Green Tales

Integrating Sustainability Across Your Organization

Establishing a New Industry Norm

By Fia Turczynewycz

Across industries, institutions that embrace organizational sustainability as a business advantage consistently outperform their peers. In zoos and aquariums, no longer are just monitoring the metrics of water, waste, and energy sufficient toward meeting our collective mission of conserving wildlife and wild places. Our existence as stewards of the natural world requires examining the root causes of species loss, doing our part to stop it, and improving our individual and industry impact. It’s time to lead by example through leveraging our conservation cultures, planning for climate resilience, addressing our accessibility barriers, and directly engaging our communities in this work.

Join the Association of Zoos and Aquariums’ Green Scientific Advisory Group in April as we host the 10th Annual Green Summit during the Mid-Year Meeting in Palm Springs, Calif. The two day Summit brings together facilities managers, sustainability coordinators, animal caretakers, zoo directors, industry partners, educators, and anyone with a focus or passion for natural resource conservation. This year, we’ll focus on ways to integrate sustainability across entire organizations—how to ensure sustainability doesn’t just sit in the hands of one specific department or role, but is embedded across our zoo and aquarium institutions and into our culture—the core of all of our job roles and responsibilities.

This year’s sessions will cover topic areas like climate change solutions (both from a facilities operation perspective and an education and engagement perspective); the circular economy and green purchasing policies; natural resource management and metrics; communicating sustainability across our staff, within our communities, and with each other; dynamic design and building to last; regenerative resilience; net zero or beyond net zero; and sustainability in our local communities.

The Green Summit is planned by members and supporters of the GSAG who span AZA institutions and partners across North America. The GSAG works together to lead the AZA community in reducing human impacts on natural resources and wildlife through sustainable operations.

Our vision is sustainability embedded in the culture and implemented through the strategic plan and daily operations of every AZA institution.

Want to get involved? Reach out to GSAG Chair, Elizabeth Bagley at ebagley@calacademy.org.

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