

Zoo History

In 1965, the **Inland Empire Zoological Society** organized as a private non-profit corporation. Their goal was to establish a zoo in the Inland Empire area to be operated for the benefit of the public.

In 1972, **Inland Empire Paper Company**, owned by the **Cowles family**, made available to the community and to the Society 240 acres of rugged, beautiful, unique landscape to build a zoo. A portion of that land is now **Mirabeau Point Park**.

The zoo opened to the public in early summer of 1974, and received 15,000 visitors that year. It was free of charge at first, with a suggested admission donation of purchasing a **\$1 Vanishing Species Medallion**. Annual attendance peaked in the early 1990's with 100,000 visitors.

The zoo was a non-profit entity, funded by admissions, a gift shop, yearly dues of almost 1200 members, grants, and donations. These generous donations included: materials; labor; and even meats, vegetables, and fruits from grocers, as the diets of the animals called for 450 pounds of meat per week.

There was an **Adopt-an-Animal Program**, in which the donor received a certificate while the zoo cared for the animal. Citizens could also "own a piece of the zoo" and purchased ceramic tile pavers.

Unfortunately, the zoo experienced financial woes and issues such as winters being especially tough with big bills for hay and other feed. The zoo closed December 31, 1995, and the animals went to other zoos or private owners.



Come Visit Mirabeau Point Park!

Parks and Recreation Department
2426 N. Discovery Place
Spokane Valley, WA 99216
(509) 688-0300



**DO YOU REMEMBER
THE ZOO?**



Walk in the Wild



Walk in the Wild Zoo ~ Formerly at Mirabeau Point Park

Have you ever wondered what happened to the **Walk in the Wild Zoo**?

The animals may not be roaming the **Mirabeau Point Park** area anymore, but you still can. Step back in time and envision what it was like, with our simple map and your imagination.

Walk in the Wild Zoo was a unique visitor attraction in the Pacific Northwest. It was a forested zoo compound where you and your family could walk, talk, and be with the animals in one of nature's most impressive zoological settings.

Every day provided new opportunities to create lifelong memories. Visitors enjoyed new experiences and could make animals their warmest friends too, especially at the **Petting Zoo**.



Group tours were always welcome, and the zoo was a fun and educational field trip for the local schools. It also provided a wonderful and unmatched setting to enjoy a picnic lunch.

As the seasons changed, so did the zoo. **Springtime** brought flowers and animal births. **Summer** offered outdoor musical concerts and special themed events. **Fall** featured educational classes and programs as the animals prepared for winter. Snow brought cross country skiing to a **Winter** wonderland of exciting events, animals, and the nature trails.

The zoo's mission statement stressed the display of animals found in North and South America. However, animals representing five continents called the Walk in the Wild their home. Up to **200 animals with 55 species** were featured throughout the park.

Feeding time at the **Otter Pond** always provided a great show for visitors. Who could forget watching "Wally" and "Nikki" perform their entertaining antics enjoyed by the



The zoo was also home to "Roscoe" and "Rosie," two Alaskan brown bears who appeared in media. They too had their own pond, which provided hours of fun for them and viewers.



Cats of the World



Certainly one of the more well-known animals people wanted to see was the gentle tiger, "Lilly." Her friend, "Kasey," was never too far away.

Several North American mountain lions, also known as cougars, were featured in a natural setting. The female "Dandi Lion" and male "Chip" were very popular with the visitors.

Locate the group of large rocks south of the YMCA, and you'll find the former home of "Dusty", "Naushka", and Tawni", all African Black-Maned Lions. "Leonard", an African Golden-Maned Lion lived here too.



"Sasha" the Snow Leopard made an appearance here for a while. Zookeepers were even able to get a paw print as a keepsake.

And who can forget "Bob" aka "Nasty" the bobcat?...nicknamed this because of his clever and cunning ways with zookeepers.


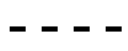


Photos and information courtesy of: Leanne Brady, Lead Zookeeper/Interim Curator; Marilyn Omlor, Zookeeper; and Spokane Valley Heritage Museum

Where Were the Animals Located?

See Below for Approximate Areas

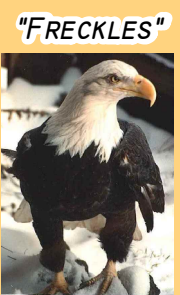
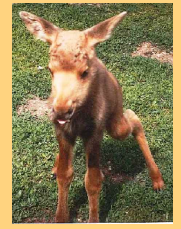
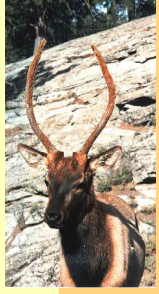
Key

-  **Animal Locations**
-  **Zoo Structures/Bldgs**
-  **Current Structures/Bldgs**
-  **Walking Trail**
-  **Former Road**

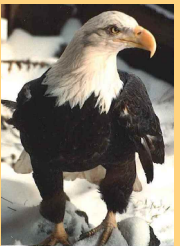
**"LAWRENCE"
THE
ROCKY MOUNTAIN
ELK**



**"TIFFANY" AND "NORMANDY"
THE
PERCHERON HORSES**



**"MORRIS"
THE
MOOSE**



BISON

**"JENNIFER" AND "BABY"
THE
ZEBRAS**



ELAND

LIONS

**LLAMA
AND
RHEA**

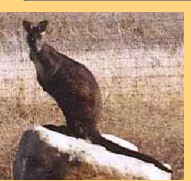


**"DONUT"
THE
MULE DEER**

**CURRENT
CHILDREN'S HOME
SOCIETY**

EMU

WALLAROO



**DINOSAUR
EXHIBIT**

CURRENT WALKING TRAIL

CURRENT SHELTER

CURRENT RESTROOMS

CURRENT STAGE

WATERFOWL POND

CURRENT MIRABEAU PARKWAY

FORMERLY EUCLID, WHICH ENDED AT PARKING LOT

SPOKANE RIVER

**"BORIS"
THE
SNOW LEOPARD**



**EAGLES
(EARLIER ON)**

**"NASTY"
THE
BOBCAT**



**"POOH"
THE
RACCOON**

FERRETS

**CONCRETE CAVE
WAS MATERNITY WARD
MOSTLY USED BY GOATS**

OTTERS

**PETTING
ZOO**

**BIRDS OF
PREY
ENCLOSURES**

**CURRENT
MIRABEAU
SPRINGS**

**ZOO
ENTRANCE/
OFFICE**

**ZOO
PARKING
LOT**

**SILVER
FOX**

**"LILLY" AND "KASEY"
THE
BENGAL TIGERS**

FLAMINGOS

**ARCTIC
FOX**

COYOTE

**"ROSCOE" AND "ROSIE"
THE
BEARS**

REPTILES

**ZOO
SCIENCE
CENTER**

COUGARS

STAIRS

"CHIP"



**CURRENT
CENTERPLACE
REGIONAL
EVENT CENTER**

**CURRENT
MIRABEAU
PARKWAY**

CURRENT DISCOVERY PL.

**CURRENT
YMCA**

