

Mission

By connecting people with wildlife, Philadelphia Zoo creates joyful discovery and inspires action for animals and habitats.

Overview

America's first zoo and one of the region's foremost conservation organizations, Philadelphia Zoo is home to nearly 1,300 animals, many rare and endangered. Cheetahs, hippos, giraffes and much more make the Zoo Philadelphia's leading family destination, welcoming over 1.2 million visitors a year. Philadelphia Zoo offers a first-in-the-world animal travel and exploration trail system that enables primates and, come spring 2014, big cats to travel above and across visitor pathways. Award-winning exhibits like First Niagara Big Cat Falls, PECO Primate Reserve, McNeil Avian Center and the newest exhibit, KidZooU: Hamilton Family Children's Zoo & Faris Family Education Center, an indoor/outdoor wildlife academy, coupled with original programming and scientific accomplishments, make Philadelphia Zoo the second highest attended ticketed attraction in the region, next to the Philadelphia Phillies.

Transformation Plan

With the new animal travel and exploration trail system, Philadelphia Zoo has become the world's first fully-animated zoo. See-through mesh trails enable animals to roam around and above the zoo grounds. The animal experience is revolutionized, while the visitor experience is transformed. Each new route creates a path of new possibilities. New vantage points. New ways to see and be seen. This continues the Zoo's commitment to excellence in animal care and to inspiring guests to conservation action through engaging experiences.

Philadelphia Zoo's animal rotation plan began with the completion of Treetop Trail for monkeys and lemurs in June 2011. The Great Ape Trail, a pilot project for orangutans, opened in summer 2012, garnering national media attention from such notable outlets as *Huffington Post*, *TIME*, *USA Today*, *Washington Post*, *NBC Nightly News* and *Philadelphia Inquirer*. An extension of the smaller arboreal system, which connects the Rare Animal Conservation Center, PECO Primate Reserve and KidZooU, opened in April 2013. And come spring 2014, big cats like lions, tigers, pumas, jaguars, will be on the move like never before. Looking ahead to 2015 and beyond, a third, fully ground-based trail will engage large, terrestrial animals – zebras, rhino, giraffe, hippos and antelope. *The New York Times* recently featured Philadelphia Zoo's new and expanding trail network in a major feature story.

Another important milestone in the Zoo's ongoing transformation is the opening of the Centennial District Intermodal Transportation Center, a 683-spot parking garage, in April 2013. Its regional impact was spotlighted in *Philadelphia Business Journal*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *6 ABC* and more.

Conservation and Education

Through a series of focused efforts, Philadelphia Zoo has worked to redefine its role as a conservation and education organization, and to significantly deepen its positive impact on the environment. Every Zoo visit is an opportunity for guests to connect with wildlife and be inspired to conservation action.

The Zoo's national and international science-based cooperative zoo breeding programs – many led by Philadelphia Zoo staff – serve as a safety net for species threatened with extinction in the wild. Among them, the Philadelphia Zoo's amphibian conservation program is making a species-saving impact among endangered frogs from the Andes and the Caribbean, earning the Zoo high praise from *Scientific American* this fall.

Driven by a passion for inspiring animal and environmental stewardship, and with a keen focus on promoting actions that support wildlife conservation, the Zoo maintains a broad portfolio of dynamic, original and award-winning educational programming.

In April 2013, Philadelphia Zoo opened KidZooU: Hamilton Family Children's Zoo & Faris Family Education Center, which became a home base for these programs and offered a new opportunity for young learners and lifelong learners alike to make lasting connections to wildlife. This state-of-the-art wildlife academy, teeming with coral reef fish, butterflies, colorful parakeets, desert ants and other extraordinary rare and domestic breeds offers indoor conservation stations, programming and interactive exhibits that show visitors how simple actions, like saving energy and recycling, can help save wildlife.

What's more, KidZooU features L.E.E.D. and Universal Design, making it both sustainable and accessible to special needs communities with signage in Braille, sign language and a picture exchange system for children on the autism spectrum and very young children, as well as audio and tactile elements.

The April 2013 *KidZooU* opening earned live spots on *Good Morning America* and the *TODAY Show*. *Boston Globe*, *Arrive Magazine* and the *Huffington Post* also brought national exposure. And this fall, *NBC Nightly News* and *Main Line Times* underscored the Zoo's outreach to special needs children – an excellent complement to the May 2013 feature in *Parenting Special Needs*.

In addition to innovative curriculum-based student programs on-site, the Zoo also offers:

- **Zoo on Wheels**, a popular outreach program, which provides intimate, live animal experiences beyond the Zoo's 42 acres.
- **Overnight programs** for scouts and a variety of community groups, summer/winter camp opportunities and a wide array of interactive workshops for children and families.
- On-site educational and volunteer programs and a activities for both youth and adults, including the **Zoo Champions for Restoring Endangered Wildlife (Zoo CREW)**, which creates the opportunity for meaningful community service and strengthens connections among underserved communities.
- The **UNLESS Contest**, a vehicle for engaging students at the classroom level and creating awareness that will inspire solutions and action that can lead to saving wildlife.
- The **Community Access Program (CAP)**, which provides free admission to eligible Title 1 school children, community groups and 501 (c)(3) organizations.