CLIMATE CHANGE MESSAGING WORKSHOP
2007 AZA Annual Conference
Mark Plunkett (10-16-7)

MODERATOR: Mark Plunkett, Seattle Aquarium
PANELISTS: Dr. Nigella Hillgarth, Birch Aquarium at Scripps
Dr. Deborah Jensen, Woodland Park Zoo
Dr. Carol Landis, Byrd Polar Research Center, Ohio State Univ.
Dr. Wm. Rapley, Toronto Zoo
Mike Chamberlain, Monterey Bay Aquarium
PARTICIPANTS: 83 from about 30 AZA facilities in US and Canada. Breakdown by messaging sub-groups: Exhibits -16, Public Programs -32; Modeling Green Practices-35

EXHIBITS SUB-GROUP INPUT

- **Birch Aquarium (Scripps Institution of Oceanography)** "Feeling the Heat" opened spring of 2007 (http://aquarium.ucsd.edu/Exhibits/Feeling_the_Heat/)
    - "Heat Signature Gallery" with stunning imagery from locations worldwide
    - "Discover Calif. 2050" provides fast-forward glimpse of projected env. changes in CA by mid-century
    - side-by-side tropical exhibits featuring healthy reef next to bleached grabs attention
    - Magic Planet rotating globe with climate change impacts is captivating
    - multiple messages in exhibits, online around personal climate solutions
    - interactive buttons perhaps won't hold up to kids
    - contact: Dr. Nigella Hilgarth about traveling aspect of exhibit
- **Toronto Zoo** beginning construction in 2008 on large interactive tundra exhibit in conjunction with Polar Bear Provincial Park in Ontario
    - will feature science of climate change and personal actions
    - contact: Dr. Wm. Rapley
- **Columbus Zoo and Aquarium**, **Byrd Polar Research Center** "Polar Frontier" planned for fall of 2008
    - obvious polar bear connections
    - actions offered for citizens, business, science, policymakers and educators
    - contact: Dr. Carol Landis
- **Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium** has new polar bear exhibit and is working on climate change messaging elements such as "One Degree of Change" pocket guide with top five things to do
    - contact Margie Marks
- **Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle Aquarium** "Engaging the Public on Global Climate Change" in discussion stage with Univ. of Washington and Climate Solutions. Hope for NSF funding to include:
    - interactive exhibits at zoo, aquarium with emphasis on climate solutions
    - joint programming for K-12 and general public
    - teacher workshops, seminars
    - written and web-based educational materials
    - contact: Mark Plunkett, Dr. Deborah Jensen

- Consider how to reach younger audiences. New children's book on climate change by respected author Lynne Cherry due out this fall. Contact www.LynneCherry.com or 202-966-9162
- Need emotional connection to visitors, e.g. polar bear story
- Demonstrate positives, e.g. no idling car, recycling, etc
- Provide opportunities for involvement in events near the facility, e.g. Earth Day or Migratory Bird Day
- Must focus climate change messaging to a facility's animals, habitats
- Message not scientific debate – it's about ACTION
- Seattle CAN (Climate Action Now) just released (http://seattlecan.org/). Good examples of messages. Key messages:
    - legacy: we have an obligation to our kids and future generations
    - it will save you money
    - it's the right thing to do
    - it will help protect the environment
    - small steps by lots of people can lead to big change (Margaret Mead)

PUBLIC PROGRAMS SUB-GROUP INPUT

- **Toronto Zoo** has youth program entitled "Cool Kids for a Cool Climate" and writing contest linking climate change and impacts on Canadian wildlife
- **Monterey Bay Aquarium** planning short movie followed by docent-lead discussion and free CFL, handouts on simple climate actions
    - contact: Mike Chamberlain
- Climate Project offers trained speakers to show/discuss "An Inconvenient Truth" at no cost. Nigella Hillgarth has been trained and has done them. See www.theclimateproject.org/ to arrange for a speaker.
- Some people prefer new movie -"11th Hour" - as a more positive and less political alternative to "An Inconvenient Truth". Consider showings/discussions.

MODELING GREEN PRACTICES SUB-GROUP INPUT

- **Toronto Zoo** has "Green Zoo" initiatives it publicizes about green practices
- **Woodland Park Zoo** planning "zoo footprint" project as guide towards sustainable operations and will message these success stories to visitors
- Each facility should promote it's green practices as a model for visitors and link how they can do the same, e.g. where they can get CFL deals, etc
- Encourage discount ticketing for demonstrating green behavior such as bringing in incandescent bulb in exchange for free CFL
- Talk about impacts to animals in your collection, esp if you have arctic animals
- Capitalize on the opportunity for individual actions to make a difference
- Directors meeting in Jan 2007 included a briefing by a number of outside experts, connect up those who missed
- Create a lecture series in your area on impacts and solutions
- www.climateproject.org
- Lots of media outlets are including significant information

- Tell the story of the process of going green many small steps
- Go green to save money -- might be easier sell in some areas. see www.sunsetzoo.com
- AZA to put green master plans on the resources section of web site
- Share approaches on the Green Practices SAG listserve
- AZA to make climate change a higher profile issue
- Challenges
    - Limited resources and institutional support to implement green actions
    - Can't even talk about this issue in our organization
    - No green infrastructure -- in the community
    - Municipalities do not support
    - Difficult to keep momentum on top of everything else we're doing
    - Not all departments are on the same page; some yes, some not
    - Overwhelming disbelief by skeptics; hard to even start the conversation
    - Lack of focus on best thing to do in our organization