



January 2015

Report to the Governor and the Minnesota State Legislature on Funding for Minnesota Zoo Programs supported by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund

Introduction

The Minnesota Zoo was established by the State Legislature to foster a partnership between the private sector and the state for the purpose of operating a zoological garden. The “New Zoo” opened to the public in 1978 and has grown into a world-leading zoo and recognized leader in family recreation, environmental education, and conservation. The mission of the Minnesota Zoo is to connect people, animals and the natural world to save wildlife. Today, more than 4,700 animals representing 400+ species (many of which are endangered or threatened) reside at the Zoo.

Funding from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment has propelled the expansion of the Zoo’s conservation, conservation education, Minnesota farm heritage, Minnesota natural heritage, and Zoo site habitat and landscape programs for the benefit of the citizens of our state.

Appropriation Summary

This report highlights projects paid for with Legacy appropriations in FY15 and provides updates on projects funded in FY14, for which funds are available through June 30, 2015. The Minnesota Zoo received a Legacy appropriation of \$1.75 million in each year of the FY14-15 biennium. This allocation represents 7% of the Zoo’s \$23.9 million annual operating budget in FY15.

FY15 Original Budget Revenue Overview

Legacy	\$1,750,000 (7%)
Contributions	\$2,200,000 (9%)
Earned Revenue	\$14,380,256 (60%)
State Appropriations	\$5,585,000 (23%)
Total Zoo Budget:	\$23,915,256 (100%)

Legacy funds are directed toward five core programming areas that serve Minnesota Zoo guests and the citizens of Minnesota through program activities onsite and throughout the State: Conservation in Minnesota, Conservation Education in Minnesota, Zoo Site Habitat, Minnesota's Farm Heritage and Minnesota's Natural Heritage. The Zoo's Legacy-funded programs include new programming and expansion of existing programs. Please note that the budget numbers in this report add up to more than our FY14-15 appropriation of \$1.75 million due to carry forward. For more information about the Minnesota Zoo, including information on Legacy projects, visit www.mnzoo.org.

A Statewide Resource

The Minnesota Zoo is one of two state-run zoos in the country and provides programs and services that reach every corner of the state. Legacy appropriations have provided critical funds that have been used toward programs that expand and enhance this service and bring our conservation efforts into Greater Minnesota. In FY14, the Zoo's service to the state included:

- 1.2 million guests, including 41,100 member households from 83 Minnesota counties
- Minnesota's #1 environmental education center, serving 484,000 Minnesotans
- 128,000 free admission passes distributed through 87 county agencies and dozens of Head Start programs for economically-disadvantaged families
- Field conservation activities in Northwestern, Northeastern and Southwestern Minnesota

Minnesota Zoo Leadership

Lee C. Ehmke, Director and President, Minnesota Zoo and Minnesota Zoo Foundation

Connie Braziel, Deputy Director

Melissa Lindsay, Executive Director, Minnesota Zoo Foundation

Joan Blumstein, Vice President for Human Resources

Beth Burns, Vice President for External Relations

Tara Harris, Vice President for Conservation

Ken Kornack, Vice President for Campus Planning and Management

Mary Robison, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Kevin Willis, Vice President for Biological Programs

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Ex-officio

Lee C. Ehmke, Director and President Minnesota Zoo

Contact Information and Accreditations

Minnesota Zoo
13000 Zoo Boulevard
Apple Valley, Minnesota 55124
www.mnzoo.org
952-431-9200

For questions about the enclosed materials contact Mary Robison, Vice President for Finance and Administration, at mary.robison@state.mn.us or by phone at 952-431-9469. The Minnesota Zoo is accredited by the Association of World Zoos and Aquariums and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums, and is a member of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Conservation in Minnesota

Engagement with the outdoors and the animals and plants that are native to Minnesota is a signature part of our heritage. Legacy funds have allowed the Minnesota Zoo to expand its field conservation efforts to focus on two animals closely aligned with Minnesota's cultural identity: prairie butterflies and moose.

Prairie Butterfly Field Conservation



Native prairie once covered 18 million acres of Minnesota (about a third of the state). Today, only 1% of the original native tallgrass prairie remains; many animals and plants that depend on prairie have declined or disappeared. Two Minnesota-native prairie butterflies, the Dakota skipper and

Poweshiek skipperling, were recently listed as Threatened and Endangered, respectively, on the US Endangered Species List. Other prairie butterfly species in Minnesota are also declining. Initiated with Legacy funding, the Zoo's Prairie Butterfly Conservation Program aims to prevent the extinction of these butterflies, understand the reasons for their declines, and ensure that populations are sustained long-term.

In partnership with other state agencies and organizations, we have created a conservation breeding program at the Zoo to prevent the extinction of some of Minnesota's most imperiled butterfly species, including the Dakota skipper. The Zoo is supporting field work to monitor prairie butterfly populations and investigate whether remnant populations of highly threatened butterfly species still exist in Minnesota. We conduct genetics laboratory work to inform captive breeding and investigate which populations of prairie butterflies might be appropriate for eventual reintroductions in Minnesota. We work with our partners to investigate land management practices. We also conduct outreach to raise awareness about the importance of prairie butterflies and ecosystems, and how the public can help.

Measurable Outcomes

- We have established the world's only captive breeding population of Dakota skippers at the Minnesota Zoo, and successfully bred them for the first time under controlled *ex situ* conditions.
- Minnesota Zoo staff conducted six butterfly field surveys in Minnesota in FY14 and contracted an additional 27 surveys at 14 sites. These surveys provided additional evidence that imperiled

Program at a Glance: Conservation in Minnesota

Projects:

- Prairie Butterfly Field Conservation
- Moose Conservation Field Research

FY14 Actual: \$364,373

FY15 Budgeted: \$220,770

FTE: 3.0

Minnesota butterfly species have experienced significant local extinctions, and only one population of Dakota skippers may remain in Minnesota.

- We raised awareness through Minnesota Public Radio, Mongabay.com, Twin Cities TV, and in Canadian media.
- Program manager Dr. Erik Runquist testified at the Minnesota House Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee, at a Pollinator Public Policy Forum, and at a government endangered species coordinators meeting. We talked before the MN Society for Conservation Biology, Minnesota Master Naturalists, and at Cascade Meadow Wetlands and Environmental Center. We wrote articles for *ZooTracks* (MNZoo), and highlighted how the public can help at the Zoo's Big Bugs! exhibit and our "Plant For Pollinators!" webpage.

Moose Conservation Field Research



Moose, one of Minnesota's most iconic wildlife species, are declining in Minnesota. In less than 20 years, moose in northwestern Minnesota declined from over 4,000 to fewer than 100. With high levels of adult and calf mortality, the northeastern Minnesota moose population, numbering 4,350 is now declining. There were approximately twice as many moose in northeastern Minnesota ten years ago as there are today. The Minnesota Zoo is partnering with moose researcher Dr. Ron Moen of the Natural Resources Research Institute at University of Minnesota Duluth, as well as other researchers in the state. Together, we are conducting research that will inform moose management in the state, and that ultimately aims to slow or prevent a decline in the northeastern Minnesota moose population. Our work is investigating moose responses to warm temperatures, moose-wolf interactions, and parasite transmission between deer and moose.

Measurable Outcomes

- Two scientific articles have been published thus far from this research: one on [warm-season heat stress in moose](#) and one on the [distribution of parasites](#) that negatively impact moose.
- Minnesota Zoo staff helped deploy 32 GPS tracking collars on white-tailed deer and 10 collars on wolves in northeastern Minnesota, to better understand how these species interact with moose.
- In FY14, we gave a total of nine presentations about our research plans and results at The Wildlife Society Minnesota Chapter meeting, Society for Conservation Biology Minnesota Chapter meeting, North American Moose Research and Management conference, Minnesota Moose Management and Research meeting.
- Our research on moose response to warm temperatures has confirmed the assumptions in original habitat regeneration planning for moose in northeastern Minnesota. These habitat alterations are ongoing, using funds from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (moose habitat project).
- We documented 31% prevalence of liver flukes and 66% prevalence of meningeal worm in 600 deer pellet samples that we collected in moose range (northeastern Minnesota). This information will be used to build a disease risk model for moose.

Conservation Education

Educating Minnesotans about conservation issues and how they can engage in conservation activities is critical to the stewardship of our State's resources. Legacy funds have been used to create new programs and expand existing activities to bring zoo guests and citizens statewide in close contact with animals and the ways in which people can participate in conservation in their own backyard. Program highlights include:

Close Encounters



Close Encounters provide on-site animal experiences for zoo guests. Programs include special animal enrichment, providing guests with one-on-one opportunities to interact with zoo keepers, animal training demonstrations, and a chance to observe and touch fascinating critters, including some that aren't typically exhibited at the Zoo. Close Encounters occur every day in all areas of the zoo. With a growing

collection of animals and an average of six presentations daily, this program offers something for all of our guests.

Measurable outcomes:

- 150,000 people attended a Close Encounter in FY2014.
- 2,485 scheduled Close Encounter programs took place in FY2014. This does not include Zookeeper Chats and informal, unscheduled engagements.

Conservation Interpretation

The Zoo uses interpretive exhibits and programs to help guests connect with our education and conservation initiatives.

Interpretive exhibits include graphics, interactive elements, audio visual components, sculpture, art, and tactile experiences. Interpretive programs include volunteer-led activities, theatre and music performances, animal demonstrations, animal feeding/training presentations, and tours.

Measurable Outcomes

- Legacy funds were used to create and install the following projects: a rhinoceros sculpture that connects to conservation efforts; shark species database and identification; creation and

Program at a Glance: Conservation Education

Projects:

- Close Encounters
- Conservation Interpretation
- Technology in Education
- Bird Show Conservation Education
- Butterfly Garden
- Enhanced Zoomobile
- Big Bugs! Exhibit
- Hanifl Family Wild Woods
- HowZooWeen

FY14 Actual: \$1,464,226

FY15 Budgeted: \$1,328,941

FTE: 8.6

installation of new graphic interpretation elements in Discovery Bay; and planning for a reading nook in the early childhood Beehive space.

Technology in Education

The Minnesota Zoo education department has developed new curriculum and program offerings that tie zoo animals, habitats, and adaptations to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) through classroom offerings, distance learning programs, and teacher training.

Measurable Outcomes

- In FY14, 66 Distance Learning programs reached students in 15 Minnesota counties.
- Distance Learning programs won the Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration 2014 Pinnacle Award from the nation's largest network of interactive learning content providers.
- A total of 271 programs delivered nationwide from the Minnesota Zoo in FY14.

Bird Show Conservation Education



Soaring hawks, majestic owls, and many more rare and beautiful feathered creatures delight and educate Zoo guests at the Wings Financial World of Birds Show. We emphasize the natural abilities of birds, the diversity of species on our planet, and the importance of natural habitats. This program provides one of the Zoo's most

tangible ways for guests to connect with animals and learn about their role in conservation efforts.

Measurable Outcomes

- The World of Birds show is now offered seven days per week from mid-October through April at no additional charge to zoo guests. Legacy funds were used to add bird shows on Tuesdays, thereby making the program available to thousands of zoo guests and school groups. 700 Bird Shows were offered in FY14.

Butterfly Garden

The Aveda Butterfly Garden is an outdoor 3,000 square foot immersion butterfly hoop house that is heavily planted with annual and perennial flowers and stocked with farm-raised North American native and migrant tropical butterflies. In FY14, it was open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from Father's Day weekend through Labor Day, weather permitting. It is free with Zoo admission.

Measurable Outcomes

- From mid-June to Labor Day, we estimate 15% of the Zoo's daily guests visit the Butterfly Garden (or approximately 90,043 people during the 2014 Butterfly Garden season)
- The Butterfly Garden provided program content and curricular focus for 12 summer zoo camps, serving more than 500 students ages three to 17.

Zoomobile



The Zoomobile program exists to break down geographic, financial and transportation barriers by bringing quality environmental education programs to Minnesotans regardless of where they live. When people have the opportunity to see zoo animals up close they experience the connections between people, animals, and their

environments firsthand. Legacy funds have expanded our capacity to offer programs with additional staff and program animals.

Measurable Outcomes

- 50,860 Minnesotans participated in Zoomobile programs in 55 Minnesota counties in FY14.

Big Bugs! Exhibit



The Minnesota Zoo offered a first-of-its-kind exhibit in summer 2014—Big Bugs! Thirteen super-sized, animatronic bugs invaded the Zoo's Northern Trail along with a live bug display and several fun, interactive elements. Big Bugs! was free (with paid Zoo admission) to all Zoo guests.

The Zoo exhibit shop developed additional bug displays highlighting insect species native to Minnesota. A live bug exhibit provided additional content for thousands of zoo campers and the general public. Featured insects included the praying mantis, walking stick, tarantula and more. Interpretive programs featuring bug adaptations, habitats and conservation inspired deeper appreciation for these oft-maligned and misunderstood creatures.

Measurable Outcomes

- Since Big Bugs! was free with Zoo admission, we do not have exact numbers for Big Bugs! participants. Onsite audits indicate that 47% of Zoo guests visited the exhibit, which would translate to 263,875 guests.
- A live bug house and exhibit complemented the animatronic bugs and featured 38 species, which zoo keepers also used to create close encounters for guests each day.
- A Minnesota theatre company, "Puppets and People," was commissioned to create an original production called Big Bug Puppet Labs, which was offered on 42 days throughout the summer for the public. The street-theatre style work offered a fun, creative look at ant social lives; adaptive behaviors of bugs; and defensive strategies of bugs.

- Interpretive graphics supported the story of unique insect adaptations, social lives, and endangered insects (including many right here in Minnesota).
- Larger than life educational photo opportunities included a giant spider web, a large dead log, and an enormous monarch caterpillar.
- Reimagined the Monarch Village as an interpretive station for volunteers, added new interpretive materials for their programs, and Zoo staff trained volunteers to do demonstrations with live insects from the Bug House.

Hanifl Family Wild Woods

Construction is underway on the Zoo's first nature-based play area. This new guest amenity will feature 30,000 square feet of nature-based play features for kids to climb, crawl, dig, and discover in a 'please touch' natural environment. Nature-based play is a global movement designed to counter the increasing presence of technology in kids' lives and to encourage young people to combat 'nature deficit disorder,' unplug and get outdoors to learn about the natural world.

Measurable Outcomes

- Construction is on track for a summer 2015 opening.
- Privately raised funds for this major new Minnesota Zoo amenity have been secured and cover more than 85% of the total project cost.

Measurable Outcomes

- October 2014 attendance at the Zoo was 69,718, which was 14% above projected attendance and 10% above October 2013 attendance.
- Guest feedback for associated events was extremely positive and participation in special programs was high.

HowlZooWeen

The popular Harvest Festival was expanded to a month-long, zoo-wide celebration that involved every trail and department at the Zoo. Education staff created conservation-based scavenger hunts, crafts, and activities; zookeepers created demonstrations highlighting creepy critters and their natural adaptations; the Zoo's new wolf pups were highlighted alongside many other baby animals born at the Zoo in fall 2014; and the Farm continued many of the traditions associated with past Harvest Festivals.

Measurable Outcomes

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- Guest feedback for associated events was extremely positive and participation in special programs was high.

Zoo Site Habitat

The Minnesota Zoo's site – 485 acres of land in Dakota County – is a state treasure that includes a diverse array of habitats including vernal pools, sedge meadows, oak woodlands, and northern rich fens. More than half of this is undeveloped wildlife habitat which, thanks to Legacy funding, is now being explored by zoo staff and guests in order to educate citizens about the wild animals and wild plants native to our state and the importance of caring for and conserving these resources.

BioDiscovery Project

This project surveyed and studied the native biodiversity found on the Minnesota Zoo's undeveloped lands, with help from numerous



volunteers, interns, researchers and public participants. The project interacted with the public through the Zoo's "Be the Biologist" and "Meet a Wildlife Biologist" programs by introducing people to Minnesota's wildlife and teaching them how to discover biodiversity in their own neighborhoods. Using the Zoo's

website and social media outlets, the BioDiscovery Project shared its discoveries with the public, and provided tools to help Minnesotans discover and learn about local wildlife species.

Measurable Outcomes

- Documented the presence of 226 native wildlife species on Zoo site: 136 bird, 18 mammal, 4 amphibian, 4 reptile, 48 butterfly, and 16 dragonfly species.
- Documented the on-site presence of the northern long-eared bat, which is has been proposed for listing under the U.S. Endangered Species List. The bat's presence was reported to MNDNR.
- Created a website (<http://mnzoo.org/conservation/zoo/biodiscovery-project/>) that highlights some of the animals found on Zoo site and provides tips for discovering native wildlife.
- Directly engaged more than 3,800 people in discovering Minnesota's native wildlife through programs at the Zoo, Google Hangout (online), and the project's Facebook group.
- In collaboration with researchers at the University of Minnesota, collected biological samples from 276 amphibians on Zoo site and tested them for chytrid fungus and ranavirus (potential threats). Results are being analyzed and will form the basis of a scientific manuscript.

Program at a Glance: Zoo Site Habitat

Projects:

- BioDiscovery Project

FY14 Actual: \$101,375

FY15 Budgeted: \$18,708

FTE: 0.65

Minnesota Farming Heritage

Farming is at the heart of Minnesota's history and development, yet today more than half of all Minnesotans live in urban or suburban settings with little or no exposure to Minnesota's agricultural history or culture. The Wells Fargo Family Farm provides an opportunity for the Zoo's 1.28 million guests to experience a working farm, directly interact with farm staff and animals, and learn to appreciate agricultural food production.

Legacy Farm Program



Legacy funds allow the Minnesota Zoo to extend the season of the Wells Fargo Family Farm beyond its historical May to September season to include full programming and exhibits from April through November.

Measurable Outcomes:

- In FY14, this program made the Wells Fargo Family Farm experience available to an additional 143,500 zoo guests.



Harvest Festival

The Harvest Festival celebrates autumn in Minnesota and the annual traditions associated with the Midwestern harvest season. The festival features an array of artists and craftspersons from throughout the state. The festival's activities took place on weekends in October and included live music, apple press demonstrations, crafts, face painting, milking demonstrations, blacksmith demonstrations, spinners/weavers and a hay maze. Based on the program's success, the program was expanded for FY15 to HowlZooWeen (see above), which included a month-long celebration with daily zoo-wide programs.

Program at a Glance: Minnesota Farming Heritage

Projects:

- Legacy Farm Program
- Harvest Festival
- Farmer's Market

FY14 Actual: \$100,977

FY15 Budgeted: \$87,050

FTE: 1.7

Measurable Outcomes

- Increased attendance (14,102 attendees in FY14, a 47% increase over the prior year's corresponding weekends)
- Positive survey feedback: 90% satisfaction rating of Harvest Festival experience.

Farmer's Market

The objective for the Minnesota Zoo Farmers' Market is to support and promote the local farming community while educating people on the importance of sustainability. In addition to providing local farmers with the opportunity to share their work with the public at the Zoo, the Zoo Farmer's Market also features demonstrations on conservation and sustainability (including from the Zoo's own Fish Smart program), musical artist performances, and general information about the Minnesota Zoo.

Measurable Outcomes

- Approximately 5,000 guests attended the Farmer's Market FY14.
- Sustainable seafood cooking demonstrations educated guests about increasing worldwide demand for seafood and how to purchase fish caught or farmed using environmentally friendly practices.

Minnesota Natural Heritage

The Minnesota Zoo is uniquely positioned to celebrate Minnesota's natural heritage by exhibiting, teaching about, and stewarding the species, habitats, and stories of our State. Our work in this area now extends beyond our own borders and is benefitting our State Park system, and schools and libraries statewide.

Our World Speakers Series

The goal of the Our World Speaker Series is to expose audiences to current environmental and wildlife issues through engaging speakers and hands-on workshops and to provide opportunities for them to take action on behalf of the natural world. The series is establishing the Minnesota Zoo as a leading voice on environmental and wildlife issues.

Measurable Outcomes

- All 2014 and 2015 featured speakers focus on issues relevant to the conservation of Minnesota's natural heritage. Topics include The Ecological Future of North American Bison, Attracting Birds, Butterflies, and other Backyard Wildlife, Invasive Species in Minnesota, Dwindling Numbers for an Iconic Insect (Monarchs), and Wildlife of Voyageurs National Park. Speakers include: University of Minnesota Conservation Biologist Karen Oberhauser; Minnesota native and Smithsonian Institute scientist Kristofer Kelgen; bison specialist Kyran Kunkel; and Minnesota's most beloved outdoorsman Ron Schara.
- An average of 85 Minnesotans (mostly adult) attended each of the 2014 Our World Speaker Series events (totaling more than 600 people).
- The Our World Speaker Series was offered free of charge to all attendees, ensuring access for all interested guests.
- Virtual Google+ Hangouts of the Speaker Series (hosted by the Zoo's social media coordinator) were offered for six of the 2014 events. The Minnesota Zoo has more than 270,000 Google+ followers.

Zoo Education Programs

The Zoo's education department has identified Minnesota Natural Heritage as a core competency and has developed and offered several new programs specifically designed to enhance participants appreciation for and knowledge of Minnesota's natural heritage. These programs and experiences are designed to foster a lifelong conservation ethic for the wild life and wild places of our state.

Program at a Glance: Minnesota Natural Heritage

Projects:

- Our World Speakers Series
- Zoo Education Programs
- Bison Reintroduction Program

FY14 Actual: \$48,617

FY15 Budget: \$243,693

FTE: 1.65

Measurable Outcomes

- Over 500 children participated in summer Zoo Camps specifically focused on Minnesota Natural Heritage, including the popular Minnesota Voyagers camp, which immersed participants in the natural treasures of our great state. Campers even participated in a fishing excursion to a nearby lake.
- More than 1,000 students from nine different schools in Minnesota enjoyed a performance of “Tales Along the Minnesota Trail,” a theatrical performance in the Zoo’s Target Learning Center, in partnership with the Minnesota History Theater. The play supported student learning in the areas of Native American history, different languages and cultures of Minnesota, links between Minnesota’s natural environment and cultural history, impacts of the arrival of European settlers to Minnesota, conservation of Minnesota natural resources, and Minnesota wildlife.
- Minnesota Natural Heritage Tours are now offered year-round to school groups visiting the Zoo. Geared for elementary and middle school students, these active 45-minute naturalist led tours highlight the rich natural and cultural history of our great state. Topics and activities support Minnesota’s social studies and science standards. Tours are enhanced by a Minnesota Quest teacher curriculum guide that enables teachers to connect their experience along the Zoo’s Minnesota Trail back to the classroom.
- Teens and adults have the opportunity to explore the unique natural heritage of Minnesota through Zoo staff-led Travel Adventures across the state. A group of teachers participated in a bird banding expedition to Hawk Ridge near Duluth in September 2014. Upcoming Adventures include tracking wolves in Ely and exploring the prairies of western Minnesota to learn about the successful reintroduction of bison to their native territory.

Bison Reintroduction Program

Bison are one of the most iconic animals of the Central plains and millions of bison once roamed vast parts of the plains and prairies that are now Minnesota. The Zoo has exhibited descendants of these plains bison for years. The Zoo has begun a partnership with the DNR that will ultimately lead to the reintroduction of genetically pure herds of bison to Blue Mound and Minneopa state parks in Greater Minnesota. This year, the project began collecting genetic samples from the bison currently at Blue Mound State Park; now the Zoo cooperatively manages a genetically pure bison herd that will ultimately populate the Zoo *and* state park sites.

Measurable Outcomes

- We have successfully bred pure bison that will be part of the first-ever release at Minneopa State Park.
- We built a new bison holding facility to accommodate the expansion of the Zoo’s onsite herd for this initiative.

Administration

These funds are used for financial monitoring and oversight of the Minnesota Zoo's legacy funds, including regular review of legacy fund expenditures, financial reporting, budget management, and assisting program staff in work planning for legacy projects. This amount also includes human resource and IT support for legacy funds, as appropriate.

Program at a Glance: Administration

Projects:

- Administration of Legacy Funded Programs

FY14 Actual: \$119,633

FY15 Budgeted: \$134,135

FTE: 1.5