



1100 Trevilian Way
Louisville KY 40213
www.louisvillezoo.org
502-459-2181

Louisville Zoo opens new Seal and Sea Lion Habitat at Glacier Run

LOUISVILLE, KY (June 30, 2010) – Today the Louisville Zoo and Mayor Jerry Abramson gave their final “seal of approval” to the Zoo’s new Seal and Sea Lion Habitat at Glacier Run during a public Grand Opening.

“The Louisville Zoo is known for its award-winning, innovative exhibits and Glacier Run continues that tradition with a world-class zoo experience right here in our own back yard,” Abramson said. “Glacier Run is an investment that will provide a major boost to our community and region’s quality of life and will be a tourism attraction for years to come.”

In September 2008, the Zoo began construction on the Glacier Run Village, the “heart” of Glacier Run, which now features pinnipeds (seals and sea lions) and will feature polar bears in the spring of 2011.

“Our Seal and Sea Lion Habitat offers a high-quality, exciting experience that fundamentally advances your Zoo’s mission of ‘bettering the bond between people and our planet’ through education, recreation and quality family fun,” Louisville Zoo Director John Walczak said. “This exhibit gives visitors a unique opportunity to connect with playful and intelligent seals and sea lions through interactive Zoo keeper trainings and fun, educational presentations.”

To date, the Zoo’s Glacier Run Capital Campaign Steering Committee has raised more than \$24 million for the entire project—the most ever raised for a single capital

campaign in the Zoo's 41-year history. The Zoo continues its efforts to raise the approximately \$3 million remaining to complete the other originally planned components of Glacier Run, which will include polar bears, Steller's sea eagles, sea otters and an animal sanctuary.

Once Glacier Run is totally complete, the estimated economic impact of the Zoo on the region will increase to \$33.6 million while adding more than 400 new jobs to the local economy.

"The Louisville Zoo is truly a gem in our region and state," said Louisville Zoo Foundation Board Chair Mark Wheeler. "The Zoo and Glacier Run are part of the solution to strengthen the economy of our community. The Zoo exists for the citizens of the greater Louisville area and the Commonwealth, and we are committed to doing our part to help."

Paul Varga, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Brown-Forman, agrees. Brown-Forman has given \$1 million to the Seal and Sea Lion Habitat.

"Louisville is home to our corporate headquarters and we have demonstrated a strong commitment to support our city for 140 years. We believe in doing our part to help our community continue to be a wonderful place to live, work, and raise our families. We know that our support of local groups such as the Louisville Zoo helps our community to grow, and in turn also benefits our business, our employees, and others within the community," Varga said.

Walczak said the exhibit is a tremendous triumph for the Zoo.

"This isn't just an exhibit. It is a place for understanding conservation and preservation," he said. "For example, we currently have a young sea lion rescued from the Pacific coast that you will meet over the summer. This exhibit is already making a positive impact on conservation and saving animals. Your Zoo is a place dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for visitors and leadership in scientific research and conservation education."

Seal and sea lion training demonstrations will be held daily at 10:30 a.m., 2 p.m. and 4:15 p.m. For more information on Zoo's Glacier Run exhibit, visit www.louisvillezoo.org/glacierrun.

GLACIER RUN OVERVIEW

Once completed, Glacier Run will not only tell the dramatic story of the polar bear, one of the most charismatic species on the planet becoming more threatened every day, it will also engage visitors of all ages and educate them about the most pressing environmental challenges of our time. Glacier Run will inspire visitors to actively participate in the Zoo's mission of bettering the bond between people and our planet.

Glacier Run will be a truly unique experience where one can visit the animals, talk to the keepers about conservation and become temporarily immersed in life on the tundra. The exhibit will recreate the natural habitat for some of the Zoo's most popular residents like polar bears, and the addition of species like the Steller's sea eagles, reindeer and Arctic fox will add to the feeling of being surrounded by wildlife. The town of Glacier Run will include a schoolhouse and general store in addition to the newly opened amphitheater that makes viewing the seal and sea lion enrichment demonstrations more enjoyable.

The first four phases of Glacier Run have now opened. They include the expanded Australian Walkabout, the Calistoga Splash Park at Glacier Run, Alice S. Etscorn Tiger Tundra exhibit and Seal and Sea Lion Habitat.

SEAL AND SEA LION HABITAT DETAILS

- General Contractor for the project was Whittenberg Construction Company.
- Architects were Peckham Guyton, Albers and Viets, Inc. (PGAV) and Arrasmith, Judd, Rapp, Chovan, Inc.
- Landscape is by Korfhage Landscaping and Design.
- The new Seal and Sea Lion habitat has the potential to hold a total of 14 seals and sea lions.
- The habitat's state-of-the-art outdoor pool holds 108,000 gallons of salt water.
- The pool depth goes from 0 to 9 feet.
- The chilled salt water temperature is maintained at 66 degrees year round.
- The salt water is recirculated through high-rate sand filters and ozone disinfection.
- It took 25 tons of salt to acclimate the 108,000 gallon pool to the desired salinity. Salinity concentration is tested by staff on a regular basis using a digital

refractometer. Sea water salinity is 32 parts per thousand. Drinking water has salinity of less than 0.5 parts per thousand. Salt water is equivalent to about 5 ounces of salt in 1 gallon of water.

- The spacious, shaded seating for visitors in the amphitheater seats 200.
- Most of the “wood” you see in the exhibit is in fact concrete painted to look like weathered wood.
- Seal and sea lion training demonstrations will be held daily at 10:30 a.m., 2 p.m. and 4:15 p.m.

The Louisville Zoo, a non-profit organization and state zoo of Kentucky, is dedicated to bettering the bond between people and our planet by providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for visitors, and leadership in scientific research and conservation education. The Zoo is accredited by the American Association of Museums (AAM) and by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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