

Zoo Idaho Master Plan





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Executive Summary/ Introduction

In 2016 Zoo Idaho embarked on the development of a strategic master plan to create a long-term vision for the Zoo built on the mission of preserving Intermountain West wildlife and habitat through conservation and education. The plan capitalizes on the natural landscape, varying topography and pristine views found within the 25 acre facility to immerse guests in the beauty of the various Idaho ecosystems.

The new plan will build upon the zoo's mission of conservation and education to reach visitors about the wildlife, habitat, geology and history of Idaho. Guests will explore and discover the diverse habitats of Idaho and how to live in conjunction with wildlife.

The proposed vision for Zoo Idaho will be implemented over a 20-year period through collaboration between Zoo Idaho, the City of Pocatello, Zoo Idaho Zoological Society Board, and Zoo Idaho Zoological Society. Funding will be through both public and private sources. The master plan takes into account the need for major exhibit and infrastructure repair and the difficulty of the extreme variation in topography. The design places efficiency and realistic costs as a priority.





Project Background and Methodology

The Zoo is at a critical point in its evolution. It is focused on gaining accreditation through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), increasing community support, and attracting the many visitors along the I-15/I-86 corridors that flow to and from Yellowstone National Park. During the last several years the Zoo has seen steady increase in attendance, minor improvements to facilities and increased animal acquisitions. Several major renovations will be complete by the end of 2018 including a new entrance and gift shop and an eight acre wetlands exhibit.

In order to continue this positive movement, gain AZA accreditation and to attract a broader more diverse audience throughout the area and beyond a compelling vision for the future needs to be put forward. The master plan addresses these needs by laying out a series of facility and exhibit improvements that will transform the Zoo into a world class facility and establish it as a premier destination within the region.

The master plan takes a long-term approach as to the direction of the development of the Zoo's site, facilities, and physical environment. The plan should establish a bold vision while at the same time offering realistic and feasible steps on how to accomplish the plan. The plan needs to reflect the community it serves, provide opportunities for support, and inclusiveness in the Zoo's success.

It is important to note that the master plan is a:

- Living 20-year vision for the Zoo that will change and grow
- Big picture view of the future with the knowledge that details and specifics may change
- Phased approach for continued development
- Map for sustainable growth

Sequencing of the plan is subject to multiple factors including: funding, donor interests, collection planning, community priorities, and AZA requirements.

A mixture of minor and major improvements will be phased in over time to continue growth in attendance, guest interests, excitement, and steps towards AZA accreditation. Factors involved in the Zoo's master plan process include:

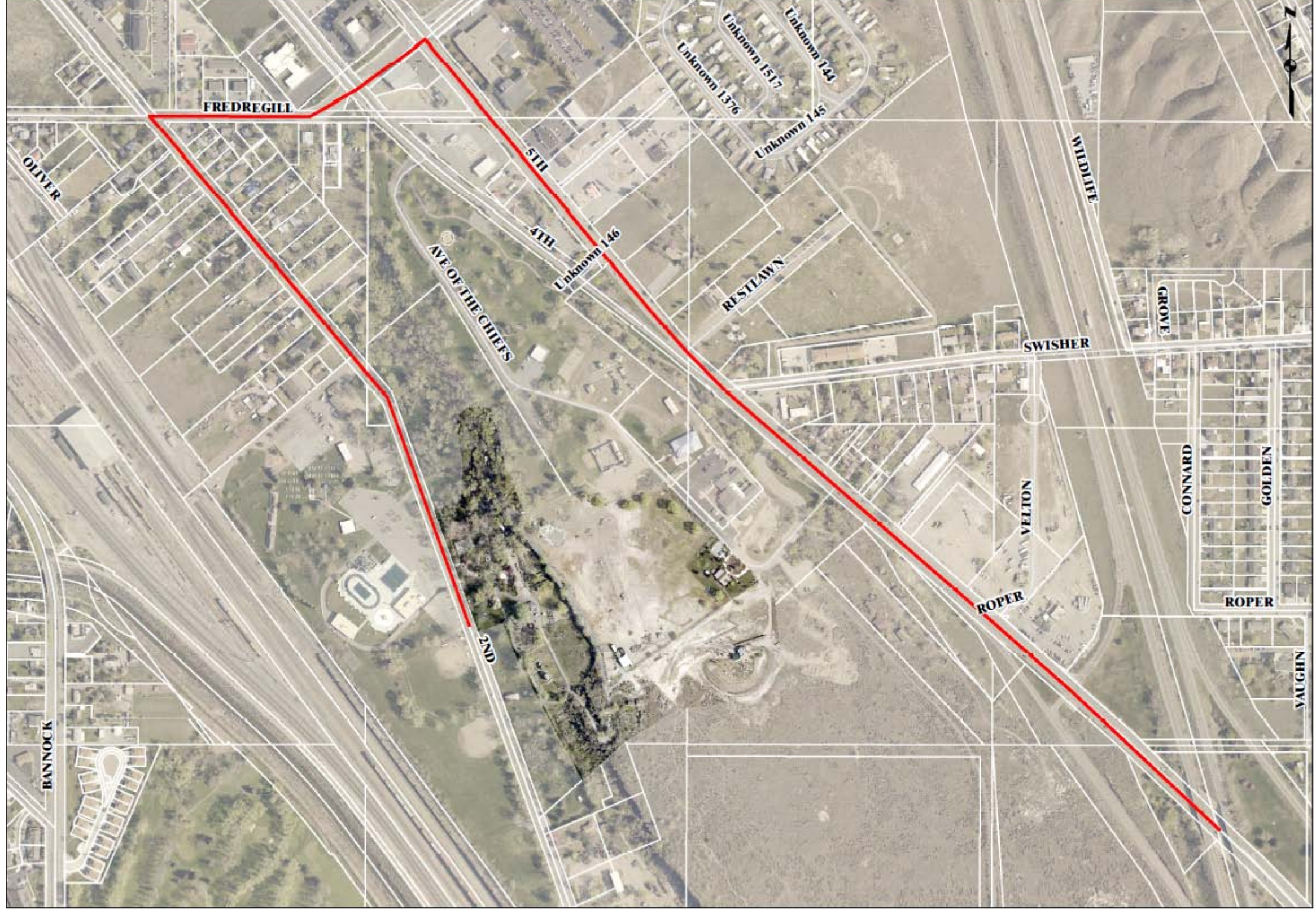
- Immersive exhibits that take advantage of the zoo's natural setting
- Interactive exhibits that include hands on educational and play opportunities
- Catering and event rental and camping space that offer guests a unique zoo experience
- Priority focus on mission-driven education and conservation programs



Existing Site and Context

Zoo Idaho occupies 25 acres of City-owned property in Ross Park located in Pocatello, Idaho.

The Zoo is divided into two sections found in Upper Ross Park and Lower Ross Park by a basalt lava bench. The public portion of Upper Ross Park and the Fort Hall Replica are to the north, the City of Pocatello Animal Shelter to the east and the AMI trail to the south of the upper zoo. The lower zoo is east of the Ross Park Aquatic Center. Access to the zoo is from South Second Ave. The Zoo and Aquatics Center share the parking lot.



Facilities and Areas of Opportunity

Entry/Exit Area

- Most recent capital improvement project
- Green bicycle parking lot
- Firewise demonstration garden
- ADA accessible walkway with an additional shorter distance stairway
- Gift shop that includes two uni-sex bathrooms, merchandise and snack areas, and second story loft for rental and education space



Lower Level

- The cougar and black bear exhibits are in disrepair and in need of complete renovation
- Modifications to the avian and small animal exhibits are minimal and will greatly enhance guest experience
- Slight renovation to the barnyard is required primarily in the yards to combat erosion
- Under-used central area that can be redeveloped to include more guest amenities and a dynamic exhibit
- Under developed transition area between the lower level and path to upper level which can be developed into a series of dynamic exhibits



Upper Level

- Major renovation required to take advantage of the natural setting and expansive views.
- Insufficient pathways, shade and rest areas
- The north set of exhibits do not merit the walk and the pathway to the lower level is extremely steep and cannot not be realistically improved in a cost effective manner
- No functional restrooms available to guests



Facility Recommendations



Guest Experience

The goal of the master plan is to provide unique and meaningful animal, educational and play experiences that set the zoo apart from the larger regional zoos.

Education

Each exhibit will contain educational components that focus on conservation issues throughout Idaho, wildlife/human conflict mitigation, and animal adaptations.

Play

Traverse a mountain ledge like a mountain goat, race pronghorn antelope, wallow in the sand with a bison, help protect forests in a fire tower, and dig through Idaho's rich history in a fossil playground. When it's time for a relaxing ride around the wetlands hop aboard the zoo train!

Restrooms

Restrooms are conveniently distributed throughout the Zoo.

Gift Shop

The gift shop will be located at the front of the zoo and serve as both the entrance and exit to the zoo. Emphasis will be placed on educating guests on the importance on becoming a localvore and supporting our local Pocatello community. A second floor with a deck overlooking the lower zoo will be available for events and classes.

Master Plan Organization

Entrance

It is imperative that the experience of entering the Zoo be pleasant, accommodating, and organized. The entrance will tell the story of Zoo Idaho by:

- Incorporating a firewise demonstration garden.
- ADA compliant path that serpentine through the firewise garden.
- Two story log cabin with entrance and exit, gift shop and snack center.
- Convenient stroller/wagon/wheelchair rentals and water bottle stations.
- Interactive North American river otter exhibit that sets the days excitement.



Homestead

The Homestead area focuses on the transition point between human and wildlife. Exhibits will tell the story of animals that are typically found cohabitating with humans in urban/rural settings.

- Barnyard: Renovations to the barn and yards are needed. Educational components within the barn, the addition of terraces and improved entrance/exit gates will improve guest experience.
- Black bears: Black bears will serve as the marquee exhibit and major capital improvement is required to the exhibit and holding.
- Barn owl, American crow, raccoon, turkey vulture: These are a series of smaller exhibits that will transition from a farm to pasture.
- Idaho Fossil Playground: The primary play area for the zoo that focuses on the rich fossil history of Idaho.
- Elk/Mule Deer: The exhibit will begin the transition from the Homestead to Mountains region.

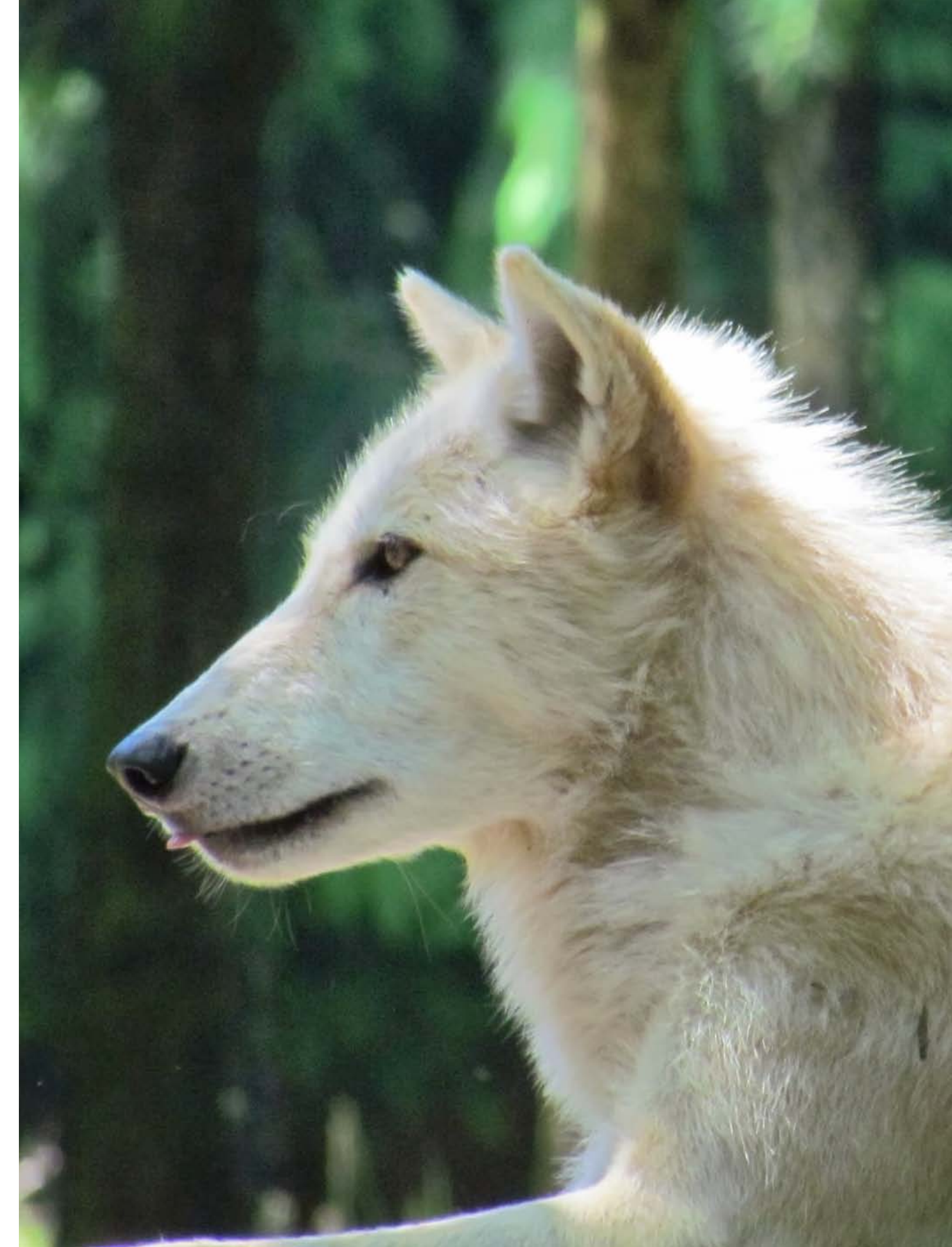




Mountains

The Mountains capitalizes on Zoo Idaho's unique geography and basalt lava bench by exhibiting animals found within the mountainous areas of Idaho. Within the area strategic play zones that demonstrate aspects of the animal and human interaction will be included.

- Elk/Mule Deer: The exhibit will begin the transition from the Homestead to Mountains region. The elk and mule will also be the first of three exhibits that includes a wildlife overpass that demonstrates how to reduce human/wildlife conflict while connected important wildlife corridors.
- Small mammals and raptors: A series of transitional exhibits that include animals found in both the Homestead and Mountain regions.
- Wolf: An important apex predator that is re-establishing within Idaho.
- Woodland Caribou: The southern Selkirk caribou population, including Idaho is listed as endangered. The exhibit will offer guests unique educational and conservation experiences.
- Big Horn Sheep: The exhibit will be located along the south path lava bench and include a wildlife overpass.





Grasslands

The upper level of the zoo is primarily sagebrush steppe with shallow soils above a basalt lava bench with expansive views of the Portneuf Gap and surrounding mountains. The grassland exhibits will tend to be larger and not limit the guest views.

- Cougars: The old coyote exhibit will be renovated for cougars. Due to the cougar's extensive range throughout Idaho they will act as a transition exhibit from the Mountains region to Grasslands region.
- American Badger/Burrowing Owl: Two charismatic animals found throughout the grasslands and arid regions of Idaho.
- Bison/Pronghorn Antelope: The final exhibit with a wildlife overpass. The exhibit will wrap around the grizzly bear exhibit and create an immersive experience.
- Grizzly Bears: Marque zoo exhibit with an amazing view of Scout Mountain.
- Train Station: The destination guest amenity for children and adults that travels around the Grasslands and Wetlands Region.





Wetlands

The wetlands will blur the line between captive wildlife and wildlife. The exhibits will include captive trumpeter swans, sandhill cranes and whooping cranes while attracting wildlife including song birds, shore birds, waterfowl and various amphibians.

- Trumpeter Swans: In conjunction with USFWS and IDFG the Zoo will house a breeding pair of swans and begin to release the yearlings throughout the Bear Lake Region of Southeast Idaho.
- Sandhill and Whooping Crane: In conjunction with USFWS and IDFG the Zoo will begin a conservation program for both Sandhill and Whooping Cranes.
- Butterfly House: The butterfly house will focus on educating guests in developing pollinator gardens and focus on Monarch butterfly conservation.
- Beaver: A very active exhibit and a species that is of local concern along the Portneuf River.
- Multiuse Camp: An excellent revenue generating source that can be used for general public use and educational programs.





Multi-Use Camp

The campground will offer a unique experience for guests, education programs, and open new sources of revenue generation.

- Camping fees will also include daily access to the zoo. Access is for zoo operating hours only.
- The multi-use camp will greatly enhance education opportunities including overnight events and rentals by education organizations throughout the community.

Parking

Parking is shared between the Ross Park Aquatics Center and Zoo with a total of 225 stalls and is sufficient at this time. Additional space within Ross Park can be utilized during large events. Bus drop off, loading, and parking areas are found both on the lower level of the zoo and upper level next to the Zoo education building. By taking advantage of two large group areas the Zoo is able to efficiently move multiple groups quickly into and out of the Zoo.

Service

The service area is extremely limited resulting in the majority of storage found off site. The maintenance building is drastically undersized and centrally located within the zoo making only small scale projects possible. Quarantine facilities are located in the center of the upper level of the zoo and attach directly to the wetlands exhibit. Quarantine at this time can only service small hoofstock, small mammals, and birds. Priority should be placed on relocating the hay barn and freezer storage into Zoo grounds, relocating the quarantine facility to the zoo perimeter and designing a facility that can hold all species appropriately, and relocate the maintenance building to accommodate a large structure with appropriate space.



SITE CIRCULATION



Project Phasing

Project Budgets

Project budgets, as listed in the following phasing, are representative of similar projects from comparable institutions. The budgets are estimates and many variables must be considered when assigning project budgets including quality of proposed construction, the availability of existing utilities, current climate for construction, and whether the project can be completed in-house or through contracting. No account for inflation over time has been factored.

All project budgets include soft costs such as architecture/engineering fees, permits, inspections, electric/HVAC, furniture, and equipment.



High Priority Areas

Entry/Gift Shop \$400,000 - \$500,000

Black Bear Exhibit \$300,000 - \$400,000

Total High Priority \$900,000

Quick Success Projects

Raptors (In-house, four exhibits) \$50,000

Fox (In-house) \$10,000

Bobcat (In-house) \$10,000

Lynx (In-house) \$20,000

Barn Owl (In-house renovation) \$5,000

Total Quick Success \$95,000

Phase I Wetlands/Grasslands

Wetlands

Exhibit \$100,000

Science Center \$200,000

Total \$300,000

Grasslands

Bison/Pronghorn \$150,000

Badger \$15,000

Burrowing Owl \$15,000

Cougar \$50,000

Total \$230,000

Total Phase I \$530,000

Phase II Mountains

Elk/Mule Deer \$150,000

Bighorn \$200,000

Caribou \$100,000

Wolf \$100,000

Total Phase II \$550,000

Phase III Homestead

Idaho Fossil Playground \$300,000

North American River Otter \$400,000

Barnyard Renovation \$25,000

Total Phase III \$725,000

Phase IV Multi-Use Camp

Camp Grounds \$250,000

Beaver \$250,000

Butterfly House \$50,000

Total Phase IV \$550,000