



## Press Kit

<b>LOCATION</b>	370 Zoo Parkway Jacksonville, Florida 32218	
<b>ESTABLISHED</b>	1914 in Springfield Park 1924 Acquired Current Property	
<b>OWNERSHIP</b>	City of Jacksonville owns all land, animal collection and equipment	
<b>STATISTICS</b>	71% of Zoo visitors are from Florida 10% are from Georgia 19% are from the other 48 states 22 thousand member households	
<b>NATIONWIDE RECOGNITION</b>	Named as a Top 25 Zoo in the U.S. by TripAdvisor, and received <i>Hall of Fame</i> recognition for consistently boasting high ratings over 5 years. Named as one of the nine best zoos in the nation by American Profile Magazine in 2011. Parents Magazine named Jacksonville Zoo as the 13 <sup>th</sup> Best Zoo in America for Kids in 2009. Intrepid Traveler Publishing Company named the Zoo as one of 60 (out of over 2,000) of the best zoos in America in 2008.	
<b>LOCAL RECOGNITION</b>	FNGLA Landscape awards in 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016 for Gardens at Trout River Plaza, Asian Gardens and Land of the Tiger. Voted by as best attraction for families by Jacksonville Magazine; Folio Weekly Magazine. Voted Jacksonville's Crown Jewel by ARBUS Magazine.	
<b>ADMISSION FEES</b>	Adults	\$19.95
	Children (3-12)	\$14.95
	Senior Citizens	\$17.95
	College Student with ID	\$10.00
	Children 2 and under	Free
	Military	10% Discount
<b>MEMBERSHIP FEES</b>	Individual	\$50.00
	Couple	\$80.00
	Friend	\$80.00
	One Adult Family	\$95.00
	Family	\$120.00
	One Adult Family + 1	\$130.00
	Family + 1	\$150.00
	Family + 2	\$185.00
	Nanny	\$45.00
	Heart of the Zoo Memberships start at	\$500.00
<b>EDUCATION PROGRAMS</b>	More than 50 different programs serving all age groups	



## **VOLUNTEERS**

About 2,200 volunteered in all areas of zoo operations for the 2016/2017 fiscal year.

## **LAND AREA**

92 developed acres; 28 acres to be developed as funds become available.

## **VISION**

Inspiring discovery, appreciation and conservation of wildlife, plants and natural resources through innovative experiences in a caring environment.

## **MISSION**

The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens fosters understanding that empowers people to respect and conserve their natural environment by:

- Creating innovative educational and recreational experiences that engage our guests
- Funding operations, expansion and programs through an entrepreneurial spirit with public and private partnerships
- Instilling passion to actively participate as responsible stewards of our planet Earth

## **Reasons the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is unique:**

- JZG is the #1 paid attraction in the region.
- JZG is one of the few Zoos that entwines its botanic gardens throughout the Zoo creating a full, immersive experience for all guests and animals.
- JZG supports 45 conservation organizations throughout the world.
- JZG's lush botanic garden naturally lends itself as a top choice for a wedding venue, hosting 30 weddings a year.
- JZG was featured in the Wall Street Journal for its innovative Land of the Tiger exhibit, highlighting a tiger trail system that allow the tigers to roam freely amongst other exhibits.
- JZG currently hosts Professor-in-Residence, Terry Maple, the foremost expert on animal care and wellness.
- JZG has a Marine Mammal Response Team (MMRT) consisting of 44 employees who respond to stranded/sick/injured marine mammals throughout north Florida. This team provides critical volunteer support to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- In 2016, JZG completed construction on its Manatee Critical Care Center in partnership with FWC. This facility is the 4th of its kind in Florida and the first manatee facility in north Florida.
- JZG started an award-winning program, W.I.L.D., that employs teens from traditionally underserved communities as education interpretation staff while teaching leadership skills.

## **Future Developments**

Coming in Spring 2018, our wellness-inspired design of the African Forest will house gorillas, bonobos, mandrills, lemurs and colobus monkeys. This habitat is an important step in providing a living environment that will promote healthy, active, and fit zoo animals.



## The History of Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens

The Zoo opened in the Springfield section of Jacksonville on May 12, 1914, with the donation of one red deer fawn. Several domestic animals were added later and a "monkey island" was established. On July 19, 1925, the Municipal Zoo, as it was then known, relocated to its present site bordering on the Trout River. Starting with 37.5 acres, the Zoo continued to grow, reaching about 89 acres when an 11-acre tract of land adjoining the Zoo to the east was acquired in January 1992. On October 20, 1993, the Zoo name was officially changed from the Jacksonville Zoological Park to the Jacksonville Zoological Gardens.

The first major animal purchase of the Zoo was a female Asian Elephant bought in 1926 with money raised by local school children. By the end of the 1960s, the Zoo is reputed to have had the largest collection of exotic animals in the Southeast, but it had fallen on hard times and a great deal of money was needed to save the Zoo. Community leaders, under the direction of Mayor Hans Tanzler, appointed a seven-member committee to search for an alternative to closing the Zoo.

The Jacksonville Zoological Society subsequently came into being in April 1971, having grown from the seven-member committee to 85 of the city's most influential leaders. The Society began managing the Zoo on June 21, 1971.

The City of Jacksonville contracts with the Society to manage all phases of the operation of the Zoo. All property, including animals and equipment, and all improvements, belong to the city, which in turn contributes an annual subsidy to offset some of the Zoo's operating expenses. All other Zoo expenses are paid through revenues earned from admission and concession sales, membership and adoption, and group sales. The Jacksonville Zoo serves a two-state area within a 100-mile radius of the facility.

A major redevelopment of the Jacksonville Zoo began in 1992. Through a combination of River City Renaissance funds and donations from the private sector, \$22.5 million was raised to complete Phase One of the Master Plan. Projects completed include a new front entry gate and parking lot, the Main Camp Safari Lodge, Birds of the Rift Valley Aviary, Great Apes of the World, an expanded train ride, an elephant and breeding complex, River Branch Foundation Animal Medical Center, the PepsiCo Foundation Education Campus and redevelopment of the 11-acre Plains of East Africa. The last project of the 1992 Master Plan, a Florida wetlands attraction, "Wild Florida," opened in March 2001.

In March 2002, the Zoo opened the Outback Steakhouse Australian Adventure. Range of the Jaguar, the Zoo's national award winning premier attraction, opened March 5, 2004. In March of 2005, the Wildlife Carousel opened to the public for the first time, with its 34 hand-painted animals. In April of 2005 the redesigned viewing area for the Giraffes called Giraffe Overlook and the first botanical gardens, Savanna Blooms, opened. As part of this development the main path was redesigned and widened for guest comfort. Play Park, an exciting environment providing children learning opportunities, opened in the late spring of 2006. In September 2007, the latest addition to the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, the Gardens at Trout River Plaza opened. The plaza serves as the



gateway to the Asian Bamboo Gardens that opened in the spring of 2009 with the new Komodo Dragon exhibit. In spring 2010, Tuxedo Coast, a new penguin exhibit displaying Magellanic penguins, opened in the Play Park area. The grand opening of Butterfly Hollow in 2012 added an 8,500 square foot meadow near the Trout River for guests to enjoy up to 20 different species of native butterflies. 2014 marked an important milestone for the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens as it celebrated its 100-year anniversary with the grand opening of the highly anticipated Land of the Tiger exhibit as a truly unique addition to the Asia Gardens experience.

In 2017, the Zoo completed the Manatee Critical Care Center and welcomed its first residents, Cassie and Buckeye. The Great Apes Loop closed for renovation in the summer of 2017 and is expected to reopen as the African Forest in 2018.

The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is an accredited institution of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association.