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Larry Holze, Public Information Officer

Municipal Information

254-750-5636

LarryH@wacotx.gov

www.waco-texas.com

City of Waco Selects New Zoo Director

As Zoo's Future is Planned City Assures Strong Transitional Leadership with New Partnership

WACO, TEXAS (September 30, 2019) – After a lengthy nationwide search, the City of Waco and Cameron Park Zoological Society are pleased to announce that Chris Vanskike (Van-Skyk) has accepted the role of Director of the Cameron Park Zoo. Chris comes to Waco from the San Antonio Zoo as its Vice President of Operations, Facilities & Construction and brings more than 21 years of experience working with the day to day operations of another world class zoo. His first day at Cameron Park Zoo will be November 18th.

While at the San Antonio Zoo, Vanskike has managed \$75 million in capital construction projects and prior to stepping in to his current role he oversaw the areas of Human Resources, Capital Construction, Facilities Maintenance, Information Technology, and Sustainability. He was also heavily involved with the Zoo's accreditation, employee safety, and emergency preparedness.

“I look forward to working for the City of Waco in my capacity as Zoo Director,” Vanskike said. “The Cameron Park Zoo has a great reputation and dedicated staff who inspire an appreciation of wildlife through conservation and education. I am humbled by the opportunity and excited to participate in their continued effort of amazing animal care.”

“We appreciate Johnny Binder's service as interim director,” said City Manager Wiley Stem. “As our new fiscal year begins, he will be free to focus on his role as the Zoo's Deputy Director, managing the care of over 1,700 animals representing 300 species from around the world, ensuring a positive relationship with the Zoological Society, and continue to support the conservation of multiple species around the world, a role he is passionate about.”

Nancy Baird, President of the Cameron Park Zoological Society and two other Society Executive Board members were part of the team that selected Chris. “The Zoological Society is excited about the future of the Zoo under the new partnership with the City,” said Baird, “It will allow us both to move forward together, each focusing on the things we do best. With the City handling the staffing and operation of the Zoo, the Society can focus on engaging the community to provide the resources for exhibit and programming enhancements. We think Chris will fit into this new partnership easily and effectively.”

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“As the Zoo transitions to more efficient roles between the City and the Zoological Society, I’m excited about the future of the Zoo. The Zoo is one of our community’s most popular attractions,” said Mayor Kyle Deaver. “It hosts over 340,000 visitors each year. It is an integral part of our community and we look forward to its continued success and growth in the future.”

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