

“30x30”

An Introduction for Zoos, Aquariums and Museums

“President Biden has challenged all of us as Americans to join together in pursuit of a goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030. The ambition of this goal reflects the urgency of the challenges we face: the need to do more to safeguard the drinking water, clean air, food supplies, and wildlife upon which we all depend; the need to fight climate change with the natural solutions that our forests, agricultural lands, and the ocean provide; and the need to give every child in America the chance to experience the wonders of nature.”

- [CONSERVING AND RESTORING AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL](#)

To help address the climate change and biodiversity crisis, scientists have urged the conservation of at least 30% of the planet’s lands, waters and ocean by 2030. At the 2019 Annual Conference of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Dr. Enric Sala [presented](#) on “30x30.” Since that time a wide array of individuals and organizations have rallied around this goal. And in recent months, more than 50 countries, including the United States, have adopted it.

30x30 is ambitious but achievable for the United States. By 2020, the U.S. had protected 12% of its lands and 23% of its ocean^[1]. In January, 2021, President Biden issued an [executive order](#) adopting the goal of achieving “30x30.” In May 2021, the Department of the Interior presented a vision and principles for “[Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful](#).” In addition, many states, from California to Maine, are pursuing their own initiatives in alignment with the national goal. Zoos, aquariums and museums can play an essential role going forward, with an emphasis on:

1. **Engaging the public.** Reaching broad and diverse audiences and engaging with them in an inclusive way will be essential to the success of 30x30. Our organizations reach millions of people who not only expect, but trust and appreciate when we engage them with ways that together we can advance conservation. And polling tells us that the public, once informed about the idea of 30x30, is very supportive.
2. **Informing policymakers.** In addition to contributing directly to conservation efforts across the country and around the globe, our organizations can leverage our impact by sharing our visitors’ views and our own expertise with policymakers, doing so as nonpartisan players who also make a clear contribution to the wellbeing of their communities.

Over the coming months and years, there will be many ways to assist in advancing 30x30, and demonstrate the important role of aquariums and zoos. These will range from raising awareness of the concept to advancing the protection of the areas needed for the survival of people and animals alike, and maximizing the impact of related conservation efforts, including [AZA SAFE](#).

Thanks to the support of the Gordan and Betty Moore Foundation, The Ocean Project is pleased to serve as the coordinator of the working group referenced below. This working group will be posting regular updates, as well as tools and resources, to this “30x30 Community” here on the AZA Network; and we encourage your feedback on those resources and how together we can help advance conservation in keeping with the goal of 30x30.

Sincerely,
Bill Mott, Director, The Ocean Project
June, 2021

30x30 Engagement Working Group

- **Frost Museum of Science:** Andy Dehart, VP of Animal Husbandry & Marine Conservation
- **National Aquarium:** Rose Slick, Guest Engagement Manager with Maggie Ostdahl, Conservation Policy Manager
- **New England Aquarium:** Taylor Engelsman, Content and Evaluation Specialist
- **Philadelphia Zoo:** Dani Hogan, Manager of Education Programs
- **San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance:** Andrea Caldwell, Associate Dir. of Government Relations; Nadine Lamberski, Chief Conservation & Wildlife Health Officer; David Miller, Chief Marketing Officer; Megan Owen, Director of Conservation Science, and Kirstie Ruppert, Scientist, Community Engagement
- **Seattle Aquarium:** Erin Meyer, Dir. of Conservation Programs and Partnerships and Heather Yu, WA SeaGrant Keystone Fellow

Advisors

- **AZA:** Rob Vernon
- **ACP:** Kim McIntyre and Noah Chesnin
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Access Issues:** Curtis Bennett
- **National Ocean Protection Coalition:** Erin Eastwood

Coordinators

[1] According to the National Ocean Protection Coalition, 23% of US waters have strong, permanent protection. Nearly all of this area is located in two large protected areas in the remote Pacific Ocean [Papahanamokuakea and the Pacific Remote Islands]. Less than 1% of other regions have strong MPAs.