



Zoos And Aquariums May Play Key Role In Teaching Future Sustainability Practices

Description



Zoos and aquariums have evolved tremendously in the last few decades. While animal welfare rightfully remains the highest priority, zoos and aquariums are expanding their conservation efforts and

investments beyond the walls of their own facilities. Thanks to the high level of trust that zoos and aquariums have earned within their communities, they have a massive opportunity to influence wider climate action. Zoos and aquariums have a special responsibility to act sustainably, as they care for live animals – especially endangered species. But there’s work to be done. The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) has an accreditation system in place that judges wildlife organizations based on several factors, including the practice of sustainability. Currently, of the approximately 2,800 animal exhibitors licensed by the USDA across the country, less than 10% are AZA-accredited. Ultimately, more zoos and aquariums need to drive a sustainability vision that embraces their potential to act as agents of cultural change as well as educators of sustainable development. I spoke with notable executives of zoos and aquariums across the United States who are incorporating sustainability practices into their organizations and how this is further promoting an eco-friendly lifestyle and giving a positive outlook on wildlife conservation. Jeff Fromm: How are you currently thinking about sustainability? Sean Putney, CEO at Kansas City Zoo: Conservation and sustainability are a core part of our strategic plan. We want to be leaders in these categories and our guests expect us to be as well. Zoos have come such a long way over the last 50 years. Though excellence in animal care continues to be a focus, we are also concerned with the environments where they come from and where we live. We are involved with dozens of projects that range from regional to international efforts and often times the focus is on the animals and how to protect them from extinction, but it is equally important to look at the environment in which they live and how to sustain it for them and for us. We have come a long way at our zoo but we continue to look for ways that we can get better and “walk the walk” not just talk the talk. Specifically speaking about the efforts we have made on grounds in the last decade, I can point to photovoltaic cells on many of our buildings that help to generate the electricity we use. We have also reduced energy waste in several buildings by updating control systems. We have added well over 100 recycling containers throughout the Zoo to make it easier for our guests to make the right choice. We have green roofs and water gardens as well as multiple areas that utilize local plants and flowers that need less watering. When building new, or renovating old, animal exhibits, we incorporate sustainability into the planning sessions as well. Several buildings are LEED Certified as we look for ways to save and conserve water and other resources and energy. We collect animal waste and plant refuse and make a rich compost that can be reused on grounds as well as sold to the local community. We have also been involved with efforts outside the Zoo as staff have helped with Blue River Cleanups and placing signs at local schools encouraging “no idle zones.” All of these should reveal that conservation and sustainability is important and are woven into our everyday practices.

Read the full article at: apple.news

Category

1. TheCircularEconomy.com

Date Created

November 22, 2022

Author

thecirculareconomyteam