

CAZA Policy Re: Sustainability and Climate Change

Preamble

Changes in climate have affected the world, and the distribution and abundance of its plants and animals since the beginning of time. However, during the 20th Century, the rate of climate change increased dramatically (the greatest in the last 1000 years), with the 1990s being the warmest decade on record. This coincided with industrial and social development increasing the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and accelerating what is essentially a natural process. A recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded, "There is now strong evidence that most of the warming over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities".

Climate change presents a series of important and immediate challenges. In nature conservation, there is already clear evidence to show that plants and animals are being affected by climate change. This includes changes in populations, ranges, migration patterns, and seasonal and reproductive behaviour of certain species. Such effects are likely to become more apparent and extensive as climate continues to change.

Definitions

"Sustainability is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It embodies social, economic and environmental dimensions." *World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy*

Policy

CAZA and its Institutional Members, recognizing the threats from climate change facing species, habitats and biomes both in Canada and throughout the world, commit to increasing the quality and quantity of their actions to counter the threat of climate change as well as promote awareness of the impact that climate change is having on the Earth's biodiversity.

Policy Recommendations

CAZA members are encouraged to lead by example in sustainable environmental practices and to incorporate the probable effects of climate change into education programs.

CAZA, through its institutional members, is strategically placed to assume a leadership role by promoting environmental sustainability and by providing accurate information to its members and all of their visitors about the issues and recommendations as to what they can do at the personal, local, national and international levels to reduce the causes and impacts of climate change.

CAZA urges government to use the results of scientific research to adapt policy and practices to the immediate challenges created by climate change, and to strengthen the case for planning the long-term conservation of species and their habitats over wide geographic areas.

CAZA urges individuals to advocate policy measures and cultural changes to reduce the long-term emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere and so help mitigate the effects of climate change as rapidly as possible, in accordance with sustainable development principles.

CAZA supports policies that encourage the sustainable use of energy, and research that promotes the development of less polluting fuels, cleaner combustion techniques, renewable energy schemes, and more energy-efficient industrial processes, consumer products, building design and transport systems.

CAZA recognizes the importance of cooperative efforts to address large issues such as global climate change and is eager to explore partnership opportunities addressing the issue of climate change that will enhance its impact and that of its members.

CAZA stands ready to aid recovery programs with the provision of resources such as technical support and expertise in the areas of captive breeding and small population management for species impacted by climate change.

To achieve the goals of this policy, CAZA member institutions are encouraged to adhere to the principles of the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy and will strive to:

Use environmentally sound waste management

- Minimize the total production of waste.
- Manage separation of waste at source to encourage maximum re-use and recycling.
- Minimize the risk of polluting.

Be energy efficient

- Maximize energy efficiency in all on-site and off-site operations.
- Try to reduce travel-related energy consumption.
- Efficiently maximize the use of energy that is produced and distributed, especially from renewable sources.

Use natural resources responsibly

- Use products that embody the most efficient and least environmentally damaging use of renewable and non-renewable natural resources. This applies to products from major construction materials to daily consumables, and should apply back along the supply chain to source.
- Apply the three Rs. – reduce, re-use, recycle – where possible.
- Make sure that animal acquisitions and dispositions are not only sustainable environmentally but also ethically acceptable.
- Buy locally to reduce transportation impacts on the environment

Contribute to equitable development

- Keep in mind that sustainable development requires a reduction in the differences of living conditions across the world and that institutions can contribute to this by:
 - conducting activities that contribute to this ideal;
 - supporting conservation projects that embody this general principle
 - adjusting purchasing policies and practices to help through the use of sustainably produced materials (such as Forest Stewardship Council approved harvesting).

Encourage public awareness and participation

- Use the zoo or aquarium's educational resources to help people understand why changes are important and what they can do personally to live in a more sustainable manner.
- Set an example for other businesses as Earth-friendly operations.
- Use media efficiently to broaden dissemination of actions and information.

Note:

Useful websites:

LEED Building Initiatives <http://www.cagbc.org>
ISO 1401 <http://www.isoratnik.com>

World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy
<http://www.waza.org/conservation/wzacs.php>

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The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has been established by WMO and UNEP to assess scientific, technical and socio- economic information relevant to the understanding of climate change, its potential impacts and options for adaptation and mitigation. It is currently finalizing its Fourth Assessment Report "Climate Change 2007", also referred to as AR4.

<http://www.ipcc.ch/>