



Hello ZRA members,

The ZRA Annual Conference Committee is pleased to announce the 2023 ZRA Annual Conference will be hosted by the Potawatomi Zoo! We wish to thank Anna Pelc, Collections Manager and Josh Sisk, Zoo Director for this exciting opportunity to visit their home within a historic district.



South Bend's first zoo, The South Bend Zoo, began as a mere duck pond in Leeper Park in 1902. In 1921, the Potawatomi Zoo was established in Potawatomi Park, where it continues to thrive today. As one of the oldest zoos in Indiana, they continue to make great strides improving and creating a local and hopefully soon-to-be destination facility.

In 2020, despite Covid, they opened the zoo with a newly constructed front-entrance/gift shop and had a grand-opening of their new STEM education classroom. In late 2021, they brought in 4 male giraffes, a historical first for the zoo. In Spring 2022, Potawatomi Zoo will debut the \$4.8M state of the art, giraffe habitat and barn! The new giraffe barn includes a visitor center where guests can view and/or feed the giraffe throughout the entire year.

Work has already begun on renovating an updating a new lion habitat and welcoming a coalition of male lions. This coming summer, there are plans to break ground for a brand-new restaurant/concession area overlooking an American black bear exhibit, that gives you the feel of a cozy lodge with beautiful space to sit, eat, relax and watch the bears.

While they are a smaller zoo at just 23 acres, they have a diverse collection, and are involved in almost 60 SSP Programs. Some of their guests' favorites include the Sichuan takin, Southern white rhino, okapi, red pandas, their American alligator, Smiley, North American river otters and Amur tigers! They are excited to welcome ZRA to visit and enjoy their facility in Fall 2023!

2023 Conference Dates: 1 October – 7 October 2022

So mark your calendars and don't miss what is sure to be a great conference where you are not only taking part in sessions and collaborating with colleagues but you are enjoying all that South Bend has to offer! Take a walk along the St. Joseph River, go white water rafting, visit the University of Notre Dame, the Studebaker National Museum and the Historic Museum.

Cheers,
Shelly Roach
Conference Committee Chair