

AUTHORIZING TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES FOR THE DANE COUNTY HENRY VILAS ZOO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Henry Vilas Zoo is a member of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the World Association of Zoos & Aquariums (WAZA). There are only 238 AZA member institutions and being AZA accredited is regarded as the gold standard of animal welfare. Henry Vilas Zoo is also one of four founding facilities of the Orangutan Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) program under the AZA umbrella. Executive Zoo Director, Ronda Schwetz is the primary author and Co-Leader of the Orangutan SAFE program. These SAFE programs are specifically designed by AZA members to provide a three-year action plan to help save the specific species from extinction.

From April 24 – May 8, 2020, The Henry Vilas Zoo's Executive Director has been asked to lead a conservation trip to Borneo with other AZA members in attendance. This would be the tenth trip Ronda Schwetz has led to Borneo to work on orangutan conservation efforts since starting in 2008. Over 50 AZA professionals have gone on these trips to help with orangutan rehabilitation, releases and habitat restoration critical to orangutans. This trip will focus on wildlife habitat corridors that will reforest areas around the palm oil plantations and create corridors for orangutans and many other species of animals to be able to access more forest habitat. These corridors ensure that local populations of orangutans, along with many other endangered species such as gibbons and other primates will not become demographically isolated which can lead to extinction.

This trip provides specific conservation actions to be accomplished as called for in the Orangutan SAFE plan. This trip will also provide education opportunities for Henry Vilas Zoo staff to share how we are leaders in orangutan conservation efforts with over 750,000 visitors each year.

Travel outside the continental United States requires the approval of the County Board and the County Executive. Funds for leading this trip for Ronda Schwetz, Executive Zoo Director are included in the 2020 budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors and County Executive do hereby approve and authorize Ronda Schwetz, Executive Zoo Director of Henry Vilas Zoo to lead the 2020 Orangutan SAFE conservation trip in Malaysia, Borneo, April 24 – May 8, 2020.