



Get Closer

Discover our bold new direction

**Edmonton
Valley
Zoo**



Intimate. Inspiring. Nurturing. Natural.

Edmonton Valley



Nestled on the banks of the Edmonton river valley, our zoo is a place that fosters enduring bonds between animals and people; a place where learning is engaging and memorable; a place of research, education and conservation; and, above all, a place where a high quality of life for the animals is the top priority.

Edmonton City Council recently approved approximately \$50 million in capital funding to support the important work of the zoo and its staff. The funding will allow the City of Edmonton to move forward and create a vibrant new zoo with improved habitats for the animals, better opportunities for guests to closely interact with animals and state-of-the-art research and education facilities.

Through this document, we invite you to explore the future with us.

“As the Edmonton Valley Zoo evolves, playing to its strengths of providing intimate and authentic animal experiences for guests of all ages, it will become a leading example of how a small zoo can have a huge role in engaging people around the need to preserve and protect the natural world.”

Linda Cochrane

General Manager, Community Services
City of Edmonton

Cool.
Zoo

Why Zoos Matter

Unlike movies, television, books or the internet, zoos provide people with opportunities to engage with animals – we see them breathe, look them in the eye, smell them, and sometimes even reach out to touch their fur, feathers or leathery skin. Zoos allow for intimate animal and people interactions that showcase the majesty of wildlife and teach people to care about the natural world around them.

Once a zoo is able to establish this connection between people and nature, it is better able to promote further education, deeper research and the need to support conservation efforts at home and around the world.



“If we don’t do something for conservation and preservation, and teach people the one word that I call LOVE... you are not going to conserve something. Where do we teach love? We teach it in zoological parks.”

Jack Hanna

Director Emeritus, Columbus Zoo
Host, Jack Hanna’s into the Wild

Get Closer at the Edmonton Valley Zoo

Vision

A special place that inspires love and learning of animals and nature.

Intimate

Warm and welcoming, the Edmonton Valley Zoo truly is a special place where guests connect with the animals. These emotional connections inspire guests to care about the animals and the natural world.



Inspiring

At the Edmonton Valley Zoo every visit is rich with animal connections. From wolves to snowy owls, to meerkats and armadillos, animals with their caregivers are regularly out and about meeting and engaging with guests. It's in these delightful moments of getting close to wildlife that learning becomes accessible and stimulating. These intimate experiences inspire guests and create an emotional connection to the animals.



Nurturing

Guests of the zoo are enveloped by a thoughtfully cultivated nurturing environment. It starts with the animal caregivers – true stewards, they continually demonstrate their dedication to providing a high quality of life for the animals living at the zoo – and flows out to other staff, volunteers and guests.

Natural

Nestled in the City's spectacular river valley, the zoo's natural setting is the perfect place for guests to connect with nature and learn how to help conserve the planet for future generations.

Cool

Of course, not all the animals at the Edmonton Valley Zoo can roam the grounds. That's why cool changes are underway at the zoo to better showcase animals in natural habitats. The new state-of-the-art facilities will allow guests to get closer to the animals, to observe clearly, and engage authentically. That's cool.



Our Values

1

Stewardship

Animal care
& conservation

2

Conservation

Habitats &
the environment

3

Education

Learning, knowledge
& research

4

Engagement

An accessible, enjoyable
experience for people



Stewardship

animal care & conservation

True stewards, staff at the Edmonton Valley Zoo provide the highest quality care at home and strongly support conservation efforts worldwide.

The living, breathing, individual animals of the Edmonton Valley Zoo are the soul of the facility. More than 350 animals live at the zoo, situated in the remarkable North Saskatchewan River valley in the heart of Edmonton. Caregivers work together to support the nutritional, medical and behavioural needs of each animal.

Staff at the zoo also work with international organizations on ethical and strategic conservation projects, either actively raising animals in species survival programs or raising money and awareness to support initiatives in other parts of the world.



Strategies

Animal Care: To ensure the animals receive the best possible care from highly skilled caregivers, the Edmonton Valley Zoo team focuses on continuous learning and employing best practices in veterinary medicine, nutrition, enrichments and habitat design.

A new veterinary hospital opened in 2010. It includes a surgery, laboratory, quarantine area and space for animals needing longer-term care. The new facility, along with advanced medical equipment, will allow the zoo's veterinarian, animal health technologists and other staff to more effectively and efficiently care for the animals.

The zoo has also implemented the Zoo Information Management System – an international electronic records database – to enhance local care, protect population health and support international conservation efforts.

Currently, plans are underway to establish an Animal Care Committee that will pull together expertise from various sources to strengthen the focus on animal enrichment, nutritional standards and behavioural training.

Conservation: The Edmonton Valley Zoo participates in the Species Survival Plan (SSP) to help ensure the survival of species that are threatened or endangered in the wild. Currently the zoo is engaged in the SSP with five species: Grevy's Zebra, Amur Tiger, Goeldi's Monkey, Snow Leopard and Red Panda. Over the next three years, the zoo will pursue additional SSP opportunities.

Through the Makira Conservation Fund, the zoo provides monetary support to Snow Leopard Trust, Red Panda Network, Amphibian Ark, Lambas for Lemurs and the Masoala-Makira Forest initiative. The zoo also supports the International Elephant Foundation and the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Amphibian Rescue Program.

The Edmonton Valley Zoo will continue to support conservation initiatives by strengthening the promotion of these important programs with zoo visitors, assigning responsibility for conservation programs to a key staff member and establishing clear conservation targets.





Conservation

habitats & the environment

Passionately practice environmental stewardship.

The Edmonton Valley Zoo team is passionate about working to preserve the natural world and promoting environmental responsibility. That's why a priority of the current zoo renewal is to recreate natural habitats for the animals that live at the zoo. Along with providing an improved quality of life for the animals, guests will be better able to appreciate the natural world, and hopefully take away the need to make changes in their own lives to help conservation efforts.

Recreating natural habitats at the zoo is the priority, but the work doesn't stop there. The zoo models green strategies in all it does to promote environmental responsibility and reduce its own environmental footprint.



Strategies

Habitat construction: *Arctic Shores* recreates an Arctic shoreline within the zoo and will be home to seals, sea lions, Arctic fox and ground squirrels. Guests will explore natural Arctic land formations like pingos, and the exhibit design will allow visitors to feel like they are immersed with the seals and sea lions in an ocean setting. *The Wander*, a magnificent central trail system, will showcase interpretive displays of plants and animals native to the river valley. *Nature's Wild Backyard* is the place where our youngest guests will have the opportunity to interact and bond with animals. Focused on learning through play, the area will allow guests to come face to face with animals such as prairie dogs, frogs, turtles and squirrel monkeys in natural habitats.

Modeling environmental responsibility: The zoo's green team is responsible for reviewing the zoo's practices and procedures. This includes energy use, eco-procurement, waste reduction, atmospheric protection, water conservation, low-impact landscaping, green building practices and ecological stewardship. The goal is to reduce the zoo's impact on the environment and model appropriate behaviours to guests of the facility. By modelling environmental responsibility, and engaging and educating visitors, the green team hopes to encourage individuals to make changes in their own lives to benefit our planet.

Building an eco-friendly facility: Consistent with Edmonton's vision to build sustainable infrastructure, construction projects at the zoo will be models of environmental responsibility.

The new *Arctic Shores* exhibit will capture and reuse storm water run-off and feature a green roof* to reduce the volume of run-off. Pool water will be filtered naturally by plant materials in working wetlands and



reused landscape plantings will be drought tolerant and dark sky compliant exterior lighting** will be used.

All new buildings at the zoo will take advantage of natural light and air ventilation and incorporate features that harness green technologies to leave a smaller ecological footprint on the natural systems and wild places that the zoo is working so hard to conserve.

* A green roof is a roof that is built to grow plant life on it, so as to allow the building to blend into the natural background, reduce the environmental impact of the building, and create habitat for native plants and animals.

**Dark sky compliant lighting is reduced voltage lighting that shines downward instead of upward. Artificial light that radiates upward and outward decreases visibility at night and wastes energy. It also disrupts plants, animals and the environment.



Education

learning, knowledge & research

Encourage and inspire learning through engaging and memorable events and activities.

Thousands of Edmonton region students attend zoo school each year. Oversubscribed, the school educates young people about animals, their habitats and the challenges to their survival. The zoo also provides structured public programming for all ages through day camps and specialty programs. Staff are looking forward to broadening the scope and reach of this educational programming once the state-of-the art education centre opens in 2012. The zoo also supports research through education partnerships and through conservation program participation.



“Touching so many of the animals and discussing their habitats made their existence real in a world of television and technology.”

A visiting teacher on the benefit of zoo school

Strategies

Education: The Edmonton Valley Zoo intends to continue with current educational programming but broaden its offerings to attract new audiences of all ages – improving opportunities for the public to interact directly with animals. Plans are also underway to develop internet tools and programs to increase the reach of the zoo and better retain engaged audiences.

Research: The zoo has been involved peripherally in research activities over the years. With the development of improved facilities and retention of a staff veterinarian the zoo is poised to take on

a greater role in the research community. This starts with developing a formal research protocol that will include the assessment, merit review and impacts to the collection. Once the protocol is in place, staff will actively pursue additional research opportunities through the existing partnership agreement with the University of Alberta and pursue new opportunities with other post-secondary institutions. The development of post-secondary practicum student involvement opportunities is also underway.





Engagement

an accessible, enjoyable experience for people

Fun experiences and rich interactions create lasting memories.

At the Edmonton Valley Zoo we recognize that for learning to be engaging and memorable, it should be FUN! And when you visit a zoo the fun centres on animal experiences and learning through play and activities. That's why construction is underway to make animal experiences more rich and rewarding.

Children can appreciate the scale of a whale as they play on a full size whale skeleton replica; they can observe ground squirrels and then imitate these animals in an interactive play burrow. Visitors will walk through a unique Arctic landform – the pingo – where they will discover the cold heart of the pingo's ice core. The new trail system will feature atmospheric play – an interactive feature that will interpret rain systems, and allow visitors to cool off on a hot day. These experiences and others will keep younger visitors engaged as they learn about the world around them.

“When people leave the zoo, they will remember the animals: how they smell, how they play, how they eat, how they breathe and how they sound. They will remember getting close enough to look deep into the eyes of lemurs or seals and sea lions or otters, wolves and owls. And they will care.”

Denise Prefontaine
Director, Edmonton Valley Zoo

Strategies

Exhibits: Once the entry area is built, the fun will begin even before visitors walk through the entry. Guests will be greeted by frolicking North American river otters. From there, visitors will be invited to follow *The Wander* trail system that will feature trout ponds and water play areas, along with spots to picnic. At the new zoo, there will also be opportunities to role play as a veterinarian or zoo keeper and, of course, interact with a wide variety of animals.

Staff: Everyone at the zoo approaches their work with enthusiasm and a desire to create memories for all who visit. The zoo will continue to cultivate a culture focused on providing memorable and engaging experiences. The zoo will also develop a customer satisfaction and evaluation process to continuously improve the visitor experience.



The Evolving Animal Collection

Over time, the Edmonton Valley Zoo's collection shifts and changes as the goals of the zoo and the zoological community evolve. Decisions must be based on what is best for the individual animals and the species. Moving forward, the zoo's collection decisions will be based on these criteria:

1. Can we meet the habitat and the care requirements of the animals?
2. Do we have the staff expertise to care for the species?
3. Does acquiring the species enhance learning opportunities?
4. Does acquiring the species support conservation needs or initiatives?
5. Are the animals available from other facilities?





Collection decisions based on the best interests of animals

The Edmonton Valley Zoo's *Animal Collection Plan* is an evolving document that is updated regularly. And while the zoo makes plans to shift and adjust its animal collection based on the collection criteria – eliminating certain species from the plan and adding others – the actual process must be managed carefully and ethically.

The recent decision to phase out elephants from the zoo collection is an example of this delicate process. In the 2005 Master Plan, Appendix 6.3 detailed five options for the future of elephants at the zoo. These options ranged from maintaining an elephant herd to not having elephants at the zoo.

Following the release of the Master Plan, zoo staff embarked on a lengthy and thoughtful consultation and decision process. At the time, the zoo was home to two elephants, Samantha and Lucy. It was determined that elephants will not be part of the Edmonton Valley Zoo animal collection in the long-term.

With this decision in mind, Samantha, the zoo's African elephant, was moved to become part of a breeding herd at the North Carolina Zoo. While she will not return to Edmonton, the decision was made

to send her on a “loan” to ensure that the zoo retains the ability to influence any decisions made regarding Samantha's welfare.

Now 35-years-old, Lucy came to the Edmonton Valley Zoo in 1977 as an orphan. Lucy is a calm well-adjusted animal with some manageable health conditions, including a respiratory condition for which treatment is ongoing. It is this same condition which now precludes any thought of placing Lucy in a stressful situation, such as transporting her and/or placing her with unfamiliar caregivers in an unfamiliar environment. To do so would be life threatening. While the long-term goal is not to have elephants, the current priority is Lucy's health and overall well-being, and the Edmonton Valley Zoo will continue to be fully responsible for her.

The process undertaken to decide the future of elephants at the Edmonton Valley Zoo highlights the care that must be taken with collection planning. Zoos are stewards of living, breathing individual animals and the staff are committed to the best interests of these individuals – even if the species will not continue to be part of the collection in future years.

Make a Difference

The Edmonton Valley Zoo has ambitious plans to become a catalyst for shaping thinking and changing attitudes about animals and the environment within Edmonton, the province of Alberta and around the world. To be successful, we need to engage you to play an active role in our conservation and education endeavours.

Here's how you can help.

Get Involved

A variety of volunteer opportunities are available for all ages. If you are interested in helping with children's programs, special events, or assisting animal caregivers, please call **(780) 496-4935** for information on available opportunities.

If you would like to get involved with the Valley Zoo Development Society to help with fundraising for the Edmonton Valley Zoo, please visit **www.buildingourzoo.com** or call **(780) 496-6924**.

Donate

Donations for zoo enhancement are accepted through the Valley Zoo Development Society at **www.buildingourzoo.com** or call **(780) 496-6924** to find out how your donation could support the zoo. All donations are tax deductible.

Adopt an Animal

Become a zoo parent by sponsoring your favourite animal for a year. For information, check **www.buildingourzoo.com** or call **(780) 496-6924**.





Be a Conservation Hero

Donations for the Makira Conservation Fund are accepted at the zoo, by mail or over the phone. You can support many conservation programs that the zoo participates in by calling **(780) 496-7396** and asking about the zoo's conservation programs.

Visit

The Edmonton Valley Zoo welcomes guests 364 days a year. Hours are dependent on the time of year, so please visit www.valleyzoo.ca or call **311** for more information.

Valley Zoo Development Society

The Valley Zoo Development Society's mission is to raise funds and promote awareness to ensure the continued development of the Edmonton Valley Zoo.

Each year the Society contributes money it raises to the Edmonton Valley Zoo for continual improvement projects. The Society also donates money to various charities including the Elephant Foundation and Snow Leopard Trust.

Recently, the Society committed to raising money towards construction of the new family area at the Edmonton Valley Zoo, *Nature's Wild Backyard*.



THE CITY OF
Edmonton

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For general information and facility
booking, call **311**, or outside of
Edmonton, call **780-442-5311**

January 2011