

To: Board of Management

From: Senior Director, Corporate Projects and Human Resources

Subject: **UPDATE ON MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING**

Date: 2020-05-08

SUMMARY:

This report describes the rationale for developing new Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with other like minded institutions and discusses current and future likely memorandums. Currently, the Toronto Zoo has long standing MoU's with Parks Canada and Centennial College. New collaborators and the supporting MOUs are a critical tool to help us achieve our mission of connection people, animals and conservation science to fight extinction.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There are no financial impacts as a result of this report.

COMMENTS:

The challenges of restoring ecological diversity through wildlife conservation are growing as climate change, and habitat destruction accelerates. For example, a recent study in the Journal of Science estimates that the North American bird population has declined by 3 Billion since 1970 (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2019/09/three-billion-birds-lost-north-america/>). Ongoing wildfires in Australia have claimed the lives of more than 1 Billion animals (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/australia-fires-half-a-billion-animals-plants-koalas-dead-wildfires-2020-01-02/>). Given the scale of the conservation challenge mankind faces, no conservation related organization can affect significant change without collaboration. Conservation needs to be a team effort. As a result, the Toronto Zoo has, and continues to, look for ways to partner with like-minded organizations to collaborate on conservation related initiatives. This report discusses existing and potential future partnerships enabled through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU).

The development of the Zoo's new Strategic Plan, which was recently approved by the Board articulates new directions for the Toronto Zoo. One direction is to undertake actions which strengthen the relationship with the community and the Zoo. MOU's are being pursued which strengthen joint action with the local community and conservation/sustainability minded organizations.

Completed Memorandums of Understanding

Centennial College

Centennial College is known for its innovative approaches to collaboration with a wide variety of partners on projects that promote education in key economic sectors. Recently, for example, Centennial College and partners opened an aviation campus at Downsview focused on education in the aerospace industry. Centennial has global reach with campuses in other countries.

In 2017 Centennial College and the Toronto Zoo entered into a Memorandum of Understanding regarding Strategic Partnerships. It established collaboration in a number of areas such as capital projects related to sustainability, urban agriculture, and conservation/sustainability. It also focuses on technology and educational outreach for Centennial Students using the Zoo environment to enhance learning. The agreement is for 5 years and can be renewed or expanded.

University of Toronto-Scarborough (UTSC)

The Toronto Zoo and the University of Toronto-Scarborough have long collaborated informally on specific teaching assignments for Zoo staff or collaboration on scientific research. Both parties realize it is desirable to formalize and expand the relationship. A new Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with a focus on an Institute for Conservation and Biodiversity, joint scientific research, teaching by Toronto Zoo staff, experiential student learning, joint Educational Outreach including seminars and symposiums, and joint fundraising. The agreement includes the establishment of a working group to vet and implement joint projects.

The University of Toronto is widely recognized as one of the world's leading education and research institutions. Due to space constraints at the downtown campus, future growth will be focused on the Scarborough and Mississauga campuses. UTSC has developed a Masterplan to guide its extensive planned future growth.

Ontario Institute of Technology

The Toronto Zoo has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ontario Institute of Technology. The memorandum contemplates the development of information technologies to assist animal welfare, guest experience, examining participation in the conservation campus/front entrance project as a partner, and to conduct educational outreach, including symposiums at the Toronto Zoo.

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)

The Toronto Zoo and the TRCA have a longstanding relationship as the TRCA is the Zoo's landlord. In addition, both organizations have strong mandates and values respecting conservation and sustainability. Recently, the TRCA was mandated to develop a more entrepreneurial model of operation based on developing external demand on a cost recovery fee for service basis for its extensive expertise. Together we have developed a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in Strategic Planning, Public Engagement and Awareness, Education and Outreach, and Sharing of Best Practices.

This MoU also proposed the provision of a wide variety of services on a cost recovery basis such as erosion hazard mitigation, forest management, facilitation of approvals, terrestrial and aquatic restoration, carbon accounting and energy management. The MOU with the TRCA was signed recently.

Woodgreen Community Services

As a United Way Agency, Woodgreen has a long history of providing a wide range of services to improve peoples quality of life. Areas of focus include skills development, housing, and facilitating employment opportunities. The MOU is centred around environmental and conservation related education, fostering employment opportunities at the Toronto Zoo, and building and celebrating the cultural diversity of Toronto at the Zoo.

Royal Canadian Geographic Society

The Toronto Zoo has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Royal Canadian Geographic Society (RGCS). The objectives are to connect Canadians to Canada, increase geographic literacy, and protect plants and animals of the natural world. Activities to be undertaken centre around cross promotion of each organization, promotion of the RGCS at Zoo events, providing an RGCS presence at Zoo events and educational programming, providing RGCS material as part of Zoo membership, and raising awareness of the Toronto Zoo's conservation mission to a wider audience through the RGCS. A Working Group has been established to oversee implementation.

Canada Blooms

Canada Blooms and the Toronto Zoo have entered into an MOU. It provides for ticket exchanges as a volunteer incentive, joint promotional offers and social media marketing, plant donations to the Zoo, and Toronto Zoo presence at the Canada Blooms event.

Pollution Probe Foundation

Pollution Probe is a well known not for profit environmental organization. Their mandate is to reduce waste thereby creating environmental benefits in water and energy use in key systems such transportation, refuse/recycling, buildings, and water. The overall objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding are to reduce plastic pollution by encouraging a circular economy, promote a holistic approach to conservation, and support innovative, non-emitting energy sources. Specific topics to be examined include examining how to support low impact development in watersheds through conservation and restoration, researching the role of "big data" in conservation decision making, and building capacity for innovative "non-emitting" energy sources, including examining regulatory and policy barriers to implementation. A working group will be established to guide the collaboration.

Clean Tech North (CTN)

Since 2008, CTN has showcased hundreds of companies to investors, advised governments on policy related to supporting the cleantech sector, and has provided mentorship and referrals to companies in Ontario, and Canada. The MOU entered into with the Toronto Zoo is for a 3 year period and will assist the Toronto Zoo in deploying

innovative clean technologies, hosting clean tech events to educate partners and the public, pursue funding opportunities for Zoo clean tech projects and assist in planning for cleantech through the Zoo's upcoming Master planning process.

Continuing Activity

Staff are continuing efforts to build strong collaborative relationships through Memorandums of Understanding. Currently MOU's are being developed with a wide variety of institutions such as Venture Lab, Storefront Scarborough, Canada Lands Corporation (CN Tower), the Indonesian Consul, the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto Community Housing, and the Geneva Centre for Autism. In addition, discussion regarding a renewed and expanded MOU with Parks Canada, and including key City Divisions such as Parks, Forestry and Recreation are underway.

SUMMARY:

Climate change, habitat destruction and animal extinctions are at a critical stage and concerted conservation action is required. The Toronto Zoo is poised to engage other institutions regarding joint action on this significant issue. In addition, Zoo staff will continue to build relationships with key community organizations to promote common objectives. Zoo staff will report back to the Board as other collaborative relationships develop.

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