



Position: Director of Zoology and Veterinary Services

Reports to: CEO

Wildlife Prairie Park has often been referred to as a jewel in the Midwest. Located just outside of Peoria, IL, this 2,000-acre zoological park is home to over 150 animals/50 different species that are native to Illinois. Our guests come to learn about wolves, bison, waterfowl, black bear, elk, cougar, otter and much more. The park opened in 1978 and since its inception Wildlife Prairie Park strives to promote its mission of conservation, education, and recreation.

The Director of Zoology and Veterinary Services is a leadership position on the executive team with the responsibility of ensuring a positive working environment and providing excellent care so that the animals thrive based on the latest relevant animal welfare research. The Director of Zoology and Veterinary Services works collaboratively with the team members of Wildlife Prairie Park, the USDA, and other regulatory agencies to identify and address health issues, disease threats, animal acquisition, husbandry, behavioral enrichment, enclosure design along with ensuring all policies and procedures meet or exceed the requirements set forth by the USDA and other regulatory agencies.

The Director of Zoology and Veterinary Services contributes to the strategic and operational planning for the organization including overseeing all public and private educational, conservation and animal programs and opportunities. The position has both supervisory and budgetary responsibilities.

This is an exciting time to join the Park. We have embarked on a fundraising campaign to build a veterinary clinic on site. The ideal candidate is someone who wants to work in zoological medicine. We are seeking a leader who will work with our existing contracted veterinarians to ensure our animals have excellent care, while working with the CEO to build an onsite clinic. We would consider an experienced DVM looking to retire and work part time.

This position reports to the CEO.

Direct Reports: Animal Curator, Education Lead

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Veterinary Care & Operational Management

- Provide expertise in support of Wildlife Prairie Park's conservation initiatives.
- Identify and implement cost-effective processes, technologies, and systems to streamline operations and maximize resources.
- Conduct veterinary clinical management focusing on routine clinical procedures, medical case management, critical care case management, and regulatory functions for a variety of species.
- Administer and prescribe medication.
- Conduct required testing, vaccinations, and other medical procedures necessary for the acquisition and disposition of animals.
- Lead the development and revision of policies, procedures, and standards, including preventative medicine programs to optimize safety, efficiency, quality, and timeliness.
- Perform regular inspections of animal enclosures and exhibits, animal kitchen, diet and food supplies, pastures, park grounds, fencing, and equipment to ensure proper care and maintenance of animals and facilities.
- Provide leadership to and manage animal acquisitions, transfers, and transition activities.
- Provide the tools and leadership to maintain animal record-keeping systems, including utilizing ZIMS Species 360 to track animal health, diets, behavior, and veterinary care.
- Coordinate, monitor, and participate in the maintenance and repair of animal exhibits and related systems; originate work orders as needed; consult with the project manager on exhibit design, renovations, and off-exhibit holding areas.
- Establish, schedule, and coordinate training in emergency response activities related to all animals, ensuring safety for animals, staff, and the public.
- Oversee daily operations at Wildlife Prairie Park and collaborate with other departmental managers in planning, organizing, and coordinating park activities.
- Comply with all OSHA regulations and any applicable laws regarding health, safety, or environment.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Strategic Leadership

- Collaborate with the executive team to establish and communicate the strategic direction of the department, ensuring alignment with Wildlife Prairie Park's mission and goals.

- Develop and implement long-term strategies and goals with a strong emphasis on sustainability, ensuring that operations are environmentally responsible, fiscally viable, and aligned with the Parks mission of conservation, education, and recreation.
- Utilize metrics and key performance indicators to evaluate and improve departmental performance.
- Promote a culture of guest-centric innovation and continuous improvement across all animal programs and veterinary services.
- Prepares a variety of correspondence and reports.
- Attends and participates in professional development opportunities, staying informed of trends and best practices in animal programs and veterinary services.
- Serve on board-level committees.
- Manage and coordinate Wildlife Prairie's role in endangered and threatened species recovery efforts on and off-site; establish and maintain partnerships with non-governmental organizations, federal, state, and local agencies working together in these efforts; ensure adherence to all local, state, federal, and USDA regulations and guidelines.
- Provide leadership for the evaluation and execution of current education programs and the development of latest programs and opportunities to promote the Park's mission of Conservation, Education, and Recreation.

Team Leadership

- Recruit, train, evaluate and supervise departmental staff, fostering accountability, collaboration, and professional growth.
- Develop a positive work culture that prioritizes team engagement, morale, and continuous learning.
- Maintain regular communication with team members, promoting open feedback and collaboration.
- Determine the number of interns required and manage the Animal & Education department internship and volunteer programs.
- Provide leadership to the Animal department operations to ensure the highest standards of animal care, wildlife enclosure viewing experience, visitor experience and satisfaction, visitor and staff safety, and staff professional development.

Fiscal Management

- Collaborate with the finance department during the creation of departmental budgets, ensuring alignment with organizational goals.

- Collaborates with the finance department to obtain periodic financial reports and metrics, ensuring accurate and comprehensive updates are prepared for the executive leadership team and board of directors.
- Control and monitor expenditures to ensure compliance with approved budgets.
- Supervise the use and maintenance of equipment.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Collaborative and innovative leader with a passion for animal programs and veterinary services
- Comprehensive knowledge of animal care operations and sustainability practices.
- Knowledge in general husbandry and veterinary management of common zoological species.
- Working knowledge of USDA standards, modern zoological practices, and animal welfare application.
- Knowledge of Wildlife conservation trends, particularly programs related to environmental stewardship and sustainable principles and best management practices.
- Strong problem-solving and decision-making skills with the ability to adapt to changing circumstances.
- Proven ability to inspire and lead diverse teams toward common goals.
- Committed to delivering exceptional guest experiences and driving operational excellence.
- Exceptional communication skills, both verbal and written, tailored to diverse audiences.
- Strong organizational skills with attention to detail.
- Knowledge of emerging trends and best practices in animal care and programs. Expertise in regulatory compliance and risk management.
- Ability to develop an inclusive environment through coaching, continuous learning, and technology.
- Ability to prioritize vision and purpose.
- Ability to develop peer relationships and manage conflict.
- Model appropriate and effective behavior.

- Ability to develop and give effective presentations.
- Proficient in Microsoft Office applications
- Budget management skills
- Strong time-management, organization, and prioritization skills with ability to prioritize and multi-task.
- Creativity and problem-solving skills
- Analyze situations accurately and adopt an effective course of action.
- Operate and maintain a variety of related tools, equipment, and machinery.
- Provide work direction to others as assigned.

Education and Experience

- DVM or equivalent degree from an AVMA accredited institution required.
- Prior experience from an AZA-accredited zoo or comparable organization working with a diverse collection of species is highly desired.
- Minimum of 8 years of leadership experience.
- Knowledge of animal welfare and wellbeing, progressive zoo management concepts and programs, zoology, animal biology, veterinary medicine, wildlife care and management skills required.
- 5+ plus years of experience with USDA regulations/Animal Welfare Act required.
- Demonstrated success in managing diverse teams and complex projects.

License & Other Requirements:

- Valid Illinois driver's license.
- DEA license.
- USDA category II Accreditation or become USDA Category II accredited within six months of hire.
- Maintain any state or federal credentials required to support the animal collection, programs, and services of Wildlife Prairie Park.

Personal Characteristics

- Ethical and professional leadership style, fostering a culture of inclusivity and collaboration.
- Strategic mindset and a passion for innovation and continuous improvement.
- Commitment to the mission of Wildlife Prairie Park.

Starting Salary \$75,000.00

Full Time or Part Time

Application Instructions: email resume and cover letter to:
dprock@wildlifeprairie.org