



news release

Assiniboine Park Zoo Earns Meritorious AZA Accreditation

Silver Spring, Maryland (September 18, 2019) – The Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) in partnership with the Assiniboine Park Conservancy has announced that the Assiniboine Park Zoo has been granted accreditation by AZA’s independent Accreditation Commission.

“Only the very best aquariums and zoos can meet AZA’s accreditation standards for animal care and welfare, conservation, education, and more, which are the most rigorous in the profession,” said AZA President and CEO Dan Ashe. “By achieving AZA accreditation, Assiniboine Park Zoo demonstrates a commitment to protecting animals around the world and inspiring their guests to do the same.”

To be accredited, the Assiniboine Park Zoo underwent a thorough review to make certain it has and will continue to meet ever-rising standards in categories which include animal care and welfare, veterinary programs, conservation, education, and safety. AZA requires zoos and aquariums to successfully complete this rigorous accreditation process every five years in order to be members of the Association.

The accreditation process includes a detailed application and a meticulous on-site inspection by a team of trained zoo and aquarium professionals. The inspecting team observes all aspects of the facility’s operation, including animal care and welfare; keeper training; safety for visitors, staff and animals; educational programs; conservation efforts; veterinary programs; financial stability; risk management; visitor services; and more. Finally, top officials are interviewed at a formal hearing of AZA’s independent Accreditation Commission, after which accreditation is granted, tabled, or denied. Any facility that is denied may reapply one year after the Commission’s decision is made.

The Assiniboine Park Zoo first received AZA accreditation in September 2014 following a major redevelopment of the Zoo that included the opening of the international award-winning Journey to Churchill exhibit. This was a major milestone for the Zoo, which is currently one of only six Canadian organizations to hold AZA accreditation.

“Accreditation provides our visitors, members and the community at large with assurance that we are holding ourselves to the highest standards for animal welfare and care and are committed to providing our guests with a memorable, meaningful and educational visitor experience,” said Grant Furniss, Senior Director, Zoological Operations, Assiniboine Park Zoo. “We are proud to actively contribute to this community of modern, progressive zoos and aquariums who are making a difference each and every day through their important work in the areas of wildlife conservation, education, research, rescue and rehabilitation.”

In their report, the AZA inspection team identified a number of key strengths including the Assiniboine Park Zoo’s robust volunteer program, the world-class Journey to Churchill exhibit, high quality interpretive signage and landscaping throughout the Zoo, and the exceptional animal husbandry program for horses in the McFeetors Heavy Horse Centre. Inspectors also noted high morale among staff and a strong feeling of optimism and enthusiasm about the future of the Zoo.

About AZA

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, animal welfare, education, science, and recreation. AZA is the accrediting body for the top zoos and aquariums in the United States and eleven other countries. Look for the AZA accreditation logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. The AZA is a leader in saving species and your link to helping animals all over the world. To learn more, visit www.aza.org.

About Assiniboine Park Zoo

Located minutes from downtown Winnipeg in beautiful Assiniboine Park, the Assiniboine Park Zoo has been a favourite destination for families, tourists, school groups, and animal lovers for over a century. With over 80 park-like acres to explore, the Zoo is open year-round with both indoor and outdoor exhibits, providing visitors with the opportunity to interact with animal species from all corners of the globe. The recent redevelopment of Assiniboine Park Zoo has included significant renovations, exciting new exhibits, enhanced facilities for visitors, and a more visible and active contribution to environmental and wildlife education, research, and conservation in Manitoba.

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