

Position Profile

*On behalf of our client,
Minnesota Zoo Foundation,
CohenTaylor Executive Search Services
is conducting a retained search for its*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



MINNESOTA ZOO™
Foundation

An Overview.....

The Executive Director of the Minnesota Zoo Foundation provides overall leadership and day-to-day management of the Minnesota Zoo Foundation; a 501(c)3 organization whose primary role is to raise contributed income of behalf of the Minnesota Zoo.

Created by the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Zoo opened in 1978. Its mission is **to connect people, animals, and the natural world to save wildlife.**

A world-class recreation destination home to more than 5,300 animals—many endangered—in award-winning exhibits

- 485-acre campus featuring miles of outdoor trails and the largest indoor interconnected zoo exhibits in the country
- 1.25 million guests annually, with approximately 420,000 from greater Minnesota
- \$25 million operating budget, with almost 70 percent from earned and contributed income
- More than 175,700 individual Zoo members
- Over 1,100 volunteers contributing more than 112,000 hours annually, a \$2.8 million gift to the Zoo

<http://www.facebook.com/mnzoo>

<http://www.twitter.com/mnzoo>



The Mission: To connect people, animals and the natural world to save wildlife.

The Vision: Our vision is a future where wildlife thrives in Minnesota and beyond.

Values: Stewardship, Excellence with Integrity, Smart Fun, Engage to Inspire, and Diversity and Inclusion.

More than 40 years ago, a vision was born for a zoo like no other—a place where guests can view exotic animals from around the world in natural habitats and a garden-like setting. After years of dreaming, discussion, planning, and construction, the Minnesota Zoological Garden, or Minnesota Zoo, opened on May 22, 1978. Called the “New Zoo” back then, it featured 1,200 animals representing 238 species. Fast forward to today, and you’ll experience a zoo that has doubled its animal collection, is the largest environmental education center in the State, and has become a leader in conservation in Minnesota as well as internationally.



The Minnesota Zoo Foundation

The Minnesota Zoo Foundation's primary purpose is to raise funds for the Minnesota Zoo. Founded in 1978, the Minnesota Zoo exists to connect people, animals, and the natural world. It is dedicated to inspiring guests to act on behalf of wildlife and wild lands. To accomplish this, the Zoo provides award-winning recreational, educational, and conservation programs, locally, nationally, and internationally.

The Executive Director provides overall leadership and day-to-day management of the Minnesota Zoo Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization whose primary role is to raise contributed income on behalf of the Minnesota Zoo. The Executive Director is the Foundation's primary liaison to the Minnesota Zoo and is charged with meeting fund-raising goals developed by the Foundation Board of Trustees. At the same time, he or she will play a key role in the greater community representing the Foundation and advocating for the mission of the Minnesota Zoo.

The new leader of the Foundation will need to have the capabilities to more than double the size and scope of the current Foundation activity. With an approved new strategic direction for the Minnesota Zoo, the Foundation will need to drive increased fundraising along with substantial growth in business development, outreach, forms of alliances with corporations and new outreach capabilities that take advantage of the digital marketplace.

This will require strong leadership skills, passion and an ability to prioritize amid sometimes conflicting internal and external needs. Over the near-term the Executive Director will need to ensure that Foundation operations are streamlined, financial health is maintained, and relationships with the Minnesota Zoo are nourished. The Board of Trustees is strongly committed to maximizing the impact of the organization and the Executive Director will need to move quickly to ensure that happens in an operationally and financially prudent way.

The Minnesota Zoo

A Radical Concept - In the 1960s, local conservationists began lobbying for an expansive zoo facility that would not only feature species native to Minnesota but also animals in naturalistic settings and outdoor exhibits. When Dakota County donated the Apple Valley parcel to the state in 1970, Zoo organizers had the space they needed to build the large exhibits they envisioned, including a means of transporting visitors to the far reaches, affording them a bird's-eye-view of the expansive outdoor exhibits. Compared with the layouts and exhibits of most North American zoos, this was a radical concept offering a very unique visitor experience—open exhibits, naturalistic settings, and glass partitions or other security barriers replacing the traditional steel bars. The Minnesota Zoo's design transformed the zoo experience, and many zoos have followed suit.

Making a Difference - Since the beginning, conservation has been a core value of the Minnesota Zoo. Its focus has always been on animals that are considered threatened or endangered based on the premise that zoos have a responsibility to educate, maintain, and provide information and research on rare species.

- The Minnesota Zoo is a leader in tiger conservation and is known internationally for its efforts in both *in situ* and *ex situ* tiger conservation programs in Southeast Asia.
- In Minnesota, 25 of our 48 remaining native mussel species are listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Native mussels are



- important for healthy rivers and lakes. The Minnesota Zoo is working with the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to help mussel populations by rearing mussels for release into the wild.
- The state of Minnesota has lost almost 50% of its moose since 2006. The Minnesota Zoo is conducting research with the University of Minnesota, Duluth, and other partners to help save Minnesota’s wild moose and to answer questions about why the moose population is declining.
- The Zoo works locally, nationally, and internationally on recovery and reintroduction projects from trumpeter swan, bison, and moose restoration in the Midwest to Asian wild horse, black rhinos, and tigers around the world.

Managing Captive Populations - Taking the lead in conservation means the Minnesota Zoo not only supports the preservation of animals in their natural habitats, it also carefully manages the birds, reptiles, and fish within its own collection. Modern zoos are in some cases the last line of defense for species that are threatened or have already vanished from the earth.

Changing How You See the World - From the beginning, the Minnesota Zoo has changed people’s perceptions of what a zoo can be. More than 36 million guests have walked through the gates into a world of exotic and rare animals, award winning exhibits, nationally recognized education programs, and leading conservation efforts. The Minnesota Zoo will continue to provide unique exhibits of animals with enriched lives while offering guests closer and more engaging encounters with nature. It will continue its mission—to connect people, animals, and the natural world to save wildlife.

The Path Forward

“I am excited to work for a zoo that can be the *Zoo of the Future*. With nearly 500 acres and an inspiring mission, one direct way is by connecting people to nature. That’s something that all Minnesotans can identify with. Nature helps us attract increasing numbers of people and meet the needs of rapidly changing Minnesota demographics. We can’t underestimate the importance of reaching more people – it’s critical to a healthy and sustainable business model.”

John Frawley, Minnesota Zoo Director

“Philanthropy is changing dramatically as more and more baby boomers retire, and millennials join the workforce. They now are the largest living generation, and by 2020, they will be the majority in the workforce. Millennials want to be involved and volunteer. They are motivated by outcomes. They are tech-savvy and social. And in Minnesota, they want to have opportunities to experience nature, according to the folks at Greater MSP. ‘*Their friends are heading north to cabins – what are the nature connections we can create at the Zoo for millennials that also will compel them to give?*’”

Melissa Lindsay, former Foundation Executive Director

In 2028, the Minnesota Zoo will celebrate its 50th anniversary. From the beginning, the Minnesota Zoo has transformed the zoo experience and made significant impact because of the work they have done. *But there is more work to be done.*

For that reason, the Minnesota Zoo’s current strategic plan is being revised, recognizing that one of the imperatives of a good strategic plan is to consider it a living document that both directs the work of the organization but also responds to changes in both internal and external environments.

The new strategic plan takes in to consideration several critical external trends:

Since the 1980s, there has been a cultural shift in our attitudes towards how children play in and interact with nature. Several high-profile kidnappings in the U.S. and UK have led to a culture of “stranger danger.” After decades of allowing kids to leave at dawn and return at dusk, parents today are reluctant to allow their children those same freedoms that were once prevalent.

Entertainment options are greater than ever before. The competition for immersive education and entertainment dollars has become fierce. If the Zoo is to remain a preferred destination for Minnesotans into the future, it will need to meet the demands of 21st century consumers.

Technology has changed the way children (and adults) interact with the world. Cable television, computers, video games, smartphones, and more mean that today’s children are spending more than seven hours a day connected to technology, resulting in unhealthy habits that will persist well into adulthood. At the same time, technology offers unprecedented opportunities to enhance the Zoo experience for visitors of all ages.

There is a growing shift in public attitudes towards zoos and aquariums. These attitudes are despite the fact that they have a collective total of 186 million annual visitors that continues to grow, and we remain the favorite destination for families with children. However, quantitative studies indicate that, while we are still very popular, we are seeing a real increase in the percentage of people who are uncomfortable with zoos and/or aquariums. One study, conducted over an eight-year period, documents an 18% decline in favorability for zoos in America, and the trends for North American aquariums are almost identical.

Corporate and foundation philanthropy is changing in response to societal changes. Historically, education has captured the largest share of Minnesota’s grant dollars (29%), while health has received approximately 10%, and the environment and animals four percent. The shares of grant funding have remained relatively stable since 2008. However, there are new trends emerging which could impact these stable trends.

1. ***Millennials.*** There are 100 million millennials, 50 million of whom are now in the workforce. They may be leading their companies’ philanthropic efforts; they are not like previous generations of givers.
2. ***Volunteerism.*** It is now the core around which companies are building employee engagement. Employee volunteers help deepen corporate partnerships with non-profit organizations.
3. ***Partnerships.*** Companies are increasingly interested in demonstrating their corporate social responsibility to the world.

This new strategy is summed up with our inspirational new vision statement: ***Our vision is a future where wildlife thrives in Minnesota and beyond!***

We will pursue this through our mission: ***To connect people, animals, and the natural world to save wildlife.***

We believe the new Executive Director will play a critical role in helping people unplug from technology and discover and explore the natural world in a safe environment; address shifting attitudes towards zoos by

reinforcing our mission to save wildlife; and embrace new ways to engage our corporate partners and build a world-class zoo that adds immeasurably to Minnesotan’s quality of life.

Under the direction of the new Executive Director the Minnesota Zoo Foundation will join the Minnesota Zoo in:

- Activating the natural synergy between the Zoo, conservation, and taking advantage of the unique asset of our animals and land to better connect people to nature, recognizing that people won’t act to save the wildlife until they’ve connected to the natural world.
- Operating with a sustainable business model by continuing to grow earned and charitable income, and establishing a “rainy day fund” to address adverse shifts in State or private funding.
- Preserving current assets and building new immersive exhibits using a model that does not favor a single large investment for one major new exhibit by developing a 12-year plan to invest in a series of smaller projects that are fundable (by way of the Zoo’s public/private partnership) and sustainable.
- Saving wildlife; at the Zoo, in the State, and around the world, together the Zoo and Zoo Foundation will demonstrate their commitment to wildlife and the natural world.

The Role

The new Executive Director of the Minnesota Zoo Foundation reports jointly to the Zoo Director/President and the Zoo Foundation Board of Trustees. The Director/CEO of the Minnesota Zoo serves as the President of the Zoo Foundation. The new Executive Director will serve as a member of the Zoo Administration Group of the Minnesota Zoo. He or she also will serve as the primary staff liaison to the Zoo Foundation Board of Trustees. The Executive Director will lead the development and implementation of capital and/or comprehensive campaigns. More information about the potential for upcoming campaigns is available upon request.



The Executive Director will have immediate management responsibility for current employees including Director of Major Gifts, Director of Individual Giving, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, Director of Finance and Administration, Corporate and Foundation Relations Manager, Annual Fund Manager, Special Events Manager, Individual Outreach Manager, and Donor Data & Stewardship Coordinator. The Foundation would benefit greatly from the hiring of a new administrative assistant/office manager and may also want to consider a re-organization to support a possible capital or comprehensive campaign.

Qualified candidates will have a minimum of ten (10) years directly-related, proven comprehensive fundraising or equivalent experience and five to seven (5-7) years’ success in a management role. Experience working for organizations with a conservation-focused mission is highly desired. Experience with state government (particularly the State of Minnesota) lobbying or bonding requests would be a plus. An entrepreneurial, results-driven style and an ability to collaborate both within and outside the Minnesota Zoo and the Zoo Foundation are imperative. He or she must have the maturity and self-confidence to recognize and respect the inherent strengths of Minnesota Zoo Foundation and at the same time add a fresh, external perspective.



Essential Duties & Responsibilities

- Managing the long-term financial growth and health of the Foundation and the Minnesota Zoo by growing and diversifying the funding base, which includes individual and corporate contributions, grants, government support, revenue generating events and other.
- Developing and sustaining relationships with the Minnesota Zoo and the Minnesota Zoo Foundation's partners and stakeholders, government entities, the non-profit community, and philanthropic and sponsor institutions, maximizing the resources and providing financial support for the Minnesota Zoo's short and long-term goals and objectives.
- Fund and operationalize the newly developed Vision of the Minnesota Zoo.
- Leading a comprehensive development department to think beyond traditional fund-raising to grow revenue, as well as other non-traditional business growth.
- Designing, implementing and measuring metrics for annual and long range fund development plans and goals.
- Create an organizational structure to meet short term and long terms goals and objectives. Bringing forward a servant leadership model is highly desired.
- Recruiting, developing and retaining a passionate high-quality staff and volunteer force.
- Fostering a culture of philanthropy among staff, board, volunteers and stakeholders.
- Actively participating in fundraising efforts to new and existing donors and playing a leadership role in the solicitation of major and capital gifts.
- Managing the Minnesota Zoo Foundation's assets and reporting financial activities to the Boards and the management team at the Minnesota Zoo by providing them with timely and accurate information on the services, finances and general administration of the Foundation.
- Contributing to the effectiveness of the Boards of Directors by providing strategic input, vision, motivation and leadership to the Directors and Trustees and effectively implementing directives from the Board and CEO.
- Developing, improving, and implementing effective systems for communications.
- Promoting the visibility and image of the Minnesota Zoo and Zoo Foundation on local, state, national and international levels by serving as a champion and spokesperson for the mission and programs.
- Representing the Minnesota Zoo Foundation and the Minnesota Zoo addressing issues around education, conservation and recreation and sharing information about the Zoo's existing programs, as well as programs and exhibits in the planning stages.
- Recruiting and fostering volunteer participation at all levels of the organization.
- Serving as an ethical and careful steward and fiduciary of the assets of the Foundation.

For more information or to send your credentials, please email info@cohentaylor.com

All inquiries will remain confidential.