

On the Wild Side – The Texas Zoo Newsletter

Directors Report

It's hard to imagine that it's been almost two years since I first arrived in Victoria. My wife and I were just talking the other day about the long drive back home to Texas from Nevada. It's certainly good to be back in the Lone Star state and living out in the country.

Here at the Zoo, there has been a lot of changes thanks to the support of the City of Victoria. In 2022, we were awarded \$500,000 in ARPA funding for renovation and restoration of the Zoo. Needless to say, we have been seriously busy.

Over the past two years we have renovated both the Ocelot and Jaguar exhibits, replaced a quarter of the power grid in the Zoo, and restored the train caboose so that we can turn it into an educational encounter space.

In addition, we just finished working with Felis Consulting and they have provided us with a master plan that will guide the Zoo to a new future. Having worked on several master plans in my career, this is the most advanced design I have ever seen.

Currently we are renovating our Black bear exhibit, upgrading our landscaping, power washing, and then painting and staining throughout the Zoo. We even found time to renovate the Eagle exhibit and the Education Station that we use for presentations.

The Zoo team has been training, taking continuing education classes and we even hosted a regional workshop for the Safe Capture Chemical Anesthesia team from the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance Academy, which our staff attended.

Speaking of our staff, the Wildlife Department continues to move forward with animal training to facilitate exams and treatment by our new veterinarian, Dr. Tim Tristin. He has been an incredible addition to our team with his years of exotic animal experience.

Our special events have really stepped up, last spring we had our best Wild About Wine ever; And we just finished Haunted Zoo and Zoo Boo for the kids. The feedback was incredible, many patrons were saying this was the best Haunted Zoo ever!

I must go for now, but it's always great to catch up with our supporters.

All the best,

W. K. Baker Jr.

Executive Director

PS: I am always interested in your feedback or questions, please contact me at wbaker@texaszoo.org. And we hope you like our new newsletter format!

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Education

In Fiscal Year 2023, we had over 5,382 students come to the Zoo on school field trips. Our Education team went out to 23 schools and met with 1,000's of students and they also held four interactive Summer Camps.

We also hosted the Loop Abroad program for students that aspire to become veterinarians. This remarkable program has been a fixture at the Texas Zoo and every summer we host a different group of students each week here at our facility.

And of course, our staff presents daily Keeper Chats to our patrons. This gives an in-depth look into the lives of our animals and their personal stories while providing details into their biology, husbandry, and conservation efforts in the wild places of our planet.

Sincerely,

Desiray Almaraz

Education Manager

Volunteers

We have numerous projects, including landscaping, clearing brush, cleaning fence lines, property clean-up, painting and various light repairs that we need assistance with. These volunteering opportunities are great for individuals and groups alike, such as clubs, civic groups, corporations, as well as other organizations. If your organization is required to do a service project, the Texas Zoo may be the right fit for you!

We also need volunteers for our special events such as Haunted Zoo, Zoo Boo, Brew at the Zoo, and Wild About Wine. It takes an immense amount of manpower to make these events happen. During Haunted Zoo we needed up to 20 volunteers per night. Your service guarantees the success of our events and free Zoo memberships for event volunteers.

For more information and to complete a volunteer application:
<https://www.texaszoo.org/careers/become-a-volunteer/>

For additional questions about volunteering please contact Desiray Almaraz at 361-573-7681 or email education@texaszoo.org for the Education Department. For the Animal Department please contact Leanne Bloomfield at 361-573-7681 or email lbloomfield@texaszoo.org.



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Wildlife

The Texas Zoo was happy to take part in this new endeavor to help further animal medicine. We were delighted to have Dr. Scott Pless on site this past month to gather valuable data for this new software that is being created called SnootScan, a Universal Animal Facial ID.

Imagine walking up to any animal (cat, dog, zoo animal, wildlife, etc.) and using an iPhone to scan them just like Apple FaceID, to retrieve their name, owner information, and medical records.

SnootScan was invented by Dr. Scott Pless, DVM and is currently under active development for launch in the US veterinary market in coordination with Center Point Bio-Tech.

SnootScan uses artificial intelligence and sophisticated 3D imaging techniques to create 3D holograms of animal faces with the goal to create an international registry to access any individual animal.

The technology allows for any user with an iPhone or iPad to create a "fingerprint" facial scan of the animal's face. SnootScan utilizes Ai to account for use through animal cages, muddy noses, wet noses, and more!

Thank You,

Leanne Bloomfield

Animal Curator



SnootScan LLC is owned by Dr. Christopher Meehl, DVM and Dr. Scott Pless DVM.

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Master Plan

After an in-depth analysis of the existing Texas Zoo facilities and site, the zoo's market, target audience, financial health, and after engaging with the community of Victoria, an exciting vision for the new Texas Zoo was created.

At the heart of the new Texas Zoo is the story of water. It is the story of the interconnectedness of all living things – humans, plants, and animals, because of our reliance on it. Water gives life and all life on our planet requires water.

The new Zoo will be dedicated to conservation education, family engagement, and an immersion quality experience for all of our guests. From an animal standpoint the exhibits will be built using the most advanced design techniques in our industry.

The facility will be divided into three biomes: North America, South America, and Asia. North America will reflect animals from Texas and the Guadalupe River, South America will encompass the Amazon Basin, and Asia will reflect the tapestry of the rain forest.

Our goal is to build the best small zoological facility in North America that will attract patrons from across our region and allow us to support endangered species.

Legend:

 Guest Path

 Guest Amenity

 Animal Holding

 Animal Habitat

 Support Bldg.

 Service Road / Area



New 15-Acre Texas Zoo at Current Parks Headquarters Site in Riverside Park

The Texas Zoo Master Plan 2024

April 19, 2024

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Donors

As a 501c3 non-profit, the Texas Zoo depends on the support of our community. We are proud to recognize the organizations that support us on a regular basis. There are no words to express our thanks for the level of support they have provided us. It is because of donors like these that we are able to make a real world difference in the quality of life for the animals at the Zoo and aid the staff in their goals of supporting conservation.



Our thanks to Sign Crafters for the incredible wrap job on our Zoo truck!

We would also like to recognize Classic Collision for the auto body repair work.

Also, our thanks to American Detail Supply for the advance work and Office Systems for providing an air conditioned work space.

Our thanks to Whataburger for their continued support and as our official sponsor for Safari Splash, Zoo Boo, and Haunted Zoo!



The Texas Zoo hosts Christmas Nights again this December (20th – 24th) thanks to our sponsor 10X Curb Appeal.

Every year their team comes out and decorates the entire Zoo with lights and after the holidays they store them until next year!

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Needs

There is always a need for supplies at the Texas Zoo and your donation can make a difference. We are in a constant state of construction and renovation here at the Zoo to ensure that the animals have the best possible life, and our patrons have a remarkable experience as well.

To do this, we need the tools, equipment, and materials to help us make that happen. As a small non-profit, we depend on the support of our community and their generosity.

Garden rakes	Hand drill – 20v battery	Paper towels
Leaf rakes	Recip saw – 20v battery	Dawn liquid dishwash
Scoop shovels	Skill saw – 20v battery	SOS pads
Push brooms	Hand grinder – 20v battery	Glass cleaner
Garden hoe	Hand light – 20v battery	Liquid bleach
Pickaxe mattock	Table saw	Liquid hand soap
Sledgehammer	Hand tools	Clorox spray cleaner
Long crowbars	Belt sanders	Clorox toilet bowl cleaner
Digging shovel	Miter saw	Clorox bathroom cleaner
Spade shovel	Router with bits and guides	Murphy's oil soap
Dirt tamper	Carpentry saws	Pine Sol liquid cleaner
Post-hole digger	Storage cabinets	Scrub brushes
T-posts	Automotive tool sets	Scrub sponges
Tree pruner	Drill bit packs	Box fans
Pruning saws	Heavy duty storage racks	Blankets
Pruning shears	Standing tool boxes	Hand towels
Hedge trimmers	2 Person post-hole drill	Bath towels
Branch loppers	John Deere gator	Plastic buckets
Plastic garden carts	Riding lawnmower	Solvent storage cabinet
Wheelbarrows	Weed eater – 20v battery	Fuel storage cabinet

The South Texas Zoological Society dba the Texas Zoo operates as a 501c3 non-profit. Your tax deductible donations provide invaluable support to the Zoo. Whether you are assisting us with monetary funds, new or even used equipment. It makes a tangible difference here at the Zoo and allows our staff to proceed with repairs and renovations along with daily maintenance of our facility.

The Texas Zoo is proud to be a leader in our mission of conservation education throughout our region. We also value our commitment to the citizens of Victoria and our surrounding communities.

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