



International Polar Bear Conservation Centre (IPBCC)

Recognizing the need for Manitoba to take a leadership role in the conservation of polar bears, the Assiniboine Park Zoo joined with Manitoba Conservation & Water Stewardship to create the International Polar Bear Conservation Centre (IPBCC). With the financial support of the Province of Manitoba and ongoing operational support from the City of Winnipeg, the IPBCC has been constructed at the Assiniboine Park Zoo and will become the hub for the Zoo's Research and Conservation efforts. The new facility is a key component of the Journey to Churchill exhibit currently under construction at the Assiniboine Park Zoo, which is a part of the Assiniboine Park Conservancy's overall \$200 million redevelopment plan for Assiniboine Park.

Manitoba has a large population of polar bears that can be observed from the town of Churchill, earning it the nickname "polar bear capital of the world". Due to a variety of environmental factors, each season there are polar bear cubs in the north that are orphaned. If an orphaned cub, which would normally die without its mother, is found within the control zones of a northern Manitoba community, it may be a candidate to be rescued and brought to the IPBCC. The IPBCC is designed to care for, rehabilitate and transition orphaned polar bear cubs rescued by Manitoba Conservation & Water Stewardship in northern Manitoba to eventual placement in accredited Manitoba-standard facilities. In addition, the centre supports and facilitates research efforts that contribute to environmental and wildlife education and the conservation of polar bears.

The building is structured into four distinct areas for bears, keepers, researchers, and visitors. The keepers and bears are situated in the upper level and back areas of the IPBCC. These areas include what was formerly the three outside bear enclosures which have been expanded to provide more space both outside and in the holding areas inside the building. Researchers are located on the main level where there is a specialized lab and a larger laboratory space that can be used for a variety of projects.

Visitors to the Zoo can experience the IPBCC in the multimedia rich interpretive gallery – learning from interviews, interactive games, touchable objects, and interpretive signage about bears, researchers, and climate change. The visitor centre's primary goal is to educate the public about polar bears, increase awareness of the fragile Arctic ecosystem, and motivate people to help conserve polar bears by reducing their carbon footprint. The IPBCC can also be used for meetings, workshops, lectures and educational classes.

Management Advisory Committee

The IPBCC receives guidance from a Management Advisory Committee, appointed jointly by the Assiniboine Park Conservancy and the Province of Manitoba. The current members are:

- Marilyn Peckett, Chair – Superintendent, Manitoba Field Unit, Parks Canada
- Tim Sinclair-Smith – Director of Zoological Operations, Assiniboine Park Zoo
- Bill Watkins – Biodiversity Conservation Zoologist, Wildlife and Ecosystem Protection Branch, Manitoba Conservation

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- Michael Goodyear – Executive Director, Churchill Northern Studies Centre
- Geoff York – Polar Bear expert with the Global Arctic Program, World Wildlife Fund Canada
- John Carnio – Endangered Species Biologist, Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums
- Dr. Jane Waterman – Wildlife Researcher and Associate Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Manitoba

LEED certification

The issue of climate change and its impact on the environment and wildlife is a matter of particular concern to the Assiniboine Park Zoo. Therefore, the Zoo is committed to pursuing choices that minimize its environmental impact. One way to accomplish this objective is through green building efforts, particularly related to the rating systems of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification program.

The Zoo is on track to receive LEED Silver certification for the IPBCC building, a level based on a ranking of points driven by credits for various green building practices.

The LEED Green Building Rating System[®] is a certification program established by the Canada Green Building Council that encourages and accelerates global adoption of sustainable green building and development practices through the creation and implementation of universally understood and accepted tools and performance criteria. LEED helps create more sustainable building environments by providing a framework for design, construction, and evaluation.