Bergen County Zoological Park

OUR BERGEN COUNTY ZOO: CHERISHED THROUGH GENERATIONS, A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE



HONORING OUR LEGACY & EMBRACING OUR FUTURE

For generations, Bergen County Zoo has been woven into the fabric of **family traditions and childhood memories.** It is a place where first animal encounters sparked **curiosity,** where parents and grandparents shared moments of **discovery,** and where countless visitors formed **lasting connections** with wildlife and the natural world. Today, the Zoo stands ready to begin an **exciting new chapter** — one that honors its cherished legacy while boldly investing in the future.

MISSION:

As stewards of a living collection, the Bergen County Zoo embraces the shared responsibility to provide a positive future for all wildlife.

Guided by its mission and under the County's leadership, the Bergen County Zoo and staff embrace a **forward-looking vision** with a thoughtful plan to welcome new species, design **immersive experiences** and **enhanced habitats**, enact **impactful renovations**, and expand **conservation education** and **dynamic programming**.

VISION:

Bergen County Zoo inspires all generations to preserve our natural world through conservation, education, and animal connections.

Based on our strategic pillars and designed to **deepen the connection with people, animals, and nature**, our plan inspires conservation action, honors the Zoo we love, and makes it even better for future generations.







YOUR BERGEN COUNTY ZOO... ONLY BETTER

The Bergen County Zoo of tomorrow will feel both comfortably familiar and surprisingly new. Longtime guests will recognize the **warmth, charm**, and **sense of community** that have made the Zoo such a treasured destination, while discovering exciting additions that create fresh **opportunities for learning, exploration, and wonder**. Every investment reflects a commitment to **animal well-being, meaningful guest experiences**, and **global conservation impact**.

Most importantly, this transformation will invite every visitor to become part of something bigger. Through **memorable experiences** and **powerful conservation storytelling**, guests will leave knowing their visit helped support wildlife protection efforts near and far. Ultimately, Bergen County Zoo will continue **inspiring people to care, conserve, and create lasting memories** for generations to come.



STRATEGIC PILLARS

As we implement exciting new plans to advance our mission and realize our vision, we are directed and inspired by the following key areas of focus:



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A Zoo Supported by Community, Built for Community

By strengthening relationships with residents, partners, donors, and stakeholders, the Zoo cultivates the engagement, advocacy, and financial support needed to thrive for generations to come.



EXCELLENT ANIMAL CARE

Setting the Standard for Animal Well-Being and Habitats

By prioritizing outstanding animal welfare, innovative habitat design, and achievement of Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accreditation standards, the Zoo demonstrates our unwavering commitment to excellence in animal care.



PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCE

Empowering an Exceptional Team

A strong team culture, talented workforce, and commitment to operational excellence ensure the Zoo has the people and capabilities needed to deliver on our vision.



DELIVERING ON OUR MISSION

Inspiring Conservation Through Education and Action

The Zoo advances our mission by creating meaningful experiences that foster wildlife conservation, environmental stewardship, and lifelong learning.



AWARENESS & VISIBILITY

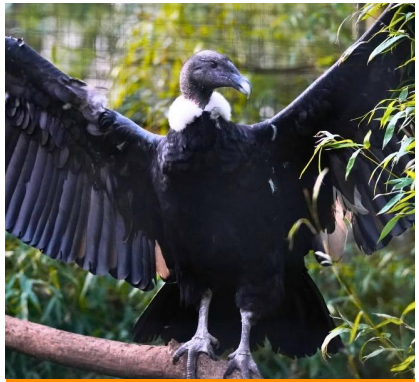
Elevating the Zoo's Presence and Promise

Through strategic marketing, branding, and storytelling, the Zoo will expand our reach, inspire new audiences, and reinforce our value as a treasured regional destination.

BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY'S ZOO

Looking to the future, we appreciate an extraordinary opportunity to build on our **legacy,** creating a zoo that is more **immersive**, **engaging**, and **impactful** than ever before. Along with **essential investments** in infrastructure, maintenance, and staff development, this plan is designed to enhance the lives of the animals in our care while creating inspiring new connections with guests.

Guided by a commitment to **exceptional animal care, conservation leadership**, and **meaningful guest experiences**, a series of **Zoo Campus Priority Projects** will lay the foundation for our next chapter in several phases over the next five to seven years:



Enhanced perching and flight opportunities for our **Andean Condors** in an expansive new habitat currently in design and development



The introduction of **Red Pandas** to Bergen County Zoo with dual habitat spaces connected by overhead passages and offering enriched environments for these charismatic ambassadors of conservation



A dynamic new home for our **Spider Monkeys**, designed to encourage climbing, exploration, and natural behaviors, while also welcoming the return of **Capybara**, the world's largest - and some would say cutest – rodents



A relocated and expanded **Bergen Dutch Barn**, providing more room for the Zoo's beloved farm animals and creating a more engaging and enjoyable experience for guests

BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY'S ZOO

Augmenting this campus transformation are two additional projects that will expand the footprint and reach of Bergen County Zoo, comprising a **Community Connection/Mission Delivery Opportunity**:



An expansive **White Rhino** savannah that will bring one of the world's most iconic and threatened species to our Zoo



A dynamic **Conservation Education Center** that will serve as a hub for learning, discovery, and community engagement

Taken all together, these projects represent a **bold commitment** to the future of Bergen County Zoo—one that honors the traditions we cherish while embracing new possibilities for conservation, education, and recreation.



From the Treetops to the Riverbank: Spider Monkey & Capybara

The Bergen Dutch Barn & Farmyard: Where Memories Grow

Taking Flight: A New Era for Our Condors

Red Panda Passage

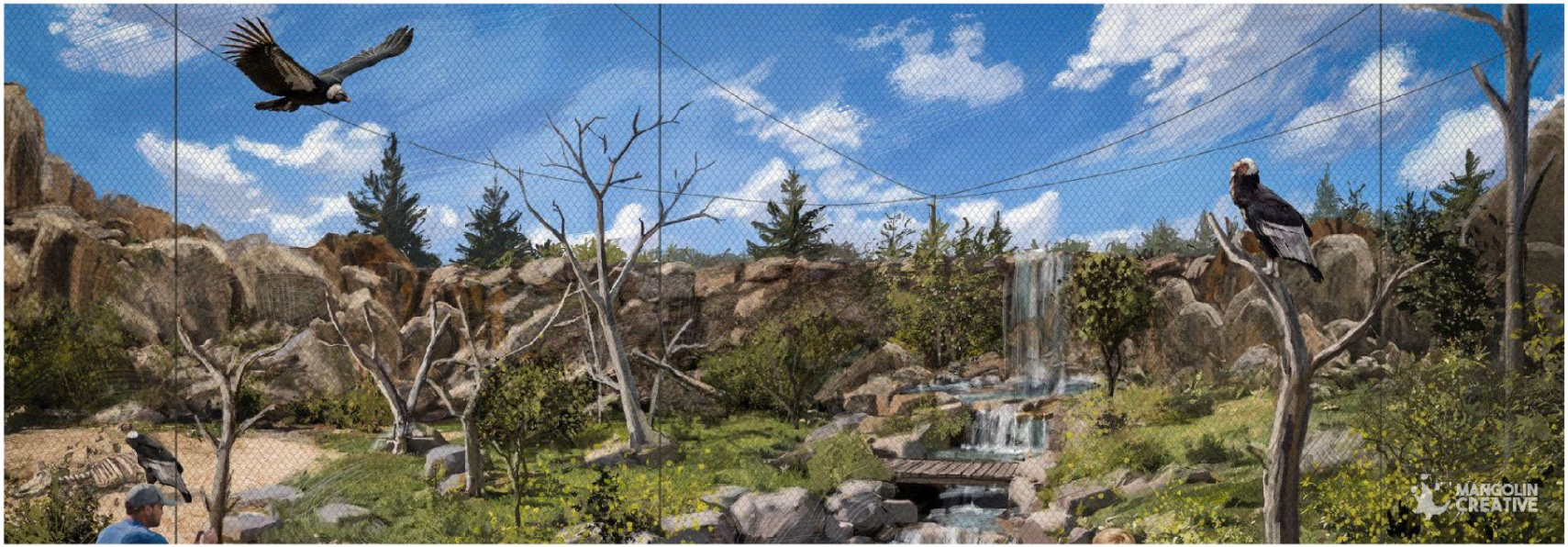
MAPPING OUR FUTURE

The site map above highlights the planned location of our Zoo Campus Priority Projects.

TAKING FLIGHT: A NEW ERA FOR OUR CONDORS

Few sights in nature are as **awe-inspiring** as a condor soaring effortlessly overhead, riding invisible currents high above the landscape. Soon, visitors to Bergen County Zoo will experience these magnificent birds in an entirely new way as the Zoo's **beloved condors** move into a **remarkable new habitat** designed to showcase their natural behaviors while advancing the highest standards of animal care and well-being.

Already in design and engineering, the new **29-foot-high aviary** provides the space and environmental features needed to encourage gliding, perching, and exploration. An immersive design with **rocky, cascading stream beds** and **elevated vantage points** creates opportunities for the condors to spread their impressive wings and offers guests a dynamic glimpse into the lives of one of the world's most extraordinary birds.



More than a new exhibit, the condor habitat represents the first step in an **imaginative transformation** of the Bergen County Zoo. For the condors, it is a chance to **reach new heights**. For Bergen County Zoo, it is an **exciting new chapter** for a species whose conservation story is part of the Zoo’s legacy.

RED PANDA PASSAGE

With their **rust-colored fur**, **masked faces**, and **playful personalities**, red pandas have a special way of capturing hearts. Soon, Bergen County Zoo guests will experience these beloved animals in an all-new habitat designed around their comfort, well-being, and natural curiosity. The new red panda habitat features **two interconnected outdoor spaces**, allowing the animals to **explore**, **climb**, and **move between** environments through **elevated passages**, which also provide guests unique views up from the walkways below.



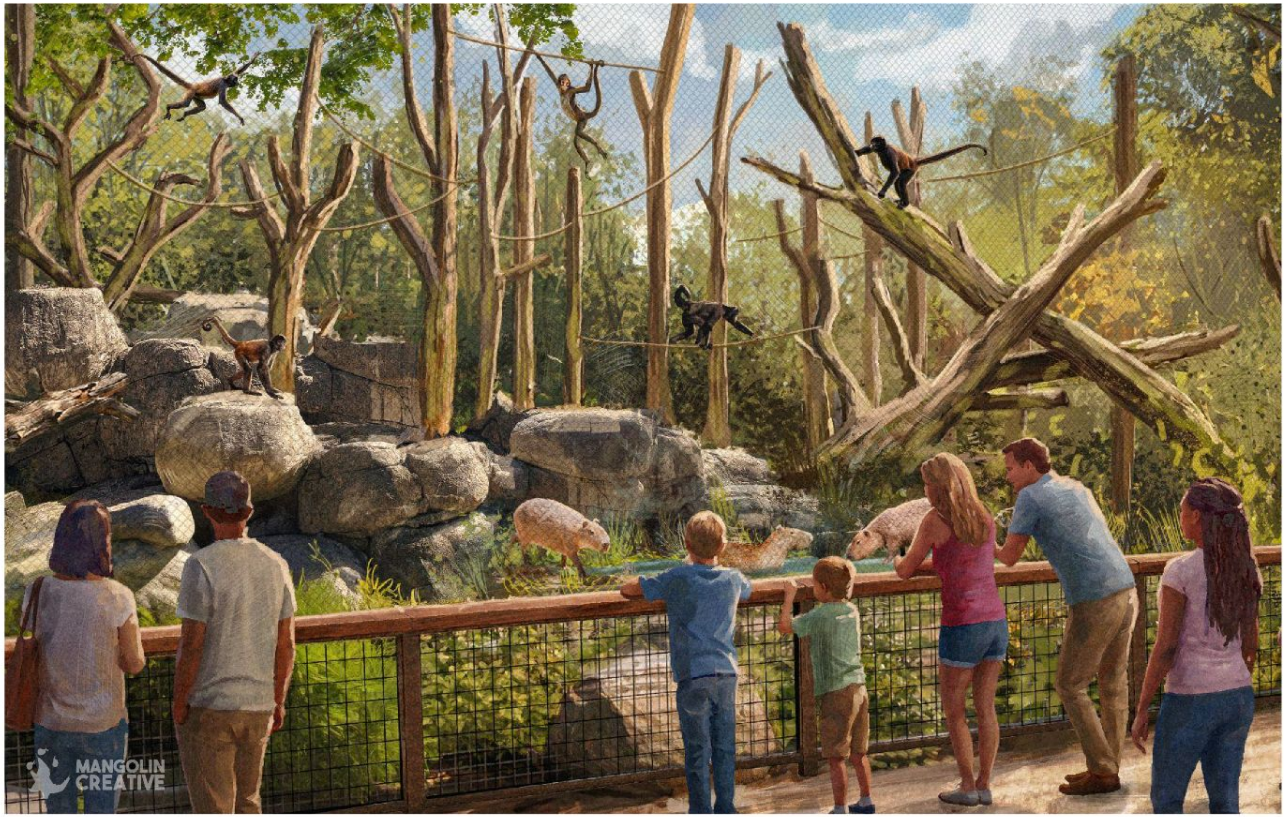
Guests will enjoy unprecedented opportunities to observe these elusive animals, including views into a **specialized denning area** where **webcams** offer glimpses into some of the most important moments in a red panda's life. Dedicated keeper training spaces will further support **exceptional animal care** while showcasing the strong bond between the Zoo's staff and its animals.

Purposefully designed for year-round care, the habitat also includes climate-controlled holding areas that provide relief during the warm summer months.

TREETOPS TO THE RIVERBANK: SPIDER MONKEY & CAPYBARA

Two of South America's most **charismatic species** will soon share an exciting new home. This **multi-level habitat** brings together the highly acrobatic **spider monkey** and the calm, social **capybara**, creating a dynamic experience that celebrates life from the rainforest canopy to the river's edge.

Designed to showcase the natural behaviors of both species, the new exhibit gives spider monkeys dramatically expanded space to **climb**, **swing**, **leap**, and **explore**. Towering tree structures and lush surroundings highlight the **remarkable agility** of these arboreal primates, whose prehensile tails allow them to move through the treetops with breathtaking ease. At ground level, guests delight in welcoming back the capybara, a **beloved favorite** returning to Bergen County Zoo. Known for their **gentle temperament** and **strong social bonds**, capybaras enjoy a spacious habitat anchored by a deep pool where they can **swim**, **wade**, and **cool off**. New year-round viewing areas allow observation through every season. More than a habitat, it is an **immersive experience** that celebrates conservation, inspires curiosity, and reconnects Bergen County Zoo with some of its most cherished animal ambassadors.



THE BERGEN DUTCH BARN AND FARMYARD: WHERE MEMORIES GROW

For generations, the Bergen Dutch Barn and Farmyard have been central to the Bergen County Zoo experience: the place where children met their first farm animals, families created **cherished traditions**, and countless memories were made.



Inspired by the **character** and **charm** of the historic structure, a new, larger, and re-located Bergen Dutch Barn expands the stall space for the **cows**, **sheep**, **pigs**, **goats**, and **horse** that guests know and love. Thoughtfully designed pastures with gated pathways provide easily accessible transfer points for animals, creating a more **dynamic** and **engaging** experience and rotational options for variety. Shady seating areas allow guests to enjoy **keeper presentations** and opportunities for **hands-on learning experiences**.

Reimagining this **beloved landmark** represents the Bergen County Zoo's commitment to honoring our history while assuring best practices and highest standards for our animals and guests.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION/MISSION DELIVERY OPPORTUNITY

The site map highlights the planned location of our **White Rhino Savannah** and the **Conservation Education Center**, our **Community Connection/Mission Delivery Opportunity.**



Welcoming Rhinos to Our Zoo

Inspiring the Next Generation: Conservation Education Center

WELCOMING RHINOS TO OUR ZOO

There are few wildlife encounters as **unforgettable** as standing face-to-face with a rhinoceros. Powerful yet surprisingly gentle, the southern white rhinoceros will bring a **new sense of awe** to Bergen County Zoo as one of its most anticipated future residents—a **true "wow" species** that inspires wonder the moment it comes into view.

The new white rhino habitat will transport guests to the **sweeping grasslands of Africa** through an **expansive savannah experience** designed for both animal well-being and immersive exploration. Visitors will enjoy multiple viewing opportunities, including an **up- close savannah trail** and memorable perspectives from the Zoo train, evoking the spirit of a classic African safari adventure**.**



Special animal encounters may even provide the rare opportunity to feel the rough skin of a rhinoceros and forge a personal connection with **one of the world's most iconic animals.**

Beyond the excitement, the habitat will tell an **inspiring conservation story.** Once brought back from the brink of extinction, the southern white rhinoceros stands as one of conservation's greatest success stories—a powerful reminder of what is possible when people choose to protect wildlife and wild places.

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION: CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER

Inspiring people to care about wildlife and the environment is central to the mission of the Bergen County Zoo. The new **Conservation Education Center** will become our **hub for learning, connection, and community engagement**—expanding opportunities for all - especially school children - to **discover**, **explore**, and **take action.**



Designed as a **flexible, multi-purpose facility**, the center will feature modern **classrooms**, **auditorium** space, expanded room for **animal programs**, and a **one-of-a-kind event venue** with sweeping views of the new rhinoceros savannah. Students will experience unforgettable **up-close encounters with ambassador animals** while families, community groups, and organizations gather for **special programs** and **celebrations.**

In addition to generating **mission-supporting revenue** and expanding **educational programming**, the center will also provide much-needed space for **Zoo staff and operations**, creating exciting opportunities to reimagine existing buildings and strengthen the Zoo's long-term capacity.

The greatest conservation tool is an i**nformed and inspired community**. By engaging school children early and fostering curiosity, understanding, and responsibility, the Conservation Education Center will nurture the **next generation of conservation-minded citizens** as responsible stewards of our natural world.

PROTECTING WILDLIFE, PROMOTING ACTION

Conservation has always been more than a goal at Bergen County Zoo; it is our **responsibility**. While guests come to connect with animals, every visit also supports efforts to **protect species** and **restore ecosystems** both locally and around the world.



That commitment takes many forms. The Zoo contributes to the conservation of **iconic species** such as the **American bison** and the critically endangered **red wolf**.

Even the Zoo's **prairie dogs** play a role in one of North America's most remarkable wildlife recovery stories. In the wild, the once-believed-extinct **black-footed ferrets** depend almost entirely on prairie dog colonies for food and shelter at their reintroduction sites. By helping guests understand this relationship, the Zoo highlights the **delicate connections** that exist throughout nature and the **collaborative efforts** required to save endangered species.

As a partner in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' **North American Monarch SAFE** (Saving Animals From Extinction) program, the Zoo has created a thriving **pollinator garden** that supports endangered **monarch butterflies** while also attracting a diverse array of native birds and invertebrates. Beyond its grounds, Zoo staff work with SAVE Coastal Wildlife to tag and monitor **horseshoe crabs** and volunteer their time through FrogWatch, helping scientists track **amphibian populations and habitat health**.

The **Friends of Bergen County Zoo** further **extend this impact** by supporting conservation organizations including Red Wolf SAFE, North American Monarch SAFE, The Wild Animal Conservation Institute (ICAS), and The Peregrine Fund.

The Zoo's planned investments—including new habitats, expanded educational opportunities, and enhanced guest experiences— will **deepen this commitment to conservation**. These projects are designed not only to improve animal care and inspire wonder, but also to create stronger connections between guests and wildlife.

Conservation begins with **caring**. And when people care, they become **advocates** for the species and wild places that need our help most.

TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT MATRIX

The following chart details the impacts of our planned projects:

KEY:

Foundational Strength

Supporting Strength



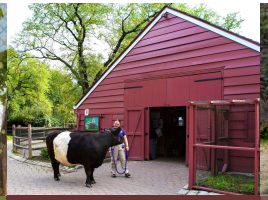
Taking Flight: A New Era for Our Condors



Red Panda Passage



Spider Monkey & Capybara



The Bergen Dutch Barn & Farmyard



Welcoming Rhinos to Our Zoo



Conservation Education Center

	Taking Flight: A New Era for Our Condors	Red Panda Passage	Spider Monkey & Capybara	The Bergen Dutch Barn & Farmyard	Welcoming Rhinos to Our Zoo	Conservation Education Center
CONSERVATION IMPACT	Foundational	Foundational	Foundational	Supporting	Foundational	Foundational
ANIMAL WELL-BEING	Foundational	Supporting	Foundational	Foundational	Supporting	Foundational
AZA ACCREDITATION STANDARD	Foundational	Supporting	Foundational	Foundational	Supporting	Supporting
GUEST EXPERIENCE	Foundational	Foundational	Foundational	Supporting	Foundational	Foundational
REVENUE GENERATION AND PROMOTABILITY	Supporting	Foundational	Foundational	Supporting	Foundational	Foundational
LEVERAGING EXISTING ASSET	Foundational	Supporting	Foundational	Foundational	Supporting	Supporting



PROJECT PARTNERS

For more information on how you can support this project, please contact:
Harry Peachey, Zoo Administrator, Bergen County Zoological Park | hpeachey@bergencountynj.gov