

# Blank Park Zoo Externship



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2021 Extern at the Blank Park Zoo

# Part I: Overview of Workplace

## **History:**

The Blank Park Zoo has been a part of the Des Moines Metro since 1963.

## **Mission:**

The mission of the zoo is to inspire visitors to appreciate the natural world by focusing on education, conservation, recreation, and research.

## **Quality:**

The zoo is held to high standards by its membership in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).



Lions using enrichment made in STEM class

## Part II: Workplace Focus

As a teacher extern, I am in charge of designing STEM lessons for students entering grades one through seven. A large focus of the zoo is conservation of endangered or threatened animals in the wild. In my STEM lessons, I teach the students about all sorts of animals, ecosystems, and ways they can help. The goal is for the students to realize the importance of the natural world.



Giraffe enrichment made in STEM class



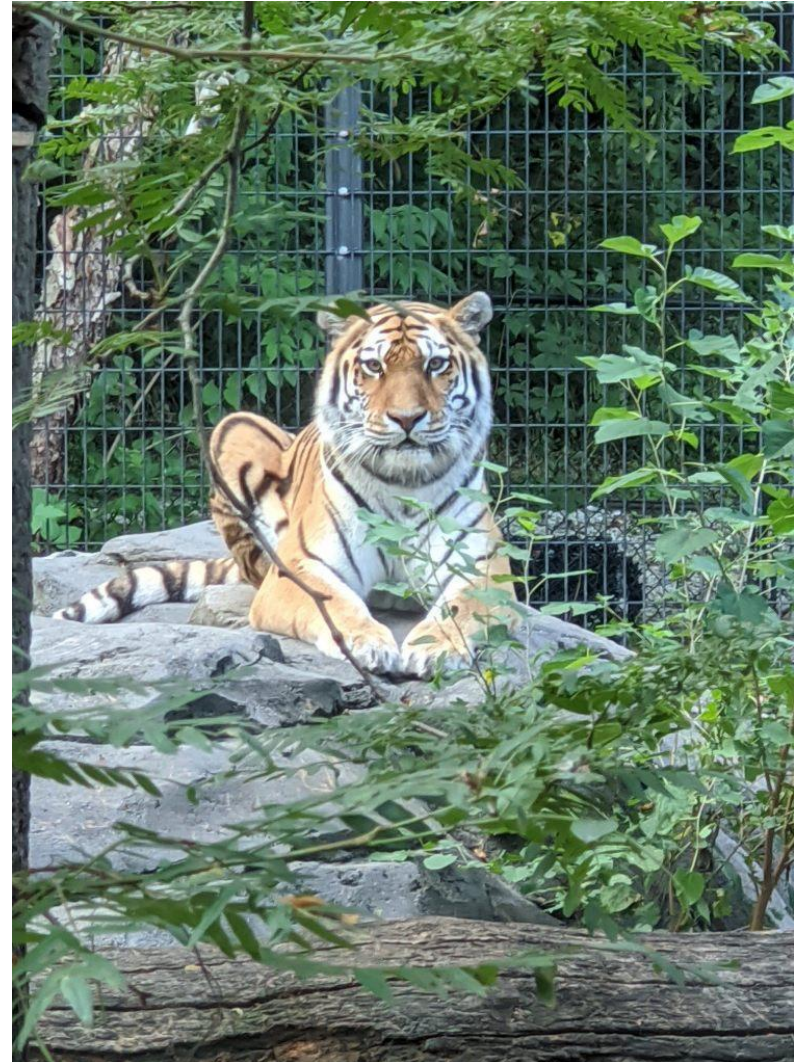
## Part III: Introduce the Problem

### **Problem:**

How can we creatively and effectively educate the public about the importance and status of the (endangered animal), while also raising funds to benefit (endangered animal) conservation?

### **Product:**

Students will create an educational opportunity and fundraiser for people to attend. Students would implement their project through the Blank Park Zoo's Zoo Crew volunteer program in summer.



## Part IV: Standards, Driving and Essential Questions

### **Standard:**

HS-ESS3-3. Create a computational simulation to illustrate the relationships among management of natural resources, the sustainability of human populations, and biodiversity.

### **Learning Objectives:**

Students will be able to

- Identify and learn about an endangered organism that is extremely important to its environment
- Understand how humans have influenced their population
- Use graphs to visually represent important information



## Part IV: Standards, Driving and Essential Questions

### **Questions:**

What organisms are extremely important, but endangered? Why is the organism endangered? How have humans influenced the organism's population? How can the public be educated best? What information does the public need to know? How can you raise money for the conservation of the organism?

### **Benchmarks:**

Choosing an endangered organism. Determining how humans influenced the organism's population. Developing a plan for educating the public.

### **Solution:**

Educating the public and raising money for the conservation of the organism.

## Part V: Extern Host Role

### **Access:**

Students will be able to look at which endangered animals are housed at the Blank Park Zoo that can be utilized to educate the public.

### **Zoo Crew:**

The Blank Park Zoo allows high school students to volunteer during the summer through their Zoo Crew program. Students would ultimately implement their project at the zoo. The head of the education department is Jessica Schellhorn and the head of the volunteer program is Christine Eckles.



## Part VI: Student Learning

### **Voice and Choice:**

During this learning opportunity, students will ultimately choose what their final product entails. They have the freedom to choose the organism they will focus on as well as the method of sharing newly learned information with the public.

### **Opportunities for Revision:**

Students will continually assess their progress throughout the learning opportunity in order to revise and create the best final product.

### **Reflection:**

Throughout the process, students will reflect on the work they have completed to ensure a deeper level of understanding. After implementation, students will reflect on the positive influence they had on the public.