

A FEW WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

## President's Message

Tommy Bryant, Director of Facilities, Oklahoma City Zoo



Greetings from Oklahoma City. First I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who attended our annual conference, and give a big round of applause to all of the vendors and sponsors that make the conference possible. Without their support and donations, we

would not be able to have these opportunities at our wonderful zoos across the country.

Now that the conference is over it is time to reflect on what knowledge we gathered and contacts we made. I think back on the first conference I attended, and the kindness shown to me when I did not know a single person. That is the kind of group this is, everyone is welcome and everyone is included. This says a lot about how we conduct our business. There were many great education sessions and discussions during the conference, many ideas shared, and many expectations set for the future. I thank everyone who conducted a session and all of those that attended. The sharing of information and ideas will make our zoos more viable places to work and grow.

We work in a unique environment where we get to sustain the animal population and teach others about our passion for wild places and species. I would like to encourage everyone to take the information gleaned from the conference and apply it to everyday processes and tasks we all face each day. I learned so much just visiting with everyone. Some ideas I had never thought of and there were other things that someone has tweaked to make it so much better. We can all learn from each other and apply those ideas to our operations.

Looking forward as the new President I would like to reach out to all of you and express my humble gratitude. I would also like to hear from you about suggestions to improve our Association. We have a great group of people but we can always improve. Thanks again for a successful conference and I look forward to great things to come.

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# Past President's Message

**Brian Timm, Sr. Director of Campus Maintenance and Operations, Houston Zoo**

Another year has passed, and another successful conference has taken place. Tommy Bryant and the folks from the Oklahoma City Zoo were a most gracious host. The annual conference is a time to see old friends, make new connections, share ideas, and further our knowledge in all that we do for our organizations. The trend of first-time attendees reaching into the forty percent range continued this year. This is the future of the AZFA, and it is important to continually foster an environment of learning, relationship building, and idea sharing with all who attend. We are doing a good job in creating this type of environment and it shows in the number of people who signed up to be on a committee for the upcoming year. These committees serve as a springboard to leadership within the organization. Panel discussions and all attendee sessions help our members understand how they can be involved and how important of a role they play in the AZFA and in everyday life.

This past year was highly successful, and it has led us down a path of change in how the AZFA conducts business as well as making improvements to the annual conference. This year we created a theme for the conference revolving around animal welfare. We can all appreciate the importance of working in concert with our counterparts in the animal care field. This type of focus can improve communication and create a better more cooperative working environment that not only benefits animals, conservation, and sustainability, but also creates a partnership amongst all staff members. We discussed the importance of a more diverse staff and how this could benefit our daily interaction and improve upon established relationships. This is the kind of topic that could lead to a theme for next year's conference. There have also been some discussions on how we can continue to improve the annual conference timeline and create a more robust and enjoyable experience while staying within the context of the mission. Ideas are

being shared throughout the group and I appreciate the feedback that has been given thus far. Please continue to share your thoughts on what is working and what may need some improvement.

It is a great feeling knowing that the AZFA is headed down the path of growth, improvement, and looking into the future both near and far. I am honored to have served as your President this past year and cherish all the good things that we do each day to make the world a better place.

We are a pretty awesome group!

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# The Green Scene

**Sustainability Institute: A Course in Organizational Sustainability Planning**  
**Wanda Kolo, Sustainability Institute Director & Director of Sustainable Operations & Construction Management at Saint Louis Zoo**

Imagine what your organization might look like if it achieved that lofty goal of sustainability; balancing net inputs with net outputs. Perhaps, you can stretch even further to envision what it might look like beyond the state of equilibrium to one of regeneration, or providing excess benefit to the broader community. No matter where your organization may be on the sustainability spectrum, there is a challenge of closing the gap between today's reality and the desired future state. To achieve measurable outcomes over time, we need strategic planning tactics.

Recognizing that many organizations within AZA & AZFA wanted more guidance on the subject of sustainability planning, the AZA's Green Scientific Advisory Group (GSAG) collaborated with other entities to create the Oglebay Sustainability Institute, a course focused on sustainability planning. The course launched in February, 2019 and preparations are underway for year two, scheduled for February 2-7, 2020 at Oglebay Resort in Wheeling, West Virginia.

The course has been developed through a unique partnership between Oglebay Resort, North Carolina State University (NCSU), members of the AZA Green Scientific Advisory Group (GSAG), and parks and recreation professionals. The Sustainability Institute was created to support the challenge we all face as complex organizations shifting towards more sustainable operations. AZFA & AZA members have made notable strides in their collective efforts to reduce operational footprints. Yet, a lot of us still need to create strategic sustainability plans that align with our visions for a healthier, more prosperous future. The week-long course is intended to provide a thorough understanding of sustainability concepts and the process necessary to creating organization-wide sustainability plans.

The course curriculum has been modelled on content created by the AZA Green Guides and includes training that leads to operational improvement, stakeholder engagement, and tools for tracking progress from an established baseline. Universal aspects of organizational sustainability include management and reduction of energy, water, and waste, as well as procurement practices that reduce the strain on natural resources. Other topics such as design & construction, facilities maintenance, innovation, and stakeholder engagement are covered to provide a broad understanding of best practices in a campus context.

First year participants found added value in attending this course as a team of two or more individuals from the same organization. As a result of going through the process together, these participants were able to discuss their specific cultural challenges and opportunities leading to vetted action plans and role assignments for next steps. Those organizations who sent staff from within their facilities departments got the most out of the course. It is important to get the commitment from top leadership, but it is equally critical to have the facilities team on board as they have the greatest impact on what actually gets done.

Of course, the planning process does not end as the week closes out. The concentrated time and effort spent on learning new concepts and organizing data, provides clarity of existing performance baselines and fuels aspirational goal setting. The work really begins upon return to respective organizations where stakeholder consensus can be garnered, plans adopted, and practices implemented.

For more information about the course and registration please visit: <https://oglebay.com/groups-and-conferences/national-training-center/sustainability-institute/> . We hope to see you there!

# Clark Waldram Conservation Fund

**Marcel Champagne, Construction Supervisor, Zoo de Granby**

During the annual conference, the Conservation Committee awarded the fall grant to The Turtle Survival Alliance in Charleston, S.C. The purpose of this funding is to help build automatic water change systems for their aquatic turtle habitats. Healthier living spaces equals healthier turtles!

In 2017, the Brevard Zoo requested some funding from the Clark Waldram Conservation Fund to help expand their onsite facilities for the breeding of endangered Perdido Key Beach Mice.

## Perdido Key Beach Mice

**Mollie Lentini, Conservation Coordinator, The Brevard Zoo**

In 1985 a tiny population of dune-dwelling beach mice along the gulf, known as Perdido Key Beach Mice (PKBM), made their debut onto the endangered species list. As an integral part of the dune's living ecosystem this endemic subspecies of mice has a very lofty job of managing the health of Perdido Key, a barrier island that stretches 16 miles along the Florida-Alabama border. With numbers that plummeted to only a few dozen individuals, it was time to bring attention to this species and uncover the reasons. Habitat destruction, both human-induced and from natural causes, seemed to be a large factor in their scarcity. Beach mice play a vital role in maintaining dune health by aerating the grasses as they burrow and by proliferating new plant life as they stash seeds underground. They also act as a natural pest control because a large percentage of their diet is insects.

After acquiring endangered species status in 1985, the PKBM population appeared to be declining at a rate that needed immediate attention and efforts were put in place to translocate individuals in order to encourage population growth on Perdido Key and surrounding areas. In September 2004, Hurri-



cane Ivan formed off the coast of Africa and churned across the Atlantic Ocean. By the time it reached the Caribbean Islands it was a catastrophic category 5 hurricane that devastated the Caribbean and pushed north for a direct hit on Perdido Key.

Hurricane Ivan was the final push that initiated The PKBM Species Survival Plan. Just as the storm was making landfall, determined wildlife biologists set traps in the hope of saving a percentage of the resident mice. Eight mice were successfully collected and removed from the island before Ivan took its toll on the beaches.

The collected mice were initially sent to the University of South Carolina's Peromyscus Center - a center that specializes in breeding mice. Unfortunately, there was little breeding success, and in a last-ditch effort the United States Fish and Wildlife Service called out for help. The Brevard Zoo, Santa Fe Teaching Zoo, and Palm Beach Zoo answered that call and prepared for the arrival of the mice to save the PKBM from extinction.

The mice proved to be a breeding challenge but with some innovation, some dune plants and quite literally

tons of sand, the zoos successfully welcomed their first beach mouse pups. This dune replication technique allowed the mice to exhibit natural behaviors, which thankfully included breeding. On March 27, 2010, forty-eight zoo-born PKBM were sent home to Perdido Key for the first-ever reintroduction.

The momentous success of the breeding program allows the three zoos to continuously hold an assurance population of PKBM that are available for reintroduction. Furthermore, the zoo population provides the opportunity to use PKBM as animal ambassadors and promote dune conservation that can benefit all species of beach mice.

The Clark Waldram Conservation Fund grant was used to make a suitable second housing space at The Brevard Zoo for our resident assurance population of mice. It is climate controlled with running water to clean dishes and fill water bowls. It gives us a good amount of space so we are able to give all of our mice plenty of room, which is critical during breeding season when our larger same-sex habitats are repurposed as breeding tanks for mice that have been genetically paired. This means a habitat which is normally large enough to house up to 8 mice, is whittled down to house only 2 breeders! This causes the need for us to shift mice around until breeding is through. The grant money allowed us to upgrade what we now lovingly call the "Mouse House" to make it suitable to house our non-breeders.



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# 2019 Conference Recap

**Samanthe Peterson, Sustainability Coordinator & Office Manager, San Antonio Zoo & Aquarium**

Our 26th Annual Conference took place in Oklahoma City last month with over 150 participants, including several international attendees. Huge appreciation must go to Tommy Bryant and his team at Oklahoma City Zoo, the staff of Tulsa Zoo who welcomed us for a post-conference tour, and all the speakers who gave presentations to share their knowledge and experience. None of it would not have been possible without the massive support of our vendors and sponsors – thank you!

The week kicked off with some friendly competition at TopGolf for the early arrivals, followed by an icebreaker dinner at the amazing Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. Monday morning continued a trend of welcoming the first-time attendees with a meet-and-greet breakfast, very important since there were 44 new attendees this year! Then the business meeting saw the approval of the 2020 budget and elections of next year's officers. The incoming Board is:

President – Tommy Bryant, Oklahoma City Zoo

President-Elect – John Kanzia, Brookfield Zoo

Past President – Brian Timm, Omaha Performing Arts

Vice President – Sean Woods, Louisville Zoo

Secretary – Dean Violetta, Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens

Directors at Large – Allmon Forrester, John Ball Zoo; Bob Wengel, Shedd Aquarium; Mark

Fisher, Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens

In our site selection update Sean Woods gave everyone a taste of what is in store in Louisville for next year's conference, so mark your calendars now for September 27th through October 1st, 2020. Make it a two-for-one special with the post-conference tour to Cincinnati Zoo.

With business complete the rest of the week was all about educational sessions, perusing the vendor trade show, and connecting with other attendees. The theme of animal welfare was highlighted in many of the presentations, though topics ranged from risk management to LSS design to accessibility and inclusion. The conference committee hopes to make many of the sessions available on the website soon.

The Oklahoma City Zoo rolled out the red carpet for Zoo Day on Wednesday, with behind-the-scenes tours and lunch at their spectacular Lotus Pavilion overlooking elephants and rhinos. That evening was the closing banquet, silent auction, and raffles, with proceeds benefiting the Clark Waldram Conservation Fund. Those who were able to stay on Thursday braved the wet and cold for a post-conference tour of Tulsa Zoo, which certainly proved well worth the trip.

In an effort to promote sustainability as well as help keep attendees informed and connected, the conference went paperless with the event management app Whova for the first time this year. Feedback was positive and the app will stay live for six months, plus all the contacts will remain on your phone for further use. Keep up those connections and stay in touch with your new AZFA friends until Louisville rolls around.

To everyone who attended in OKC, supported the conference as a vendor or sponsor, or helped with hosting, thank you for another successful year. For those who were not able to make it, remember you can still get involved by signing up for a committee or reaching out to the Board to share your input. If you have ideas for next year, would like to give a presentation, or have feedback on this year's conference, please let us know. Hope to see you all in Louisville!



# Don't Call Me Honey...

## From a Female Facilities Manager

**Nikki Myers, Director of Facilities Operations & Maintenance, Denver Zoo**

I stepped into the elevator and a man asked "Are you here for meetings?" Caught off guard by the random question in a convention center, full of individuals there for multiple conferences, I answered quickly "Yes, I'm here for a conference." Without missing a beat, the man replied "Oh, are you here with your sorority?" Let me point out, there was no sorority conference occurring.

This man made assumptions based either on my appearance or personality that I could not possibly be part of a professional business conference. In the fifteen second elevator ride from the seventh floor to first floor, I did not have a chance to truly correct him. I simply stated, "No sir, I am here as the Director of Facilities Operations and Maintenance, attending a conference for Facilities professionals." Then I gracefully exited the elevator, annoyed for longer than I should have let myself be.

This story may seem silly, but as a female leader in a male dominated field, I am faced daily with a choice between walking away or directly responding to comments like this. Some days I have a fire that drives me to firmly stand my ground and send someone with their tail tucked. Other days, I simply nod, smile, and walk away. I am not alone. I am one of many women in the Facilities world who faces this kind of judgment every day.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the US work force is 47 percent female. Women make up almost half the work force, yet our authority is questioned. Our opinions are dismissed by contractors who must know better. "You know honey, I just don't think you understand the math for this." Real comment I received during a bid walk.

An article by the New York Times describes how there are more men named James who hold a CEO position than there are of all women in the same role.

Only five percent of the US population has the name James; yet 47 percent of the US work field are women. "Women earn more college degrees than men and increasingly work in occupations that used to be male-dominated, and yet their progress to positions of power has been slowed or stalled."

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women in management roles for Facilities and Operations is 31 percent. For women in Construction Management, that number shrinks to 7.7 percent. The Denver Zoo is different. Denver Zoo's full-time staff members are 62 percent female. Our leadership, manager level and above, is 59.8 percent female. If you are anything like me, these are just facts. You do not feel the shock that comes from seeing leadership that is majority female. Denver Zoo is different than other companies and the data we have collected so far from other AZA institutions is showing we are not alone.

We reached out to several AZA institutions, and at the time of publication heard back from two of them. Both Cincinnati Zoo and San Antonio Zoo have workforce demographics with a higher number of women than the US average. Cincinnati's population is 52 percent female but females only make up 31 percent of the work force. However, at Cincinnati Zoo, women make up 75 percent of full-time employees. San Antonio Zoo's full time staff is 58 percent female and their Facilities department is a shocking 48 percent female. What makes Zoo's different? Why are we hiring and promoting women, when other companies are not?

Denver Zoo recently sent out a survey to staff asking questions about diversity and inclusivity. Maintenance staff filed into my office asking, "What is diversity?" "What do all of the letters in LGBTQA mean?" In that moment, I realized how blind I was. I had accepted

employees for race, sexual orientation, gender, etc. without question. But there are still parts of my world, where someone's race is questioned, someone's gender is not okay, and someone's sexual orientation is held against them.

This is not the accepted normal anymore. Some parts of society are resistant, some parts of society are blind, and some parts are getting ready to fight. How can your Zoo change this? As an industry, how can we be more diverse? How can Facilities teams be more inclusive?

I will be spending time over the next year, in preparation for the 2020 AZFA conference, researching how our industry can demonstrate leadership in diversity. This is not just about women in Facilities anymore. Building a diverse team will in the end be better for your team. Teach them to respect each other. To look past race, gender and sexual orientation. Your Facilities team can only be better the more diverse you make it.



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## New Members

### Associate

Glenn Barnard, Director of Midwest Sales, Cost of Wisconsin, Inc.

### Commercial

Rod Wheeler, Chief Operating Officer, Dig Defence

Lori Lucas, Richards-Wilcox Hardware

Ashley Rademacher, Animal Care and Education Director, Zoo Med Laboratories, Inc.

Michael Mancini, Sales Director, Evoqua Water Technologies

Debra Cushman, President/Owner, International Cordage

Michelle Hayer, Administration Manager, Skulls Unlimited International, Inc.

Pam Bounds, Account Manager, Hilti

Matt Johnson, Principal Johnson & Associates, Inc.

Michael Manwarren, President, Manwarren Habitats

John Eppes, Vice President of Sales & Marketing, LGL Animal Care Products, Inc.

David Peterson, Strategic Account Manager, Club Car, LLC

Brian Gillman, Southwest Sales Representative, Pharmacal Research Labs

Ryan Kirkpatrick, Project Manger, Motz Engineering

Joshua Fritz, American Sealants, Inc.

John Hawkinson, Sales & technical support, COST of Wisconsin, Inc.

Robert Gaddy, Marketing, Hayward Flow Control

### Organization

Joseph Cusick, Facilities Manager, Smithsonian Institution

Robbie Frazier, Assistant Manager of Maintenance, Zoo Atlanta

### Professional

Eduardo Galvan, Facility Manager, Fresno Chaffee Zoo

Jason Hamilton, Operations Manager, Tulsa Zoo

Kate Theune, Maintenance Technician I, Tennessee Aquarium

Tom Sehnert, Projects Director, Saint Louis Zoo

Adam McGowen, Director of Emerging Technology, The Radiant Store

Steve Massar, VP of Facility Operations, Mississippi Aquarium

Thomas Frankie, Exhibits Director, The Maritime Aquarium

Laura Barton, Director of Facilities, Indianapolis Zoo

Kirsty Strobridge, Operations Administrative Assistant, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo

Kade Kathrineberg, Maintenance, Rolling Hills Zoo

Erik Moore, Maintenance Supervisor, Greenville Zoo

Tom Nowak, Zoo Maintenance Technician, Greenville Zoo

Christopher Roddy, Director of Facilities & Grounds, Akron Zoological Park

Jeffrey Brooks, Facilities Procurement Coordinator, Denver Zoological Foundation

Simon DeCouto, Maintenance Technician, Bermuda Aquarium Museum and Zoo

Aaron Bailey, Maintenance Manager, Sedgwick County Zoo

Lili Gutierrez, CIP Administrator, El Paso Zoo

Tim McCammon, Facilities Service Supervisor, Idaho Falls Zoo

Ashley Shope, Safety Manager, Tulsa Zoo

Scott Shope, Vice President Facilities and Construction, Tulsa Zoo

Scott Myers, Director of Facilities, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo

Dominic Laperle, Zoo de Granby

LJ Wetthey, Operations Technician, Tulsa Zoo

## Professional cont.

Sabarras George, DCOO Detroit Zoological Society

Sean Tharpe, Construction Project Manager, Detroit Zoological Society

Victor Seidler, Facilities Project Supervisor, Little Rock Zoo

Dan Arcara, Supervisor of Aquatic Systems, Aquarium of Niagara

Mike Ferry, Facilities Lead, Aquarium of Niagara

Brittany Gulliani, Tech 1, Aquarium of Niagara

Jacob Henry, Tech II, Aquarium of Niagara

Adam Majtyka, Director of Facilities & Construction, Aquarium of Niagara

Jared Porter, Tech II, Aquarium of Niagara

Erin Ryan, Tech 1, Aquarium of Niagara

## 2019-2020 AZFA COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS AND MEMBERS

# 2019-2020 AZFA Committee Chairpersons and Members

**Samanthe Peterson, Sustainability Coordinator & Office Manager, San Antonio Zoo & Aquarium**

Following are the committee sign-ups as of October 24th. If you were unable to attend the conference and would still like to join a committee, please contact [sam.peterson@sazoo.org](mailto:sam.peterson@sazoo.org) to be added.

### Membership

Chair, Dean Violetta, Cincinnati Zoo – [dean.violetta@cincinnati-zoo.org](mailto:dean.violetta@cincinnati-zoo.org)

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## Site Selection

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Chair, to be determined  
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Don Ulrich, Cincinnati Zoo – donald.ulrich@cincinnati zoo.org  
Laura Barton, Indianapolis Zoo – lbarton@indy zoo.com  
Leona Mitchell, Toronto Zoo – lmitchell@torontozoo.ca

## Publications & Website

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Leona Mitchell, Toronto Zoo - lmitchell@torontozoo.ca

## Calendar

Deadline for articles for the next newsletter:  
January 23rd

Annual Conference: September 27 - October 1, 2020  
Louisville Zoo, Louisville, Kentucky

## Publication Schedule

- Summer Issue - July
- Winter Issue - January
- Fall Issue - October
- Spring Issue - April

## www.azfa.org

Don't forget to check out the AZFA website for updates and news.

## Editor's Note

**By Jennifer Golden, Operations Project Manager, Zoo New England**

I would like to take a moment to express thanks to our Commercial Members for their support throughout the year as well as during the annual conference. Advertising in The Outlet is a great way for companies to target our unique group of professionals dedicated to the construction and maintenance of aquarium and zoo buildings, exhibits, and systems. If you are a Commercial Member interested in advertising please contact me at [jgolden@zoonewengland.org](mailto:jgolden@zoonewengland.org)

## AZFA 2019 Fall Outlet Call for Outreach Support - Help wanted!

**Samanthe Peterson, Sustainability Coordinator & Office Manager, San Antonio Zoo & Aquarium**

Are you a member of other organizations across the zoo and aquarium industry besides AZFA? Do you attend conferences for AZA, AALSO, AAZK, AZH, or similar groups? If so, we could use your help! Too many professionals in our industry remain unaware of AZFA and the wonderful network of support it can provide. Please contact [sam.peterson@sazoo.org](mailto:sam.peterson@sazoo.org) if you are interested in serving as an AZFA ambassador to help spread the word about our organization and what we offer.

## Website Administrator

John Kanzia, [john.kanzia@czs.org](mailto:john.kanzia@czs.org)

## Membership

Membership Administrator  
Samanthe Peterson, [sam.peterson@sazoo.org](mailto:sam.peterson@sazoo.org)