

# Henry Vilas Zoo: Welcomes a new red panda

Posted on Wednesday, Jul 13, 2022

**>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Dane County's Henry Vilas Zoo is thrilled to announce the arrival of an endangered red panda. Bandit, a two-year-old male red panda, arrived from the Columbus Zoo in June and has completed all of his health checks. Bandit was just introduced to the Zoo's female red panda, Tai, and starting June 14<sup>th</sup> both pandas will now be viewable in the Children's Zoo area near the goat yard.

"Our red pandas are among the most popular attractions at the zoo, so we are incredibly excited to welcome Bandit and know he will be an instant family favorite," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "A huge thank you goes out to our staff for helping Bandit settle into his new home."

Bandit already has a connection to Henry Vilas Zoo. Bandit's paternal great-grandfather was Lum, who came to Henry Vilas Zoo in 2012 and his maternal great-grandfather was Tarrei, the 19-year old red panda the Zoo lost in December of 2021.

Red pandas are endangered and it is believed there are less than 2,500 adult red pandas left in the wild. The Zoo worked with the Red Panda Species Survival Program (SSP) to bring Bandit to Madison. The SSP is one of the Association of Zoos & Aquarium's many conservation programs with the primary goal to serve as a breeding program for selected endangered or threatened species. SSP's work to maintain a healthy and genetically diverse population in order to increase their numbers.

"Bandit is already showing his inquisitive personality," said Zoo Director Ronda Schwetz. "He is very curious and loves to climb and explore. It was rough on all of us when we lost Tarrei, so we are all very excited to have a young red panda back

at the Zoo.”

Henry Vilas Zoo, established more than 100 years ago, is one of just a few free-admission zoos in the United States. Accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, the Zoo is dedicated to exceptional animal care, and providing the community with education and valuable experiences with the natural world. For more information, visit <http://www.henryvilaszoo.gov>.