
List of Achievements/Concerns

Institution Name: Henry Vilas Zoo

Inspection Dates: May 21-23, 2024

PART I: **Points of Particular Achievement**

INSTITUTION DIRECTOR: During the inspection the Visiting Committee was particularly impressed with the items listed below, which are especially well done and of notable mention.

Offering a forever free zoo celebrated by the community as a valued cultural gem annually attracting 726,000 guests from a metropolitan area population of 578,000 .

Dane County's renewed financial commitment beginning in 2019 funding an exemplary program by doubling from 21 to 42 FTE, enhancing funding of maintenance, capital improvement and staff continuing education programs.

Exceptional documentation of emergency drills including excellent photographs and detailed post-drill assessments consistently following the same attractive template.

Launching a comprehensive DEAI plan designed by an engaged committee with diverse membership supported by zoo and County leadership to achieve detailed metrics increasing and retaining the number of hires of different ethnicities with nonEnglish language capabilities in leadership positions, serving increased numbers of youth from different ethnic groups and increasing guest diversity from the baseline survey data.

A team of 400 well-trained, dedicated volunteers enhancing a wide range of zoo programs from Docent “Animal Ambassador” presentations, Gate Greeters, Goat Ambassadors and volunteer gardeners totaling 12,500 hours in 2023!

“Critter Connections and Zoo to You” off-site school programs serving an all-time high 5,448 participants in 2023

Hiring the zoo's first full-time, credentialed horticulturist creating a nursery of 150 browse trees, a public sensory garden funded by a \$10,000 Party for the Planet, an educational data base educating staff about toxic plants and a successful, integrated pest management program.

A Zoo Safety Committee effectively managing a well documented and comprehensive Risk Management Plan in conjunction with zoo management with priority placed on hazard identification and risk assessment/mitigation for guests, paid & unpaid staff, animals, buildings and grounds.

Recipient of a 2-year, \$250,000 grant (ACE for Wildlife Network) funding an innovative Interpretive Masterplan successfully designing, fabricating and implementing 164 signs, 100 digital media signs and 45 exhibit or temporary signs using empathy as a central framework.

Modern, well equipped animal health center and comprehensive, well documented program of veterinary care directed by a full-time ACZM specialty certified veterinarian and two credentialed veterinary technicians well networked with the University of Wisconsin College of Veterinary Medicine.

Incredibly clean, well organized and maintained animal housing and support spaces.

Beautifully planted and immersive grounds, gardens and signature native trees.

Dedicated and well trained animal care staff promoting a strong culture of care.

SSA offering a diverse and savory cuisine ranging from chicken tenders to regionally popular cheese curds and bratwursts.

PART II: Items of Concern

INSTITUTION DIRECTOR: •IMPORTANT• The items listed below were of noted concern during the inspection. Please address as many of these concerns as possible prior to the Commission's meeting. For items that are still in progress at the time of the hearing, please provide documentation and a timeline for completion. [NOTE: any concerns that remain unaddressed from a previous inspection are considered extremely serious, and may affect the outcome of this process.] Having proper documentation is essential to meeting these standards; lack of documentation must be considered as not being in compliance (*for example*, having determined that collectors have the necessary permits, but having no documentation of this). Also, please note that it is possible that, after reviewing all supporting materials (including the Visiting Committee's written report), the Commission may have issues or concerns that are not listed below. If so, these will be discussed at the hearing.

A written report to the Commission on how you are responding to the concerns listed below must be submitted by the established deadline (usually six-seven weeks before the hearing—check with AZA if uncertain of the date). The written report is for informational purposes only. At the hearing, the Commission will ask for a verbal update on additional progress made *after* the written report was submitted.

CONCERNS REMAINING FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION

None

MAJOR CONCERNS FROM CURRENT INSPECTION

None

LESSER CONCERNS FROM CURRENT INSPECTION

Zoo staff are unable to observe or retrieve a potentially incapacitated meerkat from two approximately 20 ft underground tunnels connecting an indoor exhibit to the outdoor exhibit. The zoo should risk assess this scenario and develop a plan to address potential risk. Standard 1.5.2

The white handed gibbon indoor exhibit (approximately 10 by 24 feet floor space by 9 feet high) appears too small for natural movements especially when seasonally housed indoors. Animal habitats should be of a size and complex nature to promote and support behaviors appropriate to the animal's biology. Standard 1.2.2. and 1.5.7.