

Detroit
ZOO

where **life** connects



Detroit ZOO

8450 W. 10 Mile Rd. | Royal Oak, MI 48067



DISCOVERY TRAILS



At the Detroit Zoological Society, our mission is simple but powerful — to create meaningful connections between people, animals and the natural world so all can thrive. For more than a century, we’ve achieved this through unique experiences and programs that have reached millions, conservation work on every continent and advocacy that is igniting positive change far and wide. We are proud to hold a beloved place at the heart of our community and to be one of Michigan’s most treasured cultural institutions.

The Detroit Zoo is also a one-of-a-kind educational asset, uniquely positioned to foster curiosity among our guests and to support critical educational outcomes for our community. Through extensive programming for all ages, we partner with educators and families in offering exciting learning experiences for students and others throughout our community. The Zoo provides an enthralling and accessible setting to educate guests of all ages and backgrounds.

The Zoo is a place where people come together to build empathetic connections with animals and nature and are inspired to make positive change in our world. Now, we are preparing to bring this mission to life in a new and exciting way: Discovery Trails.

Discovery Trails is an immersive, 7-acre experience coming soon to the Detroit Zoo.

This landmark investment is dedicated to the wonder of wildlife, the power of education and the joy of discovery. Discovery Trails will offer new, immersive experiences unlike anything else in the history of the Detroit Zoo, from up-close animal encounters to an elevated canopy trail; new animals, including burrowing owls and stingrays; and all-new areas, such as an inspiring gathering area and a senses trail. Three areas to connect with animals, play and gather will further enhance our educational offerings and fulfill a long-term strategic vision. With Discovery Trails, the Detroit Zoo will have new ways to ignite positive change and create a world where animals and nature are valued, understood and protected by all people.



“Discovery Trails is an inclusive space that welcomes all to experience the wonders of nature.”

—Hayley Murphy, DVM
Executive Director and CEO



The Zoo is always seeking to create connections between people, animals and nature. Discovery Trails will offer brand-new opportunities for up-close encounters with animals in the Connect area:

- In an expanded and reimagined barnyard, guests will see domestic goats, alpacas, miniature donkeys and chickens.
- For the first time at the Detroit Zoo, guests will be invited to enter and pet or brush goats in a contact yard.
- In the Connect area, guests will discover and connect with animals in new and active ways. A life-size, touchable model of a goat will be available for those who have limited experience with animals to help ensure a positive experience for guests and goats alike.



- A flourishing garden and pretend farmers market will provide rich opportunities for immersive learning and imitation play.
- The barn and garden will feature learning spaces for a multitude of education programs.

The unique experiences made possible in the Connect area will offer extensive opportunities to enhance educational outcomes and support group learning.



PLAY



Discovery Trails will feature dynamic and accessible structures and features to invite adventure, spark curiosity and foster empathy:

- The Canopy Trail will be an accessible aerial adventure exploring Discovery Trails from above. The Canopy Trail will include unmoving and moving sections that gently sway, fostering imaginative play as children playact as soaring eagles, agile lemurs or curious conservationists.
- Treetop Crossing will include slides, platforms, climbing nets and more to inspire kids and families to play and explore together. This area will encourage freestyle play as guests create their own adventures scaling, climbing and sliding through the Crossing's features.
- The Little Sprouts area, set aside for the youngest guests, will provide toddlers with opportunities to explore and crawl among larger-than-life elements that bring nature into focus. Here, youngsters will have an opportunity to see that all plants and animals grow – just like they do – while they safely interact with each other, their caregivers and the scaled-up nature elements.

The Play area will also feature up-close encounters with stingrays and bamboo sharks in a large, sheltered touch tank:

- Animal well-being will be the focus as guests learn how to interact respectfully with these aquatic animals.
- Participants can choose to feed the animals and will be guided by staff on how to touch stingrays with care.
- These brand-new experiences will be another opportunity within Discovery Trails for people to connect with animals and build empathy for other living things.

Far more than a playground, the Play area will encourage guests to discover the Zoo from a new viewpoint.

GATHER



Discovery Trails will also feature places to gather, where groups can come together, enjoy a snack and recharge between activities:

- This Gather area will offer sheltered seating, a lactation station, men's, women's and family/single-use restrooms; as well as a restroom with a universal-sized changing table.
- The area will include beautiful artwork, shady resting areas, comfortable benches and a new concession stand.
- The walls of the main plaza will be graced by a design created by local artist Hubert Massey. The mosaic will be made from custom ceramic tiles, and their unique shapes will fit together like a puzzle and relate to educational themes found throughout Discovery Trails.

The Gather area will provide the ideal place for groups to take a break before continuing on their next adventure of discovery.

GUESTS



A unique educational experience

Discovery Trails represents a major investment in the Detroit Zoo's commitment to education. New opportunities and unique settings will inspire wonder, joy and learning for guests of all ages. Discovery Trails will foster guests' curiosity and excitement about wildlife and nature while helping build critical skills.

The dynamic features of Discovery Trails will be specially designed to support learners at all grade levels through:

- Literacy and Vocabulary Development
- Science and Math Concepts
- Observation Skills
- Sensory Development
- Social Skills and Motor Development
- Environmental and Participatory Science



A place for all to discover

The Detroit Zoo is a leader in diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. Discovery Trails will be available to the community as a place to find joy in learning and discovering animals and nature:

- Most Discovery Trails experiences will be free with regular admission, adding value to membership, one-day tickets and to participants in on-site educational programs.
- The Zoo's community partnerships will expand access to Discovery Trails, reducing economic and other barriers for youth and families.
- Signage will be presented in multiple languages to reflect and include Detroit's richly diverse community. Signage will also feature tactile elements for guests with no or low vision.
- Smooth paths and ramps will provide access for strollers and wheelchairs.
- Quiet spaces will be available throughout Discovery Trails for anyone needing a respite.

Discovery Trails is designed with the whole community in mind.

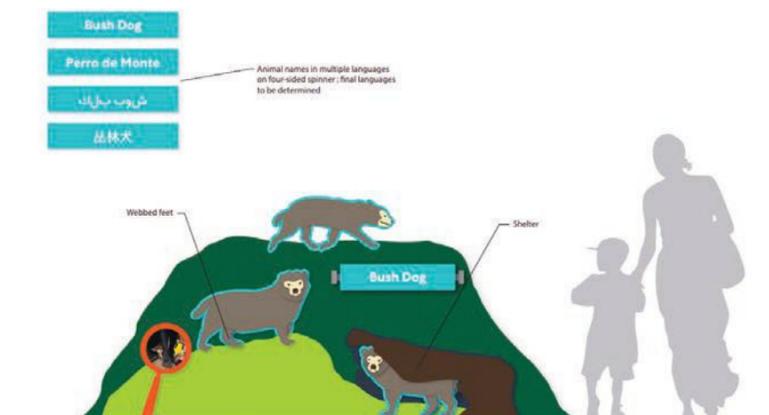
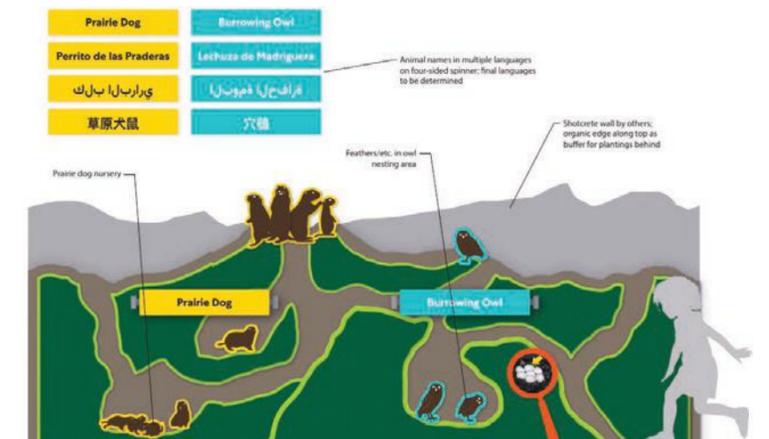
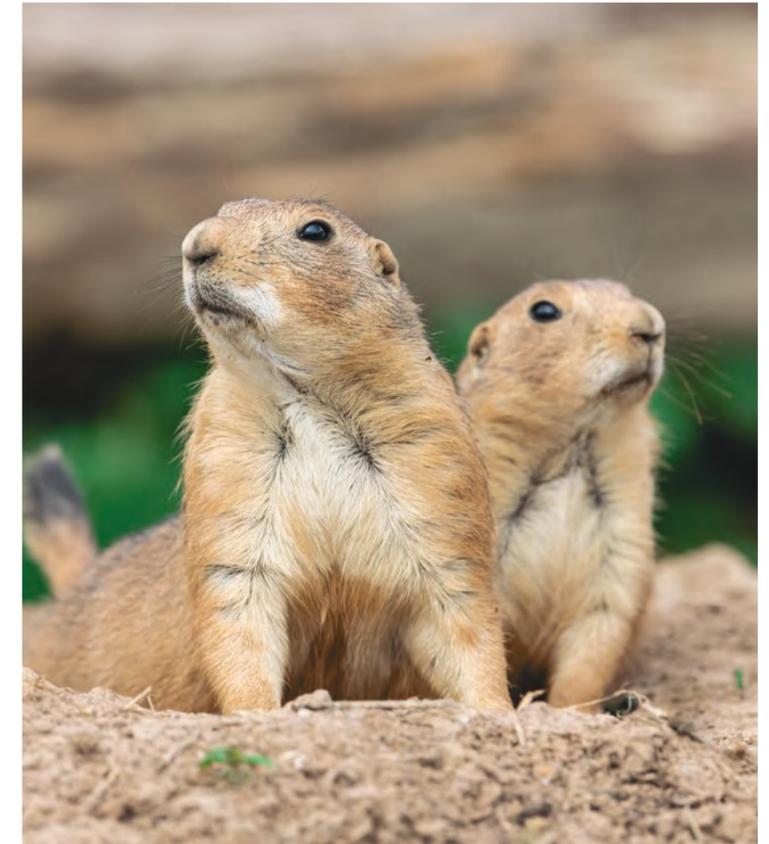
ANIMALS

Animals in our care and in the wild have always been our focus at the Detroit Zoo. Discovery Trails will be a home where animals can thrive and guests can connect with them on a deeper level. Discovery Trails will prioritize animal well-being and creating connections between people and animals that inspire a brighter future for our world.

Discovery Trails will include a wide variety of species including:

- Alpacas
- Bamboo sharks
- Burrowing owls
- Bush dogs
- Chickens
- Giant anteaters
- Goats
- Miniature donkeys
- Prairie dogs
- Stingrays

Animal well-being is at the center of every animal habitat at the Detroit Zoo. Human-animal encounters in Discovery Trails will all be choice-based. Animals such as goats and chickens will have areas to take breaks from contact with guests if they choose. The new prairie dog habitat will feature areas for animals to engage in species-typical behaviors like burrowing, grazing and socializing. The bamboo shark and stingray habitat will feature critical life support elements and backup systems to ensure their well-being. These are just a few examples of how the Zoo will uphold the highest standards of animal care as we offer new opportunities for animal encounters with guests.



Bright, engaging signage in multiple languages will teach guests how animals are similar to and different from themselves.



SUPPORT



Making the vision a reality

This multi-faceted, 7-acre site will provide engaging opportunities for guests of all ages and backgrounds to expand their learning horizons by sparking curiosity, encouraging discovery and fostering a sense of wonder and “wow” regarding the natural world.

This new landmark is a major step forward in the Detroit Zoological

Society’s education mission and overall vision, helping to increase the Zoo’s impact in our local community and beyond.

With a project budget of \$24 million*, construction of Discovery Trails is underway and scheduled for completion in 2026. In addition to the many benefits for youth and families, Discovery Trails is predicted to:

- Increase the Zoo’s regional economic impact by 11 percent, to \$185 million annually
- Increase yearly Zoo visitation by 12 percent
- Increase membership by 11 percent
- Bring an additional 13,000 children to the Zoo with their schools each year

*Excludes site preparation and infrastructure



To bring these exciting plans to life, philanthropic investments totaling \$24 million are now being sought and compelling naming opportunities are available.

For more information, please contact the Detroit Zoological Society Development Office at (248) 336-5728 or visit dzoo.org/discoverytrails.