

Amos D. Morris, Jr.

Servant Leader - Thoughtful Communicator - Coalition Builder Passionate Conservationist

Leads with vision, compassion, and a focus on positive outcomes. Communicates clearly and with passion for animals and conservation to translate extensive knowledge in an understandable way. Inspires teams to work collaboratively to uphold commitment to quality, service, and uncompromising ethics.

Areas of Expertise

- Nonprofit Board Governance
- Strategic, Vision, and Master Planning
- Maximizing Organizational Structures
- Public Relations and Media Affairs
- Government Relations
- Team Building and Performance Improvement
- Experienced in AZA Leadership
- Elephant Management
- Policy and Procedure Development
- Animal Care and Management
- Exhibit Design and Construction
- Living Collections Management

Professional Experience

Fresno Chaffee Zoo

August 2017 to Present

Deputy Director/Chief Operating Officer

- Translate the objectives, goals, and strategies set by the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer into the daily operations of the Zoo by prioritizing, delegating, and communicating these directives to staff across departments.
- Continues to lead the zoo through a worldwide health pandemic of unprecedented proportions, managing a forced zoo closure for more than three and half months, than successfully reopening the zoo for daily operations.
- Oversee the day-to-day operations of the entire zoo, which includes 130 full-time and 72 part-time employees and a \$17.7 million-dollar operating budget.
- Acts as direct manager of 7 Executive Team members to provide leadership, support, and career development.
- Reports to and works directly with the CEO, providing strategic and tactical recommendations, ideas for new opportunities, and high-level updates from zoo staff
- Actively works with employees at all levels to build organizational culture, foster collaboration and improve morale.
- Completed the Wilderness Falls and oversaw its opening.
- Completed the design, construction, and opening of the zoo's new warthog exhibit. This exhibit was added to the African Adventure exhibits.
- Recently completed a capital project that improved zoo infrastructure in the old section of the zoo to prepare for future construction and improved guest experience by including new educational and interpretive elements in that area of the zoo.
- Contributed to the design and providing oversight for the construction of the Zoo's Ambassador Complex, ZooPlex (Commissary, Staff Breakroom, and Operations Offices), and Kingdoms of Asia, a multispecies Asian exhibit nested in the themed Angkor Wat ruins. Projects totaling \$50 million dollars. All under construction in 2021.

Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden

Zoo Director/Executive Director,

January 2009 to August 2017

- Completed over \$5.2 million dollars of capital projects including Amazonia Slope Remediation, New Animal Commissary and Hay barn, Asian Cat mesh refurbishment, Kley Building upgrades which include new reptile exhibits including Komodo dragon, a 4000 sq. ft. rotational exhibit gallery, and renovated the Discovery outdoor exhibits that hold small carnivores and primates
- Served as the Executive Director of the Evansville Zoological Society, a 501c3 nonprofit organization responsible for fundraising and supplements the zoo's budget for various activities such as in situ conservation, continuing education, events, and membership operations.
- Reestablished the nonprofit board and operation, the Evansville Zoological Society. Successfully grew the cash assists for the nonprofit from \$134,000 to \$1.2 million dollars through event programming and membership sales.
- Completed a zoo wide Action Plan and three schematic designs for projects: Africa, Penguins, and Carousel/Budgie Aviary with CLR Design.
- Completed a Feasibility Study to survey the community in preparation for the zoos first capital campaign and transitioning the zoo to a Public Private Partnership
- Completed the zoo's Action Plan which was a combination of a strategic and master plan.
- Created three new successful community engagement fundraising events: Orchid Escape, Blooming Zoo Plant Sale, and Zoo Brew.
- Completed the zoological society's first feasibility study in its history resulted in launching an \$8.8 million dollars capital campaign.
- Led a three phased capital campaign to raise a total of \$8.8 million for a children's playground, carousel/birthday party rooms/budgie aviary, and penguin exhibit. Phase one completed with the construction of the children's playground. We raised an additional \$1.9 million dollars to complete Phase two, Carrousel Area and Event Room. We raised an additional \$766,000 dollars in addition to a \$2.0 million dollar commitment from the City of Evansville for the construction of a \$5.0 million dollar penguin exhibit which was to be phase three of the campaign. We obtained funding for the design and construction documents for the penguin exhibit before my departure. The funding for the budgie aviary and construction dollars for the penguin exhibit had not been obtained before upon my departure.
- Established a conservation collaboration between the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and the Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden for the restoration of Pine Martins (*Martes Americana*) in the Manistee National Forest, Michigan.
- Under my leadership, the zoo became an active participant in the restoration of the Eastern Hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis alleganiensis*) in the State of Indiana. Working in collaboration with Indiana Department of Natural Resources and Purdue University, the zoo built and operated a rearing and breeding facility for the program. Our team participated in field surveys, hellbender collections from the wild, and reintroductions of reared offspring back into the Indiana river system.

Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium

Curator of Mammals,

December 2001 to December 2008

- Manage a diverse mammal collection, comprising of more than 103 animals and 32 species, in all disciplines of animal management and husbandry
- Manage a small bird collection, comprising of 17 animals and 4 species.
- Supervise and provide opportunities for career development for one registrar, three lead keepers, and 21 zookeepers.
- Contributed to the development of Strategic and Master Plans for the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium.
- Created and maintains the collection plan for the zoo as a whole.
- Negotiate and facilitate acquisitions and de-acquisitions for the zoo.
- Managed the department's budget, purchasing, and acquisition of resources.
- Oversaw the expansion of the elephant yard, addition of an ERD, and elephant holding wing. \$2.5 million dollar project.
- Lead Curator for the \$18 million dollar Water's Edge project team for the design, construction, and completion of the exhibit. The exhibit features polar bears, walrus, and sea otter.
- Work with the Development Department to entertain and educate donors and provide status reports on projects
- Work with the Marketing Department to ensure the implementation of rentals and special events requiring keepers and animals
- Assisted in the purchase of the International Conservation Center and oversaw the construction of the first elephant barn on the property. The farm is a 724 acre conservation farm providing a home for the zoo's breeding bull African elephant and the facilities integration into the zoo's operation. I established the initial operating protocols for the International Conservation Center.
- Created and facilitated the collaborative relationship between the zoo and the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research.
- Facilitated and participated in the zoo's sister zoo relationship with Zoo Wuppertal. We collaborated exclusively with our elephant programs and extended the relationship to zoo keeper exchanges.

Roger William's Park Zoo

General Curator

Interim Co-Director

Zoo Curator

March 1997 to September 2001

June 2000 to September 2001

March 1998 to December 1998

March 1997 to June 2000

- Provided direction and management for a diverse animal collection
- Supervised overall zoo operation in the absence of the Zoo Director
- Supervised a staff of one collection manager, one commissary manager, four lead keepers, and 24 zookeepers
- Prepared and adhered to budgets and staff development plans
- Participated in the development of a Strategic Plan and Master Plan
- Provided zoological professional guidance to the Society and its board.
- Worked with the Public Relations and Marketing department to enhance and steward the zoo.
- Worked with the Education Department to assist in the department's curriculum and operation.
- Provided oversight for the city budget.
- Worked in collaboration with the parks department in the projects and daily operation of the zoo.

Detroit Zoological Institute

March 1995 to March 1997

Associate Curator of Mammals,

- Assisted in the design of the Arctic Ring of Life Polar bear/seal exhibit.
- Assisted in the renovation and construction of a Japanese Macaque Exhibit/Holding.
- Assisted in the development and design of a new river otter exhibit.
- City Facilitator – Facilitated the restructuring of the City of Detroit’s requisition process. 1996
- City Facilitator – Facilitated the restructuring of the Building Demolitions Department for the City of Detroit. 1996/97

Commonwealth Zoological Corporation,

Contract Zookeeper,

February 1993 to April 1993

Dallas Zoo,

Mammal Supervisor/Elephant Handler,

November 1990 to December 1992

St. Louis Zoological Park,

Carnivore Zookeeper, Ungulates Zookeeper,

May 1987 to November 1990

Animal Emergency Clinic,

Part-Time Veterinary Emergency Technician,

September 1988 to November 1990

Community Affiliations:

- **Board of Directors-** Kings River Conservancy, Sanger, CA 11/17 to present
- **Board of Directors -** Buffalo Trace Boy Scout Council, Evansville, IN 1/14 to 9/2017

Professional Affiliations:

Association of Zoos and Aquariums Professional Appointments:

Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Professional Fellow

- **AZA Accreditation Commission,** Oct 2018 – Present
- **AZA Nominating Committee,** Jan 2019
- **AZA Board of Directors,** Elected to serve a three year term, Oct, 2013 – Oct, 2016
 - A member of an elected board of 13 zoo professionals. Responsible oversight for the association and its activities. My direct responsibilities include but are not limited to serving as the board of director’s liaison to the AZA Elephant Species Survival Plan/Taxon Advisory Group, the Wildlife Conservation & Management Committee in 2014/15, the Animal Welfare Committee in 2014/15, the Professional Development Committee 2015/16, and the Membership Committee 2015/16.
- **AZA Accreditation Inspector** – 2007 to present, serving as the Animal Care and Elephant Management Specialist.
- **AZA Elephant TAG/SSP Steering Committee Member** – Elected to serve three consecutive terms, 4/07 to 9/17
- **AZA Tiger SSP Management Group** – 2004 to Present
- **AZA Ethics Board** – Elected to serve a three-year term. Sept 2008 to Sept, 2011
 - The Ethics Board is responsible for interpreting the AZA Code of Professional Ethics, subject to all provisions of the AZA Charter and Bylaws. The Ethics Board investigates allegations, render decisions, and prescribe subsequent actions and/or penalties.
- **AZA Small Carnivore TAG Steering Committee Member**– 1997 to 2009
 - **Vice Chair** – 8/07 to 2009
- **Wolverine Studbook Keeper** – 1997-2002
- **AZA Snow Leopard SSP Management Group** – 2000-2002

Publications

- Morris, Amos. Director's Column, Behind the Scenes at Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden.
Morris, Amos. **Bundles of Joy and Hope - Tigers.** Zoo Explorer, Vol. 10, #2, 2007, pp 10-12, 16
Morris, Amos. **African Wild Dogs are Here.** Zoo Explorer, Vol. 10, #2. 2007, pp 14-15
Morris, A and R. Capp. **When Mom Needs a Hand.** Zoo Explorer. Vol. 6, #2, 2002
Hnida, J., Fitzgerald, L., Morris, A., Knapp, A. and R. Buice. **The Small Antelope Management/Research Connection at the Dallas Zoo.** Central Regional AAZPA Proceedings, 1992
Morris, Jr., A. D. and S. Bircher. **Nearly Extinct Cats Spotted at Big Cat Country (Amur Leopards, *Panthera pardus orientalis*).** Zudus. Vol. 4, #4. 1990

Television

- **Elefamilia, Pittsburgh, PA** – Film plays internationally, 2013
- **Animal Planet's, Untamed and Uncut** - Polar bear expert , 2008
- **The Weather Channel** – Global Warming and its effects on Polar bears, 2007
- **Local Media, Evansville, IN** – Print and Television
- **Local Media, Pittsburgh, PA** - Print and Television
- **Local Media, Providence, RI** – Print and Television

Education

University of Missouri- Columbia, Bachelors of Science –Animal Science, 1987
Association of Zoos and Aquariums Schools

Wheeling, WV

- Principals of Elephant Management, 2000
- Studbook School, 1999
- Management School 1 & 2, 1997-98

St. Louis, MO

- Science of Zoo and Aquarium Management, 1991

African Lion Safari

Cambridge, Ontario, Canada

- International Workshop on Ultrasound and Assisted Reproduction for Elephants and Rhino, 2005

Leadership Evansville - Graduate, November 2009

Hobbies and Interest

- Avid Fly Fisherman, fresh and salt water.
- 1st degree black belt in Judo, Shodan
- PADI Open Water Scuba Dive Certified
- Play the Ukulele
- Traditional Archery