

A FEW WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

## President's Message

Trisha Crowe, Project Manager, Houston Zoo



Happy Fall/Winter, friends and colleagues!

I would like to start by thanking the AZFA Board of Directors, corporate sponsors, and all of our members for a fantastic effort to keep us connected throughout a year still challenged by Covid-19. Many of our members

put in a lot of time and effort all year long, bringing us the spectacular 2021 Virtual Conference Series, Catalyst for Good Change. For more details, you can read a great summary article in this newsletter written by Samanthe Peterson.

### Mark Your Calendars

We were excited to be able to announce that we will be returning to an in-person conference next year in Denver October 9th - 14th, 2022. We are looking forward to being together in person and thank you to the Denver Zoo for offering to host us!

### Help Wanted

We need you! Can you contribute a little bit of time

to be on a committee and/or help with planning the Denver conference? If you served on a committee in 2021, the chairperson will automatically include you again for next year until notified otherwise. Committees usually require minimal time commitment and are an excellent way to meet fellow members and prepare for potential service.

Below are descriptions of each committee and their duties. Pick a few and get involved!

- Conference Committee (includes Programs & Education, Site Selection, and Fundraising) – organize sponsors, presenters, raffles, auctions, and hosting logistics for the annual conference
- Publications – quarterly newsletter and website
- Membership – outreach, communication, and benefits
- Conservation – evaluate projects submitted for the Clark Waldram Fund conservation grant
- Professional Relations – liaise with vendors and other industry organizations (e.g. AZA)
- Honors & Awards – evaluate nominations for annual awards

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## A FEW WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT cont.

We are always looking for new ideas from the group. For more information about next year's conference, to get involved with a committee, or for assistance with your membership, please contact [sam.peterson@sazoo.org](mailto:sam.peterson@sazoo.org).

Thank You

To all of you, who continue to work to build better zoo and aquarium habitats for animals, and unique visiting

experiences for people while working towards more sustainable practices. We all wear many hats – home, work, community – and time is a limited resource. The fact that you all dedicate so much to making animal and human lives better should not go unrecognized!

Be safe out there, and we look forward to welcoming you in Denver next fall!

We Network, We Build, We Protect

## PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Past President's Message

**John Kanzia, Environmental Quality Manager, Brookfield Zoo**



Hello, friends! I hope that this finds you safe and well, and that you are having a great fall season. As we wrapped up the conference series, I thought back on all of the fantastic virtual sessions leading up to it. Facilities professionals networking is what started

this great organization back in the early 1990's, and that spirit of camaraderie was alive and well this year even though we were unable to be together in person. Presenters shared lessons learned that allowed them to not only survive, but thrive during a very challenging time for many of our organizations. The lessons learned will be invaluable as we move forward, and we are rebuilding better, stronger, and smarter. Thanks to all of the presenters and sponsors for providing the support and content for the sessions; they would not have happened without your participation. Special thanks to Allmon Forrester for

his weekly updates, to Sam Peterson for her unwavering support (there is so much she does behind-the-scenes), and to Nikki and Florence for making our first virtual silent auction a success and a lot of fun. I would also like to thank our amazing Board of Directors for their support throughout what has been a very challenging year, both personally and professionally. A warm AZFA welcome to our new Board members; I look forward to working with you!

There are great things coming in 2022! I look forward to Trisha Crowe's Presidency; I know that she will do an amazing job. I am also looking forward to strengthening our partnership with the Association of Minority Zoo & Aquarium Professionals (AMZAP), and our in-person conference next October in Denver. I hope to see you there.

Have a safe and happy holiday season. Wishing you and yours a happy new year!

We Network, We Build, We Protect

# 2021 Virtual Conference Recap

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

As the pandemic has dragged on it has been more important than ever to maintain connections with our colleagues for advice and support. Though travel remained off the table again, the goal of the virtual conference series, Catalyst for Good Change, was to keep our members in touch and focus on the positive lessons from the past two years. Presentation topics included resiliency, sustainability, operational adaptations for COVID-19, and discussions of diversity, equity, access, and inclusivity. Sessions also provided opportunities for behind-the-scenes access at different facilities during the member of the month and feature facility segments. Feedback from the membership was encouraging, and having recordings available on the website helped reach a wider audience.

The online silent auction, organized by Florence Tang and Nikki Myers, raised \$2,491.96 for the Clark Waldram Fund – a remarkable total that rivals proceeds from in-person auctions at previous conferences! These funds will support a modular housing project at the Punta San Juan preserve in Peru to provide wildlife researchers with a safe base camp and field station. Thank you to all the auction sponsors, donors, and participants, and especially to Flo and Nikki.

The complimentary membership scheme was a great success, resulting in the addition of over 100 new members since the 2020 virtual conference. For 2022, memberships are returning to their normal rates of \$31 for individuals and \$124 for commercial or organization levels, valid per calendar year January 1st through December 31st.

The final session of the conference series included the annual Business Meeting, where the 2022 budget was approved and officer election results announced. The 2022 Board members are:

President – Trisha Crowe, Houston Zoo

Past President - John Kanzia, Brookfield Zoo

President-Elect - Nikki Myers, Northwest Trek Zoo

Vice President – Donn Donadio, Denver Zoo

Secretary – James Mancari, North Carolina Aquariums

Treasurer - Florence Tang, Houston Zoo

Director-at-Large Year 1 - Mark Fisher, Cincinnati Zoo

Director-at-Large Year 2 - Bob Wengel, Shedd Aquarium

Director-at-Large Year 3 - Allmon Forrester, John Ball Zoo

The closing announcement of the session was the confirmation that the 2022 conference would be back on location, hosted by Denver Zoo October 9th - 14th. The conference hotel is the Crowne Plaza Airport Convention Center with rates of \$159/night. Members can begin planning travel now and follow the AZFA website, e-blasts, and newsletter for updates throughout the year. Looking even further ahead to 2023, the conference will return to Louisville, the original site of the cancelled 2020 event.

Thank you to all the presenters, featured members, and facility hosts for contributing entertaining and educational content every month. AZFA would also like to recognize the generous sponsors that enabled us to offer the virtual conference and complimentary professional individual memberships for 2021. Thank you to Beanstalk Builders, COST of Wisconsin, Dude Solutions, Hayward, Ipex, Longhorn Organics, Perry Becker, Richards-Wilcox Hardware,

and Satchell Engineering for their support in this challenging year.

To all the members who followed along on the web-

site or joined the monthly sessions, thank you for participating in the virtual conference series. We look forward to welcoming you back in person for Denver 2022!

MEET THE NEW OFFICERS

## Meet the New Officers

The four new board members elected in October are:



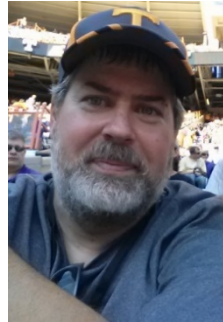
President-Elect  
Nikki Myers - North-  
west Trek Zoo

Nikki was previously the Director of Facilities Operations and Maintenance at the Denver Zoo in Colorado. She was with the Denver Zoo for seven years and

worked closely on development of the Roadmap to Reliability, a deferred maintenance plan for the 125-year-old campus. Very recently, Nikki left Denver Zoo to join the Metro Parks team at Northwest Trek Zoo as the Facility Manager. She began this adventure on October 18th! In her spare time, Nikki is a long-time volunteer of the American Cancer Society, chairing local Relay for Life events. At home, she enjoys the dichotomy of her energetic shepherd mix, Athena, and her slow moving 65-pound tortoise, Tink the Tank. Athena and Nikki enjoyed hiking and exploring Colorado mountains and are looking forward to learning about their new home in Washington state. She has been active in AZFA for several years, most recently serving as Treasurer.

Vice President Donn Donadio - Denver Zoo

Donn is the Master Electrician and a shop manager for the Denver Zoo. He has been with Denver Zoo for almost five years and worked closely with management to help develop a team structure that emphasizes prioritizing resources to better support the Zoo's infrastructure. Donn is currently responsible for all emergency and higher priority work orders, frequently managing anything from power outages and water breaks to Zoolights crises. Donn has been a master electrician for over sixteen years and worked on multiple new builds, remodels, and repairs. Donn spends most his spare time attending and supporting his daughter's high school and club volleyball teams. Olivia is the feisty daughter he deserves and will always keep him on his toes.



Secretary James Mancari - North  
Carolina Aquariums

James Mancari has been a Construction Project Manager for the North Carolina Zoo for the last eight and a half years. During his time at the zoo, James has overseen many smaller and intermediate sized projects culminating with overseeing the design phases for the upcoming Asia and Australia expansion projects.

Prior to the Zoo, James attended the University of Tennessee (UT) and graduated with an architectural degree. While working for a structural engineer, he again graduated from UT with a second degree in civil engineering and eventually obtaining his engineering license. James then worked for an architectural firm where he completed the architectural intern program. This October brings another change, but one of a similar nature, as he moves from the Zoo to be the Division Project Manager for the North Carolina Aquariums. There, James will oversee construction projects for the state's three aquariums at Roanoke Island, Pine Knoll Shores, and Fort Fisher. Included in that mix also is Jeanette's Pier, a facility that combines a 1,000-foot-long pier out into the Atlantic Ocean with educational exhibits and research facilities. Since joining the AZFA in 2016, James has served on the Conservation and Site Selection committees for the past several years.



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Director-at-Large  
Mark Fisher – Cincinnati Zoo

A product of the University of Cincinnati’s Civil and Environmental Engineering program, Mark spent the first eleven years of his

professional career working as a project manager for Turner Construction, a commercial construction company. Many of those years were spent at the Cincinnati Zoo, overseeing the construction of several major exhibits. In 2006, he came on board at the Zoo as the Senior Director of Facilities and Plan-

ning. In addition to the standard duties of a facilities manager, Mark is also the driving force behind the Zoo’s sustainability movement. By implementing the most aggressive green building program in the nation, along with producing dramatic reductions in natural resource consumption, he has taken the Zoo from an organization that barely had a recycling program, to becoming the greenest Zoo in America. In 2014 Mark was promoted to Vice President of Facilities, Planning, and Sustainability. Mark has been involved in the AZFA since 2011, serving as a former Board of Director as well as President. Outside of work, Mark most enjoys scrambling around the mountains of the American West with his wife and four young children

NEW MEMBERS

## New Members Professional

Todd Douglas Ahnert, WPMS, City of Milwaukee

Anna Anderson, Section Keeper, Pueblo Zoo

Erica Austin, Facilities Coordinator, National Aquarium

Damien Beri, President, The Coral Conservancy

Weston Davis, Facilities Maintenance Coordinator, Denver Zoological Foundation

Donn J. Donadio, Master Electrician, Denver Zoo

Cody Patrick Dunkin, Operations Manager, TZMI

Mallory Geresy, Net Zero Waste Manager, Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden

Jason Hill, Principal, SH|R Studios

Venne Leal, Recruiter, Philadelphia Zoo

Matt McCreary, Zoo Maintenance, Brandywine Zoo

Jason Montgomery, Assistant Curator/Habitat Manager, Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo

Greg Nelson, General Maintenance Technician, Riverbanks Zoo and Garden

Saoirse O’Leary, Project Coordinator, Denver Zoo

Sean Ploysa, Facilities Project Manager, Denver Zoological Foundation

Stephenie Ritchey, Sustainability Manager, Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden

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

Cerisa Skinner, Architect, Monterey Bay Aquarium

Lindsay Sturn, Maintenance Electrician, Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium

Leah Valerio, Curator, The Wild Center

Chris Williams, Executive Assistant to the CEO, Dallas Zoo

## Associate

Jim Fowler, Principal, Energy Audits of Alaska

## Commercial

Alex Waibel, President, BuildingLogix

CALENDAR

Annual Conference: October 9th - 14th at the Denver Zoo

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