First light is an incredible time on the prairie. The deep warm colors reflecting off the early morning clouds, fog filling the valleys between the grassy hills, a meadowlark’s rusty-gate melody, coyotes chirping in the distance, and the deep bass-filled guttural roar of a lion. . . . This unique experience is nearly a daily occurrence at Rolling Hills Zoo, which is about to get even better with construction set to begin on the Pride of the Prairie!

In 2019, the Zoo received a $250,000 grant from the William H. Graves Family Foundation with the challenge to match these funds and create a new lion experience for the cats and our guests. Thanks to contributions from literally hundreds of donors, and the generosity of multiple foundations, the challenge has been met and the start of construction is expected in the near future.

The Pride of the Prairie concept was designed by Jones Gillam Renz Architects, Salina, with input from Rolling Hills Zoo’s Board of Directors and staff. This new habitat will encompass nearly 20,000 sq. ft. and feature a new indoor space, additional off-exhibit housing, and an up-close and personal 180 degree lion viewing area. Highlights of this new addition include opportunities to experience being directly underneath 450 lb. lions, a training window where animal care staff can safely perform daily husbandry mere feet from zoo guests, and improvements which facilitate top-notch care for the physical and psychological needs of the animals.

One of the most exciting opportunities afforded by this major renovation is the ability to introduce a male lion to our lionesses. Creating a new pride can be a long and daunting process. It is not unusual for it to take many months before the females become trusting of a new suitor and accept him into the group. The additional housing areas incorporated into this build will allow for safe introductions, while zoo visitors observe and learn about this natural process toward acceptance. These new spaces also create an opportunity to provide den space for a lioness and her cubs in the future.

The time is now for lion conservation. In recent decades, African lions have disappeared from 12 countries where they have prowled the grasslands for thousands of years. Their wild populations have greatly declined over the past 60 years, primarily due to habitat loss and human conflict. In 1940, there were an estimated 450,000 lions roaming the savanna which has since declined to around 20,000 individuals today. Compare this number to the 415,000 endangered wild elephants left in Africa and one can begin to understand how important it is that we as humans take action to save this keystone species. Additionally, the loss of grassland habitat is a worldwide problem, resulting in the decline of many species around the globe, an issue those of us living in Kansas and the central plains states are intimately tied to.

As humans, we tend to think of animals going extinct as something that primarily happened in history, but the fact is, even with all the knowledge and experience we have acquired as caretakers of the world, we are losing species and biodiversity at an alarming rate. Just this past week another 22 species were declared to be extinct in United States, species our parents and grandparents may have seen alive, but now our children will not. At Rolling Hills Zoo we recognize that to save species and biodiversity individuals must care, be inspired, and take action. These principles are reflected in the Zoo’s mission: Touching Hearts • Igniting Passion • Saving Wildlife. The Pride of the Prairie at Rolling Hills Zoo will create many opportunities toward these tenets as visitors experience and fall in love with the awesomeness of these animals while learning what we can do to help the natural world. In 2022, we invite you to viscerally experience the lions in a whole new way, learn from our staff, surround yourself with nature, and leave here inspired to help wildlife worldwide.

Ryan VanZant, Executive Director
Kathy Tolbert, Assistant Director
Brenda Gunder, General Curator
Danita Bosquez, Guest Services Manager
Cassie Waitt, Events Director
Danelle Okeson, DVM
Linda Henderson, Director of Marketing & Development
Theresa Cannefax, Education Coordinator
Jessica Olp, Education Curator
Debra Foley, Executive Assistant
Gerrett Morris, Landscape Supervisor

Board of Directors
Joel Phelps
Carolyn L. Walker
Trace Walker
Carolyn Wedel
Travis Young

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Zoo Teen volunteers are a vital part of the zoo experience at Rolling Hills Zoo. These dedicated young volunteers assist with the Zoo’s summer camps, touch carts, overnight camps, animal meet & greets, Zoo to Yous, sno cone and cotton candy sales, and so much more. Every year, towards the end of the summer season, the Zoo Teen volunteers take a well-earned trip to experience another zoo or aquarium. This year was no exception.

Due to the unknown restrictions that the pandemic might pose, the teens made their Zoo Teen Trip destination closer to home. The Zoo Teens and Education Team traveled to the Sedgwick County Zoo where they met up with Schanee Anderson, the zoo’s Curator of Education, who hosted our teens.

While at the Sedgwick County Zoo the teens went behind the scenes and enjoyed an equine experience, visited with some of their teen volunteers, took a boat excursion, fed the giraffes and explored the zoo. Afterward, the teens traveled back to Rolling Hills Zoo for dinner and dessert followed by some competitive play at The Alley in Salina, where they engaged in bowling, arcade games, virtual reality and laser tag.

Then back to RHZ for a Zoo overnight that included crafts and board games. The next morning, Executive Director Ryan VanZant shared a special guest with the teens that was a real treat! This Zoo Teen adventure wrapped up the teens’ “official” 2021 Zoo Teen year, and we couldn’t be more thankful for their dedication and volunteer time in making this summer’s visit to the zoo a great experience for our guests.

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Zoo Teens CAP OFF THEIR 2021 SEASON

Kate Frohardt
Reptile Keeper
Before joining Rolling Hills Zoo, Kate worked at Hedrick’s Exotic Animal Farm. Adopted from Russia, Kate grew up in Lenexa, KS and graduated from Friends University in Wichita, KS, with a Bachelor of Zoo Science degree. Her favorite animal is . . . all of them!

Tori Keating
Small Primate Keeper
Growing up in Hesston, Tori moved to Minneapolis, KS in the 6th grade. She attended Ashworth College while working the vet field and participating in a number of zoo internships. Prior to coming to RHZ, Tori worked at the Central Kansas Animal Hospital in Hutchinson as a vet tech. Tori’s favorite animals include okapi, African painted dog, alligator, cheetah, koala, Pesquet parrot and sharks, just to name a few!

WHO'S NEW AT THE ZOO

amazon smile

You shop. Amazon gives.
Rolling Hills Zoo at the same time! Simply go to smile.amazon.com, log into your account, and select Rolling Hills Zoo Foundation as the organization to support. Amazon will automatically donate a percentage of your online purchases to RHZ!

2. Log into your Amazon account.
3. Enter "Rolling Hills Zoo Foundation".

When shopping online you can make your dollars do double-duty by also supporting Rolling Hills Zoo at the same time! Simply go to smile.amazon.com, log into your account, and select Rolling Hills Zoo Foundation as the organization to support. Amazon will automatically donate a percentage of your online purchases to RHZ!

2. Log into your Amazon account.
3. Enter "Rolling Hills Zoo Foundation".

Community Rewards

When shopping at Dillons, you can support Rolling Hills Zoo with every purchase! Simply select Rolling Hills Zoo as the organization to support on your rewards card. Dillons will give a percentage of your purchases to Rolling Hills Zoo! Now that is what we call true bonus shopping!

Go to www.dillons.com/CommunityRewards.
Log in or create an account.
Search "Rolling Hills Zoo".

When shopping at Dillons, you can support Rolling Hills Zoo with every purchase! Simply select Rolling Hills Zoo as the organization to support on your rewards card. Dillons will give a percentage of your purchases to Rolling Hills Zoo! Now that is what we call true bonus shopping!

Go to www.dillons.com/CommunityRewards.
Log in or create an account.
Search "Rolling Hills Zoo".
In the May 15, 2021 issue of the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), Rolling Hills Zoo Veterinarian, Dr. Danelle Okeson (in photo), was featured in an article with Dr. Sharon L. Deem, wildlife veterinarian, epidemiologist and Director of the St. Louis Zoo Institute for Conservation Medicine, about careers in zoo medicine and conservation. Dr. Deem, with several years of field work experience, has worked internationally with the Smithsonian and the Wildlife Conservation Society prior to joining the St. Louis Zoo.

Both Dr. Deem and Dr. Okeson were presenters at the Student AVMA Symposium, March 12-15, 2021, which was organized by Kansas State University and held virtually this year. Several sessions at the symposium were related to zoo and wildlife medicine, conservation, and potential careers in those areas. Dr. Deem stated that with this sort of conservation and public health crises of today, the veterinary profession is being recognized as even more important, and this discipline continues to be a competitive and versatile area of veterinary medicine.

Dr. Danielle Okeson confirmed during her session, Zoo Veterinarians: The Ultimate General Practitioner, that zoo medicine is a growing field but it does not have a huge number of jobs available. “It is a competitive field, but if you want a job with a variety of responsibilities, it is a good field,” she said. “One of the interesting things about the career is that zoo veterinarians are not only generalists but also specialists. Zoo medicine requires specialized and additional training, yet a lot of what we do is focused on what a general practitioner would do,” she said. “There are also several nonclinical duties that a zoo veterinarian may be tasked with, including exhibit design, overseeing the health of employees related to zoonotic diseases, fundraising, acting as an ambassador for the zoo, and conservation work. Additionally, there are challenges to zoo medicine. The patients for a zoo veterinarian can range (in weight) from a gram, like a hummingbird, to thousands of pounds, like elephants.”

Among the challenges zoo veterinarians face are: standardized equipment not fitting patients, physical contact with awake animals being limited, postoperative care and follow-up treatments not being easy to achieve, a lack of published data on medical decisions, and some potential rigorous postgraduate training with minimal financial incentives.

Dr. Okeson was honored to be in company with Dr. Deem as part of the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association article as well as at the Student AVMA Symposium.
Saying Goodbye Is Always Hard To Do

Rolling Hills Zoo staff said a sad farewell to Harrison (or Harry for short), our ring-tailed lemur. Born at Rolling Hills Zoo in 2002, he was the offspring of Ringo and Paula (yes, there was a Beatles theme for our lemur group back then). Harrison was the last of the original Rolling Hills Zoo conspiracy (the name of a group of lemurs). Harrison lived nineteen years and was a favorite among the small primate keepers.

Felicity, our new addax, recently made the move to RHZ from the St. Louis Zoo. Her transition has been a smooth one and she is fitting right in with our two other females, Ophelia and Zippy (offspring of Ophelia). This beautiful addax will be 3 years old this December and she is scheduled to breed with our male, Ajax, as part of the Species Survival Plan. We hope to breed her this fall for a summer birth, so stay tuned for a baby watch!

Nayda and Sasha have been recommended to move to other facilities within the year as their genetics are very important to the tiger population among AZA zoos. Training has already started so the keepers can get their weight and administer vaccinations. To do this, the keepers are working on multiple training techniques. Open, Line up, and Hip are just a few of the training commands needed to get them ready for vaccinations.

Other Zoo Updates

Capybara Iris has moved to the Takin exhibit as a way to separate her from her sister, Azalea (shown below), due to incompatibility issues. Despite coming from the same litter, both girls are fully grown at 2 years old and seem to need their own space.

The Education Department at Rolling Hills Zoo has three new ambassadors animals: a cane toad donated from North Carolina Museum of Natural Science, a gopher snake, and a guinea pig named Mocha.

We look forward to seeing our new ambassador animals out on programs in the near future.

Rolling Hills Zoo’s tiger cubs, Nayda and Sasha, celebrated their 2nd birthday on August 21st. Now that the girls are two, they are almost full grown and starting to squabble more like older siblings do -stealing each other’s spaces and toys, and partaking in annoying each other with games like “I’m not touching you” on a daily basis. They both still love the pool more than anything, but the ball and donut are definitely the biggest hit. Every time the keepers take them out of the pool for cleaning, tigers will toss them right back in after throwing them around the yard.
Over the years hoof care practices within the zoological field have become an important pillar in animal welfare, and at Rolling Hills Zoo, hoof care has been a focus and priority for the more than 35 hoofstock species, both domestic and exotic, in our care.

Our commitment to continuing education and behavioral training has been imperative in providing the best welfare our animals can receive while under human care. In this effort, RHZ keepers have attended the Cheyanne Mountain Zoo Giraffe Care Workshop to develop their knowledge of hoof care, training, enrichment and husbandry, and RHZ has hosted the Zoo Hoofstock Trim Program team to train staff while providing hoof care to several animal residents of the Zoo. To continue to meet these goals and take our skill set to the next level, our Head Keeper, Devney Bowen (pictured to the right), recently attended the Zoo Hoofstock Trim Program.

“This course was challenging, both physically and mentally, but the takeaway was that we have come such a long way in our goals to provide the best lives these animals can achieve,” stated Bowen. “I will never settle in my quest to provide the best possible life for every animal under my care. It is also important to recognize that we are always communicating in everything we do . . . How you train, clean, feed, enrich - you are always communicating.”

During the course, Bowen had an opportunity to work with young cows for routine hoof maintenance. They had only been worked on a couple times by their farrier/owner. At first it was difficult to get them to lift their feet for the keepers voluntarily, and it would be easy to say that it was because the cows hadn’t been handled. But after a lesson, eleven strangers were able to lift the cows’ feet with no resistance again and again.

“Learning to read the cues from the animal while also changing our own practices and energy, made such a magnificent difference,” commented Bowen. “We also experienced voluntary hoof trims from Przewalski’s horses, horses, goats, cows, sheep, pigs, giraffe, rhino, as well as immobilizations for hoofcare on lesser kudu and Somali wild ass. I practiced better tool usage for more effective trimming techniques on wooden hoof models before starting on the cadaver hooves. I practiced trimming a variety of cadaver hooves as well as dissecting them to better understand their anatomy and physiology. These included goats, pigs, sable, impala, horses, giraffe, mules, cows, and more!”

This course gave Bowen the tools and the confidence to continue to provide exemplary care to all of the hooved animals that call RHZ their home. “I feel a sense of duty to make sure every animal resident, be it an insect or a giraffe, is treated with the same level of care, and while this course was intense at times, I wouldn’t change a minute of it,” shared Bowen. “I learned so much, and now I get to take that knowledge and share it with my colleagues, making the world better, one hoof at a time!”

This Zoo Hoofstock Trim Program is run by E.L.P.O. (Equine Lameness Prevention Organization), whose mission is to provide hoof care guidelines that are based upon research and practical experiences for the overall wellbeing of exotic hoofstock as well as domestics by raising awareness of routine hoof trimming and establishing guidelines to achieve optimal balance and comfort. This course is recognized by AZA (American Zoological Association) as a new standard for animals under human care.

Devney Bowen, RHZ Head Keeper, bottom right corner
### Kids Winter Camps

**9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.**

**Activities:** Craft, Games, Museum Tour & Activities, Animal Encounter

**Members $20/Day • Non-Members $25/Day**

**Eat or Be Eaten?**
**Monday, December 27**
The campers will dig into what it takes to survive and who is eating who! This introduction to the food chain will be a fun and exciting way to learn about the animals we all have learned to love.

**How Cold Can You Go?**
**Tuesday, December 28**
Campers will learn what it takes to survive as a snow leopard in the extreme cold of the mountains, how seals survive the icy waters of the ocean, or why some animals simply choose to go into hibernation.

**Grab Your Grub & Go!**
**Wednesday, December 29**
Animals and plants thrive on one another! Campers will dig into all levels of the food chain to see where energy is dispersed between all biotic and abiotic organisms and how it becomes a full circle of energy.

**Ice-See Animals**
**Thursday, December 30**
Ever wonder how animals thrive in uniquely extreme environments? Join us for an exciting camp discovering the amazing adaptations animals use to help them survive in the colder climates.

**Ages 4-6**

**Ages 7-12**

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**REGISTER ONLINE AT ROLLINGHILLSZOO.ORG!**

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**A Special Thank You to our 2021 RHZ Education Sponsors!**

With our sponsors’ support we have been able to provide educational programing for the youngest members of our Zoo community through Toddler Tuesday, Summer Camps, Zoo To Yous, Wild Wonders & Beastly Safaris.

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**BOYS: January 7-8, 2022 • GIRLS: January 14-15, 2022**

**Time:** Friday at 7:00 p.m. - Saturday at 8:30 a.m.

**Ages:** 7-12 Years Old • **Price:** Members $40 | Non-Members $45

**This Wild Overnight Adventure includes:**

- Zoo Walk*
- Live Animal Encounters
- Museum Activity & Tour
- Game/Activity
  - Movie
  - Snack
- Sleepover at the Discovery Center
  - Breakfast
  - Tram Ride Through the Zoo
  - Weather dependent

**REGISTRATION for Overnight Camps**

Limited space is available, so register ASAP! Camp requires a minimum of 10 campers, maximum of 25 campers!

**Deadline to register for BOYS is December 30, 2021, for GIRLS is January 7, 2022.**

1st chaperone signed up is FREE. After that, chaperones are $25/person.

**REGISTER ONLINE AT ROLLINGHILLSZOO.ORG!**

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**Toddler Tuesday**

**Toddler Tuesday is the 1st Tuesday of Each Month!**

- **October 5th, November 2nd & December 7th**

Toddlers will enjoy a story, learn more about the featured animal, create a fun craft, & enjoy playtime!

**This event is included with paid admission. Members get in FREE!**

Sponsored by:

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[Equity Bank]
Saturday, October 9, 2021
HALF-PRICE Admission* & FREE Pumpkin Per Child!* 1st 300 Kids Wearing a Costume will Receive a FREE gift!* Treat Stations (BYO Treat Sack) Keeper Encounters • Fire Truck Kettle Corn & Cotton Candy ($) *Ages 12 & under w/ paid adult & while supplies last. Activities subject to change without notice.

Sunday, December 5th
FOUR SESSIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:
9:00 a.m. • 10:45 a.m. • 12:45 p.m. • 2:30 p.m.
Children* 12 & Under $10 Members $15 Non-Members Two Adults FREE Each Additional Adult $10/Person
*Children under age 2 that will attend & NOT participate in any of the activities do not need to purchase admission.

Kids Will Get To:
• Decorate their own giant sugar cookie
• Write and mail a letter to Santa
• Create an ornament
• Enjoy a special story & entertainment
• See Santa Claus!

RESERVE ONLINE!
Reservation Required!
Registration opens October 15th

For more information on our Special Events: Call (785) 827-9488, x114 or visit rollinghillszoo.org
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

OCT 5  Toddler Tuesday
OCT 9  Pumpkin PaZOOla
NOV 2  Toddler Tuesday
NOV 7  Off-Season Hours Begin:
         Now open 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
NOV 25  Happy Thanksgiving!
           We're closed.
DEC 5   Cookies with Santa
           Reservation required.
DEC 7   Toddler Tuesday
DEC 24  Christmas Eve
          We're closed.
DEC 25  Merry Christmas!
          We're closed.
DEC 27-30 Winter Camps
         Registration required.
JAN 1   New Year’s Day
         We’re closed.

ANIMAL ART* - Select a one-of-a-kind piece of art, painted by one of our very own animal artists. Customize your order online!

RHZ MEMBERSHIP* - This is the gift that keeps on giving all year long! We have five different memberships for individuals and families!

ANIMAL ADOPTION* - Any animal lover would cherish an animal adoption of their favorite animal under the tree this year! Each adoption includes a certificate of adoption, an animal fact sheet and animal photo.

GIFTS FOR ALL - The Elephant Trunk Gift Shop has a fun selection of gift items for all ages, including Fair Trade items. Your purchase of these items helps workers and their families improve their lives by receiving a fair living wage and working in safe conditions in underdeveloped countries.

DONATION* - For the person who has everything, making a donation in their name to Rolling Hills Zoo provides a lasting gift that supports the Zoo in bringing enjoyment to thousands each year while also participating in wildlife conservation locally and around the world.

*Also available for purchase at our website, rollinghillszoo.org.