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Zoo Offers Cell Phone Recycling

Help preserve the environment and support the zoo at the same time.

Free Cell Phone Recycling

Bring your cell phones and accessories to a drop box located in the Guest Services office at the Denver Zoo. Entry to the zoo is not required.

You can also mail your cell phones in to: Denver Zoo; Attn: Answer the Call of the Wild; 2300 Steele Street; Denver, CO 80205.



FEBRUARY 04, 2005 -- The Denver Zoo has launched a unique cell phone recycling program that benefits both the zoo and the environment. The zoo is accepting unwanted cell phones which will be given to Eco-Cell for recycling or reuse. In exchange, Eco-Cell will pay the Denver Zoo up to \$10 for each working digital cell phone.

Working phones collected by the program will be refurbished and provided to low-income residents in Latin America or donated to women's shelters and senior citizen's groups for emergency 911 calls. All unusable cell phones, batteries, and accessories will be recycled under strict EPA guidelines by certified recyclers.

Participating in the program is a great way to have a positive, direct impact on the health of the environment, and also support the animals at the Denver Zoo.

Cell phones and other consumer electronics are one of the fastest growing portions of landfill waste, and more than 3.2 million tons of electronic waste is sent to nationwide landfills each year.

This poses a significant environmental hazard because a variety of toxins are used in construction of circuit boards, coatings, resistors, batteries, plastic casings, and other parts, including carcinogens and heavy metals like arsenic, hexavalent chromium, cadmium, mercury, beryllium, nickel, zinc and brominated flame retardants (PBDE).

Discarding electronics that contain these materials in landfills means that these toxins can leach into soils and waterways, and become airborne via soil or as particulates from incineration.

Additionally, worldwide consumption of electronics leads to increased mining of natural resources, which also poses a threat to wildlife and people. The zoo cites the war over natural resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo as an example.

Related Links

- [Denver Zoo](#)
- [Eco-Cell](#)
- [Coltan Mining and Eastern Congo's Gorillas](#)
NPR, December 2001
- [Congo's Coltan Rush](#)
BBC, August 2001

- [Reduce, Reuse, Recycle](#)
- [Plug-In to eCycling \(EPA site\)](#)

The region and its people have been devastated by the effects of ore mining. In 2001, the price of the ore columbite-tantalite, or coltan, skyrocketed as a result of a growing demand for consumer electronics and a concern among manufacturers about a possible shortage of the ore.

The ore is used as a coating for capacitors that control the flow of electrical currents inside miniature circuit boards. An influx of miners descended upon the Congo, where 80 percent of the world's coltan reserves exist.

The price for coltan has since fallen, but mining for it and other resources such as gold, tin, copper and silver continue to threaten wildlife in the Congo's national parks as areas are cleared for mining, and endangered elephants and gorillas are hunted for food and profit.

To participate in the zoo's recycling program, bring your cell phones and accessories to a drop box located in the Guest Services office. Entry to the zoo is not required. You can also mail your cell phones in to: Denver Zoo; Attn: Answer the Call of the Wild; 2300 Steele Street; Denver, CO 80205.

All cell phones and accessories are accepted, but do not bring regular (wired) telephones, cordless fixed phones, pagers, two-way radios, walkie-talkies, PDAs, or any computer, television or other electronics equipment.

The zoo was able to partner with Eco-Cell at no cost, and funds provided through the program will directly benefit the zoo.

Written by Content Developer [Betsy Kimak](#), Customer Information Services.

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