



news release

Contact: Jennifer Fields, AZA, 301.244.3336
jfields@aza.org

AZA Grants Accreditation to the Buttonwood Park Zoo

Silver Spring, Maryland (March 31, 2014) – The Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) today announced that the Buttonwood Park Zoo was granted accreditation by AZA's independent Accreditation Commission.

"Only zoos and aquariums that meet the highest standards are accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums," said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy. "The community should take great pride in knowing that the Buttonwood Park Zoo is a proven leader in the care and conservation of wildlife, and in inspiring people to take action to protect the natural world."

"The Buttonwood Park Zoo is honored to be regarded as one of the finest zoos in North America. We are proud that AZA recognized the beauty of the zoo, the quality of its animal care, conservation, and education programs, and the tremendous support the Zoo receives from the City of New Bedford, the Buttonwood Park Zoological Society, and the Greater New Bedford community," said Buttonwood Park Zoo Director Keith Lovett.

To be accredited, the Buttonwood Park Zoo underwent a thorough review to ensure it has and will continue to meet ever-rising standards, which include animal care, veterinary programs, conservation, education, and safety. AZA requires zoos and aquariums to successfully complete this rigorous accreditation process every five years in order to be members of the Association.

The accreditation process includes a detailed application and a meticulous on-site inspection by a team of trained zoo and aquarium professionals. The inspecting team observes all aspects of the institution's operation, including animal care; keeper training; safety for visitors, staff and animals; educational programs; conservation efforts; veterinary programs; financial stability; risk management; visitor services; and other areas. Finally, top officials are interviewed at a formal hearing of AZA's independent Accreditation Commission, after which accreditation is granted, tabled, or denied. Any institution that is denied may reapply one year after the Commission's decision is made.

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation. Look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting an institution dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and your link to helping animals in their native habitats. For more information, please visit www.aza.org.

###

Please contact Elizabeth Treadup at (508) 979-1410 for additional information about the facility, including special events and activities for visitors and its ongoing commitment to wildlife conservation and science education.