Lincoln Park Zoo President and CEO Kevin Bell Elected to Council for World Association of Zoos and Aquariums

Literally raised in a zoo as a child, Bell has served in the highest leadership role for the North American zoo and aquarium community, now serves worldwide zoo community

Chicago (Oct. 11, 2011) – Kevin J. Bell, President and CEO of Chicago’s Lincoln Park Zoo was elected to the council of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) at the annual meeting in Prague last week. WAZA is a global organization with more than 300 members including leading zoos, aquariums, associations, affiliate organizations and corporate partners from around the world. The goal of WAZA is to guide, encourage and support the zoos, aquariums and like-minded organizations of the world in animal care and welfare, environmental education and global conservation. Bell is one of three US representatives on WAZA’s nine-member council.

Bell is a well-recognized leader for the North American zoo and aquarium community having recently served as the Chair of the Board of Directors for the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

“Zoos and aquariums are vital education and conservation centers, connecting people with wildlife and inspiring young conservationists, while also serving as a hub for important scientific work,” said Bell. “I’m honored to serve the WAZA community and help lead our strategic efforts to build the world’s largest conservation movement.”

A New York native and graduate of Syracuse University, Bell was literally raised on the grounds of the world-famous Bronx Zoo. His family’s house was located behind the reptile house. His father was the zoo’s curator of birds. Bell was raised in a culture of deep commitment to wildlife and has devoted his entire life to conservation. In 1976, at the age of 23, he was hired as Lincoln Park Zoo’s curator of birds – the youngest curator in the zoo’s history. In 1993, he was named zoo director.

Bell is currently President and CEO of Chicago’s Lincoln Park Zoo, the nation’s most historic zoo, and is an active leader within the zoo and aquarium community. At Lincoln Park Zoo, Bell was instrumental in leading the zoo’s $125 million capital campaign which created new, state-of-the-art, award-winning animal habitats and developed an endowment to secure the zoo for future generations. During his tenure, Bell has overseen the creation of one of the leading zoo-based conservation and science programs in the country, with ongoing conservation efforts locally and around the world. Bell’s most recent undertaking Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo opened
Summer 2010. This $12 million ecological pond restoration has created a natural oasis for both people and wildlife in the heart of the city and has received numerous awards.

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About Lincoln Park Zoo
Lincoln Park Zoo, a historic Chicago landmark founded in 1868, is dedicated to connecting people with nature by providing a free, family-oriented wildlife experience. A leader in conservation science both globally and locally, the zoo exemplifies the highest quality animal care and educational outreach. The not-for-profit zoo, managed by The Lincoln Park Zoological Society, is a member-supported organization and one of the nation’s only free, privately managed zoos. For more information, call (312)742-2000 or visit www.lpzoo.org.

About World Association of Zoos and Aquariums
The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) is a global organization that harmonizes the principles, policies, practices and strategy of over 1,300 leading zoos and aquariums. WAZA is the unifying representative of the global zoo and aquarium community and works in partnership with IUCN, national governments and non-governmental organizations to ensure high standards of animal welfare and to achieve conservation in zoos and aquariums (ex situ) and in nature (in situ).