



# LEGACY FUND PROGRESS REPORT January 2023



Como Park Zoo and Conservatory is pleased to submit our annual report on programs and projects supported by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, which was created by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. This report is required by M.S. 3.303 and details outcomes for Fiscal Year 2022: July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

The report of projects funded with ACHF appropriations must contain the following information:

- 1. The name of the project and project description;
- 2. The name, telephone number, members of the board or equivalent governing body, and e-mail address of the funding recipient and, when applicable, the website address where the public can directly access detailed information on the recipient's receipt and use of money for the project;
- 3. The amount and source of funding, including the fiscal year of the appropriation;
- 4. The amount and source of any additional funding or leverage;
- 5. The duration of the projects;
- 6. The number of full-time equivalents funded under the project;
- 7. The direct expenses and administration costs of the project;
- 8. Actual measured outcomes and evaluation of projects as required by statute; and
- Specific information for each program produced and broadcast, including the cost of production, the number of stations broadcasting the program, estimated number of listeners, and other related measures. If the programs produced include educational material, the noncommercial radio station must report on these efforts.

The report must be submitted by January 15, 2023 to the Minnesota Department of Administration, the Legislative Coordinating Commission, and the chairs and ranking minority members of the Senate and House of Representatives committees and divisions having jurisdiction over Arts and Cultural Heritage policy and finance.

Reporting Period: this document covers the Fiscal Year 2022 reporting period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory is owned and operated by the City of Saint Paul's Department of Parks and Recreation.

| Leadership:  | Saint Paul City Council:                 |
|--|--|
| Michelle Furrer, Campus Manager<br>& Director, Como Park Zoo and | Amy Brendmoen, City Council<br>President |
| Conservatory   | Chris Tolbert                            |
| Andy Rodriguez, Director, Saint                                  | Rebecca Noecker                          |
| Paul Parks and Recreation<br>Mayor Melvin Carter                 | Mitra Jalali                             |
|  | Nelsie Yang                              |
|  | Jane L Prince                            |
|  | Russel Balenger                          |

Oversight of these projects is the responsibility of Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, a division of the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department, and key senior staff. Questions about these projects may be directed to:

#### Michelle Furrer

michelle.furrer@ci.stpaul.mn.us www.comozooconservatory.org

City of Saint Paul – Parks & Recreation Como Park Zoo and Conservatory 1225 Estabrook Drive Saint Paul, MN 55103





# LEGACY AMENDMENT ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE GRANT Como Park Zoo and Conservatory FY 2021 Report Minnesota Legislative Reference Library July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022 / January 2023

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory is a statewide resource for every Minnesotan, inspiring visitors with the wonders of the natural world. More than a century since its founding, Como's free admission, family-friendly accessible environment, and free non-formal education programs continue to make this facility the State's most visited cultural destination.

Funding supported from the Legacy Amendment's Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund allows Como Park Zoo and Conservatory to provide a variety of accessible and free programs and enhancements that interweave the arts, culture, and history for citizens of the entire State.

Post-COVID public operations have changed during this time period. State restrictions were lifted in late May 2021, but the City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County elected to keep indoor face masks through February 2022. Como Park Zoo and Conservatory has elected to continue to use the timed-ticket reservation system for a variety of positive operational reasons, including guest experience.

Public programming was paused during COVID and began to return in Fiscal Year 2022. Uncertainty from schools for a sustained program continues to pause programming to this group, along with bus shortages.

Supply chain issues for projects have created some delays, currently over \$838,485 in spending is encumbered in Purchase Orders. The project timeline extension created budget funds from Fiscal Year 2021 to be spent in Fiscal Year 2022.

Reporting: As a recipient of funds from the ACHF, Como Park Zoo and Conservatory must abide by certain reporting requirements as stated in Minnesota Statutes § 3.303, Subd. 10, § 129D.17 Subd. 2 (d), and § 129D.19 Subd. 5. 4 According to Minnesota Statute 129D.17, Subdivision 2(d): A state agency or other recipient of a direct appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund must compile and submit all information for funded projects or programs, including the proposed measurable outcomes and all other items required under section 3.303, subdivision 10, to the Legislative Coordinating Commission as soon as practicable or by January 15 of the applicable fiscal year, whichever comes first. The Legislative Coordinating Commission must post submitted information on the website required under section 3.303, subdivision 10, as soon as it becomes available.

### Source:

Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund

Fiscal Year 2022 Total Funding Amount: \$1,350,000

Administrative Costs: 3% to MN Department of Administration Grant Management \$40,500, 2% Como Administrative Costs -\$26,190

Duration of Projects: July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022

FY21 Remaining Budget: \$447,659.42

FY22: \$318,975.70

Total Expenditures: \$766,635.12

Additional Funding & Leverage: \$125,000

FTE: 8.6

# SPECIAL EXHIBITS

# SUMMER OF SPARKY

For more than 65 years, "Sparky the Sea Lion" has been a beloved Minnesota tradition, teaching generations of children to care about seals and sea lions in the wild. As Como evolved, Sparky became a conservation ambassador, with a show that teaches visitors everything from the value of recycling to protecting marine mammals from plastic pollution.

With the opening of Como Harbor, we felt a celebration of Sparky was in order. With funding from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund Legacy Amendment, Como commissioned to have 20 custom 6 ft. Sparky statues created that would then be hand-painted by local artists and placed throughout the Twin Cities.

When we set out on the aptly named the "Summer of Sparky" initiative, our goal was not only to bring attention to Como and highlight local artists, but to help spread Sparky's message of conservation. The statues were placed at businesses, parks, and tourist locations around the Twin Cities.



Throughout the summer, we held interactive pop-up events at each statue, engaging 45,000+ attendees. Utilizing every avenue, from summer Rec Check programs to partnerships with the Science Museum of Minnesota, Minnesota Children's Museum, and Saint Paul Saints, we worked diligently to foster a connection between the public and natural world.

As a fitting finale for the Summer of Sparky, all the statues were brought back to Como campus for a monthlong celebration. Each weekend in October was a new celebration of Sparky and conservation with the help of educators, Sparky artists, sponsors, and volunteers to engage with every generation of visitors.



# POLLINATORS: ALL THE BUZZ

Como commissioned the development of a new, multi-year special exhibit with Outhouse Productions on the topic of pollinators. This seasonal exhibit was ready when we welcomed back guests in late July 2020 and reopened daily on Memorial Day Weekend in May 2021 through Labor Day 2021. This special exhibit highlighted pollinators from all around the world with signage, art installations, and live bees for visitors to observe in an indoor 2,500 square foot greenhouse garden environment filled with pollinator plants.

Live bees, including the blue orchard mason bees, alfalfa leafcutter bees, and eastern bumblebees were on display in the covered enclosures so guests could safely observe them through their lifecycles.

Como hopes to inspire the public with this exhibit to take notice of the pollinators all around them and see what all the buzz is about when it comes to pollination.



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### CONSERVATION CHAMPION EXHIBIT

A special exhibit featuring Como's Conservation Champions was on display in the Exhibit Gallery from March 2021–October 2022. The exhibit features stories from the field on signage and audio visual equipment.

## Outcomes & Outputs for FY22

- Increase free access to art exhibits to Minnesotans with ways they can feel, act, and learn
  - Attendance: 504,859
  - Engagement: 46,779
- Provided a special exhibit that featured ways to connect with nature
- Summer of Sparky Statues

24 artists, 13 community partners, 32 events

✔ Achieved most of the proposed outcomes

# MUSIC IN NATURE

Live music showcasing rich and vibrant rhythms and sounds of Minnesota's multi-cultural community.

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory offered a variety of ways to introduce music and local artists to their visitors. Groovin' in the Garden offered an eight-week concert series of live music on the front lawn of the Conservatory in the summer months. On Mondays during the summer months, Music Mondays featured strolling musicians throughout the zoo grounds. Both music series were free to the public and each featured Minnesota artists. The concerts were held outside of the standard public hours and introduced the arts to a new audience.

#### **Outcomes & Outputs for FY22**

- Groovin' in the Garden
  - 8 Concerts
  - 5050 Attendees
  - 52 Musicians
- Music Mondays
  - 15 total events
  - Engaged 55,820 guests
  - 9 Musicians
- ✓ Achieved most of the proposed outcomes







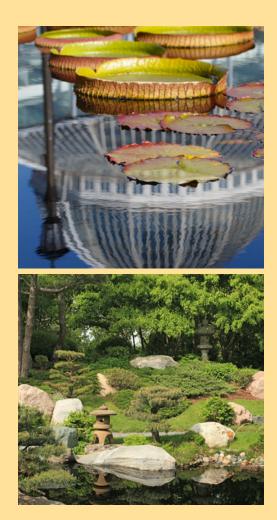
# **MOCOMOCOMOCOMOCOMOCOMOCOMOCOMO**

# GARDEN PRESERVATION

The art of gardening will be on full display for the preservation of the Lily Reflection Pool featuring the historical Victorian Water Platters, which first appeared in Como Park in the late 1880s. The Marjorie McNeely Conservatory has been a historic cultural landmark since 1915 and our goal is to preserve the great staircase and restore it back to the artist's original plan. Master Plan for the Japanese Garden. Maintaining the Centennial Garden and Minnesota Garden.

### **Outcomes & Outputs for FY22**

- Update historical relevance in one garden
- Master planning began for the Japanese Garden in June 2021 and was completed in April 2022
- Continue the maintenance of the Forecourt Gardens
- Design and bidding of the Great Stairs was completed and construction will begin in spring
- Achieved most of the proposed outcomes



# HABITAT RENEWAL

Improve interpretive graphics, add interactive elements, and expand encounters for both the guest and animal to strengthen connections that inspire the public to value the presence of living things. The focus will be the Marine Mammal Building and Tropical Encounters.

# **Outcomes & Outputs for FY22**

- Update two focused spaces
- Engage more than 200,000 visitors
- Increase knowledge and awareness
- · Increase connection to plants and animals
- Surveys are not yet conducted as work has not been completed
- ✓ Achieved proposed outcomes



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# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS & DIGITAL LEGACY LEARNING CONTENT

Como is committed to ensuring that there are program offerings accessible to all. Public Engagement programs are focused on equity, access, and virtual learning. These programs provide opportunities for participants to learn and be creative in a free environment.

# INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT

The Pathway to Employment program at Como Park Zoo and Conservatory provides young people aged 18-24 from the City of Saint Paul equitable employment opportunities with paid apprenticeships leveraged through the Right Track program. Through these apprenticeships, young people gain the necessary experience to obtain a career in zookeeping or horticulture post-graduation. Throughout this year-long program, apprentices are provided with professional development opportunities covering topics such as financial literacy, goal setting, and workplace professionalism as well as seminars in career relevant topics by Como Staff.

# SENIOR STROLLS

Senior Strolls is a program for Como's "55 and better" visitors. This program offers an opportunity for a leisurely stroll through the lush greenery and warm confines of the conservatory, or a walk amongst the amazing animals and world-class exhibits on zoo grounds. Seniors Strolls takes place 9 am-10 am two Tuesdays a month. During the winter months, we also offer "Sunset Senior Strolls" which takes place in the conservatory after hours.

# SENSORY FRIENDLY MORNINGS

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory is an energetic environment full of sensory stimuli. We know this environment can be overwhelming for some visitors. Because of this, Como has early access mornings designed for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. A Social Narrative, created in collaboration with the Autism Society of Minnesota, explains what to expect, step-by-step as they explore the campus. The Visual Schedule Board tool helps visitors plan their routes around the zoo. A sensory-friendly map is also available and highlights areas of stronger smells and quiet spaces.

# PUBLIC PROGRAMS SAFE DAYS

SAFE (Saving Animals From Extinction) Days offer visitors a special opportunity to chat with an Education Specialist about one of Como's endangered animal species. This opportunity highlights the work zoos and aquariums are doing to save these species, and what everyone can do to help.







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## COMO CARES STATIONS/SOCIAL MEDIA REELS

Como Cares Stations help visitors strengthen their connection to Como through insider information about the zoo and conservatory such as animal names, personalities, highlighting special programs, and even trivia! Along with these weekly stations, Como Cares reaches a virtual audience through social media videos (Reels) that take a look at Como's plants and animals through a humorous lens.

## LIL' EXPLORERS

Lil' Explorers was created to provide opportunities for families of young children to create memories while developing an appreciation for the natural world. This program provides age-appropriate, hands-on educational activities, along with story times accompanied by live plants and animals. Each story time is also interpreted through American Sign Language via an interpreter from ASL Interpreting Services. Lil' Explorers is offered Thursdays from 10 am-12 pm, year-round.

# VIRTUAL SEGMENTS

Como Live: Digital Legacy Learning was created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to keep visitors engaged virtually. The primary goal of Como Live was engaging the social media community with Como's extensive plant and animal collection while keeping people connected to Como's mission. To reach this goal, Como Live consisted of daily talks that premiered live on the Facebook platform, allowing visitors to interact with real-time zoo, horticulture, or educational programming. This format allowed visitors to ask questions and re-watch video segments, creating a lasting content library for the future.

# ADVENTURES WITH ASHLEY

"Adventures With Ashley" was a special summer virtual series that followed Educator Ashley as she explored the Zoo and Conservatory. Each episode showcased different animals and plants, and also interviews with zookeepers and gardeners. These videos are still available on Como's website and are perfect for elementary age kids and their families, but everyone is welcome to enjoy!









### **Outcomes & Outputs for FY22**

- · Host four monthly inclusive events
- 48 total events
- 863 participants
- Support Pathway to Employment Program
- Offered weekly professional development during the summer and monthly professional development in the fall, winter, and spring with four zookeeper apprentices that began mid-June
- 52 Segments of Como Virtual Segments

- 87 episodes 78 Como Live Segments, nine Adventures with Ashley
- 18,063 views
- 166.7K minutes viewed

### **Public Programs**

- 20 programs
- 2,593 onsite participants, 182,000 views
- 10,100 new digital followers
- ✓ Achieved proposed outcomes

# I O C O M O C