



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DAVID CROWLEY

MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Date: August 26, 2025

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, County Board of Supervisors

From: David Crowley, County Executive

Subject: Reappointment of Amos Morris as Director of the Milwaukee County Zoo

Pursuant to *Wisconsin State Statute Sec. 59.17(2)* and subject to confirmation by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, I am pleased to reappoint Mr. Amos Morris Jr. to the position of Director of the Milwaukee County Zoo. The appointment length is four years, at which point it will again be subject to your confirmation.

Mr. Morris brings with him over thirty years of experience in zoo operations, organizational leadership, and animal management. He will continue to serve the Milwaukee County Zoo with distinction as we continue to uphold our reputation as one of the top zoos in the nation — a place of enrichment, education, conservation, and entertainment for all.

Prior to joining Milwaukee County, Mr. Morris served for three and a half years as Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer of the Fresno Chaffee Zoo in California. His leadership there helped drive significant operational improvements and community engagement. His previous roles include Director of the Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden and Executive Director of the Evansville Zoological Society in Indiana.

Mr. Morris also held various leadership and curatorial roles at several other respected institutions, including the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium, Roger Williams Park Zoo in Rhode Island, and the Dallas Zoo in Texas. Across these institutions, he has consistently demonstrated a commitment to animal welfare, education, DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) initiatives, and operational excellence.

Importantly, Mr. Morris is a trailblazer. He was the first Black member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (AZA) Board of Directors, and the first Black zoo director in the history of the Milwaukee County Zoo.

Under Mr. Morris's leadership for the past four years, the Milwaukee County Zoo has achieved remarkable progress through innovative projects and strategic partnerships:

- Successfully submitted and received a \$3.5 million ARPA tourism grant to renovate the Humboldt Penguin Exhibit, complemented by a \$1.5 million County contribution.



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DAVID CROWLEY

MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

This project was completed in December 2024, significantly enhancing visitor experience and animal care.

- Awarded \$1.7 million in ARPA grant funding for the purchase of a state-of-the-art Point of Sale (POS) system currently in progress to improve guest services.
- Secured funding for the construction of a \$22 million Rhinoceros Complex, with \$7 million contributed by nonprofit partners. This facility is scheduled for completion in Fall 2025, furthering the zoo's conservation efforts.
- Completed a joint Strategic Plan and Master Plan in collaboration with the Zoological Society of Milwaukee, guiding the zoo's future development and growth.
- Received funding to research and design a new front entrance to reduce vehicle traffic congestion, improving access and guest satisfaction.
- Established the zoo's first veterinary residency program, approved by the American College of Zoological Medicine (ACZM). The inaugural veterinary resident will begin in July 2026, marking a significant advancement in veterinary care and professional development.
- Successfully imported a female Jaguar from the Belize Zoo to contribute to the Jaguar Species Survival Plan, supporting global conservation initiatives.
- Maintained excellence through reaccreditation by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) in 2024.

Additionally, the zoo's curatorial and veterinary staff have earned professional recognition under Mr. Morris's leadership, contributing to the broader zoological community:

- Tim Wild serves on the Antelope, Cattle, Giraffid, and Camelid Taxon Advisory Group Steering Committee.
- Katie Kahn holds positions on the Felid TAG Steering Committee, Snow Leopard SSP Steering Committee, and serves as Course Coordinator/Instructor for Felid TAG Husbandry courses.
- Dr. Emily Vincent is the PR Chair for the American Association of Zoological Veterinarians.
- Alex Waier leads the Humboldt Penguins SSP and serves on the Coraciiformes and Bucerotiformes TAG Steering Committee.



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DAVID CROWLEY

MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

- Kara DeLanty is Secretary of the Orangutan SAFE Steering Committee and Chair of the AZA Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) Bonobo Committee.

I am confident that Mr. Morris will continue to lead the Milwaukee County Zoo forward, fostering innovation, stewardship, and accessibility for all residents and visitors.

Thank you for your consideration of this reappointment. I look forward to your confirmation and the continued success of the Milwaukee County Zoo under Mr. Morris's leadership.

Sincerely,

David Crowley
Milwaukee County Executive

cc: Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
George Chistenson, Milwaukee County Clerk
Amos Morris Jr.