



-For Immediate Release-

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Wild Election Showdown: Meet the Animal Candidates Battling for Mayor of Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo

Bridgeport, CT –October 22, 2024– Six animals are competing for the coveted title of Mayor of Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo in this year's fun and exciting election. The election will decide the Zoo's fifth Mayor, the highest-ranking animal official who will showcase the important role of animal ambassadors. Last year's winner, Tahu the river otter, whose campaign slogan was "Ready to Dive In," spent most her term swimming upstream while also promoting conservation and the benefits of clean water for our ecosystem.

The 2024 race introduces a new lineup of contenders vying for the top spot:

Dumbledore the Yellow-Banded Poison Dart Frog: You can't miss this brightly colored candidate! Dumbledore, the Yellow-Banded Poison Dart Frog or Bumblebee Dart Frog, is ready to leap into this race and believes he is the best choice for Zoo Mayor because he is not afraid to stand out from his opponents. Dumbledore promises to accomplish so much during his term as Mayor of the Zoo that you will question if his abilities are magic. His campaign slogan is "Vibrant Leadership for a Brighter Future!" Text 2025ZooMayor5 to 71777 to vote for Dumbledore.



Post Makoi the Koi Fish: Making a splash as the first ever mayoral candidate to represent the Zoo's Greenhouse, Post Makoi the Koi is excited to dive into uncharted waters. Since the Zoo achieved Level One Arboretum Status this past year, Post Makoi believes he has the advantage over his opponents to help the Zoo reach Level 2 Arboretum Status since he spends his days swimming amongst the greenery. His campaign motto is: "Making Waves for a Greener Tomorrow!" Text 2025ZooMayor2 to 71777 to vote for Post Makoi.



Willow the Eastern Mud Turtle: Sure and steady in her decision to run for Mayor, Willow the Eastern Mud Turtle says she is best suited for the job because she is not afraid to get her feet on the ground and handle the dirty work. Willow says that real progress isn't about sprinting but instead knowing when to dig in for the long haul. Her campaign motto is "Making Change from the Ground, Up!" Text 2025ZooMayor1 to 71777 to vote for Willow.



Berry the Red Panda: An expert at knowing how to balance responsibilities, Berry the Red Panda says whether you are high up in the trees, or down on the ground, she will be a Mayor for all at the Zoo. Berry spends much of her day behind the scenes in her habitat busy working on her plans to move the Zoo forward and said she is “Red-y” to climb to new heights with your support. Her campaign slogan is, “Let’s Make Paws-itive Change Together!” Text 2025ZooMayor7 to 71777 to vote for Berry.



Nuna the Andean Bear: One of the newer residents of Connecticut’s Beardsley Zoo is throwing her paw into the pool of candidates for Mayor this year. Nuna, the Andean Bear, believes that her fresh perspective as a newer resident will allow her to bring new and progressive ideas to the Zoo. Andean Bears are accustomed to navigating steep cliffs, thick forests, and unpredictable terrain and Nuna believes this experience has adapted her with resilience, and the ability to stay focused on what matters. Her campaign slogan is “More than just the Bear Necessities!” Text 2025ZooMayor6 to 71777 to vote for Nuna.



Ethel the Guinea Hog: Mother to five guinea hog piglets, Ethel the Guinea Hog says that her ability to keep her rambunctious little ones in line proves that she’s the right candidate for the job. While she says she has a lot of ideas for the Zoo, she does not plan to hog the spotlight and says there will be room for everyone at her farm table. Ethel’s campaign slogan is “Don’t go Hog Wild- Vote for Ethel!” Text 2025ZooMayor8 to 71777 to vote for Ethel.



“The election for Mayor of Connecticut’s Beardsley Zoo is a fun and engaging way for the public to connect with our animals while supporting our fundraising efforts,” said Jim Wharton, CEO of Connecticut’s Beardsley Zoo. “Each candidate is working hard to win over voters, making this a lively and competitive race. Unlike other elections, we encourage everyone to vote early, vote often, and stuff the ballot box for their favorite candidate.”

The election will be decided by all tallied text and online votes. The voting begins on Tuesday, October 22nd and the polls close at 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, November 5th. The public is invited to vote for the candidate of their choice by making a one-dollar donation for each vote via text to the number identified in the candidate profile, or online at <https://fundraise.givesmart.com/vf/2025ZooMayor>.

The winning Mayor will hold a 12-month term. All donations to the ballot box will support the Zoo’s mission of conservation, education, research, and fun.

For more information, visiting hours, and other zoo attractions, please visit www.beardsleyzoo.org.

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About Connecticut’s Beardsley Zoo

Connecticut’s only zoo, celebrating 102 years, features 350 animals representing primarily North and South American and Northern Asian species. Guests won’t want to miss our Andean bear, maned wolves, Mexican gray wolves, and red wolves. Other highlights include our Spider Monkey Habitat, and a new prairie dog exhibit. As an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and participant in its Species Survival Plan (SSP) programs, the non-profit Zoo is committed to the preservation of endangered animals and wild habitats. Tickets can be purchased on the [Zoo’s website](#).