



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 18, 2011

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Point Defiance Zoo officials invite community input on zoo's future at public meetings

Tacoma, Wash. – Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium officials are inviting the community to share the experiences, animals and exhibits they would like to see at the zoo in the future. This feedback will help guide staff in developing the Tacoma zoo's 10-year strategic plan.

“We’ve been blessed to have extraordinary community support, which has been instrumental in helping us become a nationally-recognized zoo and aquarium,” said John Houck, deputy director for the zoo. “As we develop our plan for the future, we turn again to our community for guidance in determining what that future will look like.”

Houck said the zoo will face many challenges over the next decade, including a deteriorating North Pacific Aquarium and Rocky Shores exhibit and aging animals that may be difficult to replace. With these challenges come potential opportunities, he said, ranging from new animals and exhibits to a modern aquarium complex with more up-close animal viewing experiences and improved breeding facilities.

Zoo officials will host three public meetings over the next week to solicit community input.

- Wed. April 20, 6-7:30 p.m., Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, 5400 North Pearl Street, Tacoma
- Thurs. April 21, 6-7:30 p.m., Tacoma Nature Center, 1919 South Tyler Street, Tacoma
- Mon. April 25, 4:30-6 p.m. , Metro Parks Headquarters Board room, 4702 South 19th Street, Tacoma

Individuals who are unable to participate in a public meeting are encouraged to share their feedback by email at pdzacomments@tacomaparks.com, the zoo's Facebook page at facebook.com/PtDefianceZoo or by telephone at (253) 591-5337.

Zoo staff hope to finalize the zoo strategic plan by summer 2012. To learn more about the zoo's draft comprehensive strategic plan, visit pdza.org.

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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium promotes responsible stewardship of the world's resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).