



GUIDELINES FOR HOSTING

AN

AZAD SANCTIONED

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

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AZAD REGIONAL CONFERENCE GUIDELINES

Contents

About AZAD Regional Conferences.....	2
Reasons/Benefits to Hosting a Regional Conference.....	2
Considering to be a Host.....	3
Request to Host a Regional Conference.....	3
Preparing a Request to Host a Regional Conference.....	4
Upon Approval from AZAD to Host a Regional Conference.....	4
Suggested Regional Conference Schedule.....	6
Budget Guidelines	6
Suggested Committee Structure.....	6
Final Report.....	9

Direct any questions on regional conferences to the Director-Conference Advisory.
Send an email to: Advisory@AZADocents.org or see contact information in *Symbiosis*.

AZAD REGIONAL CONFERENCE GUIDELINES

About AZAD Regional Conferences

1. The Director-Conference Advisory will be the liaison for regional conferences. Email Advisory@AZADocents.org or see *Symbiosis* newsletter for current contact information.
2. The following 2 regions have been established for determining regional conferences:
 - A. Eastern - Continental United States east of the Mississippi, eastern Canada including Ontario and Quebec, Bermuda, Bahamas
 - B. Western - Continental United States west of the Mississippi, Alaska, Hawaii, Western Canada including British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Mexico
3. Each region may offer no more than 1 regional conference per year.

Reasons/Benefits to Hosting a Regional Conference

(Taken from a presentation by Vanessa Lambert, Great Plains Zoo & Delbridge Museum)

Reasons

1. Share ideas, information, common problems.
2. Opportunity for members to attend a conference closer to home, less expensive and fewer days.
3. Re-motivate volunteers who have lost interest.
4. Showcase your zoo/aquarium and volunteer corp.
5. Share the diversity of zoos/aquariums.

Benefits to the Host Organization

1. New friendships.
2. Growth of volunteers skills in leadership and teamwork.
3. Exchange of new ideas.
4. Pride in showing what your volunteers do and what your zoo/aquarium has to offer.
5. Enhances relationship between staff and volunteers.
6. Respect gained from a project done well from start to finish.

Concerns

1. Lots of work, hours of planning and coordination.
2. Enough support from your own volunteers to serve as hosts.
3. Sufficient funds to cover expenses.
4. Inclement weather - have an alternate plan.

Considering to be a Host

1. Your zoo/aquarium must have an active organizational membership in AZAD.
2. The conference chair or co-chairs must have active individual membership(s) in AZAD.
3. The conference chair or co-chairs should have attended at least one AZAD conference, annual or regional.
4. Have a strong docent/volunteer organization with a commitment to host an AZAD regional conference.
5. Have full support of your zoo/aquarium staff and support organizations.
6. Registration fee may not completely cover all of the expenses for the conference. You may need to do some fundraising and/or obtain donations from companies or individuals. Work with your organization staff to determine what you would be allowed to do. Try to keep conference functions simple and comfortable to attend. AZAD will provide you with the greater of \$10 per registrant or \$1000 in assistance funds, that does not have to be repaid.
7. Contact the Director-Conference Advisory for further discussion and clarification at Advisory@AZADocents.org or see contact information in *Symbiosis*.

Request to Host a Regional Conference

1. Requests to hold an AZAD sanctioned regional conference are made at least two (2) years in advance of the planned conference.
2. Requests are accepted in writing via mail or e-mail to the Director-Conference Advisory. See current *Symbiosis* issue for contact information or email Advisory@AZADocents.org.
3. Requests should include the following:
 - confirmation that you have full support of your zoo/aquarium staff and support organizations
 - proposed hotel venue and tentative room rate
 - potential dates of conference (suggest starting Friday evening and ending Sunday afternoon)
 - tentative ideas you have developed about theme, guest speakers, etc.
 - your maximum attendance number

- suggested registration fee
4. The Director-Conference Advisory will review your request with the Executive Board for approval.
 5. See the section below, 'Preparing a Request....' for the research to do in preparation for making a request to host a regional conference.

Preparing a Request to Host a Regional Conference

1. Seek approval from your organization to pursue your request to host.
2. Attendance at regionals in the past have ranged from 75 to 250.
3. Regionals should not be held within three (3) months of a national conference.
4. Choose weekend dates that do not interfere with major religious holidays. Regionals typically start Friday evening and end Sunday afternoon.
5. Contact local hotels for a tentative room rate for the conference dates you are proposing. Do not sign a contract with any hotel at this point, but do get in writing from the hotel the proposed room rates and other details discussed.
6. Think about potential themes. Regional conference programs should contain diversified topics addressing all aspects of docent/volunteer interests.
7. Submit your Request to the Director-Conference Advisory, per the instructions listed in the previous section.

Upon Approval from AZAD to Host a Regional Conference

1. AZAD will offer assistance funds of \$1000 when the request to host is approved by the Board. If more than 100 register for the conference, additional monies will be given to bring the total assistance to \$10 per registrant. Any surplus monies are to be paid back to AZAD, up to the total amount of the assistance funds received.
2. Schedule the conference dates, to be approved by the Director-Conference Advisory. Preference is to start Friday evening and end Sunday afternoon.
3. Contact the hotel to secure conference dates and room rates. All hotel accounts should be in the name of the host zoo/aquarium.
 - secure block of hotel rooms
 - secure VIP speaker accommodations, if needed.

- secure meeting rooms, whether they be at the hotel or your zoo/aquarium
4. The Director-Conference Advisory will request periodic updates from the host Conference Chairman regarding the progress and content of the conference plans.
 5. Sanctioned regional conferences should include:
 - an ice breaker event
 - tour of host zoo/aquarium
 - one luncheon or banquet
 - at least 4 speaker presentations (papers)/workshops
 6. Optional activities are at the discretion of the host committee, such as:
 - pre- or post-tour
 - raffle or silent auction to benefit a conservation organization(s) that meets the approval of your zoo/aquarium
 - inclusion of continental breakfast
 7. Regional conferences should have a theme centered around education and the sharing of ideas among docents.
 8. Regional conference programs should contain diversified topics addressing all aspects of docent interests, including but not limited to such topics as conservation, animal issues, zoo interests, docent problems and concerns, news from AZAD, etc. However, specific program content shall be at the discretion of the host organization. Under no circumstances should a program be offered that would financially benefit the speakers.
 9. Offer a minimum of four (4) presentations (papers) during the course of each regional conference, but the number shall be at the discretion of the host organization.
 10. In the registration materials, include information on other local attractions that might be of interest to attendees.
 11. Suggested registration cost for AZAD sanctioned regional conferences is between \$80-\$100. AZAD recognizes that costs may vary according to the location and the minimum number of attendees needed to hold the conference. The registration fee will be presented to the Director-Conference Advisory for final approval.
 12. The conference registration details and program are to be shared with the Director-Conference Advisory before the conference details are announced on the AZAD website, in *Symbiosis* or prior to any mailings
 13. Registration will be open to any interested individuals.

14. AZAD will announce and publicize regional conferences through *Symbiosis* and the AZAD website. The host docent group may also publicize the regional conference by distributing literature at the annual national AZAD conference and mailings to other institutions in their region and adjoining regions. Contact the Director-Conference Advisory to discuss publicity plans.

Suggested Regional Conference Schedule

Friday Evening	Ice Breaker
Saturday Morning	Paper Presentations/Workshops
Saturday Afternoon/Eve	Day at Host Zoo/Aquarium and Dinner
Sunday Morning	Paper Presentations/Workshops

Budget Guidelines

These are guidelines to help you begin your budget planning. Seek out local sponsors to help defray expenses (i.e. organization's society covers cost of visit to host zoo/aquarium, a sponsor covers cost of printing). You may need to have a fundraiser during the planning stages to help cover conference costs. AZAD recognizes that costs may vary from one region of the country to another. Registration fee must be approved by the AZAD Board.

Suggested Registration Fee*	\$80 - \$100
Gift (i.e.: misc. giveaways in paper/plastic bag)	\$ 5
Ice Breaker	\$20
Bus (if needed)**	\$20
Zoo/Aquarium visit	\$15
Dinner or Luncheon	<u>\$40</u>
	\$100

*None of the registration fee is to be used for the purchase of alcohol.

**Bus may not be needed as many attendees drive. Indicate in registration material if attendees are responsible for their own transportation between hotel and conference events.

Suggested Committee Structure

This is a suggested listing of committee chairs and duties. You may choose to combine some tasks or come up with a different way of dividing up the work. Do whatever works best for your team.

Conference Chairman

1. Oversees development of mission statement and responsibilities.
2. Coordinates and oversees all conference details.
3. Reviews all plans with Director-Conference Advisory.
4. Works on agenda with all committees.
5. Coordinates with committee chairs to send out registration information 3-5 months prior to conference.
6. Prepares an evaluation sheet for each registrant to complete at end of conference.
7. Serves as host at conference meetings.
8. Coordinates preparation of Final Report for submission to Director-Conference Advisory within 90 days from end of conference. This will provide additional information and guidance to future organizations hosting a regional.

Facilities Chairman

1. Coordinates arrangements for space with hotel, zoo/aquarium, ice breaker location, any venues being utilized during conference.
2. Hotel arrangements might include room block, meeting rooms, AV, food.
3. Coordinates with Program Chairman for AV equipment needed.
4. Ensures adequate and appropriate insurance coverage at all venues. Check with your zoo/aquarium about being included in their coverage under a temporary Rider for this type of limited event.

Food Chairman

1. Coordinates all food offerings during the conference.
2. Makes provisions for persons with special dietary needs.

Fundraising Chairman

1. Coordinates fundraising efforts prior to conference to raise any additional funds needed to cover conference expenses.

Giveaways/ Raffles Chairman

1. Coordinates items to be handed out during registration at conference.
2. Obtains door prizes, solicits raffle items (optional).
3. Notifies donors and participants which organization(s) will receive raffle proceeds.

Hospitality Chairman

1. Staffs hospitality room.
2. Provides decorations for events.
3. Provides directional signage.
4. Gather information on other local attractions.

Ice Breaker Chairman

1. Coordinates Ice breaker event that includes light refreshments.

Legal Counsel

1. Due to contracts involved in hosting the conference, it is suggested you obtain legal counsel, perhaps provided by a volunteer or staff member.

Program Chairman

1. Contacts and confirms guest speakers. No speaker is allowed to charge a fee to those attending. Speakers should be dynamic and topics appropriate for docents. It is at the discretion of the host organization if they wish to provide speaker with an honorarium in lieu of a speaker fee.
2. Solicits docent/volunteer presentations from other zoos/aquariums in your region to present at conference. Presentation venues can be concurrent sessions, workshops, roundtable discussions, presentations to the entire group.
3. Works with Facilities Chairman on AV equipment needs.
4. Prepares and has printed the conference program booklet.

Publicity Chairman

1. Prepares notices to promote conference in *Symbiosis*, on AZAD website, at annual conference, optional mailings to zoos/aquariums in your region and neighboring regions.
2. Prepares a post-conference article for *Symbiosis* to recap the events and speakers.

Registration Chairman

1. Designs and prepares the registration information.
2. Final registration form and fee must be approved by the AZAD Executive Board.
3. Registration information can be obtained through the AZAD website or by contact Information available in *Symbiosis*.
4. Determine if registration information is to be mailed to AZAD regional members.
5. Collects registrations by mail and through the host website.
6. Sends out confirmations for registrations.
7. Makes attendee name tags that include the name of the attendee's zoo/aquarium, city and state.
8. Compiles list of conference attendees: name, zoo/aquarium affiliation, city and state.
9. Organizes registration check-in and dispenses conference packet.

Transportation

1. Coordinates transportation between hotel and conference events, if needed.
2. If the hotel is close to the zoo, you might decide to have everyone responsible for their own transportation, since many might drive. If so, be sure to make this clear in the registration information.

Treasurer

1. Prepares and maintains on-going budget of income and expenses.
2. Keeps accurate records of all financial transactions.
3. After paying all conference expenses, remits any surplus funds to the AZAD Executive Board Treasurer, up to the total amount of AZAD assistance funds received.

Zoo/Aquarium Day Chairman

1. Coordinates a visit to the host zoo/aquarium.
2. If possible, arranges for:
 - special tours or behind the scenes tours
 - involves keepers/staff
 - discounts at gift shop and food stands

Final Report

The Conference Chair will provide the Director- Conference Advisory a final activity report within 90 days of the conference that compiles information from each committee chair.

Information to include:

- budget details
- tasks/timelines
- sample correspondence
- copy of registration form and conference agenda
- helpful hints
- what worked well
- problems or issues that came up
- what you might have done differently
- common questions
- things to look out for,
- quantities of items ordered

The Final Report should be sent to the Director-Conference Advisory within 90 days of the conference. Your report will provide assistance to future regional hosts.