

To: Board of Management

From: John Tracogna
Chief Executive Officer

Subject: **GIANT PANDA UPDATE**

Date: 2010-08-19

Summary:

This report provides a summary of recent developments regarding the Giant Panda project and recommends that the Toronto Zoo join the Calgary Zoo and Granby Zoo in a delegation to China in the fall of 2010 to begin negotiations. The project has gained momentum following the Prime Minister's public announcement of support and the Governor General's recent visit to a panda breeding centre in China. October 2010 will mark the 40th anniversary of Canada and China relations. In the next few months the Toronto Zoo will be ready to meet with the Chinese representatives and formalize discussions to date.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that a delegation of up to three members of the Giant Panda Acquisition Task Force (Dr. Cheung, Dr. Cho, G. Mammoliti) and up to two Zoo staff members (J. Tracogna, W. Rapley) travel to China in the fall of 2010 to meet with Chinese officials and begin negotiations for a Giant Panda Cooperation and Research project and, this travel be approved at an estimated cost of \$7,000 per person to be funded from the 2010 Operating Budget.

Financial Impact:

The travel to China is estimated to cost \$7,000 per person. The Toronto Zoo delegation would be comprised of up to three members of the Giant Panda Acquisition Task Force and up to two Zoo staff members. Funds are available in the 2010 Operating Budget.

Background:

At its meeting of 2010-06-03, the Board was advised that the consortium proposal of the Toronto Zoo, Calgary Zoo and the Granby Zoo, to acquire a pair of giant pandas, had been submitted to Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. Since the June update, there have been several key developments on the panda acquisition project.

First, through the efforts of Mr. Michael Chong, MP for Wellington-Halton Hills and a member on the Zoo's Giant Panda Acquisition Task Force, the Canadian zoo consortium proposal was delivered to the Prime Minister's Office. As well, Mr. Chong delivered the proposal to the Honourable Jim Flaherty, Finance Minister and Minister Responsible for the GTA and several other MPs to generate awareness and support for the initiative. In addition, Minister Stockwell

Day along with the Premiers of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, as part of their trade mission to China in May 2010, presented the panda proposal to various Chinese authorities.

Secondly, on 2010-06-24 Prime Minister Harper delivered remarks at a state dinner with Hu Jintao, President of China, celebrating Canada-China relations in which the Prime Minister “expressed Canada’s pleasure that negotiations will soon begin to secure a long-term loan of giant pandas to Canada”. Support at the highest political level is essential for the panda acquisition initiative to proceed further.

Thirdly, Dr. Ming-Tat Cheung, Chair of the Giant Panda Acquisition Task Force, was invited as a member of the Governor General’s Friendship Trip to China in late June. The delegation visited several locations in China, including the Chengdu Panda Research Base in Sichuan Province and the capital city of Beijing. When in Beijing, the Governor General spoke with President Hu Jintao about the panda initiative. Both the Governor General and President Hu spoke enthusiastically about the Canadian zoo proposal for giant pandas.

The Giant Panda Acquisition Task Force met on 2010-07-08 to discuss strategy and next steps. It was agreed that the three zoos should meet further to refine the consortium proposal, particularly the areas that need to be strengthened based on some initial feedback from the Chinese and the Canadian Embassy in Beijing. Further, if or when formal negotiations commence, the Panda Task Force passed a motion that a five member team be authorized to negotiate with the Calgary Zoo, the Granby Zoo and Chinese representatives, to bring giant pandas to Canada, the team to be comprised of:

- Dr. M.T. Cheung, Chair of the Giant Panda Task Force;
- Councillor R. Cho, Chair of the Zoo Board of Management;
- Councillor G. Mammoliti, Chair of the Fundraising & Sponsorship Committee and who has led previous delegations to China regarding the giant panda acquisition;
- Mr. J. Tracogna, Chief Executive Officer; and
- Dr. W. Rapley, Executive Director of Conservation, Education & Research.

On 2010-08-16, a meeting was held at the Toronto Zoo with the CEOs of the Calgary and Granby zoos to further discuss our joint proposal, particularly the conservation and research elements.

Comments/Discussion:

Dr. Rapley is currently preparing a Panda Conservation, Research and Education Plan, with input from the Calgary and Granby zoos, which has been requested by the Chinese. This will describe projects in captivity and in situ for the conservation of giant panda, to be undertaken by the three zoos and partners. Potential partners would include universities, conservation organizations, other zoos and cultural institutions. We are contacting specific organizations and groups to determine their level of interest.

At the next Board of Management meeting, the framework of a memorandum of understanding with the obligations of all parties will be reported. The next step would be to meet with Chinese authorities in China to begin negotiations. It is anticipated that this would take place in the fall of 2010. Representatives from all three Canadian zoos would attend. On behalf of the Toronto

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Zoo, this report seeks approval to send a delegation of up to three members of the Giant Panda Acquisition Task Force and up to two staff members to China to negotiate on behalf on the Toronto Zoo.

The Giant Panda Cooperation and Research project is entering a timely and critical stage of negotiations with both the Calgary and Granby zoos and the Chinese authorities. It is extremely important that the Toronto Zoo be represented in China.

John Tracogna
Chief Executive Officer

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