

Gov. Markell cuts ribbon to open Brandywine Zoo's new Eagle Ridge

DOVER – Governor Jack Markell, DNREC Secretary David Small, Delaware Zoological Society President Megan McGlinchey, DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation Director Ray Bivens, state legislators and stakeholders joined together today for the ceremonial ribbon cutting that marked the opening of the Brandywine Zoo's new Eagle Ridge area.



Gov. Jack Markell, left, looks on as Megan McGlinchey, president of the board of directors of the Delaware Zoological Society, cuts the ribbon for the Brandywine Zoo's new Eagle Ridge area which makes a hillside at the zoo fully accessible for observing the zoo's bald eagles and river otters. Left to right, Gov. Markell; Nnamdi Chukwuocha, Wilmington City Council member; Theo Gregory, Sr., Wilmington City Council president; City of Wilmington Mayor's Office chief of staff Gary Fullman; Ms. McGlinchey; and State Representative Charles Potter.

/DNREC Photo

The Eagle Ridge improvement project, which broke ground in October 2015, has transformed the hilly, multi-story area surrounding the bald eagle and river otter exhibits, making it fully accessible for all visitors. With an attractive viewing platform and gently sloping walkway, Eagle Ridge offers visitors better views of the popular eagle and otter exhibits.

"The Brandywine Zoo is a Delaware treasure that appeals to both the young and the young at heart," said Gov. Jack Markell. "It offers diverse exhibits and activities that engage its 100,000 annual visitors in unique educational

experiences that connect them to our broader world. The completion of Eagle Ridge is another reason why the Brandywine Zoo is one of the best small zoos in the country.”

Eagle Ridge was made possible by Delaware State Parks’ zoo officials, the Delaware Zoological Society and a group of five state legislators – Reps. Gerald Brady, Stephanie Bolden and Charles Porter; and Senators Harris McDowell and Robert Marshall – who secured \$100,000 in construction funds for the project.

“We are grateful to the legislators, the Delaware Zoological Society, and our many friends and stakeholders, for making Eagle Ridge a reality,” said DNREC Sec. David Small. “The partnership between DNREC’s Division of Parks & Recreation and the Delaware Zoological Society, along with our supporters in the legislature and many other friends, continues to set the zoo on a path to grow and expand in the future.”

“Eagle Ridge is a great addition to the Brandywine Zoo,” said Brandywine Zoo Director Gene Peacock. “It offers our visitors better views of our eagle and otter exhibits, while at the same time, providing better access to that area for all zoo visitors.”

Architect Bob Grove, the board treasurer of the Delaware Zoological Society, donated his design services for the project.

“Our heartfelt thanks go out to Bob Grove and our five legislative supporters for all their assistance with Eagle Ridge,” said Mike Allen, executive director of the Delaware Zoological Society, the non-profit volunteer organization which supports the zoo’s mission.

Zoo Director Peacock noted that Eagle Ridge is ready just in time for “Spring Opening Weekend” on Saturday and Sunday, March 12 and 13, from 10 a.m. – 3:45 p.m., with a special member preview on Saturday March 12, from 9:30 – 10 a.m.

During the opening weekend, the zoo will offer visitors activities and learning stations centered on the zoo's animals, and provide the opportunity to see new animals, including reptiles and a great horned owl. In addition, the Brandywine Zoo is home to a tiger, red pandas, golden lion tamarins, condors, llamas, and many other mammals, reptiles and birds.

Fees for the opening weekend are as follows: children 3-17, \$3; children under 3, free; adults 18-61, \$5; seniors 62+, \$4; Delaware Zoological Society members with cards, free. The zoo has a full calendar of events, shows, workshops and camps available on its website, www.brandywinezoo.org or call 302-571-7747.

The Brandywine Zoo is managed by DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation with the support of the Delaware Zoological Society. It is an accredited member of the American Association of Zoos and Aquariums, a distinction that marks its commitment to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for visitors and a better future for all living things.

Media Contact: Beth Shockley, DNREC Public Affairs,
302-739-9902

Vol. 46, No. 72