

Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division



John Frawley, Zoo Director

MINNESOTA ZOO

Your State Zoo...Serving Minnesota



MINNESOTA ZOO

Our mission is to connect people, animals and the natural world to save wildlife.

- 5th largest zoo in the country; 435-acres
- 1.3 million guests annually
- Home to nearly 5,000 animals; 67 endangered/threatened species
- Nationally recognized conservation work; including turtles, bison, butterflies, mussels
- \$226 million of annual economic impact to Minnesota
- Over 200,000 members/43,000 paid membership households
- 90,000 school group participants from nearly 1,000 schools in Minnesota
- 50 counties reached through our Zoomobile programming
- 89,000 Minnesotans from nearly all counties visit the Zoo for free through our *Free to Explore* program
- Continued commitment to conservation partnering with organizations throughout MN including DNR, U of M, MNDOT, etc.



A Unique State Agency



MINNESOTA ZOO

- Private/public partnership
 - \$30 million annual operating budget
 - 1/3 operating support from the State
 - 2/3 of operating budget through earned revenue
 - *Closed or limited gate capacity*
 - *Closed or limited parking revenue*
 - *Closed or limited food and beverage*
 - *Closed or limited retail*
 - *Cancelled or reduced education programs and camps*
 - *No animal encounters or shows*
 - *No Zoomobile*
 - *Cancelled events (except drive through)*

COVID-19 Impact



MINNESOTA ZOO

- Zoo temporary closure on March 14, 2020 - July 24, 2020
- Customized Continuity of Operations Plan to align with pandemic response
- Analyzed financial position and developed a revised financial forecast
 - Cost Containment – Salary
 - **Laid off 48 staff members and impacted 125 positions in total by eliminating or reducing hours for many intermittent and seasonal positions**

Cost Containment – Non Salary

- **Reviewed contracts and RFP's and pulled back spending where it was feasible**
- **Halted or delayed all major projects except those funded by asset preservation**
- **Froze expenditures**

While these measures have helped reduce costs by nearly \$8 million in FY 2020-21, concern remains over the ability to perform routine care for the animals and Zoo facilities.





Continued serving Minnesota through the pandemic

Through it all, we've continued to serve Minnesota...

- Pivoted to offering award-winning virtual educational content and camps to support teachers and parents
- Delivered non-virtual curriculum to under-served communities throughout the state
- Offered virtual farm babies experience as an alternative to “traditional” farm babies onsite experience
- Operated drive through zoo experience (Beastly Boulevard)
- Reopened socially-distanced daytime Zoo
 - Developed timed ticketing system for safe daytime zoo experiences
- Created a new winter drive through event (Nature Illuminated)



June 2020 Appropriation

\$6 million was recommended by the Governor and approved by the Legislative COVID-19 Response Commission to sustain zoo operations including animal care, veterinary care and life-support systems.

Without this appropriation, the Zoo would have had to....

- remain closed indefinitely
- lay off majority of the remaining workforce
- reduce its animal collection of nearly 5,000 animals; 67 endangered species
- discontinue 43,000 household memberships

Given the duration of the pandemic, the Zoo continues to experience significant revenue loss and anticipates a slow recovery of revenues as we rebuild experiences and programs over the next few years.

Our current projection is for a total revenue loss of nearly \$30 million over two biennia. This includes:

- **50% reduction in earned revenue in FY 2020-21**
- **34% reduction in earned revenue in FY 2022-23**



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