



# BUSINESS PLAN

Creating Excellence Through  
Vision and Mission

## 2025

WWW.ZOONEWYORK.ORG

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# Executive Summary

Zoo New York at Thompson Park is a cornerstone of the Thousand Islands region, offering unique experiences that connect visitors to New York State's native wildlife and natural habitats. As the only zoo focused exclusively on the animals and ecosystems of New York, Zoo New York plays a vital role in education, conservation, and recreation, enriching the lives of residents and visitors alike.

In recent years, the zoo has faced significant financial and operational challenges, culminating in its temporary closure in late 2023. Since reopening in May 2024, strategic measures have been implemented to stabilize finances, enhance operations, and lay the groundwork for long-term sustainability. These efforts include securing payment moratoriums, restructuring staff roles, and increasing community and governmental support. However, revitalization requires continued investment and action.

This business plan outlines an achievable path forward for Zoo New York from 2025-2029.



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# Overview

Zoo New York at Thompson Park is a cherished institution located on a 25-acre site within the scenic John C. Thompson Park in Watertown, NY. Owned by the City of Watertown and operated by the nonprofit Thompson Park Conservancy, Inc., the zoo provides a unique blend of education, recreation, and conservation. As the only zoo in the Thousand Islands region, it connects visitors to New York State's native wildlife and habitats while fostering a deeper appreciation for nature.

## Program Support Staff

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- Dr. Mark Irwin - Interim Executive Director
- Ryan Farris - Director of Operations
- Kathryn Allen - Animal Curator
- Full Time: 5
- Part Time: 4
- Seasonal: 9

## Board of Directors

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- Kenneth Mix (Chair) - Retired Watertown City Manager
- Mark Pacilio (Vice Chair) - Executive Director, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust
- Phillip James (Treasurer) - Supervisor of General Accounting, Samaritan Medical Center
- Julia Dame (Secretary) - Teller, Community Bank N.A.
- Justin Hall (Immediate Past Chair) - Veterinary Practices Instructor, Bohlen Technical Center
- Christine Darrow - Fundraising Consultant, FUNd Development
- Cynthia Eisenhauer - Wildlife Artist
- Robert Hagemann - Retired Jefferson County Administrator
- Dr. Marie Hess - Retired Nurse Educator, JCC
- Ryan Jones - Owner, Advanced Business Systems
- Clifford Lashway - Store Manager, 7 Eleven
- Lesley McKinney - Retired SMG Sales, WWNY-TV7
- Dr. Andrew Majak - Podiatrist/ Foot and Ankle Surgeon, Majak Podiatry, PC
- Terry Tontarski - Owner, FABCO
- Jordan Walker - Grant Writer, Samaritan Medical Center



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# History

## Early Beginnings

Zoo New York was founded in 1920 as a small community zoo within Thompson Park, serving as a beloved gathering place for families and visitors. Originally managed by the City of Watertown, the zoo provided opportunities to engage with wildlife and nature in a picturesque outdoor setting.

## Transition to Nonprofit Management

In 1991, management of the zoo transitioned to the Thompson Park Conservancy, Inc., a nonprofit organization, and in doing so, embarked upon a longstanding partnership with the City of Watertown. This shift enabled significant expansions, including the development of exhibits focused on New York State's native wildlife. During this period, the zoo gained national recognition, achieving accreditation from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) in 2000 and 2005.

## Challenges and Resilience

By the mid-2000s, the zoo faced operational and financial difficulties, including leadership turnover and reduced revenue. These challenges led to the loss of the AZA accreditation in 2007, resulting in deferred maintenance, declining attendance, and diminished guest experiences. Despite these setbacks, the zoo remained committed to serving the community as a space for education, conservation, and recreation.

## Renewal and Transformation

The zoo has recently embarked on a period of renewal and transformation. Following a temporary closure in late 2023, Zoo New York reopened in May 2024, adopting strategic measures to stabilize its finances, rebuild its infrastructure, and reestablish its role as a premier destination for families, students, and tourists.

## Looking Ahead

With a legacy of resilience and community impact, Zoo New York is poised for a new era of growth. This business plan provides a strategic vision for enhancing guest experiences, achieving financial stability, and pursuing reaccreditation from AZA, ensuring the zoo's continued contribution to the community for generations to come.

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# Organization



## Vision

Our vision is a future where New York nature is valued and conserved.



## Mission

Our mission is to, by example and action, provide knowledge and motivation to conserve nature in New York State through science-based natural and cultural experiences.



## Value

Our value is offered as a vital community resource that connects people to nature, enhances our quality of life, fosters education, showcases native species and promotes conservation. As the only zoo in the Thousands Island region, we provide immersive experiences that inspire visitors while enriching our community and strengthening its ties to the natural world.

The zoo's new financial plan reflects a commitment to accountability and strategic growth. Key steps include increasing attendance through targeted marketing, leveraging tourism opportunities, and implementing new revenue-generating programs. Projections indicate that with sustained support from Jefferson County, the City of Watertown, and the State of New York, the zoo will achieve financial stability while fulfilling its mission.

Zoo New York is poised to reclaim its role as a premier conservation and educational institution in the North Country. This business plan serves as a roadmap for realizing this vision, ensuring the zoo remains a vibrant community asset for generations to come.





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# Statistics

## Reach

In 2024 Zoo New York welcomed more than 28,000 guests

**28**

thousand

## Stewardship

We are home to 45 species and 77 individuals, not including fish and cockroaches.

**77**

individuals

## Support

We are supported by a team of more than 300 volunteers, clocking more than 4,800 hours of service

**300+**

volunteers

## Survey Results

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A recent survey conducted by the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College highlights the zoo's positive community impact:

**Quality  
of Life**

**84%**

**Quality  
Family Time**

**89%**

**Safe Outdoor  
Recreation**

**86%**

**Education**

**88%**

***Zoo New York is often cited as the  
second-most visited operated  
attraction in the Thousand Islands  
Region***

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# Community Partnerships



Zoo New York at Thompson Park serves as a vital community resource, fostering connections between individuals, families, and organizations. Through impactful partnerships and programs, the zoo enhances education, conservation, and quality of life for the entire region.

## **Jefferson Community College**

Since 1999, Jefferson Community College (JCC) has partnered with Zoo New York to offer a Zoo Technology Associate of Applied Science degree, one of only five Associate programs in the nation focused on training zookeepers. Accredited zoos typically require staff to hold degrees in biology or related fields, and this program provides an affordable and practical pathway into the field. By combining academic theory with hands-on learning at Zoo New York, graduates are well-prepared for careers in animal care. Alumni have gone on to work at prestigious institutions such as the San Diego Zoo, Disney's Animal Kingdom, and other renowned zoos across the country.

## **Sci-Tech Museum of Northern New York**

Zoo New York has partnered with the Sci-Tech Museum of Northern New York to provide a unique, hands-on educational experience for visitors. Following a flood at Sci-Tech's primary facility, several interactive exhibits were relocated to the zoo's Conservation Center, where they are now integrated into the zoo experience at no additional cost. These exhibits align with Sci-Tech's mission to spark curiosity and foster a deeper understanding of science and technology. By hosting Sci-Tech displays, Zoo New York expands its educational reach, offering visitors an engaging blend of wildlife conservation and interactive science exploration, and reinforcing its role as a community resource for learning and discovery.



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## **ARC, DPAO, and THRIVE**

Zoo New York is grateful to partner with The ARC Jefferson - St. Lawrence, the Disabled Persons Action Organization, and THRIVE Wellness and Recovery. These three organizations, in part, serve community members with disabilities, mental illnesses and disorders. Part of their missions include learning life skills and completing volunteer work, and the zoo has provided a welcoming, accessible, and exciting environment for that. The ARC has generously provided 46 individuals annually for regular volunteer work like cleaning, crafting, and decorating. Likewise, the DPAO has brought 29 individuals to the zoo for cleaning and gardening. Our partnership with THRIVE has yielded 22 individuals for volunteer hours.

Connecting with these organizations has been a great asset to Zoo New York, as it helps with general maintenance and upkeep, and it has provided special opportunities to the individuals utilizing those services, so they can make a positive impact in the community while learning new skills and having a memorable outing.

## **Jefferson Workplace's Summer Youth Employment Program**

Another business Zoo New York partners with is the Jefferson Workplace's Summer Youth Employment Program. The program introduces youth to the workforce and helps them acquire skills that can be used to improve school performance and future career opportunities.



## **BOCES**

For the past 17 years, Zoo New York has partnered with the Jefferson-Lewis BOCES vocational training program, accepting interns from the Veterinary Practice program at Bohlen Technical Center. This enables students to work with exotic animals. It is a hands-on approach designed to provide students with a supportive job site experience. The zoo has also acted as an integral part in community service opportunities for both the individual program and for the the local chapter of Skills USA. Several students who are graduates of the program have worked in different aspects of the zoo, including guest services, maintenance, and animal care.

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# Events

Zoo New York at Thompson Park hosts a variety of special events throughout the year, offering unique recreational experiences that strengthen community bonds and enhance guest experience. These events not only provide seasonal variety, but also create opportunities for local businesses to engage through sponsorships, all while contributing to the region's tourism and economic vitality. While resource-intensive, these events are a cornerstone of the zoo's commitment to enriching the community.

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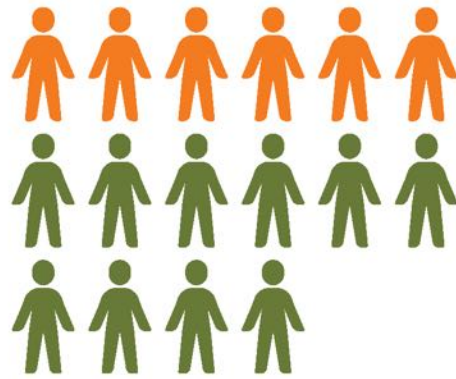
<b>Lunar New Year</b>	In collaboration with cultural experts, Zoo New York hosts a Lunar New Year event at the start of the year. This event is both fun and educational, celebrating the Asian community in the North Country and enabling others to take part in new cultural traditions.
<b>Earth Day</b>	Zoo New York hosts an Earth Day celebration every spring to bolster an appreciation for conservation, one of the foundations of Zoo New York's mission and legacy.
<b>Season Kickoff</b>	To welcome in the zoo's regular season, a kickoff event is held. This event serves as an opportunity to reinvigorate zoo interest and debut new educational programming.
<b>Brew at the Zoo</b>	Brew at the Zoo is a summertime favorite for many guests and local producers. The zoo invites local breweries, wineries, and distilleries to set up throughout the zoo for guest sampling. This event supports zoo attendance amongst the adult demographic and establishes a partnership with small business owners in the area.
<b>Boo at the Zoo</b>	Boo at the Zoo is the zoo's most well-attended event, and attracts guests from the North Country and beyond. This event provides an accessible alternative to traditional Trick-or-Treating. Boo at the Zoo makes Halloween a safe family outing, and offering it for multiple days enables families with busy schedules many opportunities to attend.
<b>Winter Wonderlights</b>	Winter Wonderlights is a way for the zoo to boost attendance during a slower time of year, when winter hours limit visitation to weekends. This event establishes the zoo as a holiday haven, with light displays, hot cocoa, and visits from Santa and Mrs. Claus.

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# Market Analysis



Zoo visitation, like other leisure activities, competes with numerous options vying for people's limited free time, including other attractions, television, and digital media. Zoo New York provides a unique alternative: a remarkable outdoor experience that immerses visitors in the natural world and offers direct access to New York State's native wildlife and ecosystems.

## Current Audience

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### Members

Individuals and families committed to the zoo's mission who value multiple visits per year.

### First-time Visitors

Tourists and local residents exploring the zoo as a recreational destination, which frequently results in return visits.

### Students

Participants in field trips and educational programs designed to inspire a lifelong connection to conservation.

### Fort Drum

Fort Drum soldiers and their families seeking enrichment in the area.

### Special Events Attendees

Visitors who are drawn to the zoo by a special event. This also frequently results in repeat visits.

## Attendance

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**116,000**

Jefferson County's population

**65%**

65% of zoo guests in 2024 were from Jefferson County.

**258**

There are 258 active members of Zoo New York. In 2024, 3,600 zoo visits were from members.

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# Challenges and Opportunities

Attendance in 2024 experienced a decline after two years of consistency, influenced by negative publicity surrounding financial challenges and a rainy summer season. In 2024, visitors spent \$330,500 at the zoo, which was 38% of total revenue. It is estimated that Jefferson County residents accounted for \$215,000 of this spending, while tourists contributed \$115,500.

There is significant potential to increase both local and tourist attendance. Historically, the zoo welcomed 45,000 visitors in 2015 and more than 70,000 in the 1990s, demonstrating a strong foundation for growth. In 2023, tourists spent \$20 million on recreation in Jefferson County, yet Zoo New York only captured a small fraction of this market.

## Strategic Growth Opportunities

To capitalize on its unique value and address competition, Zoo New York can pursue the following strategies:

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<b>1. Expand Tourism Appeal</b>	Collaborate with regional tourism efforts to capitalize on and contribute to an even greater recreation market beyond \$20 million.
<b>2. Increase Local Engagement</b>	Develop targeted marketing campaigns to attract Jefferson County residents and foster repeat visits.
<b>3. Enhance Educational Programs</b>	Strengthen partnerships with schools and other institutions to boost participation in field trips and conservation organizations.
<b>4. Diversify Revenue Streams</b>	Expand special event offerings, animal encounters, and themed merchandise to increase visitor spending.
<b>5. Broaden Fort Drum Ties</b>	Connect with organizations, soldiers and their families to enhance quality-of-life and local engagement of military personnel.

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# Price Comparison

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The information in the table illustrates Zoo New York's standing among other local family attractions within Watertown's driving distance. Zoo New York is in line with CNY zoo's and far less than the admission prices of amusement or water parks below.

Name	Distance	Adult Admission	Child Admission	Brew at the Zoo	Boo at the Zoo
Zoo New York	N/A	\$12	\$9	\$40	\$12
Old McDonald's Farm	13 miles	\$15.95	\$15.95		
Enchanted Forest Water Safari	49 miles	\$44.99	\$41.99		
Museum/ Hands-On Science and Tech Activity Center (MOST)	65 miles	\$14	\$12		
Rosamond Gifford Zoo	65 miles	\$9	\$5	\$55	\$9
Utica Zoo	70 miles	\$9	\$6	\$55	\$8
Wild Center @ Tupper Lake	75 miles	\$23	\$13		
Ross Park Zoo (Binghamton)	130 miles	\$7	\$5		
Seneca Park Zoo (Rochester)	129 miles	\$10	\$7	\$15-60	\$15

Zoo New York's admission pricing is carefully balanced to ensure sound financial management while striving to serve all members of the community. While our rates are comparable to similar attractions, some competitors benefit from significantly higher government subsidies, allowing lower prices. To enhance accessibility, particularly for low-income families, we are actively exploring grant opportunities and other initiatives to increase affordability.



# Goals

Zoo New York aims to revitalize the visitor experience, achieve financial sustainability, and enhance its reputation as a leading conservation and educational institution. The following immediate objectives will guide the zoo toward achieving these goals:

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<b>Goal 1:</b>	Enhance guest experience through site improvements and programming.
<b>Goal 2:</b>	Expand community engagement.
<b>Goal 3:</b>	Achieve financial sustainability
<b>Goal 4:</b>	Pursue AZA accreditation

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# Goal I Breakdown:

## *Enhance guest experience through site improvements and programming*

The quality of the zoo's physical environment is a primary determinant of its success. Awe-inspiring exhibits, lush plantings, accessible walkways, clear signage, and convenient amenities are critical for creating an engaging and immersive outdoor experience.

### 2025 Objectives:

1. Install nature play structures and develop sensory trails and gardens.
2. Address deferred maintenance and improve overall maintenance capacity.
3. Install a chute system for elk to enhance animal care and guest safety.
4. Expand horticultural capacity to improve landscaping and exhibit design.
5. Develop plans for a new petting farm area to increase family engagement.
6. Revise the Master Plan to include updates to the entrance, cafe, gift shop, Visitor/Discovery Center, and Conservation Center.
7. Plan for additional restroom facilities at the rear of the zoo for visitor convenience.





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# Nature Playscape:

Adding a Nature Playscape to Zoo New York would foster natural interactions and sensory experiences, playing a crucial role in child development and well-being. This addition would also generate renewed interest in visitation, volunteering, and sponsorships. Using natural materials will adhere to Zoo New York's mission, keep costs low, and maintenance simple.

## What is it?

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Nature Playscapes are outdoor environments designed to encourage free play and interactions with natural elements, incorporating all five senses for an immersive experience which supports curiosity, creativity, and development.





## Goal 2 Breakdown:

### *Expand community engagement*

Meaningful interactions with staff, docents, and student zookeepers are key to creating memorable guest experiences. Educational programs that include animal interactions can leave a lasting impression and foster a deeper connection to conservation.

### 2025 Objective:

1. Expand the number of educational presentations and interactive programs to enrich the visitor experience.



## Goal 3 Breakdown:

### *Achieve financial sustainability*

Long-term success depends on stable and diversified funding sources. In 2024, progress was made with increased funding from the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, and individual sponsorships. Building on this momentum is essential to secure the zoo's future. Attendance is dependent on weather and cannot be solely relied upon.

### 2025 Objectives:

1. Increase attendance through targeted marketing to local residents and tourists.
2. Implement a robust system to grow individual and corporate donations.
3. Secure increased and stable funding commitments from the City and County.





# Goal 4 Breakdown:

## Pursue *AZA accreditation*

AZA accreditation represents the gold standard for animal care, education, and conservation. Attaining this designation will enhance public trust, attract funding, and facilitate key operational functions such as staff recruitment and animal acquisitions. Achieving AZA accreditation will require a 3-5 year effort to systematically assess and address improvements in the following areas:

### Accreditation Standards:

1. Animal care, wellbeing, and management
2. Veterinary care
3. Conservation initiatives
4. Education and interpretation programs
5. Scientific research and advancement
6. Governance and organizational structure
7. Staff recruitment and development
8. Organizational support
9. Financial stability
10. Physical facilities and infrastructure
11. Safety and security measures
12. Guest services
13. Strategic and campus planning



***Zoo New York has earned AZA accreditation twice before, in 2000 and 2005, demonstrating its capacity to meet rigorous industry standards. The path to accreditation will guide decisions and ensure adherence to best practices throughout operations.***

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# Marketing Strategy



## Attendance Increase

Focus on digital marketing, networking, and partnering with other community assets to improve visibility and interest for everyday attendance and event attendance.



## Public Perception

Promote the zoo's mission through the media to improve public perception of Zoo New York as a thriving, invaluable community asset.



## Brand Positioning

Utilize the newly-designed brand glossary as part of an ongoing effort to refresh and strengthen Zoo New York's identity, ensuring it becomes a distinctive and recognizable entity across all print, digital, and physical materials.



## Implementing Additional Methods

Method	Description
Billboards	Adding billboards to I-81 will attract tourists to visit the zoo, and increase revenue to the area.
Commercials	Purchasing commercials for television and radio will reinforce to north country residents that the zoo is open and thriving, with exciting events and opportunities to come experience again and again.
Social Media "Boosts"	Boosting a post in social media platforms will reconfigure the post to the top of the online algorithm. In short, it is a guarantee that more people will see the post and interact with it's content. This will be especially helpful for posts advertising events.
Zoo Signage	The signage across the zoo needs to be redone to establish a cleaner, more professional, more accessible, more interactive look.



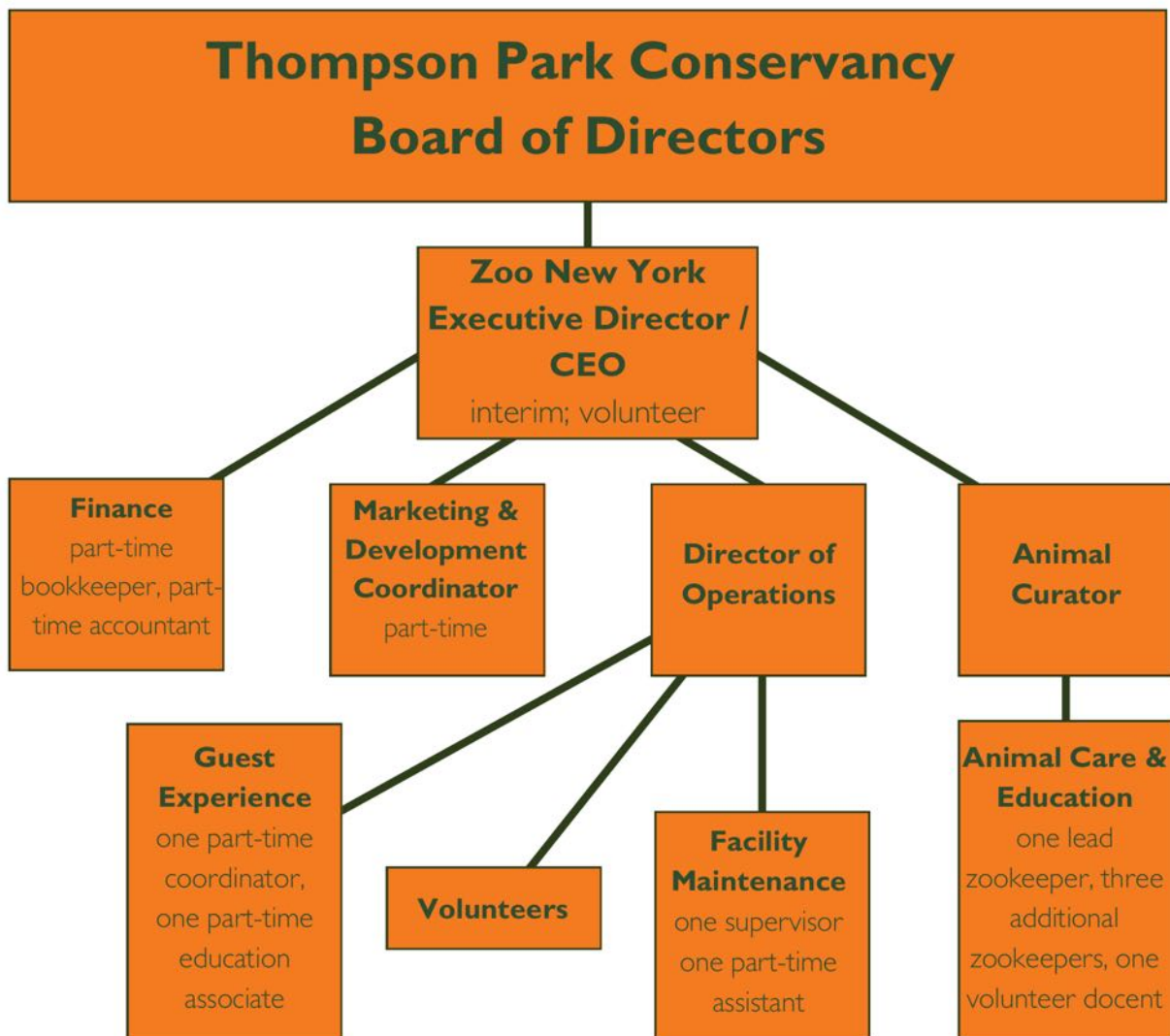
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# Operations

Achieving Zoo New York's aspirations and goals requires an adequately staffed and efficiently structured organization. To this end, the zoo is undergoing a phased restructuring of its staffing plan over three years, contingent on sufficient funding. The proposed structure is designed to optimize operations, enhance guest experiences, and ensure effective management across all departments.

## Current Staffing

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# Recent Staff Changes

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Zoo New York has taken great care to choose team members with high levels of certification, education, professionalism and experience to run the zoo with integrity and ambition. The past year has been a significant one in the way of employment growth and staff restructuring.

## **Executive Director:**

- Dr. Mark Irwin has been volunteering as Executive Director since late 2023. His leadership has driven significant positive changes at the zoo. A veterinarian, JCC professor, and former AZA-accredited curator, Dr. Irwin also developed the authoritative textbook on zookeeping. The critical partnership with JCC has provided this expertise, quality volunteers and a pipeline of graduate students who have joined the zoo's staff.

## **Director of Operations:**

- Ryan Farris has taken on the vital role of Director of Operations, overseeing guest services, maintenance, and events. As a disabled veteran of the military with a heartfelt passion for the zoo, his efforts are enhancing operational efficiency and improving guest experiences.

## **Zookeeping Staff:**

- The zoo typically has 4-5 zookeepers who work with the animals every day. Lead keepers are assigned additional duties such as scheduling, supplies and feed ordering, enrichment, and training coordination. Animal care is core to what we do and with adequate staffing, there will be more opportunities for public interaction and educational programming with keepers.

## **Animal Curator:**

- The zoo was pleased to welcome Kathryn Allen as Animal Curator. Formerly the Zoological Manager and General Curator at AZA-accredited Clyde Peeling's Reptiland in Pennsylvania, Kathryn brings extensive expertise. She now leads the zoo's animal department and educational programs, ensuring exceptional care and engaging guest experiences.

## **Marketing & Development Coordinator:**

- Emily Griffin has joined as the part-time Marketing and Development Coordinator. Her communication skills have greatly expanded the zoo's media outreach, improving its visibility and community perception. This role has strengthened outreach efforts, established a cohesive brand guide, and is paving the way for a redesigned website.



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# Staffing Plan

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## Executive Director

- Animal Curator
  - Lead Zookeeper
  - Zookeepers (4)
  - Seasonal Zookeepers
- Director of Operations
  - Guest Experience Coordinator
    - Seasonal Guest Experience Associates
  - Maintenance Supervisor
    - Maintenance Assistant
    - Seasonal Maintenance
  - Horticulturalist
- Marketing and Development Coordinator
- Bookkeeper/Office Manager



## **Support Roles and Outsourced Services:**

- Seasonal and part-time staff will supplement each division as needed to manage peak periods and specialized tasks.
- Human resources functions have been outsourced to Staff Leasing, a firm specializing in HR management, ensuring streamlined processes and compliance.
- Financial oversight is supported by a part-time bookkeeper and a contract accountant, who provide reconciliations and maintain financial accuracy.

## **Phased Staffing Implementation Plan:**

- This staffing plan will be implemented over a three-year period, with new roles added strategically as funding becomes available. Priority will be given to positions that directly impact animal care, guest experiences, and organizational growth.
- By investing in a well-structured team, Zoo New York aims to build a foundation for long-term sustainability and success, ensuring the zoo remains a vital resource for education, conservation, and recreation in the Thousand Islands region.

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# Finances

Zoo New York has faced increasing financial challenges over the past two decades, culminating in late 2023 when the zoo temporarily closed due to operational and funding shortfalls. Key contributing factors included:

1. **Leadership Instability:** Frequent turnover in leadership disrupted strategic planning and operational consistency.
2. **Deferred Maintenance:** Years of limited funding led to aging facilities requiring costly repairs, negatively impacting guest experiences.
3. **Fluctuating Revenue Streams:** Heavy reliance on visitor admissions left the zoo vulnerable to seasonal and weather-related attendance declines.
4. **Debt Obligations:** High-interest loans and large payment requirements constrained financial flexibility.

Since reopening in May 2024, the zoo has implemented several immediate recovery measures:

1. **Cost Containment:** A lean staffing model was adopted, with the interim executive director volunteering significant time.
2. **Increased Funding:** enhanced support was secured from the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, and individual donors.
3. **Diversification Efforts:** New revenue streams were pursued through grants, sponsorships, and expanded guest experiences.
4. **Debt Management:** Payment moratoriums and structured repayment plans helped reduce immediate financial strain.

These actions have helped address the financial issues and provided a foundation for the zoo's future strategic planning.





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# Financial Plan

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Building on the immediate recovery measures implemented in 2024, Zoo New York's financial plan focuses on achieving long-term sustainability through diversified funding and strategic investment. This plan aligns with the zoo's mission to provide exceptional education, recreation, and conservation experiences while ensuring operational stability.

## Diversified Funding Sources

Zoo New York relies on a mix of three primary funding sources:

1. **Visitor Expenditures:** In 2024, visitors contributed \$330,500, representing 38% of total revenue.
2. **Donors and Sponsors:** Business sponsors and individual donors contributed \$133,000, or 15% of total revenue.
3. **Governmental Support:** Funding from the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, and New York State totaled \$375,500, or 44% of revenue, in 2024.

While this revenue mix reflects improvement, diversifying and stabilizing these streams remains critical to meet operational and growth needs.



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## Financial Priorities

The three-to-five-year financial plan focuses on:

1. **Phasing in Staffing:** Filling key roles over three years, aligned with available funding.
2. **Addressing Deferred Maintenance:** Allocating resources to improve guest experiences and infrastructure.

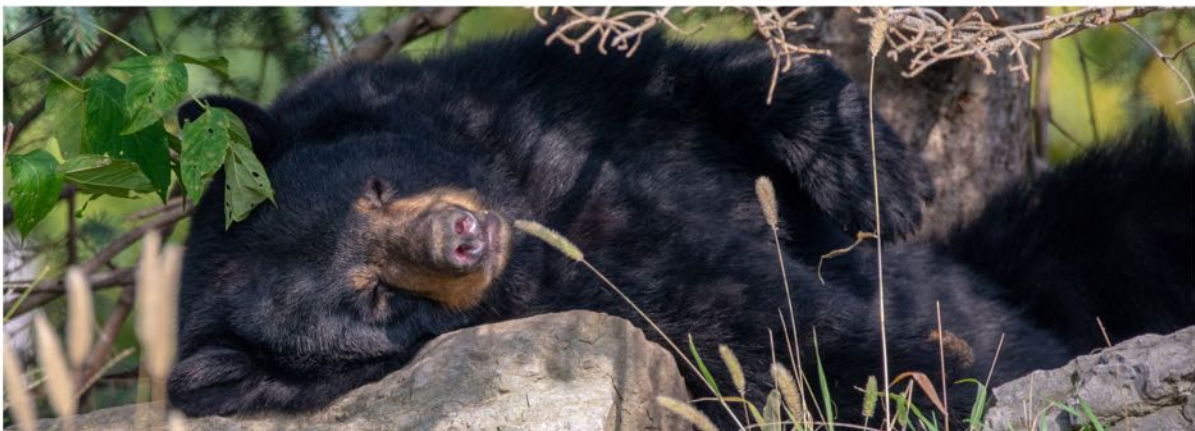
## Financial Development

To secure its financial future, Zoo New York will:

1. **Expand Donor Engagement:** Filling key roles over three years, aligned with available funding.
2. **Boost Attendance:** Allocating resources to improve guest experiences and infrastructure.
3. **Introduce New Revenue Streams:** Develop programs and events appealing to diverse audiences.
4. **Grant Acquisition:** Establishing a dedicated fund development and grant committee to secure additional funding.
5. **Strengthen Government Partnerships:** Establishing a foundational level of government support on par with other zoological parks to enable strategic financial development efforts.

## Financial Planning Pro Forma

The zoo's financial projections reflect the resources needed to operate a quality institution. Continued support from key stakeholders, including government partners, will be essential to achieving these goals. The Pro Forma is built on the assumption that the zoo will receive the total amount requested from the City and County.





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# Pro Forma

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## Operating Budget Revenue

Year	2024 (actual)	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Donations & Sponsorships	\$133,000	\$155,000	\$170,500	\$187,550	\$206,305	\$226,936
Admissions	\$213,500	\$255,000	\$280,500	\$308,550	\$339,405	\$373,349
Memberships	\$38,000	\$40,000	\$44,000	\$48,000	\$53,240	\$58,564
Cafe (Net)	\$8,500	\$10,000	\$11,000	\$12,000	\$13,310	\$14,641
Gift Shop (Net)	\$36,000	\$37,000	\$40,700	\$44,770	\$49,247	\$54,172
Programs	\$14,000	\$17,000	\$18,700	\$20,570	\$22,627	\$24,890
Special Events	\$20,500	\$40,000	\$44,000	\$48,400	\$53,240	\$58,564
NYS ZBGA	\$66,500	\$67,000	\$53,000	\$53,000	\$53,000	\$53,000
City/County	\$309,000	\$687,500	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000
Endowment Draw	-	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$27,000
Animal Wellness Fund	-	\$12,500	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
Misc.	\$22,500	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$22,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$861,500</b>	<b>\$1,370,000</b>	<b>\$1,467,400</b>	<b>\$1,528,340</b>	<b>\$1,595,374</b>	<b>\$1,669,111</b>

## Operating Budget Expenditures

Year	2024 (actual)	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Business Operations	\$109,500	\$114,975	\$120,724	\$126,760	\$133,098	\$139,753
Programs	\$2,000	\$20,000	\$21,000	\$22,050	\$23,153	\$24,310
Special Events	\$15,000	\$30,000	\$31,500	\$33,075	\$34,729	\$36,465
Maintenance	\$32,500	\$50,000	\$55,000	\$60,500	\$66,550	\$73,205
Insurances	\$47,500	\$48,500	\$50,925	\$53,471	\$56,145	\$58,952
Marketing & Advertising	\$24,000	\$50,000	\$52,500	\$55,125	\$57,881	\$60,775
Animal Care	\$50,000	\$55,000	\$57,750	\$60,638	\$63,669	\$66,853
Finance Interest & Fees	\$12,000	\$35,000	\$30,000	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$15,000
Fuel	\$2,500	\$3,500	\$3,675	\$3,859	\$4,052	\$4,254
Employees	\$381,500 *	\$613,322	\$738,371	\$758,399	\$779,027	\$800,273
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$676,500	\$1,020,297	\$1,161,445	\$1,198,876	\$1,238,303	\$1,279,841
NET REVENUE	\$185,000	\$349,703	\$305,955	\$329,464	\$357,071	\$389,271



## Non-Operating Expenditures

Year	2024 (actual)	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Debt Principal & Aged AP Payments	\$66,000	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$35,000
Operating Reserves	\$119,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Transfer to Capital Fund	-	\$314,703	\$265,955	\$284,464	\$307,071	\$334,271
<b>TOTAL NON-OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$185,000</b>	<b>\$349,703</b>	<b>\$305,955</b>	<b>\$329,464</b>	<b>\$357,071</b>	<b>\$389,271</b>
Surplus/Deficit	-	-	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

***\*2024 was an atypical year for employee costs due to staff reductions. 2023 was a more typical year with a cost of \$578,000.***



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# A New Era for Zoo New York

Zoo New York has reached a turning point, equipped with a clear vision and actionable plan to secure its future. With a renewed commitment to enhancing guest experiences, achieving financial stability, and becoming a leader in conservation and education, the zoo is poised to reclaim its role as a cornerstone of the Thousand Islands region.

To achieve these goals, the following priorities will guide our efforts:

1. **Enhance Guest Experience:** Upgrading facilities, addressing deferred maintenance, and expanding educational programs to attract and engage visitors.
2. **Expand Community Engagement:** Offering meaningful interactions and educational programs with staff, docents, and student zookeepers.
3. **Ensuring Financial Sustainability:** Diversifying funding sources, strengthening donor and sponsor relationships, and securing stable governmental support.
4. **Pursuing AZA Accreditation:** Meeting the highest standards in animal care, education, and operations to elevate the zoo's reputation with our initiatives.

This business plan charts a strategic path forward for Zoo New York, balancing immediate needs with long-term aspirations. With the support of our partners, stakeholders, and the community, we can transform the zoo into a sustainable and vibrant institution that inspires visitors, enriches the region, and contributes to the preservation of New York State's natural heritage. We urge our community and partners to invest in this vision by providing financial support, advocating for the zoo's value, and engaging with our initiatives.

***Together, our community can build a future where Zoo New York thrives as a hub for education, recreation, and conservation - ensuring it remains a treasured resource for generations to come.***



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# The Future of Your Zoo

At Zoo New York, we envision a future that extends beyond maintaining our current operations. It's about dreaming big, seizing bold opportunities, and delivering exceptional experiences to our community. This future is not just the zoo's - it's **your** future, **your** investment, and **your** legacy.

Imagine strolling through a revitalized landscape, where the sights and sounds of majestic bison transport you to New York's natural plains. Picture new state-of-the-art exhibits showcasing the region's native wildlife in environments that spark awe, curiosity, and pride. These exhibits would not only elevate our mission of conservation and education but also position Zoo New York as a premier destination in the Thousand Islands region, drawing visitors from near and far.





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# Transformational Opportunities Await

The future of **your** zoo includes:

- **Immersive Wildlife Displays:** Captivating exhibits such as North American bison, moose, caribou and foxes.
- **Expanded Educational Programs:** Interactive experiences that connect guests of all ages to the wonders of New York's wildlife.
- **Enhanced Guest Amenities:** Modern facilities, improved walkways, and family-friendly spaces to create an unforgettable visit for all.

But this vision can only become a reality with your support. Together, we can shape a future where your zoo showcases the best of New York State's wildlife and exemplifies the power of community in action.

*The next chapter begins with you.*







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