Here at Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, Wash., we have successfully implemented a range of environmentally sustainable practices in carbon and waste reduction, water conservation, and staff and guest engagement. Since transportation represents 40 percent of the nation's total carbon footprint, our vehicle fleet has become an area of focus. For the past few years, the Zoo has been transitioning to a greener fleet and offering green transportation incentives.

**Sustainable Pedal Power**

Over 20 years ago, our transition to a greener Zoo fleet began with the purchase of three-wheeled tricycles or “trikes.” Through donations and purchases, we gradually expanded our fleet to 18 Worksman trikes with baskets. These are used for everything from carrying tools to a repair site to last minute food deliveries. Gardener, David Bobroff, has a knack for bike mechanics, so for the past several years he has been caring for our trikes, which are long lasting when well maintained.

The Zoo also has more than a dozen bicycles used by security for grounds patrols and emergency response. These carry mobile first aid kits and other supplies. Combined, all of our bikes and trikes reduce our carbon emissions by avoiding an estimated 15,000 miles of utility vehicle trips annually, equivalent to 5 metric tons of CO2 offset. Pedal power also provides the bonus of physical exercise for our staff—not to mention being friendly, quiet and cool.

**Alternative Fuels and Maintenance**

Beyond our pedal-powered fleet, Woodland Park Zoo also has over two dozen alternative fueled vehicles, from all electric carts to propane trucks. Since 2011, Maintenance Supervisor, John Dougall, has implemented our alternative fuel vehicle replacement policy. Due to budget limitations, the greenest choice is not always possible. But each year we make progress, and currently, almost 60 percent of our vehicles run on alternative fuels. Last year we added an electric lift, reducing rental deliveries and improving safety by replacing ladder use.

In addition to vehicles, we are looking at greener landscaping equipment. Lead Horticulturist, Dann Block, is testing replacements for noisy, air-polluting 2-cycle small engine motors like blowers. We are exploring 4-cycle and battery-powered options.

A green fleet must also include regular maintenance to maintain fuel efficiency and reduce pollution. Woodland Park Zoo keeps kits ready to mitigate accidents like oil spills that could pollute local watersheds. We also have achieved 5 Stars with Envirostar, a Washington State hazardous waste reduction certification, that includes properly recycling vehicle batteries and oil.

**Commute Trip Reduction and EV Charging**

Woodland Park Zoo offers transportation incentives for employees through our Commute Trip Reduction program, and subsidizes bus passes through Seattle’s ORCA card program. As we look to the future, the Zoo is exploring plans for employee or publically accessible electric vehicle charging stations, in concert with Seattle Public Utilities—which has been called the nation’s greenest utility.

A wholesale transition to alternative fuels can seem daunting. But as Woodland Park Zoo’s journey demonstrates, small steps can get us closer to our goal, with many side benefits along the way.

Pliny Keep is the acting director of facilities at Woodland Park Zoo.

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