



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fort Wayne Children's Zoo Announces the Loss of Bill the Lion

Zoo staff will be available for questions Thursday, April 7 from 1:00PM – 3:00PM.

With heavy hearts, the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo announces the loss of Bill, the zoo's male African lion. This follows the recent announcement of Bill's diagnosis of aggressive cancer, revealed in a medical exam performed Wednesday, March 30.

The experienced animal care staff closely monitored Bill's health condition from the first sign of concern, and provided him with excellent care. Despite recent treatment, his quality of life continued to decline. The zoo's veterinary and animal care staff made the difficult decision to humanely euthanize Bill Wednesday, April 6.

In his final days, Bill was able to rest in his behind the scenes area, with access to his outdoor exercise yard. Ina, the female lioness, was with Bill—often lying beside him.

Dr. Joe Smith, director of animal programs expresses "Our staff's excellent care has given Bill a great quality of life here, and he in turn has enriched the quality of the lives of all of us and the entire Fort Wayne community."

Bill arrived at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo in December of 2008, and quickly became a zoo favorite with both staff and guests. Since his arrival, 4.4 million guests have visited the zoo. His impact in the community is evident.

"Our mission is connecting kids and animals, strengthening families, and inspiring people to care. Bill has helped us to serve that mission in every aspect," says Jim Anderson, zoo director. "Since the announcement of Bill's health condition, the zoo has received an overwhelming outpouring of love, sympathy, and support from the community. Numerous guests have shared

family pictures with Bill, and even sent cards to our staff. It has helped to raise our spirits during this difficult time. “

The Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo encourages the community to mail cards, photos or accounts of your favorite memories of Bill to the zoo at 3411 Sherman Blvd., Fort Wayne, IN 46808. Memories and comments can also be shared on the zoo’s Facebook page, [facebook.com/kidszoo](https://www.facebook.com/kidszoo).

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About the Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo: The Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo’s mission is to connect kids and animals, strengthen families, and inspire people to care. The zoo is northeast Indiana’s largest tourist attraction, hosting more than 600,000 guests in 2105. The zoo received the **2015 TripAdvisor Travelers’ Choice Award**, was voted **Indiana’s #1 “Gotta-Do Summer Attraction,”** and was named the **#7 Zoo in the United States and #20 in the World by TripAdvisor** in 2015.

The zoo is a conservation leader, contributing more than \$90,000 annually to local, regional, and international efforts to protect wild animals and habitats, and participating in cooperative management programs for 91 endangered species and taxa. The zoo was named Northeast Indiana’s **Sustainable Business of the Year** in 2014.

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 will open for the 2016 season on April 23. Zoo hours are 9:00am-5:00pm, open until 7:00pm Memorial Day through Labor Day. The zoo will close for one day on Friday, August 19 for an annual fundraising event.

Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo | 3411 Sherman Blvd. | Fort Wayne, IN 46808 | 260.427.6800 | kidszoo.org