

Brochure Info:

The Edmonton Valley Zoo is committed to lowering its ecological footprint while promoting ethically sourced goods and services. This provides a happy and healthy community-focused environment for Edmonton's citizens and guests to 'Get Closer'. How do we do this? Well... let's explore together!

Enviso and "The Way We Green"

Our zoo is committed to the City of Edmonton's ISO 14001 environmental management certification, sometimes referred to as Enviso within the city. Enviso is outlined in the city's environmental strategy plan "The Way We Green". This includes fostering urban lifestyles which are fun, healthy, sustainable, and resilient.

LEED Certification

All future zoo construction projects will meet the requirements of a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification standard or greater. This is a North American construction standard which recognizes outstanding contributions to sustainable construction processes, high efficiency buildings, and ecologically friendly spaces. It's all about thinking outside of the box about how we build within and relate to our local environment. Did you know our own entrance plaza, café, gift shop, and education centre are LEED Silver certified? Can you spot some of the many contributions these buildings have made towards being sustainable? (Hints: What's growing on the roofs? What are the large, open windows facing towards?)

Arctic Shores

While enjoying our zoo make sure to visit our Arctic Shores exhibit and say "hi" to our harbour seal Hula, and our northern fur seals Sofia, Mischa, Isadora, and Mika. It takes A LOT of water to make sure that our seals are well taken care of. Millions of litres of water a year in fact! But not to worry, we are committed to limiting our water footprint through a number of state of the art water conservation technologies. This includes capturing storm water that gets cycled into the water system (and also used for irrigation of our landscapes), filtering pool water through working wetlands containing salt tolerant plants (yes, our seals live in salt water), and by landscaping with native drought tolerant plants where possible.

Conservation Station

One might ask, "Where are the polar bears, I don't see them in Arctic Shores?" There are no polar bears at our zoo but that does not mean we aren't working on polar bear conservation! We are actually a member of Polar Bears International, an organization devoted to polar bear and sea ice conservation. You can find out more about this organization at our Conservation Station. But the zoo is also involved in much more than this organization alone... Stop by the Conservation Station to learn about red panda, African elephant, and snow leopard conservation; how properly recycling your electronics is helping to preserve critical gorilla habitat in central Africa; what sustainable palm oil production is; and much, much more! Ever wonder how large your own personal ecological footprint is? You can calculate it here!

Composting & Recycling

You may see one of our site keepers or zoo keepers cautiously drive by you in one of our repurposed electric golf carts that we received from one of the local, municipal golf courses. If they are hauling bins there is a good chance that those bins contain compostable waste that is being taken to our onsite compost pile. This pile is off limits to the public for safety reasons but it is there! Our zoo tries to lower its waste footprint by reducing, reusing, and recycling whenever possible. You may have even noticed our animal enrichment gardens or seen an animal enrichment made out of a box or plastic tube, both of which help us reduce and reuse right here onsite! Pretty cool!

Sustainability at Home

Some of you might be curious about how to begin living more sustainably at home while others might already be “Masters of Sustainability”. We have wonderful and concise pamphlets about sustainable lifestyle choices which you can take home with you. These pamphlets are located in the Conservation Station and the EdVenture Lodge. There are also many great resources online. Many sustainable actions are little and easily accomplishable: fixing that drippy tap (which you have been planning on fixing for months anyway), powering down and unplugging electronics not being used including your television and favourite gaming machine, or collecting rain water off your roof in a barrel to water those beautiful flowers in your front yard. Funny thing is... each of these actions actually saves you money too! What a wild world it is where behaving in a way that is better for the environment can also mean a few extra dollars in our pockets!

Below are several possible future sustainability scholar projects as identified by Scott Boyce during his time as a sustainability scholar at the Edmonton Valley Zoo (EVZ), 2016:

Baselines and Benchmarks

One of the most important steps that the EVZ can take towards identifying onsite sustainable efficiency issues is to develop an ongoing monitoring protocol for energy use, water, waste, etc. It is this protocol which a future sustainability scholar could research. This may include researching onsite resource auditing, creating a detailed "Progress to Date" table (see pg 7 of the EVZ Sustainability Plan 2016 for a simplified version), researching sustainability metrics and indices, looking into benchmarks which other facilities have accomplished so that the EVZ can decide on its own benchmarks, and help the Zoo determine specific sustainability goals.

Closing Onsite Water Cycle

The EVZ currently has a number of stormwater ponds which collect onsite rainwater and runoff to be cycled into the Arctic Shores exhibit or used for irrigation of onsite landscapes. A sustainability scholar could study the onsite water cycle to determine how the Zoo can reduce its water use footprint, identify new areas where future stormwater ponds makes sense to be constructed, and to try to find strategies which will help the EVZ close its onsite water cycle.

From Parking Lot to Green Lot

There is a movement by many environmentally conscious organizations to 'green' their parking lot. Two common examples of this are the installation of chargers for electric vehicles and setting up solar panels. The EVZ parking lot takes up a relatively large, homogenous, and open space with lots of potential to become a model "Green Lot" for the Greater Edmonton area. The sustainability scholar would research green lot innovations, costs associated with these innovations, and steps the EVZ could take to convert their parking lot into a green lot. This may include solar panels which also double as shade, a stormwater pond at the low end of the lot to collect and purify runoff containing hydrocarbons or other chemicals, and how to promote car-pooling and public transit.

A Plasticless Zoo

How would the Zoo move from the use of plastics, which is common practice today, to using only plant-based plastics or no plastics whatsoever? Going plasticless in today's society is definitely a difficult challenge but is not impossible and makes a powerful statement to the public about a commitment to sustainable practices. The sustainability scholar for this project would develop a plasticless strategy guide for the EVZ. This would include doing a cost-benefit analysis associated with a move away from plastics, identifying the easiest ways the Zoo could limit its onsite plastic use, and how the public can limit their own plastic use at home.

Conservation Action Month

An interesting initiative first developed by the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. Conservation Action Month gets employees engaged in environmentally and socially sustainable projects outside of the mandate of the Zoo. It allows employees paid a half-day or full-day helping out a local, community organization for a day. This can be anything from doing weed management in

protected areas to working with the homeless. The sustainability scholar would research how to implement such a program within a public facility like the EVZ. This research would include looking into legalities around such an initiative, making contact with potential partner organizations, promoting the Conservation Action Month to staff and supervisors alike, and developing a means to measure the success of Conservation Action Month.