

{ GREEN INITIATIVES }

VOLUNTEERING FOR CONSERVATION

{ BY DR. TARA HARRIS, CONSERVATION DIRECTOR }

The Minnesota Zoo is fortunate to have hundreds of dedicated volunteers that are passionate about animals and their conservation. Formed this past January, the Zoo's new Volunteer Conservation Corps is making big strides in furthering the Zoo's conservation mission.

It started with a moment of inspiration. Several Minnesota Zoo volunteers attended the American Zoo and Aquarium Docents conference this past fall and learned about the conservation activities of docents and other volunteers at zoos across the nation. Energized and filled with ideas, they worked with Minnesota Zoo staff to create a volunteer group specifically devoted to conservation.

This enthusiastic group has made amazing progress in a short period of time. One of their first initiatives has been to help with the Zoo's "Recycle for Rainforests" cell phone recycling program, which benefits conservation efforts in African rainforests. Volunteer Conservation Corps members took cell phone collection boxes to work and other locations, and have already started increasing the number of phones donated to this program. They also set up tables at the Zoo's ABC Weekend and Tropical Beach Party events, speaking to over 600 Zoo guests about cell phone recycling. Look for their table at future Zoo events!

The Volunteer Conservation Corps is also developing a "green" initiative to be launched on Earth Day weekend, highlighting the many ways we can help the environment in our daily lives. The group also aims to help with recycling and composting at Zoo events, and to plant a demonstration garden that shows how people of all ages can create valuable habitat for wildlife in their back yards.

Rounding out their initiatives, the Volunteer Conservation Corps is engaging all volunteers to participate in the Zoo's composting program. Each day, volunteers generate a bag of food waste and take it to the Zoo's compost bin. This effort reduces waste and serves as a simple reminder to take positive steps to improve our environment.

What Can You Do?

Volunteer at the Minnesota Zoo! mnzoo.org/global/volunteer.asp

Collect cell phones for recycling! mnzoo.org/cell

Start composting at home!



**Recycle
Your Cell
Phone and
Receive
Free
Admission
March 1-16.**

One admission per cell phone donation. Valid for either child, senior or adult admission. Free admission applies only on the day of your cell phone donation. Not valid with other promotions.