



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: October 28, 2009
TO: Park and Recreation Commission
FROM: Administration, Parks and Recreation Department
SUBJECT: Santa Barbara Zoo Annual Maintenance Report

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the Santa Barbara Zoological Foundation Annual Maintenance Report for calendar year 2008.

DISCUSSION:

The agreement between the City and the Santa Barbara Zoological Foundation requires that the Zoo submit an annual maintenance report. The report is for information only.

ATTACHMENT: Report Letter dated August 13, 1009

SUBMITTED BY: Karla M. Megill, Executive Assistant *KM*

APPROVED BY: Jill E. Zachary, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director *JZ*



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**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**

August 13, 2009

Nancy Rapp, Director
Parks & Recreation Department
City of Santa Barbara
PO Box 1990
Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1990

Dear Nancy,

This letter serves as the Zoo's annual report on maintenance, required under our lease agreement. I am hoping this belated report will be satisfactory as the major construction of *California Trails* spanned over a year, between March 2008 and April 2009.

In March 2008 construction started on *Condor Country, The Wave* (hilltop guest services facility), and the renovation of the Channel Island fox exhibit.

As we last received accreditation by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) in March 2005, we are again preparing for our next thorough site inspection that will take place in late 2009 or early January 2010. (AZA accreditation is on a five-year cycle). To be accredited an institution must demonstrate the highest standards in animal care, facilities, management, programs and staff qualifications. The Zoo was originally accredited in 1981 and has maintained that status ever since. The projects approved by the Planning Commission will contribute to our accreditation in 2010.

Chris Briggs, the Zoo's Safety & Security Manager, continues to track water use at the Zoo. Chris tracks readings from a number of meters that measure waster consumption at major exhibits. All of our project renovations incorporate improvements that focus on the reduction of water consumption. The use of meters throughout the Zoo helps Chris identify problem areas quickly and bring them to the attention of the management team at the weekly maintenance meetings.

Chris' leadership in water conservation efforts in 2008 and into 2009 proved extremely successful. Chris challenges the staff to improve and they responded! In 2008, potable water consumption was down 11% (1.4 million gallons) over 2007 and reclaimed water use was down 24% (1.5 million gallons). Average daily use of potable and reclaimed water was down 15% and 26% respectively. (A complete water consumption table is attached.)

Chris achieved similar results in energy conservation. Total kilowatt hours used was down just about 5% over 2007 and average daily consumption was down about 8%. (A complete electric consumption table is attached.)

In combination, this significant reduction in the use of water and electricity is a direct reflection of the Zoo's commitment to resource conservation. Staff was able to achieve these results through improvements to facilities and changes in operating procedures.

A Review of 2008-9 Projects and Activities

- In March 2008 Zoo staff completed the landscaping of the open area adjacent to the Zoo's train station to create a play area for children, The **Kallman Family Play Area**. After careful review of plans for **Condor Country** back in 2006, it seemed like a good strategy to move the lively activities of children from the present location adjacent to the proposed exhibit. This decision provided the opportunity to rethink the nature of play and our audience. As 20% of our guests are ages five and under, we determined that a traditional "playground" was not appropriate and decided to go with the concept of nature-based creative play. (PowerPoint slides 6-10)
- Construction started in earnest in March 2008 on the new exhibit/guest services complex known as **California Trails**. We could never have imagined back in 1999 when the Santa Barbara Zoological Foundation's Board of Directors approved a series of new projects for the master plan that the scope of these new projects would reach so many aspects of the Zoo. Construction of **California Trails** began in earnest in March, but the planning started years before 2008. (PowerPoint slides 12-14)

The plan for a California condor exhibit (**Condor Country**) was just a dream in 1999 and the idea for a new restaurant on the hilltop grew out of our desire to enhance the guest experience while generating additional operating revenue. After a year of construction, these dreams and visions are finally a reality. (PowerPoint slides 16-32)

The new shape of the hilltop and the complex of exhibits called **California Trails** can be clearly seen and the condors are visible from a number of distant trails. From accessible pathways to structures, this ambitious Zoo project has reshaped the Zoo experience for the more than 440,000 annual visitors. The scope of work spans the area between the Dreier Family Elephant Junction (opened in August 2004) to the gorilla viewing areas (opened in 1996). (PowerPoint slides 34-70)

The first area to be completed was the native plants pathway that leads to the new **Explore Store** (formerly known as the Kids' Marketplace) and the upper restrooms. Opening this new pathway helped meet the challenge of visitor circulation during the early stages of construction. (PowerPoint slides 72-77)

As **California Trails** is now open, it is important to recognize the incredible contributions that have brought this dream to life. From the Zoo staff that invested countless hours in meetings to the staffs at Blackbird Architects, TynanGroup, Frank Schipper Construction, Cemrock (Tucson, AZ), and International Cordage (Tucson, AZ) that turned visions into reshaped landscape and new structures, we had the benefit of an exceptional team of professionals. We also had the support of the professional staff in the Parks & Recreation Department and City Planning. This complemented the encouragement we received from members of the Parks & Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission, and the Historic Landmarks Commission.

- The Zoo's facilities crew finally gave up after years of attempts to make the giraffe "chute" functional. The chute is a device that helps us manage the care of the Zoo's giraffe herd. The Animal Care staff identified a commercially available chute fabricated by Fauna Research and is confident the new chute will allow for successful training of the giraffes to get acclimated to remaining calm in an enclosed space. Between the training and the new chute, we are improving our ability to provide the best care for our giraffes. The Board approved the \$55,000 investment in June 2009. It is part of a

longer term plan to introduce three Masai giraffes to the Zoo's herd. (*PowerPoint slides 79 & 80*)

- The Zoo displayed several new banner designs on State Street in 2009. Penguins, snow leopards, turacos (tropical African birds), and black & white ruffed lemurs made their colorful debut in July. (*PowerPoint slides 82 & 83*)

Projects in the Planning Process

- Plans for the ***Discovery Pavilion***, the Zoo's new education building, moved forward, but fundraising was put on hold because of the economy. The firm of Neumann, Mendro and Andrulitis architects (Carpinteria) is nearing completion of construction drawings for the project. The new estimated cost of the ***Discovery Pavilion*** will be \$8.5 million, with approximately \$2.5 million "in the bank." Construction of this facility is not anticipated to begin until late 2011 or early 2012. Construction is projected to take about 18 months. (*PowerPoint slides 86-89*)
- Blackbird Architects prepared preliminary designs for ***The Heart of Asia***, the facility approved by the Planning Commission as the "langur/lemur holding complex." For the short term, the lemurs and red panda have been removed in order to meet the accreditation standards of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the requirements for our exhibitor's permit issued by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). (*PowerPoint slides 91-93*)

As always, I am happy to provide any additional information or meet with Parks & Recreation staff to review projects and future plans. As you would expect, work will continue on landscape maintenance. Brush will be cleared, trees will be trimmed, and all routine maintenance on buildings and grounds is scheduled.

In addition, the Zoo is cooperating with its neighbors in the East Beach Condominiums and El Escorial to address issues that concern tenants and owners. The Zoo has made a number of concessions in cleaning up and landscaping the service area in response to requests from owners in the East Beach Condominiums.

A *PowerPoint* presentation has been included with slides identified that correspond to the various sections of the narrative. As so many of these projects and changes are significant in scope, photos seemed to be a reasonable approach to capturing that provide background on the Zoo and our projects. I hope these will be useful in reviewing current work and future plans for the Zoo.

Sincerely yours,



Richard Block
CEO / Zoo Director