

# Northeastern Wisconsin Zoo

## Service Animal Policy and Procedures

EFFECTIVE 11/16/2011

revised 3/18

### **PURPOSE**

The NEW Zoo strikes a good and reasonable balance between safeguarding the health and well-being of the Zoo's resident animals, and respecting the needs and feelings of visitors that utilize service animals. Providing safe, reasonable and comfortable accommodations for service animals and personal assistance to their owners is the goal of the NEW Zoo.

### **POLICY**

Companion and emotional support animals, therapy animals, and animals in training are not considered service animals under the ADA. For the safety of the Zoo animals, they are not allowed on Zoo grounds.

Individuals impacted by disability visit the zoo and may require the use of a service animal. Although service animals are very well trained, they can present a potential hazard to some of the Zoo animals. Prey species (hooved animals, rodents, birds) may react suddenly and explosively to the presence of a perceived predator resulting in serious injury. Many of the predator species ( cats, primates) become excited when a unfamiliar service animal is in the area and may inflict injuries on exhibit mates.

A service animal that displays signs of aggression or predatory behavior towards Zoo animals, visitors or staff will be asked to leave the premises.

A service animal that presents any clinical symptoms of disease, such as coughing, ocular or nasal discharge, vomiting or diarrhea, will be restricted from the premises.

To guard against the potential for disease transmission (in both directions), service animals should not come in direct contact with zoo animals. Service animals should be leashed and are not allowed in areas where they might have direct contact (nose to nose through a fence, for example) with a zoo animal or exhibit. These areas include portions of the Children's Zoo, Giraffe feeding areas, Aviary walkthrough and areas where education program animals are accessible.

### **PROCEDURES**

The following procedure is recommended when an individual enters the zoo with a service animal:

1. A Visitor Center Staff person will greet the individual with a service animal. The staff member will then provide the individual with a copy of our Service Animal Policy and Procedures. The staff member will explain the policy.
2. A Zookeeper will be called to meet with the individual to assess risk to Zoo animals. Based upon the current status (breeding season, exhibit changes, social dynamics, etc) of Zoo animals, the Zookeeper will determine an appropriate plan for the visit. The

individual using the service animal may be apprised of areas of potential concern. Staff may determine that one of the following is appropriate:

- a. A Zookeeper or Trained Volunteer may accompany/follow the service animal for the duration of the visit. Staff/Volunteer will assess the Zoo animals' responses during the visit and may determine routes to avoid negative impacts on Zoo animals.
  - b. All Zookeepers may be notified that a service animal is on grounds. Each will observe Zoo animals of concern in their areas for any negative impacts while the service animal is present. The service animal may be accompanied/followed for portions of the visit.
  - c. In some circumstances, the Zoo animals' response to a service animal may be monitored by Staff from a distance.
3. If the individual does not accept the reasonable alternative plan(s), the individual will not be able to visit the zoo with the service animal.