Lincoln Park Zoo Internship and Volunteer Opportunities Plan

2018-2019

Lincoln Park Zoo, Office of Animal Permits and Records

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The Lincoln Park Zoo Internship and Volunteer Opportunities should bring the backlog of unsorted collections to a more manageable level for Adrienne Horrigan, the person in charge of Animal Permits and Records. With the backlog of items left from the previous library and the temporary functional structure that was built on that, the tasks of catching up while simultaneously keeping up with new records and accurate databases should be mitigated with volunteers or interns to keep from being overwhelming. The tasks of assisting in the sorting and organizing of old archives and migrating those files to the new location or to a digital home on a local network is a high priority.

In order to create a central repository and eliminate keeping archives in three different storage areas, digitizing artifacts and entering them into Past Perfect software will make commonly accessed items available to offices across the campus. For existing content that will not be immediately digitized, adding finding aids or collection inventories to the Past Perfect software will help these offices locate specific boxes in the archives to look for items of interest and aid the archives office in which collections to prioritize for the next digitization project.

The items currently in possession by the zoo archives are/were not tracked so the extent of what items are there and how they were acquired is unclear. Certain items require specific equipment to be maintained or digitized. Without knowing the quantity of the formats that are becoming obsolete, it is difficult to purchase or borrow equipment to transition or preserve these items. It is a priority to create standard forms or lists of required information and review the existing collections. Continuing on that theme, creating an accession form to keep with items until they are entered into the software could temporarily create a paper tracking system that would aid the archives.

There are a number of marketing and promotion opportunities with archival materials. Selecting specific projects to digitize as a sample of what collections the zoo has is a priority in order to draw interest and possible funds from public or private organizations. Showcasing former days of the zoo has the potential of drawing the concern and awe using digital displays in the new visitor's center.

Statement of Need

Adrienne Horrigan, manager of Animal Records and Permits, walked Danielle Oakes, student at Dominican University, through a consultation to point out areas of need in September 2018. During this interview, Oakes and Horrigan determined the following items need to be addressed.

- Archives are currently in 3 different locations: Regenstein Center for African Apes- the new facility to house archives, Laflin Administrative building 1st floor public relations office- current photos and items used by public relations office, Laflin Administrative building 4th floor records office- collections not categorized or currently in use. The conditions in the attic and basement of the Laflin building are not ideal for long-term storage.
- There is no central repository for archives. Different offices are in need of different materials and as such materials have been kept in different locations instead of a central database.
- Films have been flattened and moved to the new facility, but there is no existing cold storage. There are not sufficient canisters to store all the films.
- Sensitive files with accounting details or animal curation records are mixed with photographs and print media. Accumulated collection of unknown provenance should be sorted and separated into different categories to protect or limit access to sensitive information.
- Some items are written in print while others are in cursive. Some items will require a person to transcribe the artifact with a computer for digitization.
- There are no regulated forms or finding aids for the collection materials.
- Artifacts and collections with existing finding aids are in the process of being entered into new software, but many items do not have finding aids.
- Some collection items were donated and the zoo did not receive them in a timely manner. Other items in the collection have unknown provenance. An accession form is suggested to keep with incoming collections or artifacts until the details are recorded in the software.
- The Lincoln Park Zoo is celebrating their 150th anniversary and building a new visitor center. Creating digital marketing and promotional materials to show the zoo throughout the years is a great opportunity to draw in donors for the zoo and draw attention to the importance of zoo archives.
- Some media files are stored on obsolete formats and there is no playback equipment on site to view or access the files.
- Many items are old enough to be in public domain with no copyright issues, however, the content on some items, such as monkeys dressed in clothing or caged animals, are dated images the zoo would not like to promote. The options

for uploading entire collections are limited until the collections can be evaluated for sensitive or non-promotional content.

- The zoo has recently begun using Past Perfect archival software and there are some working collections that have already been entered. There is no guide for required fields to keep continuity among all the different types of records. Some information can be synced or cross-posted with Tracks database for specific artifacts. Examples include aging animals who might be honored for their birthday milestones or animals who have documented incidents or public events.
- Some items currently in archives storage are excess or inappropriate to continue to save. The collection needs to be weeded of items that no longer have relevance to the zoo like materials for comparison with other zoos, children's programming not related to the zoo, old bookstore surplus and reference materials that have multiple copies.
- Items need to be placed in archival boxes or storage to prevent further deterioration.

Goals

- Evaluate items and their continuing place in the LPZ archives life cycle.
- Facilitate access to items needed for promotional and marketing value.
- Preserve items with historical value that may be on obsolete media or currently have limited access.
- Create guides for using and maintaining collections with new and existing technology.
- Migrate organized collections to one archives space.

Design and Implementation

Budget: Can use existing resources for small purchases related to archives or records management, i.e. archival boxes. Large purchase requests would need to go through the zoo for future budgeting, i.e. slide scanner.

Persons involved: Adrienne Horrigan, Danielle Oakes, additional volunteers

Summary: This plan is broken down into five phases.

Phase 1: Investigation.

- Conduct a consultation and survey for plan with Adrienne Horrigan.
- Address accountability and reporting.
- Create or confirm procedures.
- Transcribe procedures.
- Identify records requirements or sensitive subjects and log these.
- Review plan with proper zoo authorities.
- Assess existing systems including filing and storage methods, equipment, and media formats.
- Address disposition of any artifacts weeded from collections (donate, sale, toss).

Phase 2: Creation and approval of policies and procedures.

- Designate official storage repository.
- Create timeline of moving items to central repository.
- Create new forms to use for transitioning items (accession, deposition, inventory, finding aid).

Phase 3: Distribution of knowledge, training, and securing any needed equipment.

- Make sure database and Past Perfect software are accessible by the departments which currently use artifacts from the archives.
- Create any custom fields in Past Perfect software.
- Make arrangements to borrow or purchase any equipment necessary for digitization.
- Train workers on how to use equipment, if needed.
- Determine which types of records or subjects should be weeded (locations that are not Lincoln Park Zoo or do not pertain to events at the zoo).

Phase 4: Working with the artifacts.

- Digitize a sample of artifacts into Past Perfect software using different methods (scanners, photographs).
- Create guides on how to digitize these items so future digitization is done in the same method.
- Weed out unwanted items from collection in Laflin.
- Organize and store items from attic of Laflin in archival boxes.
- Create finding aids or inventories for existing content.
- Enter finding aids or inventories into Past Perfect software to expand the collection database.
- Migrate physical files to new archive storage space as completed.

Phase 5: Evaluation of the work, establishment of training or forms for future workers, adjustment of policies.

- Eliminate obsolete media formats.
- Create and train for uniformity across departments.
- Audit and monitor program compliance (check in with Adrienne on all items at intervals).
- Establish training manual for future workers.
- Evaluate (zoo to evaluate project as a whole, Adrienne to evaluate individual work, Chicago Collections Consortium to evaluate files for web)

Timeline

September: Phase 1 will be completed. Phase 2 begins. Phase 3 begins.

October: Phase 2 will be completed. Phase 3 should be in progress. Phase 4 begins. Phase 5 begins.

November: Phase 3 will be completed. Phase 4 will be in progress. Phase 5 will be in progress. Paperwork regarding Danielle's internship requirements must be turned in.

December: Phase 4 will be in progress. Phase 5 will be in progress. Danielle will finish her internship program.

2019: New volunteers will begin. A new investigation should take place to re-evaluate the work that was done and a modified plan for continuing the work should be made.

Strategic Issues, Goals, and Objectives

Given the time frame and the scope of the project, the deliverables listed for Danielle's internship program may be different than the amount of work that is completed within that time frame. The expectation is that more than listed will be completed if time allows.

Projected deliverables from the internship:

- Create forms or policy for accession and disposition.
- Create standard fields for finding aids.
- Code custom fields into Past Perfect software.
- Take inventory of items in Laflin attic.
- Take inventory of items in Laflin basement.
- Digitize short 4mm/8mm film.
- Digitize VHS promo.
- Digitize one binder of the postcard collection.
- Digitize one scrapbook.
- Digitize one folder of photographs.
- Digitize one box of slides.
- Digitize one notebook, book, or folder of papers.
- Move completed items into RCAA space.
- Create standard operating procedure binder for volunteering.

Projected outcomes from current and continued volunteer/internship program:

- Move archives to central repository.
- Organize/sort unmarked archival materials.
- Input items into Past Perfect software.
- Create standard training protocols and expectations.
- Acquire new archival materials to continue organization and storage.
- Make a list of priority items to digitize for promotional value.
- Make a list of priority items to digitize from obsolete media.
- De-accession/weed materials that are no longer appropriate for this zoo.

Success Measures

The initial success of this plan can be seen in the increase of the amount of items being entered into Past Perfect. The second notable success can be seen as items are moved from the other archive offices in Laflin to the new archive office in the RCAA. Third, a binder (as well as a digital folder) of best practices, standard operating procedures, and forms will be available for continuity among volunteers within the program.

The program will need continued support and a short-term commitment from volunteers or interns until the old files are all migrated to one accessible central repository and all prioritized files are recorded in Past Perfect software. This project is large in scope, but the opportunities to work with different materials and do various tasks relating to the library and information science field is a great opportunity for a number of disciplines including archiving and information management.

With these tasks completed, the Lincoln Park Zoo will have more materials available and accessible to use for publishing on the web through the Chicago Collections Consortium, for digital display in and around the zoo including on screens in the new visitor's center, for promotional materials and reprinting possibilities such as viewfinder slides or retro postcards, and the fear of losing items of historical value due to obsolete or deteriorating formats and improper storage will be lessened.