

**Zoo New England  
Budget Crisis Fact Sheet  
July 21, 2009**

- Like most accredited zoos in the country, ZNE is a public-private partnership and state funding makes up 60% of our budget. The national average is between 40%-60% public support.
- ZNE has shared in the current challenges of the economy and does not expect to be nor has it been immune to the budget cuts. ZNE sustained two 9C cuts totaling \$400,000 in FY09. The FY10 budget passed by the Conference Committee funded ZNE at \$6.5 million, a nearly 8% cut from the budget passed in FY09. ZNE has a small staff, so these cuts are keenly felt, impacting care of animals and our ability to continue progress towards making the zoos world class facilities.
- ZNE cannot sustain operations with such an immediate and drastic cut as proposed. For example it costs over \$4 million per year *JUST* to keep the lights, heat and water on and care for the animals.
- ZNE has already taken steps to address economic challenges and previous budget cuts. Zoo salaries have been frozen for over 18 months and non-critical positions vacated through attrition have remained unfilled. Admission prices have been raised every year for the past 4 years and again this year. Membership prices were raised last year and are slated to be raised again September 1<sup>st</sup>.
- It's important to understand that the state funding cuts have immediate ramifications to private fundraising, membership and admission revenues, as well as to our national accreditation, a process which is up for renewal in September. The zoo received 4 major gifts right before the budget cuts were announced, a real and tangible sign of progress. Now several of these gifts have been put on hold by the donors. The recent controversy impedes the progress the zoo is making toward the goal of greater private support of our mission.
- It would appear that an easy solution would be to close Stone Zoo and combine the collections at Franklin Park, something ZNE studied during the strategic planning process. Certain economic realities make this not a cost saving move, and it would actually work to the detriment to increasing gross sales. The two zoos draw from different markets, and house different animal species. And Stone Zoo is a revenue generator, one that can be maximized through implementation of the master plan.
- If we cannot fulfill our mission and ZNE can't meet its financial obligations to run the facilities, it becomes more expensive for the state, not less. Closing a zoo is a lengthy and costly proposition and the budget expenditure that would fall on the state would increase from the 60% it is today to operate opened facilities, to 100% to sustain the closed facilities—more than the savings of the \$4 million veto.
- We have a long range strategic master plan that has as a primary goal moving to greater self sufficiency; however it takes time and investment to achieve it. A draft of this plan was presented to members of the Legislature and was the basis of the \$30 million bond allocation passed last year.
- The issue is not how to close the zoos at greater expense to the Commonwealth, but how best to sustain these zoos during these difficult and challenging economic times. Zoo New England has a plan that is working.