



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT

Cheryl Piropato

260-427-6803

cheryl@kidszoo.org

Zoo Awarded Accreditation

*Zoo Director Jim Anderson and AZA Executive Director Kris Vehrs
available for media interviews today from 9-11 AM and 3-5 PM*

The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo has once again met the highest standards in the zoo profession by being awarded Accreditation by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA).

"The entire zoo team works hard to ensure that our programs, protocols, and facilities meet the highest standards," said Zoo Director Jim Anderson, who serves on AZA's Accreditation Commission and is part of a team that inspects other zoos.

The zoo was inspected over the summer by representatives of the AZA Accreditation Commission and submitted more than 2,700 pages of documentation to demonstrate that it meets the AZA's rigorous standards, including animal care; keeper training; safety for visitors, staff and animals; educational programs; conservation efforts; veterinary programs; financial stability; risk management; visitor services; and other areas.

Only 223 zoos are accredited by the AZA in the United States.

Kris Vehrs, AZA Executive Director, will be available to the media to share the AZA's national perspective on the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo and the accreditation process from 9-11 AM and 3-5 PM on Monday, September 30. Zoo Director Jim Anderson will also be available.

Accredited zoos are required to undergo the accreditation process every five years. The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo was first accredited in 1976.

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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. The zoo was voted Indiana's #1 "Gotta-Do Summer Attraction" 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.

3411 Sherman Boulevard Fort Wayne, IN 46808 P: 260-427-6800 F: 260-427-6820 www.kidszoo.org