

# GET CONNECTED

## See You in Calgary!

Dear Colleagues,

I know many of us are already planning our trek to the Canadian Rocky Mountains in mid-September for our Association of Zoos and Aquariums 2024 Annual Conference in Calgary. We know the Wilder Institute / Calgary Zoo in Alberta, Canada, will be fantastic hosts and will welcome us all with their genuine Canadian kindness and hospitality!

It is my distinct pleasure to introduce this issue of *Connect* that is focused on stories from our colleagues at Calgary Zoo. We are highlighting several programs and initiatives that represent the team's commitment to fighting the extinction of plants and animals worldwide. Those bold conservation actions start at home and encompass education and species-saving work around the globe.

You'll learn about efforts to save the most endangered bird species in Canada's grassland prairies, the burrowing owl. You'll be introduced to Wild Canada, a redevelopment project that celebrates the wonder and diversity of a world where people, animals, and the land are all connected. And you'll read about an inspiring partnership between the Wilder Institute / Calgary Zoo, the Government of Alberta, and the Bow Habitat Station that has turned into a fun family-friendly experience at the Zoo. This festival event celebrates biodiversity and is helping empower people—including our next generation of conservationists—to understand how to protect and preserve Alberta's fish, water, wildlife, and ecosystems.

As we prepare to gather in Calgary later this year, I am confident that learning about the outstanding work being done by the Wilder Institute / Calgary Zoo will excite and motivate us all.

This year's Annual Conference is obviously a special one for me, as it signals the conclusion of my year as AZA board chair. After serving in this role for a year now, I continue to be amazed at the astounding talent we have within our organizations and at what we can all accomplish when driven by a united passion for saving wildlife and wild places.

I go into every AZA event excited to connect with colleagues and to experience the collaborative spirit that permeates AZA—I leave every Annual Conference invigorated by new people, new places, and new ideas.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Calgary!



**LISA NEW**  
AZA Board Chair  
Chief Executive Officer, Dallas Zoo



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