



# **Friends of Zoo Idaho**

2024

## **End of Year Report**

*A Statistical Review of the First Year*

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Working as a volunteer in 2022-23 at Zoo Idaho allowed me to make critical observations of their needs which led to the basis of creating FOZI. The obvious need was to bring more working hands on a regular basis to facilitate completing projects. Historically, maintenance has been allocated to one city paid employee. Due to budget cuts or lack of funding it seems inconceivable that one employee can maintain an entire zoo. Yet, that is the glaring factor at Zoo Idaho.

This employee has the responsibility of the entire zoo maintenance program. The zoo superintendent assists in maintenance efforts daily and it may be perceived that the zoo has two maintenance personnel. Even with two employees working maintenance issues, it is not enough to sufficiently maintain appearances. Both these employees are hand-strung with routine maintenance projects coupled with new demanding projects. There are basically not enough hours or personnel to keep up with all the infrastructures, maintenance, emergencies, animal issues, and new projects at this zoo.

FOZI or Friends of Zoo Idaho organization was created on April 1, 2024 to assist with the maintenance at the zoo. It has been visibly evident to the random visitor that the zoo appearance was in need of repairs and upgrades.

FOZI's approach and intent was to supplement their workforce with 'many hands' and free up their schedule for more pressing projects or activities.

FOZI was established with permission to be under the auspicious of ZIZS [Zoo Idaho Zoological Society]. FOZI is indeed grateful to be partnering with ZIZS. Under their 501c3 non-profit status, FOZI has established itself as an offshoot working arm for ZIZS.

The zoo has a volunteer coordinator and that employee does an outstanding job working with adolescences that wish to volunteer at the zoo. The zoo's volunteer program is branched into two age categories. The youth work more or less with the zoo animals under the guidance of the zookeepers. Their volunteer base contributes substantially to the welfare of the animals and grounds.

FOZI's function compliments the volunteer program at the zoo. FOZI provides a steady flow of volunteers each week for three hours. Under the direction of zoo staff, FOZI is assigned tasks each week that require special expertise, skill sets, vision, critique, and work ethic to bring most projects to closure.

FOZI in retrospect does not work directly with the animals on exhibit. The zoo by direction has official zoo keepers that are responsible for the health and daily welfare of the animals. Indirectly, FOZI's contribution increases the appearance of the zoo's surroundings making the environment safe for animals and visitors.

FOZI workforce is composed of retirees, military retirees, college students, naturalists, and working class folks that find the time after work to assist the zoo.

FOZI's first year consisted of a core group of seven – ten dedicated volunteers that put in their time and 'sweat equity' to make the zoo a better place.

FOZI has no dues or membership requirements other than being capable to perform some outdoor work. Nothing prohibits anyone from joining the team. FOZI vision is simple – provide quality services to the zoo, work on projects till closure, ensure the working environment is safe for animals, volunteers, and visitors. FOZI strives to have every assignment done safely, properly, clean, restored or otherwise finished in a semi-professional manner.

FOZI is slightly different than most 501c3 organizations as the structure focuses on initially growing the membership which is needed to provide support to the zoo. One of the main building points for the organization is providing signature work attire and proper PPE [personal protective equipment]. Promotional swag items are needed for recruitment and educating the citizenry of the mission for FOZI. Donations and future grants are the primary funding for the group at this point. Once FOZI receives donations and grant monies that exceed start up expenses, the organization will use monies on construction supplies, tools, equipment and specific zoo project needs.

FOZI members get additional benefits from ZIZS. ZIZS generously rewards any member of FOZI that puts in nine or fifteen hours of volunteer work at the zoo with a free yearly membership. A seasonal pass which allows the FOZI members to visit often and not be pressed with work, rather triumph over the work that FOZI has done.

FOZI continues to grow in membership. With more media exposure, participating in ZIZS events, partaking in environmental and cultural fairs, and other city events, FOZI hopefully will intensify its volunteer base, thus creating a larger once a week evening workforce. At the zoo, there is always something to work on. There are no misconceptions of completing all the known projects each year. FOZI has secured a place at the zoo which benefits all parties involved – management, the animals, volunteers and the visitors.

FOZI provides high school and college students an opportunity to earn 'volunteer work hours' as determined by their respective schools. Community service folks have worked their hours quite honorably with FOZI and come back regularly to fulfill their time commitment. Something must be said about FOZI work ethics and program as community service folks can choose other venues. For those that need bullets on their resume, FOZI has validity and merit and should be regarded as a believable action item for employers.

FOZI first year stats are impressive.

Action Project	No. Events	No. Volunteers	Total Volunteer Hrs
Bison Shade	2	2	12
Children's Tree-house	22	12	214
Birdcage Fence	3	7	39
Brushing #1	2	8	42
Overlook ramp	1	6	18
Grizzly compound	1	5	15
Gabions construct	1	5	15
Gazebo concrete	1	6	18
Gazebo roof	2	5	16
Brushing #2	2	6	19
Admin Bldg	10	2	50
Brushing #3	1	5	7.5
Brushing #4	1	4	6
Angry Squirrel	3	4	36
Festivals	3	6	43
Gabions Fill	1	3	9
Misc Meetings	6	2	8
Brushing #5	1	4	9
			<b>576.5</b>

Based on the national survey of volunteer hours per state (<https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>) for the state of Idaho, the 2023 average hourly rate was \$30.12. Based on that calculated figure, FOZI has saved the City of Pocatello and taxpayers \$17,500.00 considering 16 volunteers committed 581 hours [includes a few meetings] to work projects at the zoo.

FOZI was instrumental in securing an extraordinary large anonymous donation of construction supplies which was divided among the city Parks and Recs and Zoo Idaho. This donation was estimated to be over \$8,000 in donated materials and required two pick up trucks to retrieve the materials. FOZI also donated \$635 in construction/repairs supplies during the active projects at the zoo.

FOZI is also creating a new exhibit at the zoo with zero cost involved. Gnome City will display various gnomes for the visitor to enjoy while visiting with the live animals. FOZI will maintain and staff the Gnome City area during the zoo operating season.

FOZI presents a 'win-win' attitude for all parties seeking to keep the zoo functional. The animals in captivity get a better place to live, visitors recognize an improved and cleaner look for the zoo, and the volunteers get contentment, personal therapeutic gratification and self-rewarding feeling from work 'well done'. FOZI helps get more work done on a regular basis quicker and efficiently.

FOZI is unique as the organization does as it claims. Projects are done to completion, even if it requires more than one session [session equals three hours]. FOZI is closure-driven in most projects. FOZI's frequency of weekly visits allows the organization to produce more results than some seasonal groups, volunteer work days from local companies. No doubt, all free labor is good for the zoo.

FOZI will make head-strides in its second year of operations. FOZI will strive for quality work by volunteers to make the zoo a better place for the animals and visitors. FOZI signature projects are a reflection on their dedication to details, to a job well done, and presenting a better outlook for Zoo Idaho. As long as there are wonderful volunteers willing to put in their time and effort, the FOZI organization will stay relevant, productive, appreciated and eventually revered.

In closing, FOZI would like to personally thank Zoo Idaho for allowing the new club to organize and provide worthwhile projects during the year. Peter Pruett and Roger Anderson were exceptional persons to work with. Their work ethic and candor made the work so much easier and bolstered morale within the group of volunteers. The projects they aligned FOZI with were thoughtful, within FOZI's capabilities, safe, and fun. FOZI looks forward to another productive year at the zoo.

FOZI thanks Chuck Rizzo and a cast of ZIZS members for working with the club and providing a substantial reward for hours worked at the zoo. It has been a pleasure to work with Chuck all year with email missives to coffee shop meetings. FOZI thanks ZIZS for letting the group come under the arm of ZIZS; now the physical working arm in some respects.

FOZI thanks the zookeepers for supporting the new group and hopefully FOZI has not been getting in way of animal upkeep and daily chores. FOZI appreciates all that

this employee workforce does in keeping the animals housed, fed, cared for 24/7 in all kinds of weather conditions. There is a fine line between humans and animals surviving out there everyday in harsh conditions. The animals appreciate the zookeepers more-so and there are unwritten bonds that develop in caring for these creatures the public so adores.

I take this time to personally thank Rick Satterfield with City of Pocatello for being our webmaster and setting up an easy to use wonderful webpage for FOZI. He is very professional and great to work with. He populates the page with stuff I send him very quickly. We are blessed to have him working a webpage as so many on the internet are not kept up. FOZI webpage is accurate and current.

FOZI would like to thank our first donor – Idaho Central Credit Union for their gracious monetary gift. FOZI appreciates any and all capital shoved in the coffers of FOZI. Money helps in many ways and in FOZI's case, all monies are spent on the membership and building the organization at this time.

Bob Johnson  
Director



# FOZI Accomplishments 2024

**Children's tree fort power-washed/repaired/sanded/stained**

**Wooded fence installed**

**Brushing paths**

**Rock work**

**Gazebo roof installation**

**Sawyering - dead fall removal**

**Gabion construct and fill**

**Power-wash building/benches/stain/seal**

**Administration building front/back stained**

**Outside bird demonstration area – benches sanded-stained**

**Angry Squirrel blind constructed/stained**

**Nine wooden benches sanded-stained**

**Grizzly compound mowed – brushed**

**Stacking bricks, packing concrete pad**

**Stacking hay**

**Festivals, meetings**

**Secured large construction materials donation**