



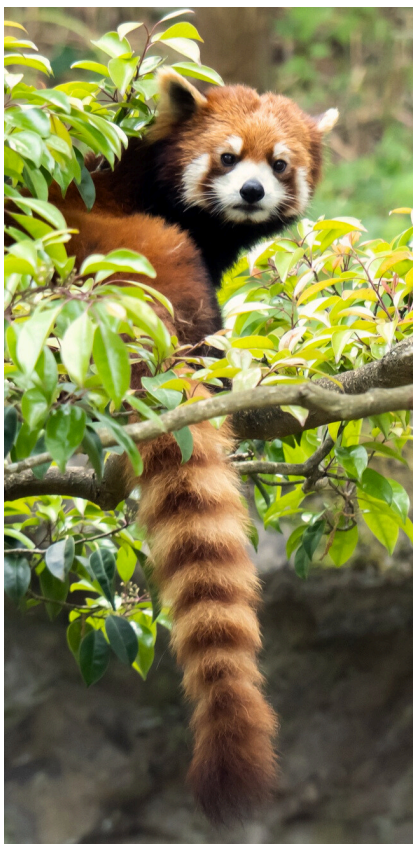
PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RED RIVER ZOO Fargo, North Dakota

The Red River Zoo seeks candidates for its President & Chief Executive Officer role. This position leads a respected, AZA-accredited institution dedicated to the care and conservation of cold-adapted species while delivering engaging wildlife experiences that connect guests with nature year-round.

Small enough to be nimble, established enough to be trusted, and positioned for thoughtful growth, the Red River Zoo presents a uniquely compelling leadership opportunity.

Over the past decade, the Zoo has built a strong and stable foundation under thoughtful leadership, strengthening facilities, reinforcing financial discipline, cultivating community support, and fostering a positive, mission-aligned culture.

Building on this momentum, the next President & CEO will guide the Zoo into its next chapter of visibility, sustainability, and strategic growth.



ORGANIZATIONAL SNAPSHOT

- AZA Accredited Since 2006
 - Specialists in Cold-Adapted Species
 - A Beloved Community Asset
 - Modern Exhibits & Minimal Deferred Maintenance
 - Significant Land Available for Future Development
 - Established Endowment Supporting Long-Term Stability
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MISSION

As conservation leaders, the Red River Zoo connects our community to nature and inspires people to help save species.

VISION

The Red River Zoo will deliver WOW experiences to a community that cares.



PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RED RIVER ZOO

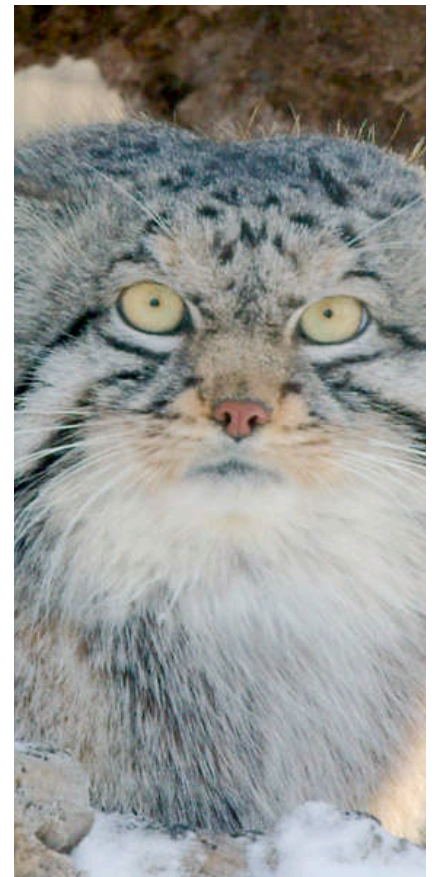
WHY THIS ROLE IS COMPELLING

Leadership opportunities like this are rare within the zoological community. The Red River Zoo offers the opportunity to lead a respected, AZA-accredited institution with strong organizational fundamentals, financial stability, modern infrastructure, and authentic community support – all within a setting that allows for highly visible leadership and meaningful institutional impact.

This role is uniquely suited for a leader who values:

- High visibility and influence within a deeply supportive community
- Hands-on executive leadership in a nimble, mission-driven organization
- Strategic growth opportunities supported by available land and modern facilities
- Institutional stability reinforced by disciplined financial management and an established endowment
- Professional fulfillment leading a Zoo with a distinctive niche and identity
- The opportunity to mentor, develop, and elevate a talented, emerging team

For an ambitious and people-centered executive seeking both impact and longevity, this role provides exceptional professional and personal opportunity.



ARE YOU ... ?

- A Visible Leader – Outgoing, Engaging, Authentic, Positive
- A Relationship Builder – Collaborative, Trust-Centered, Community-Focused
- Financially & Operationally Savvy – Strategic, Disciplined, Resourceful
- An Advocate for Wildlife & Conservation - Mission-Driven, Energetic, Resilient
- A Hands-On Executive – Adaptive, Practical, Willing to Wear Many Hats



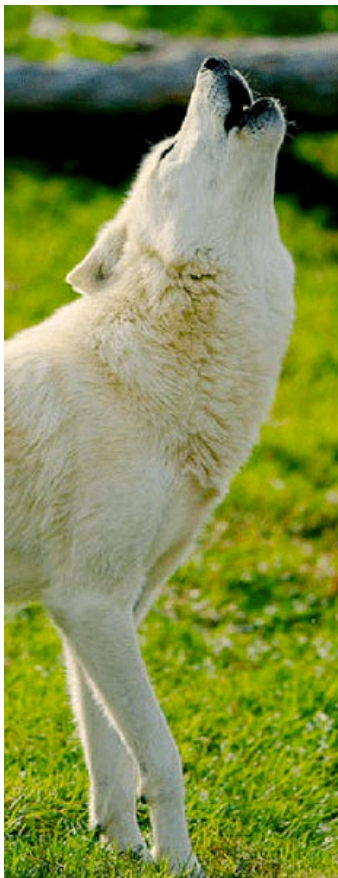
PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

RED RIVER ZOO

CANDIDATE STRENGTHS, SKILLS, AND QUALITIES

At the core, the next President & CEO should be a visible, people-centered leader who combines strong interpersonal and community-facing skills with sound financial and operational discipline.

As a smaller, high-impact institution, success in this role requires a hands-on executive comfortable wearing many hats, balancing strategic leadership with operational engagement.



The Board seeks candidates who demonstrate:

- Collaborative, emotionally intelligent leadership
- An outgoing, engaging, and consistently positive leadership presence
- Strong communication, advocacy, and ambassadorial skills
- Deep commitment to community engagement and relationship-building
- Proven fundraising capability
- Demonstrated success or capability in grant writing, a distinct and critical skill within the Zoo's funding model
- Financial acumen and organizational management competence
- Strong knowledge of AZA standards, animal welfare principles, and zoo operations, essential for mentoring staff, maintaining professional standing, and supporting institutional decision-making
- Passion for the Zoo's mission, staff, and animals

While direct animal care experience is not required, the President & CEO must possess strong institutional zoo knowledge and a deep appreciation for animal wellbeing and professional standards. Demonstrated knowledge of AZA accreditation standards and regulatory frameworks is essential.



PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

RED RIVER ZOO

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

- Lead a High-Impact, Agile Organization
- Small Enough to Be Nimble. Established Enough to Be Trusted.
- Opportunity to Shape the Zoo's Next Chapter
- Modern Facilities. Real Growth Runway. Minimal Deferred Maintenance.

PRESIDENT & CEO ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership, Vision, and Executive Management

- Serve as chief executive with overall responsibility for organizational performance
- Provide leadership for strategy, operations, and institutional direction
- Foster a positive, collaborative, and accountable workplace culture
- Mentor, support, and develop staff and emerging leaders
- Ensure excellence in animal welfare, guest experience, and mission-aligned programming
- Uphold the highest standards of animal welfare and ethical care
- Maintain compliance with AZA, USDA, and regulatory requirements
- Lead strategic planning and master planning initiatives
- Guide capital improvements, exhibit development, and campus enhancements
- Maximize earned revenue opportunities
- Strengthen organizational systems and operational effectiveness

Community Relations, Advocacy, and Fundraising

- Serve as the visible face of the Red River Zoo
- Act as a trusted advocate and ambassador for the Zoo
- Lead fundraising and donor engagement efforts
- Advance and strengthen grant funding strategies
- Strengthen relationships with civic, business, and political stakeholders
- Enhance community partnerships and institutional visibility
- Oversee marketing and communications initiatives



PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RED RIVER ZOO

Board Partnership

- Maintain transparent, open, and collaborative communication
- Work closely with the Board on strategic priorities
- Support Board engagement in fundraising and advocacy
- Maintain effective governance-management role clarity

POSITION REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent leadership experience
- Progressive senior leadership experience
- Demonstrated organizational leadership capability
- Proven fundraising success
- Demonstrated experience or capability in grant development
- Financial management experience
- Strong knowledge of AZA standards
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Experience working with a governing board



Red River Valley Zoo, photo by BrielleMary, used under CC BY-SA 4.0

ABOUT THE RED RIVER ZOO

The Red River Zoo specializes in the care and conservation of cold-adapted species, offering distinctive wildlife experiences that inspire curiosity, learning, and conservation awareness. Entering its 27th season, the Zoo features modern exhibits, minimal deferred maintenance, strong organizational fundamentals, and significant land available for future development. Supported by a disciplined financial model and an established endowment, the Zoo is positioned for continued success and thoughtful growth.

Annual Attendance: 120,000

Operating Budget: \$2.1 million

Roughly 90% of revenue is earned income and approximately 10% from contributed support.



Downtown Fargo, photo by Jonathan Geiger, used under [CC BY 2.0](#)

FARGO-MOORHEAD: “NORTH OF NORMAL”

Fargo-Moorhead is widely recognized as one of the Upper Midwest’s most livable and affordable metropolitan areas, offering an exceptional quality of life for professionals and families alike. The Fargo region is a metro area that has it all, from rural small-town vibes to unique urban scenes to family-friendly suburban neighborhoods. With a fast-growing population of more than 260,000 people, the Fargo-Moorhead region has a young population, great schools, safe cities and lots to do year-round. The region has a strong job market with a lot of company diversity, and boasts a thriving live music, concert, and indie music scene; an eclectic and interesting food-and-drink culture; year-round outdoor fun from lake life to winter festivals; and a welcoming, connected community.

- Metro population exceeding 260,000 residents
- Home to three universities
- Cost of living below national averages
- Affordable housing market
- Excellent schools and safe communities
- Short commute times and exceptional convenience
- Exceptional outdoor recreation
- Proximity to Minnesota Lakes Area
- Vibrant cultural amenities and year-round events

Fargo-Moorhead is a community designed for all seasons — active, engaged, and widely known for its welcoming “Fargo Nice” character.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Red River Zoo has retained Canopy Strategic Partners to manage this search. To be considered for this role, please submit a letter of interest and resume in a single PDF format to Lauren David at ldavid@canopysp.com.