

History of Oakland Zoo

- Pre 1800's** Ohlone land
- 1770-1857** Knowland Park Property was once part of the 100,000 acre Rancho San Antonio, owned by Don Louie and Maria Peralta.
- 1857-1888** The property was purchased by Ellis A. Haines.
- 1888-1899** The property title was passed to Frederick Talbot of the famous Talbot and Pope Lumber Company.
- 1919** The title passed to automobile manufacturer Cliff Durant.
- 1921** The estate's mansion was destroyed by fire.
- 1922** Henry A. Snow, recognized as a naturalist, collector, African big game hunter, film producer and museum advocate, established the Oakland Zoo in downtown Oakland. This first Zoo was located at 19th and Harrison in downtown Oakland and was later moved to Sequoia Park (Joaquin Miller Park).
- 1926** The Durant Park Property title passed to Norman Deveaux.
- 1932** Bank of America became title holder after Mr. Deveaux experienced financial difficulty.
- 1936** The Alameda County Botanical and Zoological Society was founded as a support organization for the Zoo. Eventually, the Society was renamed the East Bay Zoological Society (EBZS). Over time, this organization became more heavily involved in the development and administration of the Zoo.
- 1939** Oakland Zoo was moved from Joaquin Miller Park to Durant Park. The City provided an annual budget of \$4800 to care for the Zoo.
- 1948** Under Joseph P. Knowland, Chairman of the California State Park Commission, the State purchased 453 acres for \$660,000 on a matching grant basis and the property became a State Park on April 30, 1948.
- 1949** In December, the State of California, through the California Department of Parks and Recreation, leased the property to the City of Oakland for a period of fifty years. The City, in turn, subleased the property to the Society.
- 1950** In December, the property's name was changed to Joseph Knowland State Arboretum and Park due to Mr. Knowland's dedicated efforts to secure the land for recreational use.
- 1956** Concessionaire contract with John Clark went into effect for the food stands and rides.
- 1957-1961** The General Manager of the City Parks Commission, William Penn Mott, Jr., directed major efforts toward improving and developing the Zoo and Park. The first major addition was construction of a new elephant enclosure for Miss Effie the elephant, at a total cost of \$15,000. The move to relocate the animal collection from the lower Park to the present site began.
- 1965** The Baby Zoo opened under the management of Lutz Ruhe.
- 1975** Knowland State Park was conveyed to the City of Oakland and negotiations began between the City and the Society.
- 1977** The Society purchased the rides and food concessions from John Clark and The Baby Zoo from Lutz Ruhe.

- 1982** In August, a major turning point in the Zoo's development occurred when the City of Oakland gave the Society, a nonprofit organization, the responsibility of managing the entire Park and Zoo. The Society signed a ten-year management contract with an option to extend in 1992.
- 1982-1984** William Penn Mott, Jr., serving as Director of the Society, led the Zoo into a new era of growth and development. Through his efforts, a Master Plan for the Zoo was generated, an Assistant Director/Veterinarian was hired, a fully-equipped animal hospital was established and numerous renovations made on facilities and exhibits throughout the Zoo and Park.
- 1985** Assistant Director Joel J. Parrott, DVM was appointed Executive Director. An even more aggressive development plan was implemented and over the next 20 years a complete renovation of the Zoo occurred in 6 phases.
- 1987** The Oakland Zoo's Education Department was established to provide school and community groups with on-site classes and a Zoomobile outreach program. Today this department serves over 50,000 students annually. Construction finished on the new Hamadryas Baboon Exhibit.
- 1988** Two milestones were passed. First, the Zoo established a secure funding base through an operational subsidy from the City of Oakland and the East Bay Regional Park District. Funding for capital improvements was provided by Bond Measure AA. Secondly, the Zoo was accredited by the Association of Zoo and Aquariums (AZA), ranking the Oakland Zoo in the top 27% of zoos nationwide. The new Chimpanzee Exhibit was completed.
- 1989** In October, following a successful fund raising campaign that raised \$820,000 in private contributions, a one-acre African Elephant Exhibit was completed. The exhibit, "Mahali Pa Tempo" (Swahili for "Place of the Elephant") is a spacious representation of the elephants' natural habitat and has received national recognition.
- 1990** In November, Bond Measure K passed, providing the Zoo with additional funds for capital improvements.
- 1991** In December, Gibbon Island was dedicated. The pair of White-handed gibbons now have a spacious, lush island home complete with 40-foot tall trees and a river moat.
- 1992** In January, a 1.5 acre African Lion Exhibit "Simba Pori" (Swahili for "Lion County") opened. A pride of six lions is now residing in a savanna and woodland setting complete with kopje rock structures and a pond. The exhibit can be seen from two large viewing decks. In June, Flamingo Plaza, located at the front entrance to the Zoo, opened. The exhibit is home to 11 Lesser Flamingos, several African Spoonbills and furnishes ample visitor seating around much of its perimeter.
- 1993** In December, the Siamang Island Exhibit was dedicated.
- 1994** In March, the Society signed a renewal contract with the City of Oakland to continue their management of the Zoo to the year 2004.
- 1996** In May, the Malayan Sun Bear Exhibit was dedicated. December marked the completion of the Capital Campaign which raised over \$3.9 million to fund the Maddie's Center for Science and Environmental Education.
- 1997** The Administration Office Building was completed at the end of May. Renovation work in the Children's Rides Area was completed in the summer. The work included a new food service building, seating area, ticket booth, and refurbished rides.
- 1998** The African Savanna opened in April. The area features eleven animal exhibits and highlights eighteen animal species of the savanna. The landscaping contains over seventy-five plant species from South and East Africa.

- 1999** The grand opening for the Maddie's Center for Science and Environmental Education was held in March. The 17,500 square-foot Education Center features: four classrooms, an auditorium, a library, and a theater, as well as offices for the Education Department and Docents.
- 2000** In May, the Warthog exhibit opened and furnishes our pair of warthogs with a large grassy area to explore.
- 2001** On June 28, the "Karibu Village", the main entrance pavilion, officially opened. The 20,000 square-foot project includes a new gift shop, restaurant, membership office, restrooms and outdoor dining area. Other amenities include five new ticket windows and a handcrafted archway sign to greet visitors. The wood frame and stucco complex was designed to simulate the African coastal village of Lamu, off the coast of Kenya. The Tiger exhibit's renovation/expansion was completed in July. In addition to expanding the exhibit area, a new waterfall and rockwork over the night house were created. The night house was enlarged, and a new visitor viewing deck was added.
- 2001** In October, the Squirrel Monkeys moved into a spacious new Rainforest exhibit complete with naturalistic rockwork, vines, climbing structures and lush foliage.
- 2002** A new, endangered species carousel was installed in the Rides Area in the spring of 2002. Also in that year, new restrooms were built, a parking lot was added to the lower park, and a new giraffe barn was built.
- 2003** In August, the old Children's Zoo was demolished to make way for construction of the new Children's Zoo, scheduled for completion in the summer of 2005.
- 2004** The African elephant exhibit, "Mahali Pa Tembo", was expanded from one acre to six-and-a-half acres. All 6.5 acres is usable space for the Zoo's four African elephants.
- 2005** In July, the Wayne and Gladys Valley Children's Zoo was completed. Representing the largest renovation and construction in the zoo's history, this three-acre area features: Tortoise; Ring-tailed Lemur; Otter; Malayan Fruit Bats; Alligator; Rabbit; and Pot-bellied Pig exhibits, as well as a Reptile & Amphibian Discovery Room (RAD); Bug House; and Goat & Sheep Barn and petting yard. Also found in the Valley Children's Zoo is a common area with play structures; the Wilds Discovery Area with pathway and stream; Lily Pad Walk and a new amphitheater. The entry showcases artwork of cement snakes on which to sit, tall brass blades of grass through which to walk, as well as cement eggs and assorted brass bugs which can be discovered on paths, steps and walls throughout the Valley Children's Zoo.
- 2006** In response to the our mission to provide access to the whole community, the Oakland Zoo launched Zoo-to-Community, with the goal of providing free Zoo admission and transportation to qualified schools, daycare and Head Start programs, early childhood development centers and community organizations. In its first six months of operation, the Zoo-to-Community program exceeded its goal of booking and visiting twenty-five Head Start classrooms by more than 100%.
- 2007** The clean up and restoration of the Arroyo Viejo creek, which runs through the Zoo, was completed. New additions include 6 outdoor classrooms, instructional signage, shoring up of the creek banks, and removal of non-native species. Eucalyptus trees that were removed were reused to create the outdoor classroom spaces.
- 2009** Baboon Cliffs exhibit opened. The 8,100 square foot exhibit includes a cascading waterfall, climbing structures, a spacious area for the baboons to roam, a night house facility, and offices for Zoo staff.
- 2010** Grand Opening of Wild Australia, the exhibit is accessible via the Outback Express Adventure Train. It's a journey through an Australian themed exhibit which features wallaroos and emus.
- 2011** "Quarters for Conservation," a newly instituted program, challenges guests upon entering the Zoo to actively participate in conserving wildlife. Oakland Zoo donates 25 cents from each admission fee to one of our featured

partner conservation organizations worldwide, and guests get to cast their vote to decide which project will receive their donation.

2012 Grand opening of our 17,000 square foot, state-of-the-art veterinary hospital, the largest wild animal veterinary facility in Northern California.

2013 In partnership with the Ventana Wildlife Society, Oakland Zoo installs the first-ever live-streaming California condor cam in the wild and also made a commitment to help rehabilitate sick or injured condors by building The Steve and Jackie Kane Condor Recovery Center, a facility specifically designed to treat the massive sized birds. A new Biodiversity Center was also opened in 2013, serving as a breeding, research, and education facility devoted to the conservation of endangered and threatened animals, plants and habitats. The Zoo's "Quarters for Conservation" program hits the \$100,000 mark in raising funds for wildlife conservation program partners worldwide.

2014 Renovation of the "Rides Area" and a new ride, "Serengeti Safari" was completed. The new look and feel of "Adventure Landing" is complimented with an entertainment area and new branding throughout.

2015 Oakland Zoo breaks ground on the "California Trail" project, doubling in size after adding 56 acres for new California native animal enclosures, a learning center, and on-site conservation activities.

2016 Events like World Giraffe Day, Bison Day, Celebrating Elephants, and Discovering Primates continue to grow and raise money and awareness for conservation.

2017 Our ADA-accessible, all-electric, eight-passenger gondolas opens to transport guests, from the main Zoo, up and over the rolling hills of Knowland Park to California Trail. There, at 650 feet above sea-level, the gondolas arrive at the state of the art 3-story Kaiser Permanente Visitor Center, which houses The Landing Café.

2018 The East Bay Zoological Society operated and managed the Zoo for the City of Oakland from 1982 until August 2017, when it was renamed the Conservation Society of California to better reflect the Zoo's evolving purpose and mission in its commitment to conservation.

2018 Oakland Zoo Unveils Long-Awaited 56-acre California Trail Expansion featuring 8 native CA Species, California Conservation Habitarium, Conservation Action Tent, California Wilds! Playground based on California's diverse eco-zones, and Clorox Overnight Experience 'safari-style' campground.

2019 Consistently breaking attendance records and at an all-time high number of membership households. The future is bright at the Oakland Zoo. We have big dreams and plans that will transform the Zoo and put us on the map as one of the most recognized Zoos in the country, especially for our humane treatment of animals and our world-wide conservation efforts.