



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Zoo Director Jim Anderson Receives National Award

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) announced today that Jim Anderson, Director of the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo, has been named AZA Inspector of the Year.

Anderson serves as an Inspector for zoos seeking accreditation through the AZA. He has served as Director of the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo since 1994. He first joined the staff as a train driver while on summer break from college in 1976.

"Accreditation is one of the most important components of the AZA, and we rely on our inspectors to ensure that zoos and aquariums meet the highest standards," said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy. "Jim's leadership, dedication, and extensive experience make him a valuable member of the AZA inspection team."

Anderson has conducted 20 inspections at zoos around the country and is currently vice-chair of the AZA Accreditation Commission. He also serves as a mentor for zoos seeking accreditation and on a variety of boards and committees with AZA.

"I have the privilege of working with Jim Anderson on an almost daily basis," said Chuck Surack, President of Sweetwater, who serves as President of the Fort Wayne Zoological Society Board of Directors. "He is a real treasure for the Fort Wayne community, and it's great to see him recognized nationally for his leadership in the zoo profession. He has accomplished remarkable things at our zoo, and has helped to shape and improve zoos throughout the country through his inspections and mentoring through the accreditation process."

To be accredited by the AZA, the zoos and aquariums must meet rigorous standards in animal care, veterinary programs, conservation, education, and safety. Organizations must be reaccredited every five years.

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**About the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo:** The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo is northeast Indiana's largest tourist attraction, hosting more than 500,000 guests annually and exhibiting more than 1,000

animals on 40 acres. The zoo was voted Indiana's #1 "Gotta-Do Summer Attraction" in 2012 and is consistently named one of the nation's **Top Ten Zoos for Kids** by national media outlets.

The zoo is a conservation leader, contributing \$50,000 annually to local, regional, and international efforts to protect wild animals and habitats, and participating in cooperative management programs for 15 endangered species.

As a self-supporting facility, the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo receives no tax dollars for operations. The zoo's operations are funded entirely by earned revenue and donations.

The zoo is open April 20-October 13, 2013. Admission is \$13.50 for adults; \$10.50 for seniors age 60+; and \$8.50 for children ages 2-14. Babies age 1 and under and Zoo Society Members are admitted free.