker for all zoo staff to attend.

The Staff Holiday Party and Potluck is on Tuesday, Dec. 16, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Safari room.

With the government shutdown of SNAP benefits in November, we launched a food pantry in our Discovery Center. The Society initially stocked the shelves, and our staff continued to add donations throughout the month. The pantry was well-received and worked smoothly, so we will be continuing it through the end of the year.

Public Safety

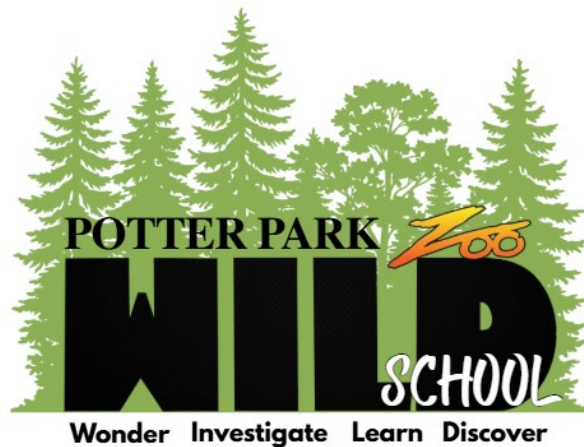
A code brown/blue drill was conducted on October 28th, which completed all required AZA drills for the year. A code brown involved “a guest inside the tiger exhibit” and the code blue occurred when the “guest was injured by the tiger”.

TB tests are scheduled for January 27. Tests will be required for all animal and vet staff as well as any staff member that may be in close contact with the primates.

The Ingham County Sheriff's Department will conduct a firearms training with the Zoo Emergency Response Team on January 20.

All building inspections were completed by the end of October and results of the inspections were sent to supervisors of the corresponding areas.

Conservation Engagement



After more than 25 years of successful work at Potter Park Zoo through the BIG Zoo Lesson and as Margaret Holtschlag moves toward retirement, we will be transitioning to a new immersive learning program we are calling Potter Park Zoo WILD School. The activities offered that impact volunteers like enrichment making and viewing, behind the scenes tours and lessons will not change and the program activities will continue to be scheduled to accommodate zoo staff.

What is WILD School?

WILD School transforms Potter Park Zoo into a living classroom where students in grades 2-5 connect every subject area to the wonders of wildlife. Through hands-on investigations, creative expression, and real-world science, learners become explorers who ask questions, make discoveries, and grow their curiosity about the natural world.

BIG Zoo Lesson Summary (September – November)

- 9 weeks, 417 Students, 5 Districts, 2 Counties (Ingham and Eaton)
- 5 Classes have received grants
- Estimated to reach 375 more students in this school year!

Eaton RESA Animal Science High School class started a new activity – Keeper Lessons! Each area has created three workshops for the class to participate in. This ranges from habitat design to hoof trims.

Homeschool Zoo Crew Summary

- 56 students, 3 classes, 12 weeks, 2 age groups, 2 themes; Grossology and Animal Health

Intern Salamander Plots Project!

Mid-Michigan is home to three native salamander species, and these sensitive amphibians are powerful indicators of environmental health. Salamander plots at Potter Park Zoo give guests a hands-on way to explore local wildlife, learn why salamanders matter, and discover how “Conservation Begins at Home.” By observing and reporting sightings through miherpatlas.org, visitors can contribute to real community science while building a deeper connection to the nature in their own backyard.

Pollinator Garden Project Begins! 🌸

Saturday, November 22, members of the MSU Zoological Student Association helped kick off the transformation of the pollinator garden by the Discovery Center Building. About 20 students worked with Stephanie Pentiuk to remove existing plants in preparation for an exciting redesign led by Carolyn Miller of MSU’s Beal Botanical Gardens.

The new garden will showcase a beautiful, guest-friendly design that inspires visitors to recreate pollinator habitats in their own backyards. Throughout the coming months, work will continue on the garden’s layout and interpretive signage, with planting scheduled for spring.



Once completed, the garden will be registered as a Monarch Watch Waystation and certified as a Wildlife Habitat through the National Wildlife Federation—a meaningful step in supporting pollinators and local biodiversity! 🦋🐝

Thank you to Zoo Board member Mary Leys for her help with this project!

Striking Success: \$6,200 Raised for Rhinos! 🐘🐘

The 10th annual PPZ AAZK chapter Bowling for Rhinos event, held in August, raised an impressive \$6,200 to support global rhino and habitat conservation efforts. This fundraiser helps protect endangered rhino species and the ecosystems they share with countless other animals across Africa and Asia.

Membership

In November there were 1,070 members who visited. Within that number, 609 were adults, 374 children, 79 infants and 8 seniors. Additionally, we had 5,676 active members, representing 3,030 households.

Volunteers

The Volunteer Holiday Potluck is Tuesday, December 16, at 5:30 p.m.

There were several groups that helped in November with grounds beautification and getting ready for Wonderland of Lights with a total of 9 groups, representing 79 individuals, donating 150 hours. Our core volunteers were 44 strong, giving 859 hours of their time. Additionally, the number of guests engaged by our education-trained volunteers were 1,241.

Community Outreach

Throughout the three weekends of Boo at the Zoo, we gave out about 542 bags of candy, which equals close to 89,400 pieces of candy and over 1,984.55 pounds of candy!

This year's FALCONERS Wonderland of Lights had over 250 participants! Families were able to stroll the zoo, create a craft and enjoy yummy hot cocoa and cookies. It was a magical night at the zoo.

Over 250 guests visited the zoo utilizing a Zoo In Your Neighborhood zoo pass in November. This is consistent with November 2024. Many of those guests visited during our Wonderland of Lights nights. Outreach programming for 2026 has already been scheduled and we have 23 programs booked for summer 2026.

Mariah Martinez entered her third year as a member of the AZA Diversity Committee. Serving on the committee allows her to stay informed about AZA's DEAI standards and explore ways the zoo can continue advancing its own DEAI efforts. She continues to co-chair the Professional Development Sub-committee this year.

Animals

This year we sent animal care employees for professional development and field conservation efforts for the following:

- AZA Enrichment Class
- Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Field Study and SSP meeting
- International Rhino Keeper Workshop (bi-annual)
- Piping Plovers - salvage and hand rearing field work
- New World Primate Husbandry Course
- Okapi Conference (bi-annual)
- Rhino Hoof Care Workshop
- AZA Annual Conference
- Registrar Conference
- Veterinary Technician Conference
- Zoo Vet Conference

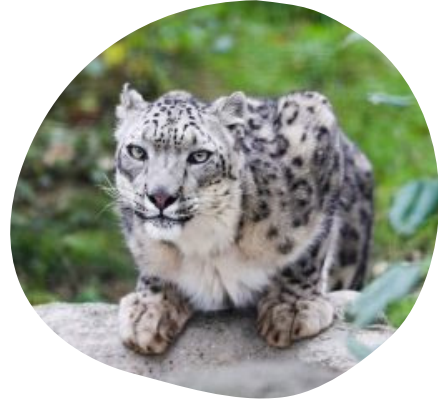
Our two young male otters left for their new zoo in Wisconsin. Two staff from the receiving facility visited PPZ and worked with our otter keepers for several hours prior to leaving with the otters.

We are working with SSP on a recommendation for a female black rhino. SSP recommending a non-AZA sanctuary for placement of our male snow leopard. Cynthia Wagner and Annie Marcum are visiting the facility near Reno, NV on December 9.



Vik, our Amur tiger, has been given the opportunity to explore the outdoor lion exhibit in the mornings when the lion is inside. Vik has been very active and investigating the space when he is in it.

MAJOR GIFTS UPDATE



12/4/2025

OVERALL YEAR TO DATE: APPROX. \$154,600

So far this year, the major gifts donors have donated approximately \$154,600. This includes any gifts over \$1,000, except for funds from foundations or the capital campaign. This total also does not include \$121,837 in planned gifts from individuals.

NEW CORPORATE GIVING: \$26,500

New corporate supporters so far this year: Emergent, LAFUCU, MSUFCU, AF Group, Granger Waste Systems, and LBWL. These donors, along with a returning lapsed corporate donor Home Depot, gave more than \$26,500. Based on these results, corporate giving will be a larger focus in the coming year.

NEW, RETURNING, & UPGRADED INDIVIDUALS: \$19,430

At least 10 supporters upgraded to or within the major gifts category, resulting in \$11,480 in additional support compared to their previous giving. New major donors generated \$6,000 and returning major donors (who had not made a major gift in at least 4 years) gave \$1,950.

EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

The year to date total of \$154,600 above includes \$68,500 in event sponsorships. This includes three brand-new event sponsors.

DONOR CONNECTIONS: 131%

Increased the number of major & mid-level donors we have a connection with (outside of just a gift) by 131% (26 to 60).

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

For individual donors, the big year-end special appeal went out in mid-November. Early returns are starting to arrive so are included here. More gifts from that are anticipated. We also have several larger individual donation requests planned for the final quarter.

Several corporate sponsorship requests are still pending for this year --for species sponsorships and for special projects. One foundation grant is also still pending, with the results to be announced later in December. We are also prepping for the feline/primate capital asks in the new year.

For the coming year, new major (and mid-level) donor outreach will be a big priority. While we've seen progress this year, we really need to grow our major donor pool significantly in order to achieve our goals.

Potter Park Zoological Society Donations Report 2025

The Zoological Society made the following purchases and donations to and on behalf of Potter Park Zoo through the third quarter:

Description	Funding Source	Date	Amount
Radiology Consulting Services	Society Budget	1/9/2025	\$4,000
Replacement Spider Web Part	Society Budget	3/7/2025	\$3,429
Enter and Exit Sign	Society Budget	4/3/2025	\$169.73
Graphic Sign Panel	Society Budget	4/7/2025	\$395.85
Bond Payment #1	Donations	4/10/2025	\$416,323.75
No straws/smoking sign	Society Budget	6/27/2025	\$239.46
Flowers for Harmony Park Project	Grant	8/26/2025	\$6,060.40
MSU – Regenerative Medicine	Society Budget	9/17/2025	\$200
Various meals for staff and guests	Society Budget	2025	\$1325.96
Total			\$432,144.15

Additional Benefits Provided by the Society to the Zoo:

Communications Specialist position – approximately: \$40,000



NOTICE REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE POTTER PARK ZOO BOARD FOR 2026

The Potter Park Zoo Board meetings commence at 6:00pm and are held at Potter Park Zoo, 1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Education Bldg., Lansing, Michigan

January 14, 2026
February 11, 2026
March 11, 2026
April 08, 2026
May 13, 2026
June 10, 2026
July 08, 2026
August 12, 2026
September 09, 2026
October 14, 2026
November 11, 2026
December 09, 2026

In the event of a special meeting, rescheduled meeting or cancellation of a regularly scheduled meeting, a notice of same will be posted at the office of Potter Park Zoo, 1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing, Michigan, at least 18 hours prior to the time of the meeting or canceled meeting.

The 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, or individuals with disabilities at the meeting, upon five (5) working days' notice to the Potter Park Zoo. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Potter Park Zoo in writing or by calling the Potter Park Zoo Office, 1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing, MI 48912~ Phone: (517)342-2715.

A QUORUM OF POTTER PARK ZOO BOARD MEMBERS MAY BE IN ATTENDANCE AT THIS MEETING

INGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE A ON-CALL PROGRAM FOR UAW ZOO
MAINTENANCE STAFF TO SUPPORT WINTER OPERATIONS AND PUBLIC
SAFETY**

WHEREAS, Ingham County operates Potter Park Zoo, a family-friendly public attraction that remains open year-round except for Christmas Day, and relies on consistent maintenance staffing to ensure the safety and accessibility of zoo pathways for guests and staff; and

WHEREAS, winter conditions have significantly increased the operational need for timely snow and ice removal, and the Zoo has experienced ongoing difficulty filling existing on-call coverage using voluntary methods under the current collective bargaining agreement with UAW Zoo; and

WHEREAS, the parties met in a special labor-management meeting and mutually recognized the need for a structured on-call system to ensure safe operations during the winter season; and

WHEREAS, the parties also acknowledge that the framework for this program is consistent with the general structure of on-call provisions utilized in the UAW TOPS collective bargaining agreement, with adjustments tailored to the operational needs of the Zoo; and

WHEREAS, the Employer and the Union reached agreement to implement an on-call program for holidays and weekends beginning immediately upon Board approval through March 31, 2026, with the program to recur annually beginning the week prior to Thanksgiving through March 31, 2027; and

WHEREAS, the parties further agreed that Zoo maintenance employees will first be afforded the opportunity to volunteer for on-call assignments, and if insufficient volunteers are obtained, assignments will be mandated in reverse order of seniority; and

WHEREAS, compensation for this on-call program shall be four (4) hours of straight-time pay for each assigned on-call day (holidays and weekend days only), and if called in, the employee shall receive a minimum of three (3) hours of call-back pay at time-and-one-half or all hours worked, whichever is greater; and

WHEREAS, the parties agree to evaluate the program at the conclusion of the March 31, 2026 period, with a joint review and recommendations for adjustments to occur in April; and

WHEREAS, the Zoo will develop an internal administrative policy to support implementation of the on-call system.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorizes the winter on-call program for UAW Zoo maintenance staff as outlined above.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this program shall take effect immediately upon approval and continue through March 31, 2026, of the current winter season, and thereafter annually from the week prior to Thanksgiving through March 31, 2027, unless modified by mutual agreement of the parties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board chair is authorized to sign a Letter of Understanding with UAW Zoo incorporating the terms of this resolution as approved to form by County legal counsel.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Controller is authorized to make any necessary budget adjustments to support this resolution with an estimated cost of \$6,000 annually.