



**COSLEY
ZOO**



COSLEY ZOO ANNUAL REPORT 2023

MISSION

To create connections between people and animals that will inspire lifelong conservation of the natural world.



Vision

A world in which everyone has a meaningful connection to animals and nature.



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Photos on the cover and pages 2, 40 and 49 are courtesy of Edward Durbin Photography.

MESSAGE

from the Zoo Director



As the zoo completes its 49th year and prepares to celebrate its 50th anniversary, it is a great time to reflect on how the zoo has grown and changed.

In some years we have experienced the addition of grand new exhibits, whereas others have brought about smaller changes such as infrastructure repairs or the joy of a new animal resident.

While the years have all been different, one thing consistently remains the same - the zoo is always moving forward. We are not content to "do as we have always done". The needs of our animals, guests, and alas, wild spaces are ever changing. Our dedicated staff works tirelessly to improve animal well-being, continually expand and diversify our program offerings, have a greater impact on endangered species, and improve the experience of our guests.

This past year has not been one with grand new exhibits but was indeed a year with many positive changes. I am proud to share these accomplishments with you in the following pages of the 2023 annual report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Susan L. Wahlgren'.

Susan L. Wahlgren
Cosley Zoo Director



ANIMALS

OUR PRIMARY FOCUS

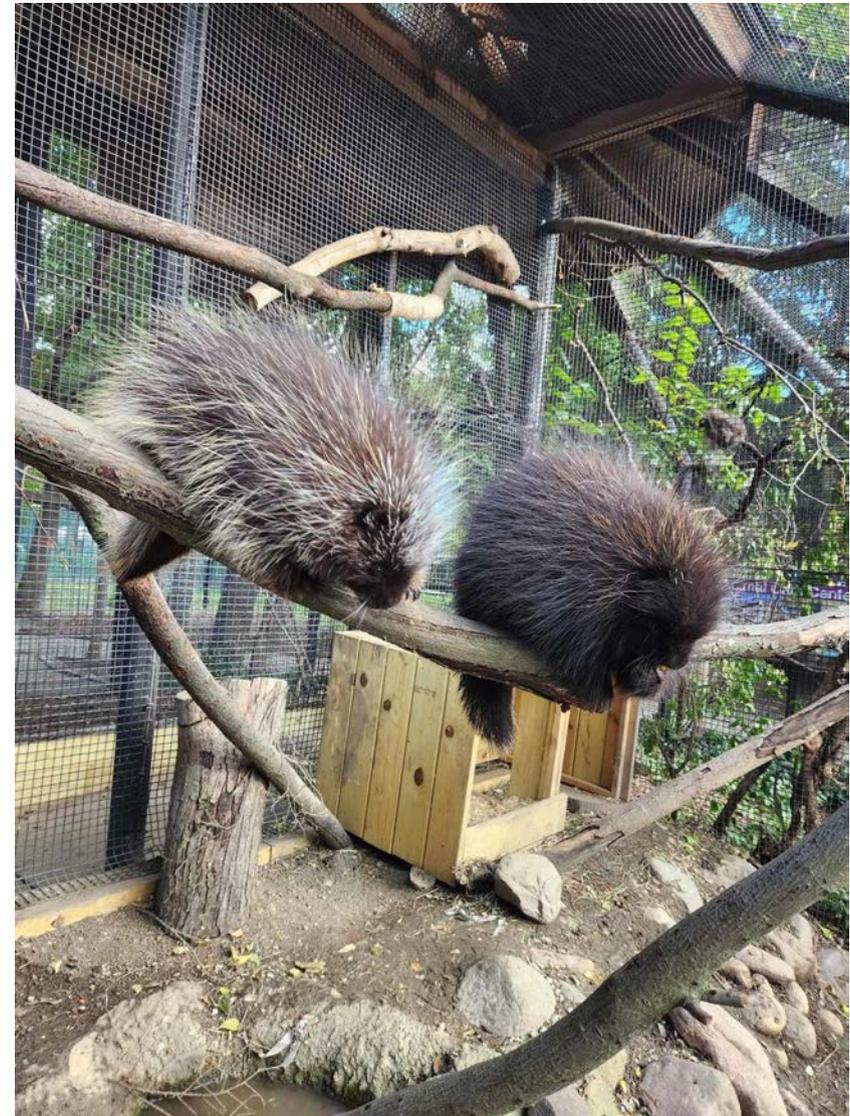
As confirmed by accreditation from the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), Cosley Zoo meets the gold standard for exceptional animal care. Our animal welfare program is centered around providing the very best care, which ensures the animals receive far more than just their basic needs of proper nutrition, clean and naturalistic habitats, and veterinary care. Animal care at Cosley Zoo also means providing mental and physical stimulation, choice and control in their environments, and opportunities to participate in species-specific behavior. All these factors contribute to the greatest quality well-being for each animal. Animal welfare is a science and our staff regularly measures it by conducting assessments on each animal and its habitat. These evaluations allow us to analyze each animal's well-being and how their needs vary as the seasons change and as they progress through different life stages, ensuring we are providing excellent life experiences.

New to the Zoo

In 2023 the zoo was excited to add several new animals including two North American porcupines. Their arrival marked the first time porcupines were exhibited in the zoo's history.

Before their arrival, one of the raptor habitats received some modifications to fulfill the needs of the incoming porcupines and help educate the zoo's visitors about this new species. Once the habitat updates were complete, the "girls", Mable and Sable were moved to their new home from their temporary residence in quarantine.

Upon arrival at the zoo, the porcupines underwent a mandatory 30-day quarantine period which gave them the opportunity to adjust to their new surroundings and begin to bond with their caregivers.



North American porcupines Mable and Sable exploring their new habitat.

ANIMALS OUR PRIMARY FOCUS

Like the Canada lynx, the North American porcupines are part of a Species Survival Plan (SSP). SSPs are an Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) conservation initiative designed to maintain long-term and geographically varied, healthy and genetically diverse populations of select endangered or threatened species within AZA facilities and partner organizations. These plans keep track of each individual animal of a species living in human care, manage genetics through a studbook, make breeding recommendations, and in some cases, even facilitate research and initiatives to reintroduce species back into the wild.

The zoo also acquired an additional lesser Madagascar hedgehog tenrec in 2023, which is another SSP species. Within AZA, there are over 500 species managed through SSP programs.



The zoo welcomed several other new additions including Angus and Guernsey calves Ginny and Gigi, Dolly, a Falabella miniature horse, a bull snake named Sherbet, and two Guinea hog piglets, dubbed Tater and Tot.



Calves Ginny and Gigi.



Guinea hog piglets Tater and Tot.



Dolly the Falabella.



The bull snake Sherbet.

ANIMALS

OUR PRIMARY FOCUS

Generous Contributions

The relationships the zoo has with the local community not only confirm we are achieving our mission of creating connections between people and animals, but also helps us provide the very best care to each and every one of the animals that call Cosley Zoo home. Thanks to generous donor support the zoo was able to purchase a replacement ambassador animal habitat that provides outdoor access for some of the animals such as the nine-banded armadillo. With the addition of a central panel containing a shift door, and double door access, this enclosure provides more flexibility and safety for both animals and staff.



The new ambassador animal outside enclosure. This enclosure can also be used for emergency holding.

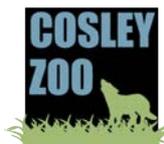
Community Partnerships

Throughout the year, Cosley Zoo partners with many groups and organizations to implement small projects that improve the lives of the animal residents. These groups often donate items used in animal care or create unique animal enrichment items that will encourage natural behaviors.

In 2023, the animal care staff had the unique opportunity to mentor several local middle school students from Oak Lawn, as they learned about, designed, and created various enrichment items.



Oak Lawn middle school students with their enrichment creations.



ANIMALS

OUR PRIMARY FOCUS

Avian Influenza and *Emydomyces testavorans*

While a reduced threat in our area in 2023, the zoo's Emergency Preparedness Team continued to monitor any North American outbreaks of avian influenza and implement biosecurity protocols as indicated.

Another continued challenge for 2023 included dealing with the shell rot fungus (*Emydomyces testavorans*) that has been impacting Blanding's turtles. More detailed information can be found on page 10.

Enrichment and Training

Daily enrichment and training continue to be cornerstones of ensuring positive animal well-being at Cosley Zoo. These initiatives help to encourage natural behavior as well as reduce the stress from important animal management tasks such as vaccinations, acquiring accurate weights, and trimming nails.

Every bit as critical as proper nutrition, appropriate housing, and medical care, training and enrichment take place 365 days of the year.

One unique enrichment activity in 2023 was the celebration of the lynx 5th birthday. Staff partnered with Racine Zoo to prepare a birthday celebration for the lynx as Racine has the male littermates (Barney and Bam Bam) to Cosley Zoo's girls Sage and Poppy. Both zoos prepared matching "cakes" and activities for the four felines and shared the ensuing antics with our guests both at the zoo and through social media.



Canada lynx birthday celebration.



Donkeys Jesse and Elmo enjoying their enrichment.



A training session with the lynx sisters.



COSLEY ZOO ANIMALS



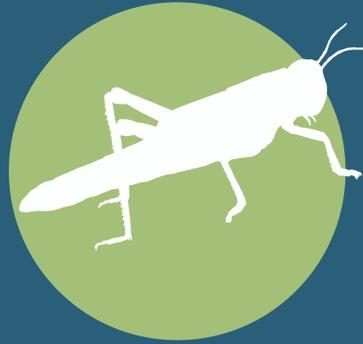
AMPHIBIANS

3 SPECIES
15 INDIVIDUALS



BIRDS

20 SPECIES
63 INDIVIDUALS



INVERTEBRATES

4 SPECIES
2 INDIVIDUALS
2 GROUPS



MAMMALS

18 SPECIES
42 INDIVIDUALS



REPTILES

10 SPECIES
16 INDIVIDUALS

COSLEY ZOO ANIMALS NEW IN 2023

2 NORTHERN ORIOLES

7 CHICKENS

3 MALLARDS

2 NORTH AMERICAN
PORCUPINES

1 FALABELLA HORSE

1 LESSER MADAGASCAR
HEDGEHOG TENREC

2 GUINEA HOGS

2 CALVES

1 BLANDING'S TURTLE

1 EASTERN BOX TURTLE

1 BULL SNAKE



CONSERVATION MAKING A DIFFERENCE

As a key component of the zoo's mission, zoo staff have committed to several conservation initiatives including:

- Being an active partner in the Blanding's Turtle Recovery Project
- Raising funds for and participating in working groups to support threatened and endangered species in the wild
- Teaching our surrounding communities about environmentally conscious living and how to take part in conservation efforts at home
- Raising awareness about conservation initiatives at the local, national, and global levels

Conservation Project Support

The zoo's Coins for Conservation kiosk is an interactive way for zoo visitors to donate their spare change and help support conservation efforts for various endangered species. This year, \$1,656 was raised at the kiosk for three SAFE (Saving Animals from Extinction) programs supporting recovery efforts for the African penguin, the black-footed ferret, and the Blanding's turtle. \$1,000 was donated to SAFE and \$656 was kept at the zoo to support its work with the Blanding's Turtle Recovery Project.

Additionally, the zoo contributed 50% of the net proceeds from Picnic with the Animals, totalling \$1,700 to the Snow Leopard Conservancy.



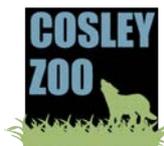
Blanding's Turtle Recovery Project

Cosley Zoo has been a dedicated partner of the Blanding's Turtle Recovery Project since 2001. In those 23 years, the zoo has worked with partners to further the recovery of this native state endangered species and to highlight the plight of endangered species and habitats worldwide. Through this local initiative zoo staff puts Cosley Zoo's conservation-based mission and vision into daily practice.

Cosley Zoo continues to contribute to the Blanding's Turtle Recovery Project in several ways. Hatchling turtles are reared for future release as part of the head start program. Zoo visitors are engaged through educational programs, some of which utilize resident Blanding's turtles as ambassadors. The zoo also displays both interpretive signage as well as an informational video on the efforts of the Blanding's Turtle Recovery Project.

At the beginning of 2023, Cosley Zoo housed 22 hatchling Blanding's turtles from the 2021 hatch year. A transfer was approved by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in August where two Cosley Zoo hatchlings were sent to a partner facility and one turtle from the 2020 hatch year was acquired. These 21 hatchling turtles currently remain at the zoo.

Cosley Zoo is continuing to house seven male adult Blanding's turtles, ranging in age from 16 to 19 years old. These turtles are currently slated to participate in a future breeding program, to maintain the genetic diversity of the wild Blanding's turtle populations in DuPage County.



CONSERVATION

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The goal of Cosley Zoo's turtle management in 2023 was to further identify, contain, and treat any turtles that tested positive for the fungal disease, E. testavorans. Additional testing was conducted on the zoo's 29 individual Blanding's turtles in June and September. Results showed a portion of the turtles housed at Cosley Zoo were potentially infected. Steps taken to mitigate the spread include:

- Moving hatchlings that tested positive to a partner facility to receive treatment.
- Quarantining two adult males with inconclusive test results while awaiting further testing.
- Managing the remaining fungal-negative turtles using the highest biosecurity measures available while awaiting further testing.



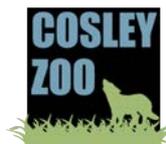
Staff located a Blanding's turtle during trapping activities.

In addition to on-site turtle management, several zoo staff members had the opportunity to assist the recovery project with aspects of field work including trapping, tagging, collecting samples, and tracking nesting turtles during the 2023 Blanding's turtle breeding season. The opportunity was also extended to animal care interns and volunteers for the first time, further connecting the Cosley Zoo community to this important conservation work.



Zookeeper Nicole Nasal helping trap turtles.

Cosley Zoo continues to use its resources to help raise awareness of the Blanding's turtle and the recovery project. The zoo utilizes several ongoing awareness opportunities, including special events, education programs, social media, informational signage, and Blanding's turtle adoption packages to help us reach a wider audience.



CONSERVATION MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In 2023, the zoo raised funds and awareness via several methods, including donations at the Coins for Conservation kiosk and in the gift shop; and hosting over 64,000 children and adults in zoo educational programs, many of whom had the opportunity to learn about the Blanding's turtle through interpretation and live animal visits.

Zoo staff continue to remain flexible and hopeful in the face of challenges presented to the Blanding's Turtle Recovery Project by the *E. testavorans* fungal infection. Further testing is slated for early 2024 that will help direct the future of the project.

Conservation Team

Cosley Zoo's multi-departmental Conservation Team once again organized several opportunities for zoo staff and the community to get involved in local hands-on conservation efforts.

In May and September, the team rallied the help of 50 volunteers to assist with the cleanup of Cosley Zoo's adopted half-mile section of Winfield Creek.



Stream clean-up May 2023



The conservation team held another holiday light recycling drive in 2023. During the holiday season, zoo visitors were encouraged to drop off their old, unwanted, or broken light strings for recycling either at the zoo or at the Wheaton Park District Community Center. Between the two sites, a massive 1,123 lbs. of lights were diverted from the landfill, significantly outpacing 2022's collection of 482 lbs. of lights.



One of two truckloads of Christmas lights that were collected for recycling, for a total of 1,123 pounds!

The conservation team facilitated additional recycling efforts, with the collection of small electronics in support of gorilla conservation, and the collection and recycling of latex gloves, and candy wrappers throughout the year.

CONSERVATION

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Community Science

For several years the zoo has offered training sessions for two community science projects, The Great Backyard Bird Count and FrogWatch USA. These staff run trainings allow community members to get involved in conservation efforts while learning more about the threats affecting local species. Each of these projects teaches how to identify species and report sightings online to national databases. The data is then used to create a geographic snapshot allowing scientists to evaluate bird, frog, and toad species distribution around the world.

In preparation for the 26th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, education staff facilitated a virtual training for 13 participants as well as an in-person training for the zoo's Junior Zookeepers (JZ) program. A total of 15 teens participated in the count which took place February 17 - 20. The JZs collectively spent 33.5 hours bird watching and recording data for this global event.



In March, zoo staff facilitated a virtual FrogWatch USA training for 15 community members. Participants learned how to identify frog species by their chirps and calls. Additionally, they were able to contribute to this national community science program through learning to properly monitor, collect, and submit data.

Conservation Day

Cosley Zoo held Conservation Day in May. This event had 551 guests in attendance. Visitors had the opportunity to participate in several conservation related activities and interact with vendors to learn ways they could have a positive impact on animals and nature.



Plastic Free Ecochallenge

For the fourth consecutive year, Cosley Zoo was a sponsor for the Plastic Free Ecochallenge. This 31-day global initiative is held in July and aims to bring awareness to the harmful long-term impact plastics have on the environment and encourages participants to reduce and refuse the use of single-use plastics. In addition to sponsoring the challenge, Cosley Zoo also led a team of staff and community members in partaking in the challenge. The zoo's 20-person team earned points through making eco-conscious decisions such as using reusable bottles/cups, dishes, and cutlery; skipping the use of plastic straws; and furthering their knowledge on the detriments of plastic in nature and how to alter their daily habits to include less plastic. In total, our team refused plastic materials and made other eco-friendly decisions 190 times during the challenge.







EDUCATION SHARING THE MESSAGE

Creating opportunities where humans can touch an animal, watch it move, observe a species-specific behavior, or look into its eyes while it peers back, helps visitors realize we are not alone on the planet and other species depend on us to make ecofriendly decisions that help keep them safe. These authentic experiences are vital in spreading the conservation message and inspiring others to care about the wild world around them and take action to protect it. We live in a world where wild places are becoming more threatened each year, so this take-home message becomes ever more important.

While our staff provides amazing educational opportunities, activities, and events throughout the year, some of the highlights in 2023 included:

- The Lincoln Park Zoo teen education team spent a day at Cosley Zoo with our education department. The two groups shared information on their respective teen programs and opportunities to work together.
- The zoo held Conservation Day in May. A total of 551 guests had the opportunity to participate in several conservation related activities and interact with vendors to learn ways that they could have a positive impact on animals and nature.



Scouts participating in an activity during the NOVA Wild program.

- The zoo partnered with the Three Fires Council STEM Committee (Boy Scouts) to host and help facilitate a NOVA Wild program. Education team members conducted presentations about ecosystems and conservation while scouting staff ran additional activities to help the scouts meet their badge requirements. There was a total of 100 participants present for this evening event,
- Cosley Zoo partnered with Arrowhead and Pinot's Palette to offer a new Paint & Sip event for ages 21 and over at the zoo. Participants were greeted by animal ambassadors and enjoyed painting instruction all while enjoying a glass of wine.



Budding artists showing off their masterpieces during the zoo's first Paint & Sip event.



EDUCATION SHARING THE MESSAGE

- The education staff once again partnered with Wheaton College to offer hands-on positive reinforcement training experience as part of a psychology class. During the Fall semester the students came to the zoo on a regular basis to train their assigned chickens.
- Cosley Zoo hosted the popular Cosley Zoo Uncorked wine tasting event again in September. Despite the threat of inclement weather, 400 guests enjoyed an evening tasting more than 50 wines, eating good food, and hearing live entertainment.
- The annual Spooktacular event was sold out with 754 registered participants. Guests took part in pumpkin decorating, trick or treating, crafts, games, and animal visits.
- Staff facilitated training for community conservation projects including the Great Backyard Bird Count and FrogWatch.

- Thanks to generous donors and the design skills of the park district marketing team, the zoo has a new education van complete with a colorful graphic wrap. The van is being used all throughout Illinois as staff travels to present popular Zoo to You programs.



Zoo staff facilitating a Zoo to You program.



Young zoo visitors enjoying an up close animal encounter.



EDUCATION

SHARING THE MESSAGE

Junior Zookeepers

The Junior Zookeepers (JZ) program is for young adults in grades 7 through 12 that have a strong interest in animals, conservation, and the environment. Cosley Zoo provides JZs with comprehensive training in various topics including, but not limited to, animal care, informal education, and guest engagement. After training, JZs have many opportunities to put their new skills to use by participating in diverse activities. Each summer, the group takes a day trip to another Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) facility. The JZs also help support the zoo's mission by assisting with special events, animal care, and educational programs. Through the program, Junior Zookeepers also develop and strengthen important life skills, including leadership, responsibility, time management, and teamwork.



JZs assisting with feed prep during their summer incentives.

JZ highlights from 2023 include:

- Seven JZs attended virtual “Advocacy Training for Youth Leaders in Conservation” workshops, hosted by The Ocean Project. Topics included an in-depth look at conservation policy, advocacy & organization, social media & communications, and event planning & fundraising. Participants also had the opportunity to talk with experts, network and collaborate with peers, and develop a strong foundation for future advocacy efforts.
- Junior Zookeeper, Keaton Selbert, gave an hour-long presentation about giraffes for one of Lincoln Park Zoo’s biweekly ZooClub meetings. ZooClub is a virtual opportunity offered to the Cosley Zoo Junior Zookeepers to help them extend their animal and environmental knowledge and network with other teens around the world.
- Staff and nine Junior Zookeepers attended the Teen Conservation Leadership Conference held at Brookfield Zoo. The teens attended sessions that explored safe spaces in nature, the infusion of art and technology within wild spaces and places, a glimpse into the astonishing world of bees, and the convergence of climate change, microbiology, and immunology.
- The annual Junior Zookeeper trip took place in August, with 25 teens making the trek to Lincoln Park Zoo. The teens were treated to special experiences and lunch with some participants from Lincoln Park’s teen program.
- Five teen King Conservation Science Scholars from Brookfield Zoo visited Cosley Zoo. During their visit, the teens were able to participate in duck feeding, a Coyote Connection program, animal encounters provided by Cosley Zoo JZs, and lunch with several of our teens.



EDUCATION

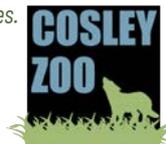
SHARING THE MESSAGE

Participant Numbers

The chart below shows a breakdown of participation by program type.

Numbers of Program Participants in 2023		
Type of Program	Number of Participants	Percentage of Total
Guest Engagement	44,087	67%
Rentals	5,445	8%
Camps	99	<1%
Outreach	4,736	7%
Junior Zookeepers	611	<1%
Special Events	4,179	6%
School Programs	5,006	8%
Scout Programs	581	<1%
Individual & Family Programs	928	1%
Total	65,672	100%

- *Guest engagement—Informal drop-in programs which do not require registration. Guest engagement includes Discovery Stations, animal encounters, and duck/chicken feeding opportunities.*
- *Rentals—Spaces at the zoo are reserved for parties, meetings, or other private events. Rentals often include educational animal presentations.*
- *Camps—Week-long summer programs for children ages 4-15.*
- *Outreach—Educational programs which take place at another organization’s facility, such as a school, church, or retirement community.*
- *Junior Zookeepers—Meetings and other gatherings of Cosley Zoo’s year-round teen program.*
- *Special events—Celebrations open to the public.*
- *School programs—Education offerings designed to complement classroom curriculum or meet other specific needs.*
- *Scout programs—Education offerings designed to complement scout badge requirements.*
- *Individual & Family Programs—Educational offerings designed for individuals and families.*





Education Program Testimonials

- “REALLY enjoyed today's presentation. The students loved getting to learn and touch the animals and our presenter was amazing with the first graders! Looking forward to next year!!”
- “We really enjoyed spending time at your zoo. We found it very age appropriate, easy to navigate, and engaging. We hope to be back next year!”
- “The presenter was wonderful! She kept the students engaged and entertained and they learned so much. We definitely want you back next year. Thank You:)”
- “What a great program! My girls were engaged the whole time. Thank you Cosley Zoo staff!”
- “Great experience, we are trying to have our K-2 look into this fabulous place to build background knowledge when the students are younger so they come to us with some understanding of barnyard animals vs natural habitats and the animals that actually are from North America and not rainforests and jungles from other continents.”



PEOPLE MAKING CONNECTIONS

The zoo's dedicated and passionate staff, interns, volunteers, and supporters all play a crucial role connecting people to the other amazing species that share the world with us.

Staff Milestones and Transitions

Cosley Zoo welcomed several new staff members to its ever-evolving team in 2023. The Animal Care team welcomed the experience of new zookeepers Teddy Argentum, Faith Stepuncik, and Mason Cargola. New Assistant Operations Manager Brian Mangiaracina joined the zoo team and Kelly Golbeck was greeted by the Education department.

In November, the zoo's Education Supervisor Jackie Karnstedt, a 10-year zoo veteran, chose to move on to a different phase of her career, leaving the position open to fill in 2024.

While our team may be evolving there are also milestones to celebrate. In 2023, staff members Erin Stephens, Alison Donahue, and Laurie Warfel, celebrated their 5-year anniversary while Tami Romejko and Shelley Jenks both celebrated 20 years.



Education & Guest Experiences Manager, Tami Romejko.



Educator, Shelley Jenks

Expanding our Knowledge Base

In an ever-changing world our staff are challenged regularly to keep up with best practices in animal wellbeing, education, emergency response and much more. In addition to gaining knowledge, we strive to offer our insights to others. In 2023 some of our highlights for continuing education include:

- Education and Animal Care staff, along with three current volunteers co-hosted the first ever virtual volunteer open house. Interested individuals learned about various volunteer opportunities at the zoo.
- The zoo's animal care team welcomed a job shadow student from Wheaton Academy.
- Education Supervisor, Jackie Karnstedt and Lead Zookeeper & Animal Welfare Coordinator, Heather Christophe traveled to Columbus, OH to attend the AZA annual conference. Jackie and Heather joined 3,000 other attendees in taking part in exciting activities, networking with peers, and learning from a wide variety of educational sessions.
- Zookeeper Amanda Rensch attended the American Association of Zookeepers conference in Akron, OH. She enjoyed many educational sessions including one on using technology in animal enrichment, and another on stopping burnout and compassion fatigue before it starts.
- Animal care staff hosted employees from the Cook County Forest Preserve District who were seeking information about animal training.
- Animal Curator, Angie Musselman attended a weeklong AZA professional development course, "Animal Welfare: Evidence Based Management" hosted at Brookfield Zoo.
- ALICE training was conducted for all zoo staff by the Wheaton Police Department.



PEOPLE MAKING CONNECTIONS

Volunteers & Interns

Cosley Zoo is fortunate to have a crew of dedicated volunteers and interns help the zoo fulfill its mission in many ways: helping with animal diet preparation, offering enrichment opportunities for the animals, interpreting animal habitats, providing hands-on learning opportunities, ensuring the zoo remains beautiful and clean, and so much more.



**THANK YOU,
COSLEY ZOO VOLUNTEERS!**

National Volunteer Week
April 16-22, 2023



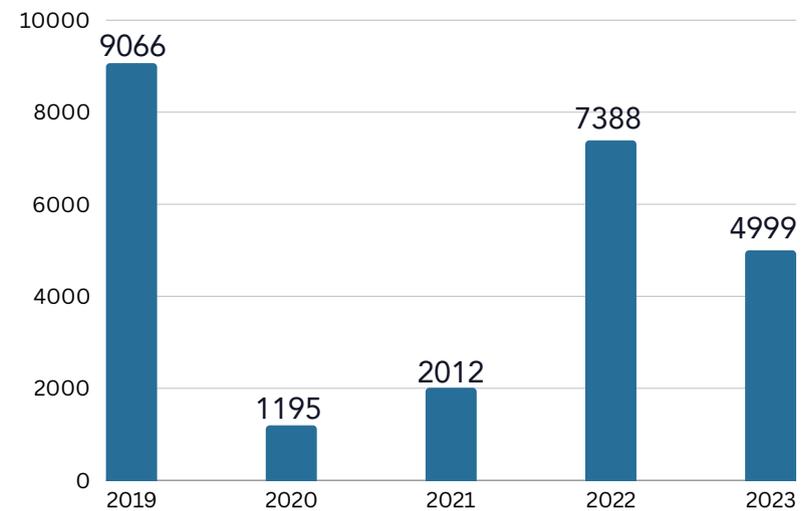
Cosley Zoo celebrates its volunteers each year during National Volunteer Week.



Animal care volunteer, Mike, helps with a turkey vulture exam.

In 2023, our volunteers and interns contributed a total of 4,999 hours of their time to the zoo, a monetary value of \$158,968 according to independentsector.org. (\$31.80/hour).

Volunteer & Intern Hours



PEOPLE MAKING CONNECTIONS

Mike Williams Scholarship

Each year the zoo offers a scholarship to a former Junior Zookeeper or intern. The scholarship was established in 2009 by Williams Architects to honor the memory of Mike Williams, a longtime supporter of Cosley Zoo. In 2023, Williams Architects increased the scholarship from \$2,000 to \$2,500. The 2023 scholarship recipient was Junior Zookeeper, Bellastarr Jakresky.



Scholarship winner Bellastarr Jakresky accepting her award.

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion

The zoo's Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) team continues with its mission:

Welcoming all communities and celebrating diverse peoples without exception to inspire connections with the natural world

by continuing to raise awareness within the zoo team on various aspects of DEAI. This is facilitated through a DEAI information/activity board and in-service training.

The zoo maintains its status as an approved sensory inclusive facility by KultureCity.



Zoo staff welcomes ALL.



PEOPLE MAKING CONNECTIONS

Visitorship

Cosley Zoo welcomed 157,404 visitors in 2023. These guests came from 7 countries, 47 U.S. states, and 1 U.S. territory. The tables and maps below and on the following pages show a more detailed breakdown of our visitors' demographics, residency, and zoo membership status.

2023 Visitor Data—Age		
Age Group	Number of Visitors	Percentage of Total
Children (birth-17 years)	79,212	50.3%
Adults (18-54 years)	62,608	39.8%
Seniors (55+ years)	15,584	9.9%
Total	157,404	100%

2023 Visitor Data—Residency		
Age Group	Number of Visitors	Percentage of Total
Wheaton Park District Residents	26,478	16.7%
Non-residents	130,926	83.3%
Total	157,404	100%

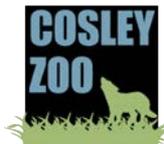


PEOPLE MAKING CONNECTIONS

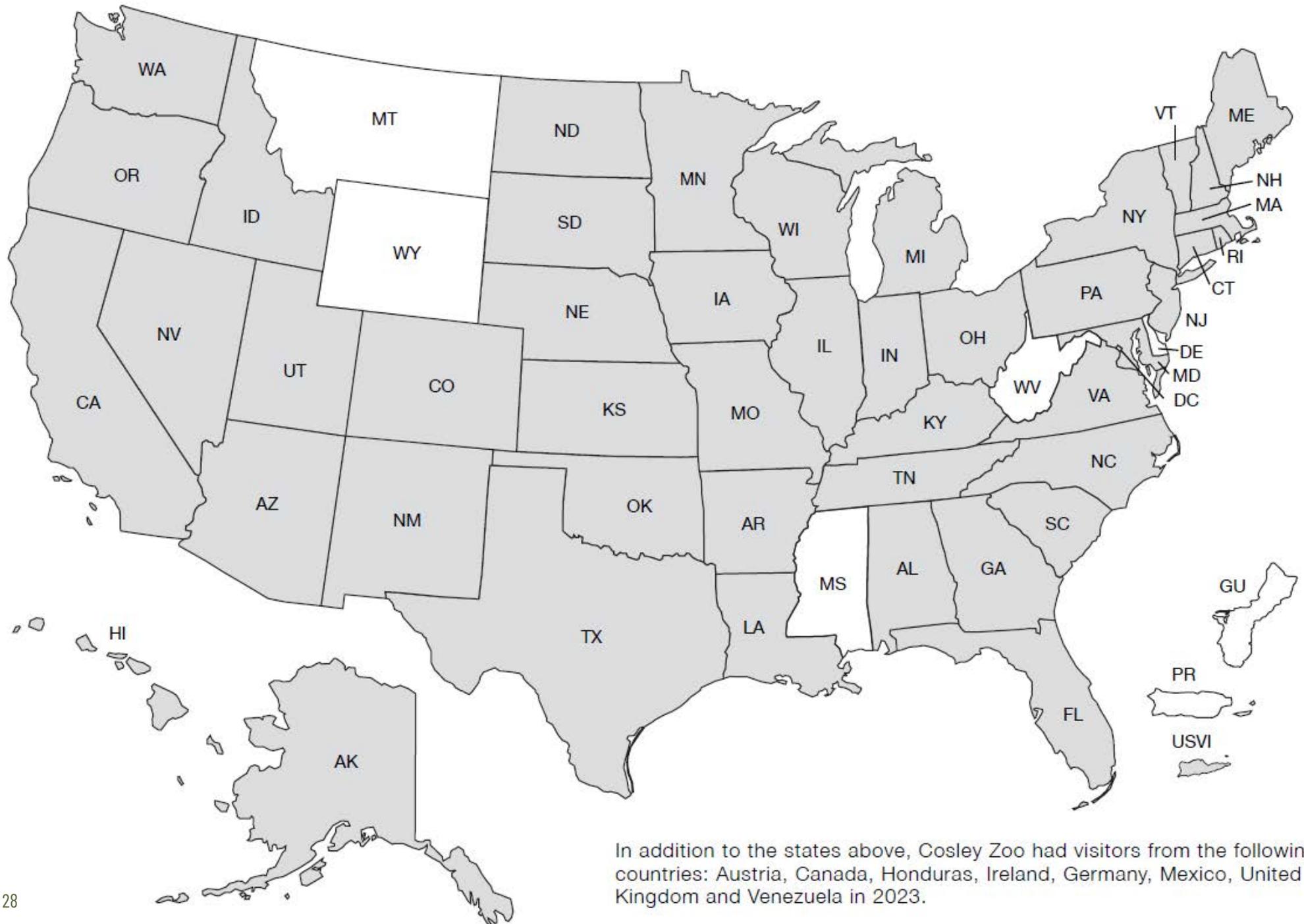
2023 Visitor Data—Members/Nonmembers		
Age Group	Number of Visitors	Percentage of Total
Cosley Zoo Members	14,358	9.1%
Nonmembers	143,046	90.9%
Total	157,404	100%

2023 Visitor Data—Paid Visitors vs. Free Admission		
Age Group	Number of Visitors	Percentage of Total
Paid Admission	57,584	36.6%
Free Admission*	99,820	63.4%
Total	157,404	100%

*Visitors receiving free admission include Wheaton Park District residents, all children 17 and under regardless of residency, Cosley Zoo members, and members of reciprocal institutions.



2023 COSLEY ZOO VISITORSHIP BY STATE



In addition to the states above, Cosley Zoo had visitors from the following countries: Austria, Canada, Honduras, Ireland, Germany, Mexico, United Kingdom and Venezuela in 2023.



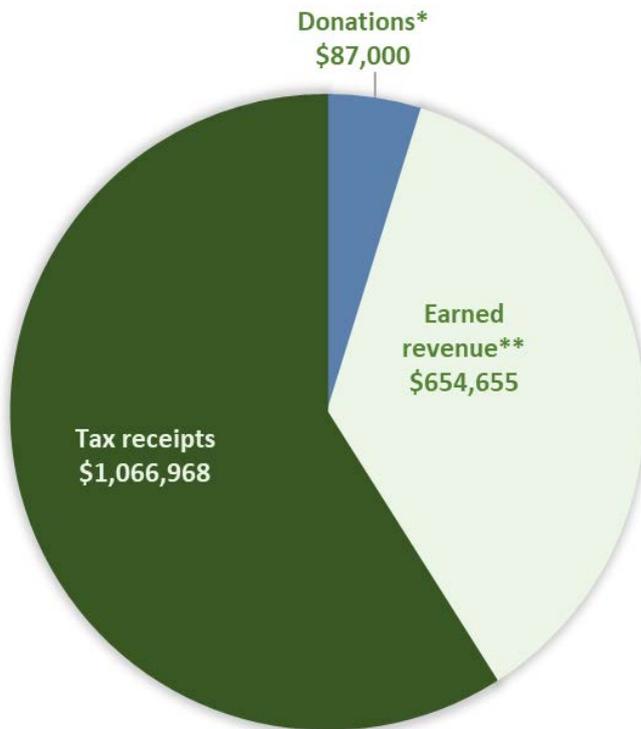


FINANCE

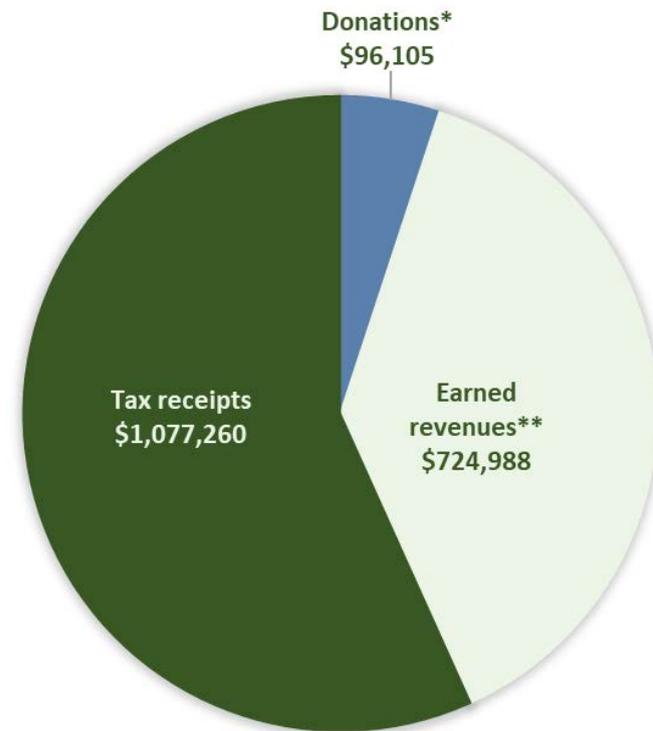
DOLLARS AND SENSE

Budgeted revenue for 2023 totaled \$1,808,623 with actual revenue of \$1,898,353

BUDGETED REVENUE FISCAL YEAR 2023



ACTUAL REVENUE FISCAL YEAR 2023



*Donations include Holiday Wish Tree, Coins for Conservation, donations through the zoo's online ticketing system, and conservation donations requested at the gift shop registers.

**Earned revenues include admission fees, penny and wind machine income, animal adoptions, facility rentals, program revenue, sponsorships, grants, and interest.



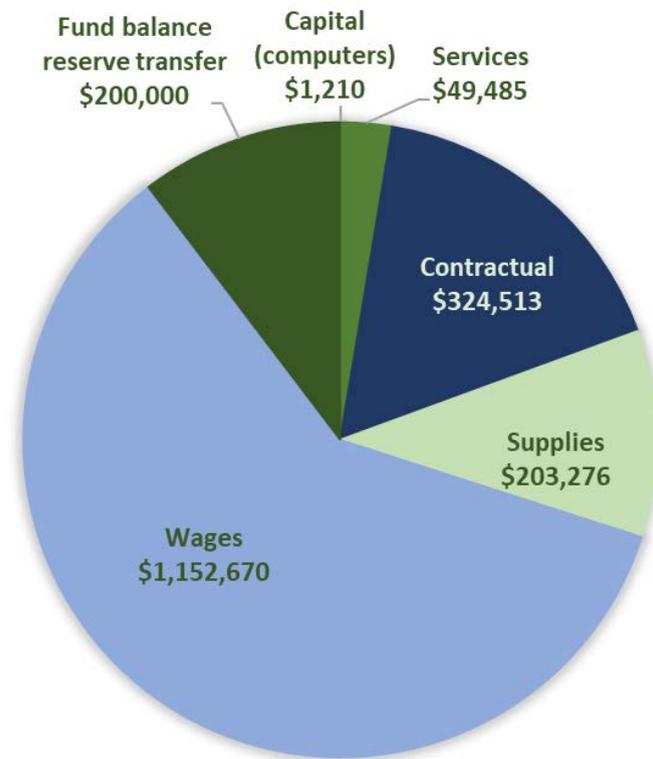
FINANCE DOLLARS AND SENSE

Budgeted expenses for 2023 totaled \$2,078,086 with actual expenses of \$1,931,154

BUDGETED EXPENSES FISCAL YEAR 2023



ACTUAL EXPENSES FISCAL YEAR 2023



FINANCE DOLLARS AND SENSE

Cosley Zoo receives revenue from a variety of sources including both the Wheaton Park District and the Cosley Foundation. The following data is for Wheaton Park District revenue only. Information pertaining to Cosley Foundation revenue may be found on page 39.

Cosley Zoo Earned Revenue Sources, 2019-2023					
Revenue Source	2019	2020 ^a	2021	2022	2023*
Donations, sponsorships, and grants	\$66,184	\$163,536 ^b	\$208,219	\$90,626	\$97,290
Penny and wind machine	\$5,220	\$74	\$3,050	\$2,545	\$2,170
Animal adoptions	\$865	\$1,688	\$1,665	\$1,235	\$945
General admission	\$278,933	\$199,495	\$418,684 ^c	\$342,166 ^d	\$371,381 ^e
Programs, events, and rentals	\$220,106	\$36,808	\$135,472	\$208,267	\$257,878
Cosley Foundation Support	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$0	\$0
Interest and miscellaneous income	\$34,294	\$18,445	\$1,797	\$16,724	\$91,429
Total revenue	\$630,602	\$450,046	\$798,887	\$661,563	\$821,093

*Numbers subject to change upon completion of year-end audit

a The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a four-month zoo shutdown, which had a significant impact on many sources of revenue.

b Fall and year-end appeals were given to operations but are now directed to the Cosley Foundation.

c The admission fee increased in 2021 from \$7 to \$8 for non-resident adults and \$6 to \$7 for non-resident seniors.

d The admission fee was increased in 2022 from \$8 to \$9 for non-resident adults and \$7 to \$8 for non-resident seniors.

e The admission fee was increased in 2023 from \$9 to \$10 for non-resident adults and \$8 to \$9 for non-resident seniors.



FINANCE DOLLARS AND SENSE

In 2023, Cosley Zoo was the recipient of several operational donations and grants including:

- Wheaton Lions Club grant in support of the Blanding's Turtle Program
- A \$500,000 grant from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity in support of a new parking lot
- More than \$90,000 in operational donations

These funds made the following possible:

- The installation of a new information kiosk
- Replacement of an outdoor ambassador animal habitat
- New signs for the Falabella horse and porcupines
- Replacement of public fencing around the lynx and coyote habitats



Guest information kiosk.



New North American porcupine sign.



FINANCE DOLLARS AND SENSE

Many infrastructure and equipment updates, totaling \$210,238, were made possible by Wheaton Park District capital funds with support from donors.

Projects completed throughout the zoo in 2023, include:

- New roofs on the deer and raptor holding buildings
- Replacement of the wood deck around the train station
- Replacement of timber walls along the deer holding building, behind the wildlife holding buildings, and inside the raptor habitats
- A point of sale system was added to the admissions operation to facilitate check-in and data collection
- The addition of a new public fence along the entry walkway



New deck complete with railings.



New public fence that adds a more natural feel to the zoo's entrance.



One of the timber walls that was replaced in 2023.



COSLEY FOUNDATION

A PATH TO THE FUTURE

Since its inception in 1986, the Cosley Foundation has raised funds for the continued development of the zoo and has been an integral component of the zoo's overall success. The volunteer foundation board is passionate about Cosley Zoo and works diligently throughout the year to ensure the zoo receives the support it needs to grow and fulfill its mission for years to come.

The board enthusiastically welcomed new board member Paul Becker in 2023. As of December 31, the Cosley Foundation Board of Directors was comprised of the following dedicated members:

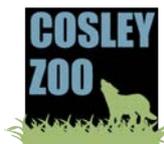
- Matt Szafranski—President
- Shayne Purdue—Vice President
- Michael Benard—Secretary
- Adam Sharpee—Treasurer
- Paul Becker
- Jennifer Clark
- Phyllis Geyer
- Jasmina Hoscheit
- Rachel Ittner
- Larry Kmiecik
- Ashley Rabatic
- Susan Varcak



Cosley Foundation Vice President Shayne Purdue and President Matt Szafranski enjoying a night out at the zoo.



Senior Development Officer Cathy Mousseau with zoo supporters Dave and Judy Hale.



COSLEY FOUNDATION

A PATH TO THE FUTURE

In October, the foundation board members got together for their annual retreat. During the retreat, strategic plan consultant Elizabeth Hennig facilitated a planning exercise and discussed the details and importance of strategic planning.

The Cosley Foundation continued to work with a fundraising consultant throughout 2023. With the support of the consultant, the foundation had a very successful year, earning more than \$750,000 in donations and fundraising event proceeds.

Thanks to fundraising efforts, the zoo welcomed 54 Wildlife Champions Society members, supporters giving \$1,000 or more during the year.

The Cosley Foundation made many other contacts with donors through events such as Dr. Steve and Janet Armbrust's Party with a Purpose. This event enabled the zoo to share its impact with a new audience.



Dr. Steve Armbrust with his mother and brother at Party with a Purpose.

The Cosley Foundation once again hosted a donor appreciation event in 2023, which was attended by more than 70 zoo supporters.

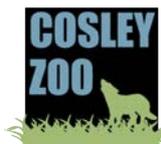


Zoo supporters Carol Honeywell, Roman and Molly Boed, and Mary Landreth enjoying the donor appreciation event.

In addition to three fundraising appeals and other philanthropy efforts, the Cosley Foundation sponsored several events throughout the year including the Run for the Animals, the 40th annual Mike Williams Cosley Classic Golf Outing, Pumpkin Fest, and the Festival of Lights and Christmas Tree Sale. These events raise funds for capital projects and support zoo operations (see financial details on the following page).

The sale of zoo memberships once again reached an all-time high with 1,403 memberships purchased in 2023.

Cosley Zoo Memberships 2020-2023				
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of memberships	618	998	1350	1403



COSLEY FOUNDATION

A PATH TO THE FUTURE

The following chart shows the amount of revenue gained from Cosley Foundation fund raisers, as well as a five-year comparison of funds earned.

Cosley Foundation Net Revenue 2019-2023					
Revenue Source	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*
Zoo membership	\$54,471	\$34,129	\$58,759	\$71,136	\$92,451
Retail revenue	\$110,129	\$72,666	\$158,533	\$138,656	\$146,489
Donations	\$82,695	\$267,321	\$149,299	\$686,218	\$280,895
Run for the Animals	\$64,702	\$23,239	\$23,967	\$23,525	\$37,378
Cosley Classic Golf Outing	\$39,743	\$15,643	\$37,576	\$32,880	\$43,675
Pumpkin Fest	\$12,730	\$16,998	\$17,816	\$16,758	\$11,800
Festival of Lights & Tree Sales	\$117,429	\$113,216	\$134,790	\$134,999	\$131,580
Interest & miscellaneous income	\$1,243	\$993	\$874	\$13,225	\$76,175
Total net revenue	\$483,142	\$544,145	\$581,614	\$1,117,397	\$820,443

*Numbers subject to change upon completion of year-end audit

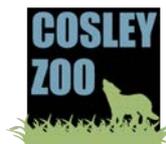
Strategic Planning

In 2023 the zoo began working on a 5-year strategic plan with consultant Public Communications, Inc. This plan is completely funded by a zoo supporter through the Cosley Foundation.

When completed this plan will set direction and priorities for Cosley Zoo, focus work to achieve meaningful results, inform daily decision-making, and make a positive impact on the community by teaching, inspiring, and motivating people to protect animals and nature.



Cosley Foundation board member Phyllis Geyer with supporter Jane Akerman.





MARKETING

COMMUNICATING OUR VISION

In 2023, the zoo and marketing staff developed a marketing plan and calendar that allowed us to have a continued presence in the community, drive daily attendance, increase program participation, share conservation initiatives, and continue to enhance our engagement on social media platforms.

The marketing plan outlines various programs, special events, fundraising initiatives, daily activities, and conservation projects.

The zoo continued to offer advance ticket registration through our website and convenient event registration through a new program called Fareharbor.

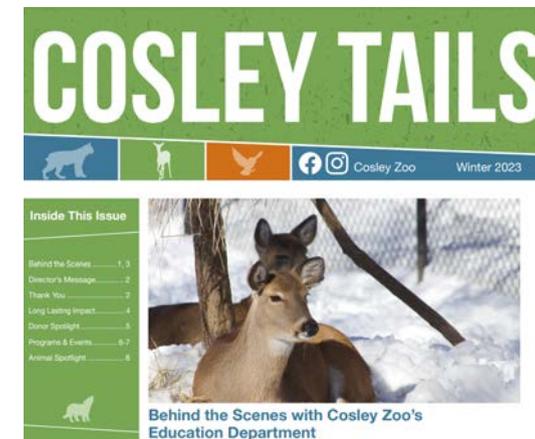
The zoo hosted and participated in many activities including an evening event for neighbors, a fundraiser at the local Chili's restaurant, the Uncorked Wine event, showcased the zoo at the Sensory Garden Playground summer play day, and participated in the Downtown Wheaton Associations Dinosaur exhibit.

We issued a total of 5 press releases, distributed 39 email blasts and designed 246 social media posts. Email marketing and social media continues to be one of our preferred methods of marketing and communications. Our interactions and engagement on social media has grown up to 16.2K from 8.9K. Instagram reached 9,521 in 2023 vs. 5,742 in 2022.

The zoos social media followers and engagement continued to grow. In 2023, Facebook hit 23,200 follower's vs 22,600 in 2022. Instagram grew to 3,764 from 3,200.

Marketing highlights in 2023:

- Updated signage for display onsite at the zoo
- Direct mail and emails targeted to area schools and organizations.
- Featuring zoo programs and events in quarterly district program guide.
- Distribution of Cosley Tails printed and e-newsletters highlighting various animals, donor spotlights, staff members and conservation efforts.



- Highlighting event and daily activities on digital screen displayed in the gift shop.
- Posting news, photo's, special events and program information on social media.
- Maintained profiles and links from various advertisers such as kidlist.com, macaronikid.com, discoverdupage.com and yelp.com:
Yelp Statistics:
 - The page received 2,400 views vs. 2,200 in 2022, and appeared in Yelp search results 76,000 times vs. 65,468 in 2022.
- Created and unveiled a NEW logo celebrating the zoos upcoming 50th anniversary in 2024.



MARKETING

COMMUNICATING OUR VISION

Cosley Zoo's website, cosleyzoo.org, continues to see a high number of visitors.

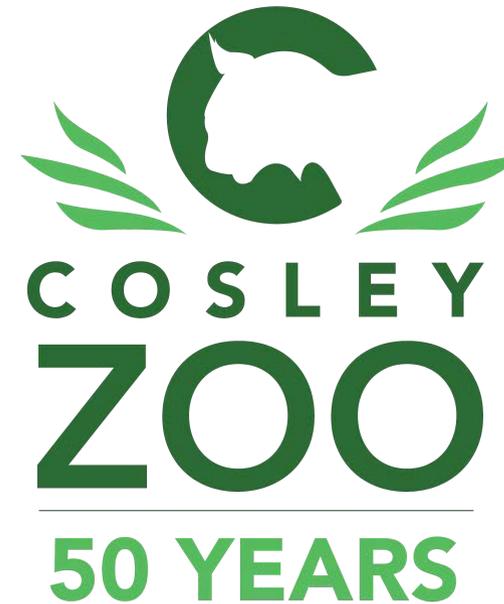
The top ten visited pages of the zoo's website were:

1. Home - 143,351
2. Tickets - 50,299
3. Plan Your Visit - 43,641
4. Fees & Reservations - 36,464
5. Species List - 22,769
6. Animals - 20,456
7. Daily Activities - 17,931
8. Festival of Lights - 14,775
9. Event Calendar - 14,434
10. Zoo Information - 13,967

The top ten referral sites were:

1. Google - 109,686
2. Cosley Home - 70,591
3. Facebook - 2,413
4. Bing - 2,008
5. Fareharbor - 1,682
6. Mykidlist.com - 1,198
7. Wheatonparkdistrict.com - 1,008
8. Yahoo - 999
9. Duckduckgo - 858
10. Discoverdupage.com - 691

The collage on the next several pages highlights various ads, signage, eblasts and other graphics created for Cosley Zoo in 2023.



50th anniversary logos were unveiled at the donor appreciation event.



Marketing Collage—General Facility

ZOO INFORMATION PLAN YOUR VISIT GET INVOLVED EVENTS PROGRAMS FOR KIDS TICKETS



Take your students on an educational field trip they are sure to enjoy.

School & Group Programs

Let the area's best zoo provide an unforgettable learning experience for you.

Cosley Zoo education programs support many Illinois State Learning Standards for children ages 3 and over. Cosley Zoo staff is experienced in working with a wide variety of ages and groups with special needs. Program material is adjusted to be age-appropriate for your group. We look forward to being part of a memorable learning experience.



SUPPORT COSLEY ZOO

[Donate Online](#)

Secure donation portal at [kindful.com](#) is best viewed using Chrome, Firefox, Edge and Safari web browsers.

STAY IN TOUCH

Receive upcoming event details, animal profiles, conservation information and more in your inbox!

[Subscribe to e-News](#)

FIND US ON:



- Programs
- Overnight Programs
- School & Group Programs**
- Scout Programs
- Summer Camps
- Teen Opportunities

Virtual Programs	In-person Programs
+ Cosley Zoo-m Animal Chat	
+ Cosley Zoo-m Educational Presentation	
+ Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Challenge	
+ Virtual Zoo to You - Pre-recorded Program	

ZOO INFORMATION PLAN YOUR VISIT GET INVOLVED EVENTS PROGRAMS FOR KIDS TICKETS



[Get Involved](#)

[Club Care Animal Adoptions](#)

[Donate](#)

[Partners & Sponsors](#)

[Planned Giving](#)

[Volunteer & Internship Opportunities](#)

Zoo Membership

Show your support for conservation and enjoy great member benefits—including free and discounted admission to more than 175 other zoos and aquariums nationwide!

We would love for you to join our wonderful family of Cosley Zoo members!

To become a member, call 630.665.5534, [download a brochure](#), or [sign up online](#).

[SIGN UP NOW FOR A MEMBERSHIP](#)

Levels of Membership

All levels of membership receive free admission to Cosley Zoo.

Annual membership fees support the development of new animal exhibits, the zoo's participation in wildlife conservation initiatives and unique educational experiences for people of all ages.

Membership Options

[+ Wild Bunch Family Membership \\$75/year](#)

SUPPORT COSLEY ZOO

[Donate Online](#)

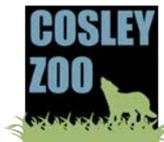
Secure donation portal at [kindful.com](#) is best viewed using Chrome, Firefox, Edge and Safari web browsers.

STAY IN TOUCH

Receive upcoming event details, animal profiles, conservation information and more in your inbox!

[Subscribe to e-News](#)

FIND US ON:



MARKETING

COMMUNICATING OUR VISION

Marketing Collage—Advertisements

HAUL OUT THE HOLLY!

Christmas season's most alluring decorative finds are waiting to be discovered at Cosley Zoo's Festival of Lights and Christmas Tree Sale running Nov. 24 through Dec. 31. Four species of fresh evergreen trees are available, measuring 3 to 12 feet, along with a selection of choice wreaths, garlands and greenery. Gifts abound inside the Wild Side Gift Shop. Come celebrate the season with the zoo's resident animals, grab a cup of cocoa and bask in the glow of dazzling light displays while searching for that special tree. Free admission. **COSLEY ZOO**
1356 N. Gary Ave., Wheaton, www.cosleyzoo.org



West Suburban Living

1/2 mile race for kids

Kick off SUMMER JUNE 3

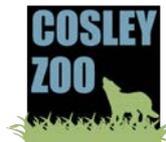
COSLEY ZOO RUN FOR THE ANIMALS 2023

5K/10K 1/2 MILE

Memorial Park | Wheaton

cosleyzoo.org/run

Kidlist Ad



COSLEY ZOO PUMPKIN FEST

It's a fall must!

plus
KID'S ADMISSION IS ALWAYS FREE AT COSLEY ZOO!

OCTOBER 1-31 | 9A-5P

Small Pie Pumpkins

COSLEY ZOO
1356 N. GARY AVE., WHEATON, IL
COSLEYZOO.ORG

Daily Herald Ad

MARKETING

COMMUNICATING OUR VISION

Marketing Collage—Special Events



COSLEY ZOO
FESTIVAL OF
LIGHTS
& CHRISTMAS TREE SALES

November 24-December 30

Open 9A-9P
Lights come on at 3P.

Illuminate your family's holiday traditions at Cosley Zoo!
Spectacular Light Displays | Trees, Wreaths & More

Donations are greatly appreciated. Proceeds support the zoo,
its animals, programs, and exhibit development.

Holiday Hours:
December 24 & 31 | 9A-12P
December 25 & January 1 | Closed

1356 North Gary Ave., Wheaton | 630.665.5534 | cosleyzoo.org



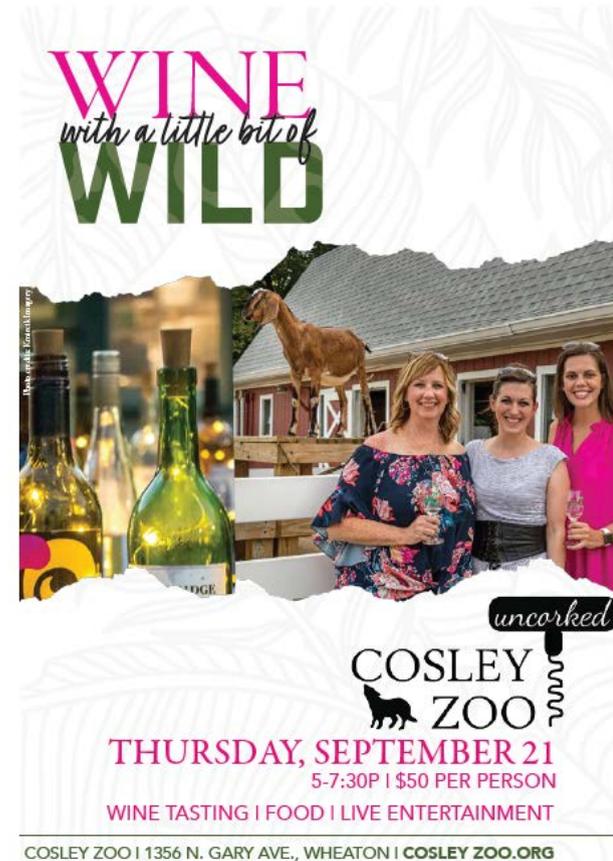
WELCOME FRIENDS



Cosley Zoo

CELEBRATES YOU!

Sponsored by  Fairhaven
wealth management



WINE
with a little bit of
WILD



uncorked

COSLEY ZOO

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21
5-7:30P | \$50 PER PERSON
WINE TASTING | FOOD | LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

COSLEY ZOO | 1356 N. GARY AVE., WHEATON | COSLEY ZOO.ORG



MARKETING

COMMUNICATING OUR VISION

Marketing Collage—Education & Outreach

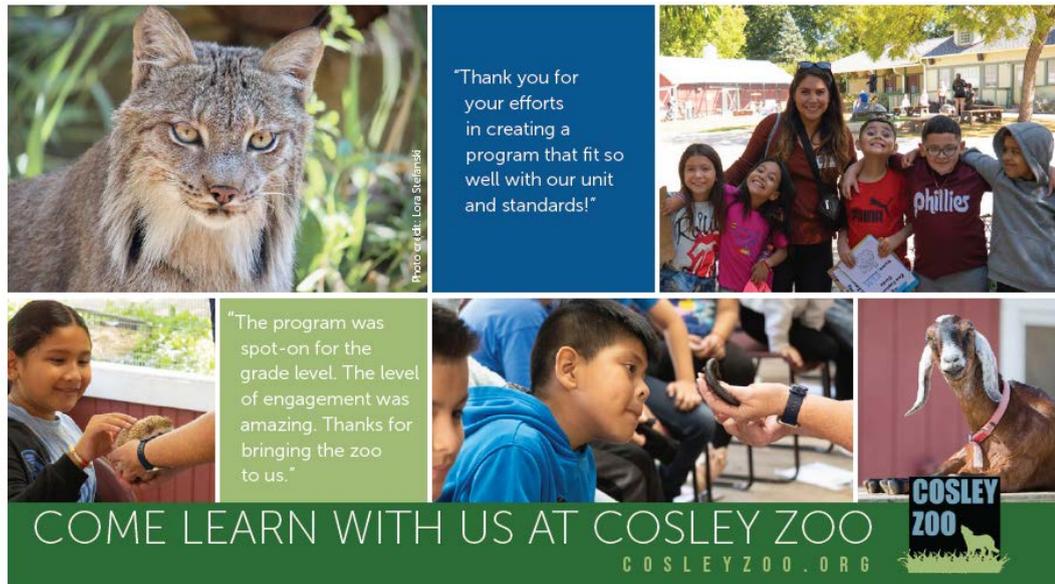


Photo of Lila, Lora, Stefani & Ash

"Thank you for your efforts in creating a program that fit so well with our unit and standards!"

"The program was spot-on for the grade level. The level of engagement was amazing. Thanks for bringing the zoo to us."

COME LEARN WITH US AT COSLEY ZOO
COSLEYZOO.ORG



AT COSLEY ZOO
IN 2022

COSLEY ZOO

CONSERVATION

COSLEY ZOO is Certified Sensory Inclusive

Visit cosleyzoo.org if you are interested in learning more or want to continue to support Cosley Zoo.

1356 N. Gary Ave., Wheaton, IL | cosleyzoo.org

Special thanks to the Cosley Foundation Board
Matt Szatmari, President | Shayne Purdue, Vice President | Adam Sharpoo, Treasurer | Michael Bernard, Secretary
Jennifer Clark | Phyllis Geyer | Jasmina Hoesche | Rachel Iltner | Larry Krueck | Ashley Radabaugh | Susan Vercak

ANIMAL WELL-BEING
EDUCATION
CONSERVATION
COMMUNITY SUPPORT

COSLEY ZOO

2022 IMPACT REPORT

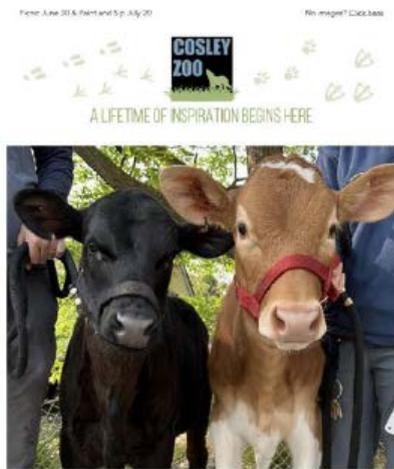
YOU HAD A BIG IMPACT



MARKETING

COMMUNICATING OUR VISION

Marketing Collage—Eblasts



Upcoming Events

Picnic with the Animals

Friday, June 30 | 5:30-8P | All ages | \$11/each (Free for kids 1 & under)

Bring your own picnic and join us for an evening full of fun. Activities, animal visits and after-hours access to the zoo are all included in your fee. The Coyote Cafe, concessions stand and Wild Side Gift Shop will also be open. This event is held rain or shine. 50% of proceeds support conservation of an endangered or threatened species.

[Tickets](#)

Paint & Sip

Thursday, July 20 | 6-8P | 21 & Over | \$85/person

Join us at Pinot's Palette of St. Charles for an adult-only program where you not only get to create memories, but a painting as well. The evening will be filled with animal encounters, adult beverages and painting.

[Register](#)



Thursday, September 21

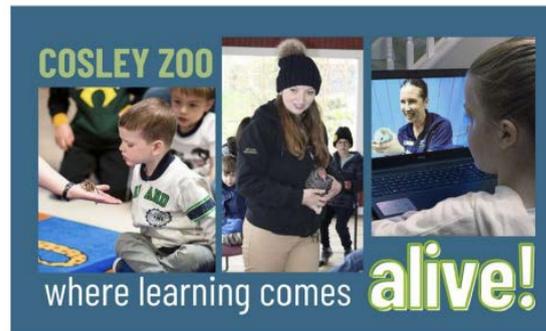
Multiple Wine Stations | Live Entertainment | Appetizers | Talks | Animal Visits

[Tickets](#)



IT'S A BRAND NEW YEAR!

Cosley Zoo has a learning experience your students will love.



Schedule a fun in-person or virtual education program today!

Our professional zoo educators and live animal ambassadors will help learning come alive for your students. We have a presentation that will complement every curriculum.

Check out our School and Group Programs page to see our Zoo to You, in-person and virtual program options. We look forward to seeing you and your students soon.

[View Programs](#)



Get Excited for Fall with Pumpkin Fest!

Taking in the beautiful fall colors at Cosley Zoo is a must-do! Come see the animals and pick out the perfect pumpkin.

Event Features:

- Children's rides available for an additional fee
- Apples, gourds, pumpkins, cider, cornstalks, and various sizes of straw bales available to purchase
- Fall merchandise in the Wild Side Gift Shop



Proceeds from your purchases benefit [Cosley Zoo](#). Regular admission rates apply.

[DETAILS](#)



Friday, October 20
5:15-8:30P

SPOOKTACULAR
HALLOWEEN STROLL
at Cosley Zoo

REGISTER AT [COSLEYZOO.ORG](#)

Experience an evening stroll through the zoo while enjoying the family-friendly decorations and activities. Finish your visit by decorating a pumpkin or take one to-go and decorate it at home! Get your costumes together and register early to secure your spot. All ages are welcome. Infants ages 1 and under are free but a ticket is required.

MARKETING

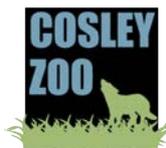
COMMUNICATING OUR VISION

Marketing Collage—Social Media



24 likes

cosleyzoo It's International Vulture Awareness Day; a day organized to bring awareness to a wider audience and highlight the important work being carried out by vulture conservationists around the world.

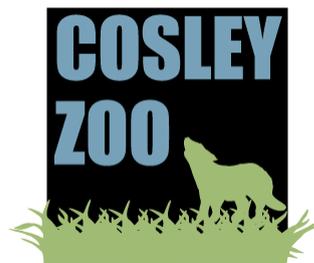


Liked by wheatonparkdistrict and 23 others

cosleyzoo Join the Cosley Zoo team throughout the entire month of July in the 2023 Plastic Free Ecochallenge! This global initiative challenges participants to reduce and refuse single-use plastics. Sign up to see how 31 days of action add up to a lifetime of positive changes for you, our community, and the planet! Register today to get started (link in bio)!

June 30, 2023





ACCREDITED BY THE
**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**

COSLEY ZOO

1356 NORTH GARY AVE., WHEATON IL 60187 | (630) 665-5534 | www.cosleyzoo.org