

## **CREATION OF THE ZOO AND WILDLIFE NUTRITION FOUNDATION**

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### **Introduction to the Zoo and Wildlife Nutrition Foundation (ZWNF)**

The Zoo and Wildlife Nutrition Foundation (ZWNF) was formed in March 2012 and became an official 501(c)3 organization a year later. The Foundation was established for the purpose of contributing expertise and providing funds to support the field of zoo and wildlife nutrition worldwide, furthering the science of zoo nutrition, facilitating the dissemination of nutrition knowledge, and developing the next generation of zoo nutrition leaders. To that end, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was enacted in 2015 that defines the role of the Foundation in its support of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) as a whole and, specifically, the goals and mission of the AZA Nutrition Advisory Group (NAG). One of the primary goals of the ZWNF is to provide support and fund-raising capacity for the Susan Crissey Animal Nutrition Residency Fund, a fund to train future zoo nutritionists. Additionally, the Foundation provides technical, financial and administrative support for the NAG website. In these ways, the ZWNF functions in concert with the AZA NAG to support the effective and efficient accomplishment of common goals to benefit the zoo nutrition profession.

### **Governance of ZWNF**

The Board of Directors provides direction and management of the Foundation. The Board is currently comprised of 7 dues paying members from 7 different facilities around the US. They are elected by an approved set of bylaws to serve 3 year terms, and then rotate from the Board to ensure new ideas and perspectives as the Foundation grows over time. Initially, these individuals comprised a group of interested professional zoo nutritionists with a vested interest in the success and future growth of the NAG and its goals. Over time, the focus of the Board likely will change as fund-raising will be pivotal to the future collective success of the Foundation and the NAG.

### **Specific Project/Activity Goals of the ZWNF**

The ZWNF provides support (primarily financial) to the mutual nutrition related goals of both AZA and the NAG. This includes but is not limited to: the SCARF program, the continued development and maintenance of an engaging educational website, and the ongoing efforts to conduct an efficient and effective biennial conference on zoo and wildlife nutrition. All of these efforts revolve around the financial ability of the Foundation to support those needs. As a tax exempt nonprofit, the ZWNF is freed from taxes and potential donors can make tax-deductible contributions. These benefits are critical to a fund raising organization. Thus, over time, the goals of the Foundation increasingly will include fund-raising. The financial resources provided by

ZWNF, coupled with the operational and logistical resources of the NAG, will allow for the timely achievement of goals, and the further development of the organizations and the field as a whole. As part of the MOU established among the three partners (AZA, NAG, ZWNF), there also remains the possibility of the Foundation providing grant support to specific NAG-approved research projects that are consistent with the mission and priorities of the ZWNF, in a similar fashion to other Foundations established in the same spirit (IRF, IEF, etc). This aspect will take some time to develop.

Ultimately, the goal of the Founding Board of Directors of the ZWNF will be to provide an additional resource for the benefit of the profession as a whole. Initially, the goals of the Foundation are obvious, based on the current needs of the NAG. As those needs change, the Foundation will be well poised to continue its support of NAG goals into the future, contributing to the collective success of both organizations and the field.