

2016

**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.

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 FY15, 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 500,000+ participants each year
- 120,000 free admission passes distributed through 87 county agencies and dozens
- Field conservation activities in Northwestern, Northeastern and Southwestern Minnesota

Appropriation Summary

This report highlights projects paid for with Legacy appropriations in FY16 and provides updates on projects funded in FY15, for which funds are available through June 30, 2016. The Minnesota Zoo received a Legacy appropriation of \$1.75 million in each year of the FY16-FY17 biennium. This allocation represents 7% of the Zoo’s \$26.5 million annual operating budget in FY16.

FY16 Budget Revenue Overview

Legacy	\$1,750,000 (7%)
Contributions	\$2,300,000 (9%)
Earned Revenue	\$13,981,086 (53%)
State Appropriations	\$8,410,000 (31%)
Federal	\$64,160 (<1%)
Total Zoo Budget:	\$26,505,246 (100%)

Legacy funds are directed toward five core program areas that serve Minnesota Zoo guests and citizens: Commitment to Access, Conservation in Minnesota, Conservation Education, Minnesota's Farm Heritage, and Minnesota's Natural Heritage. Please note that the budget numbers in this report add up to more than \$1.75 million due to carry forward from FY15. For more information about the Minnesota Zoo, including information on Legacy projects, visit www.mnzoo.org.

Minnesota Zoo Leadership

John Frawley, Director and President, Minnesota Zoo and Minnesota Zoo Foundation
Melissa Lindsay, Executive Director, Minnesota Zoo Foundation
Beth Burns, Vice President for External Relations
Tara Harris, Vice President for Conservation
Mary Robison, Vice President for Finance and Administration
Kevin Willis, Vice President for Biological Programs
Derik Otten, Interim Vice President for Campus Planning and Management

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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.

Commitment to Access

As Minnesota's State Zoo, we are committed to ensuring that our programs are accessible to all our citizens – regardless of age, geographic location, disability, or prior exposure to animals.

Working under the belief that we cannot love and protect what we do not know or understand, Legacy funds help us bridge barriers that keep people from connecting with the natural world, which in turn helps us fulfill our mission to save wildlife.

Access Services

In FY15, the Zoo created the position of Community Relations Coordinator; this position is responsible for ensuring access to all citizens through strategic partnerships, programs and services. Zoo access services include the statutorily-mandated free ticket program for economically disadvantaged Minnesotans, all aspects of ADA compliance, Zoo maps printed in eight languages other than English, and more.

Measurable Outcomes

- The Zoo Access Program (ZAP), which replaced the previous system for distributing free zoo admission to low income Minnesota families, has increased program participation by more than 400% in the first quarter.
- The Zoo printed maps for navigating the site in eight languages other than English in FY15: Spanish, French, German, Russian, Japanese, Hmong, Somali, and Arabic.

Lifelong Learning

While the vast majority of Minnesota Zoo guests are families with children, the Zoo is a meaningful and fun destination for adults without children, too. Legacy funding allowed for the introduction of a new program dedicated to serving adults-only audiences by creating a series entitled "Adult Night Out." These age 18+ evening events offer an after-hours experience for working and older adults who might not otherwise visit the Zoo. In addition to stroller-free trails and exhibits, ANO guests are treated to guest speakers, photography exhibits and more. Introduced in FY15, the program reaches a new demographic that it has not always effectively served.

Measurable Outcomes

- In the first four events, the Adult Night Out series has served more than 3,500 people.

Program at a Glance: Commitment to Access

Projects:

- Access Services
- Close Encounters
- Lifelong Learning
- Conservation
Ambassadors for Kids
- Zoomobile

FY16 Budgeted: \$892,124

FTE: 7

Strategic Communications: Making Conservation Meaningful for Kids



In an effort to help Zoo guests care more and do more for conservation, this project was designed to test and implement zoo-based conservation messaging that will encourage people to act for wildlife. The Zoo engaged a creative agency to create a brand strategy entitled “Where Amazing Lives. Every Day.” This campaign creates a consistent story throughout the Zoo, from Zoomobile to the Wells Fargo Family Farm. In addition, this program includes a strategy to engage children as conservation ambassadors.

Three original “Zoooper Trooperz” characters based on animals at the Minnesota Zoo will help inspire and teach people to act to save wildlife. *Yuki* is a snow monkey who promotes compassion, healing and creativity. Yuki uses poetry, music and the arts to inspire children’s love for animals (and achieve affective learning outcomes). *Lookiloo* is an African Penguin that encourages curiosity and inquiry: this character engages children in activities designed to achieve cognitive learning outcomes. *Scout* is the adventurous Amur tiger who loves to explore. Scout leads children through activities that encourage kids to act for wildlife (and achieve behavioral learning outcomes). Together, these approachable characters will help make the Zoo’s mission to save wildlife meaningful to children.

Measurable Outcomes

- The Zoo selected a new creative partner, Adventure, and developed our “Where Amazing Lives. Every Day.” brand strategy.
- The Zoo completed the development of its Zoooper Trooperz characters for kids’ conservation messaging, and will premier them with the Summer 2016 Dinos exhibit.

Close Encounters



Animal enrichment, training and interpretation are part of zookeepers’ daily responsibilities and these efforts are vital to the zoo’s mission to connect people, animals, and the natural world to save wildlife. Close Encounters is a special onsite Zoo program that allows Zoo staff to offer zookeeper-led interpretive talks right on the Zoo’s trails every single day. Zoo guests get up close and personal with Close Encounters animals; these animals are trained to be comfortable in public settings and therefore serve as ambassadors for their species in the wild. Legacy funding pays for the expansion of Close Encounters programs offered to the public and supports a Behavioral Zoologist position at the Minnesota Zoo. As a result, in FY15 the Minnesota Zoo served 164,500 Zoo guests through the Close Encounters program.

Measurable Outcomes

- The Zoo added a Behavioral Zoologist position to its biological programs staff.
- The Minnesota Zoo served 164,500 Zoo guests through the Close Encounters program in FY15.

Expanded Zoomobile

Geography can be a barrier to accessing high quality environmental education programs. The Zoomobile program exists to serve people who cannot visit the Minnesota Zoo by bringing the Zoo to them, regardless of where they live in Minnesota. Trained interpretive naturalists travel with animals to all corners of the state and deliver programs at schools, libraries, community centers, children's hospitals, senior centers, and more. Zoomobile participants experience live animals up close and learn about the ecological principles that connect all living things to one another. Legacy funding makes it possible to expand the service and reach of Zoomobile by sending more staff and more animals throughout the state.

Measurable Outcomes

- In FY15, Zoomobile served 58,200 people in 50 Minnesota counties.

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 animals closely aligned with Minnesota's cultural identity: American plains bison, 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

Program at a Glance: Conservation in Minnesota

Projects:

- Prairie Butterfly Field Conservation
- Moose Conservation Research

FY16 Budgeted: \$277,707

FTE:2.23

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, 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 are successfully breeding on site under controlled *ex situ* conditions.
- Pesticides research on-site has been initiated, and grass/soil field samples collected will be sent for pesticide residue analysis.
- The new butterfly breeding pod is operational.
- The Zoo hosted a regional workshop on Dakota skipper and Poweshiek skipperling captive management and reintroduction.
- Program manager Dr. Erik Runquist continues to be in demand as a speaker, panelist and regional expert on pollinators. In the past year, he has appeared 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.

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 from this research: one on [warm-season heat stress in moose](#) and one on the [distribution of parasites](#) that negatively impact moose.
- 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:

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

- In FY15, Legacy funds were used to create new graphics, interpretive elements and tactile experiences at the Wells Fargo Family Farm, Tiger Lair, Minnesota Trail and more.

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 FY15, 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)

Program at a Glance: Conservation Education

Projects:

- Conservation Interpretation
- Bird Show Conservation Education
- Butterfly Garden
- Seasonal Programs
- Hanifl Family Wild Woods
- Legacy Connections

FY16 Budgeted: \$492,013

FTE: 2.34

- The Butterfly Garden provided program content and curricular focus for 12 summer zoo camps, serving more than 500 students ages three to 17.

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 FY15.

Seasonal Programming

Fall at the Minnesota Zoo is an extraordinary experience as the old growth oak forests change color and the Zoo’s animals along the Northern and Minnesota trails exhibit seasonal behaviors in anticipation of winter. To promote off season attendance, the Zoo created a month-long, zoo-wide celebration that involved every trail and department at the Zoo. In addition to touting October’s fall colors, the Farm continued many of the traditions associated with past Harvest Festivals and the last two weekends of October featured Halloween-themed activities for families.

Measurable Outcomes

- October 2015 attendance was 75,172 people, up from 2014 (69,718) and the highest October attendance in more than five years.
- Guest feedback for associated events was extremely positive and participation in special programs was high.

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

Program at a Glance: Minnesota Farming Heritage

Projects:

- Legacy Farm Program
- Farmer’s Market

FY16 Budgeted: \$124,637

FTE: 1.22

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 FY15, this program made the Wells Fargo Family Farm experience available to an additional 249,324 zoo guests.

Farmer's Market



The objective of 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 featured demonstrations on conservation and sustainability (including from the Zoo's own Fish Smart program), musical artist performances, and information about the Minnesota Zoo's prairie conservation programs.

Measurable Outcomes

- Approximately 5,000 guests attended the Farmer's Market FY15.

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.

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 and the DNR are now reintroducing animals who are genetically free of cattle genes to Blue Mound and Minneopa state parks in Greater Minnesota. The project also involves collecting genetic samples

Program at a Glance: Minnesota Natural Heritage Projects:

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

FY16 Budget: \$191,083

FTE: 2.2

from the bison currently at Blue Mound State Park; the Zoo cooperatively manages a bison herd that will ultimately populate the Zoo *and* state park sites.

Measurable Outcomes

- Eleven American plains bison, free from cattle genes, were released at Minneopa State Park and are now available for viewing by state park visitors.
- We built a bison holding facility to accommodate the expansion of the Zoo's onsite herd.



Zoo Education Programs

The education department has identified Minnesota Natural Heritage as a core competency and now offers several 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. Particular emphasis for this competency rests in the Zoo's "Connections" program, which serves zoo learners outside the formal school setting.

Measurable Outcomes

- Over 500 children participated in summer Zoo Camps 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, languages and cultures of Minnesota, links between the natural environment and cultural history, impacts of the arrival of European settlers, conservation natural resources, and wildlife.
- Minnesota Natural Heritage Tours are now offered year-round to school groups. Geared for elementary and middle school students, these active 45-minute naturalist-led tours highlight the rich natural and cultural history of our state. Topics and activities support Minnesota's social studies and science standards.
- The Minnesota Quest teacher guide was developed especially for classroom educators to connect their experience along the Minnesota Trail to statewide curriculum standards.
- Teens and adults explore the unique natural heritage of Minnesota through Zoo staff-led Travel Edventures. FY15 Edventures included tracking wolves in Ely and exploring the prairies of western Minnesota to learn about the successful reintroduction of bison to their native territory.



- Connections program offerings included Family Zoo Adventures, Backstage Pass behind-the-scenes programs, Adult Education (including photography and horticulture classes), overnight programs, and more.

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. The theme of the FY15 series was Minnesota speakers, and included presentations representing Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota natives now working at the Smithsonian Institute, Mississippi River habitats, and more.

Measurable Outcomes

- Since the schedule for the Minnesota Speaker Series was aligned to correspond with the Adult Night Out program, attendance has doubled, including a “sellout” for the program’s most recent “delicate sea creature” program.
- 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 four of the 2015 events. The Minnesota Zoo has more than 270,000 Google+ followers.