



NEWS RELEASE

FRIENDS
OF THE
ROSAMOND GIFFORD ZOO

For Immediate Release

For more information:

**Jaime Alvarez, Director of Public Relations
Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park
Phone: (315) 435-8511 x110**

New Elephant Pool Opens at Rosamond Gifford Zoo, Funded by Friends of the Zoo

Syracuse, N.Y. (July 13, 2016) – Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney today joined Friends of the Zoo President & CEO Janet Agostini and Zoo Director Ted Fox for the official opening of the new elephant pool at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo's premiere habitat, Asian Elephant Preserve. The \$1.8 million project was fully funded by Friends of the Zoo.

"The new elephant pool further enhances the zoo's state-of-the-art elephant facility. It was designed by industry experts and built by local businesses. It provides our herd with a beautiful environment and our guests with a unique visitor experience," said County Executive Mahoney.

"Friends of the Zoo is grateful for the support of our donors, members, zoo professionals and the community in helping to make the elephant pool a reality. We value the collaboration of our Onondaga County partners as we work together to continually improve and invest in our zoo," says Friends of the Zoo President and CEO Janet Agostini.

The best habitats for elephants in zoos and the wild have a variety of environmental stimuli including land and water. The elephant pool is the first priority project of the zoo's strategic and master plan. The new construction includes a pool for the zoo's herd of seven Asian elephants, accompanying observation deck for guests and life support system for maintaining water filtration. The project incorporates green infrastructure, including a storm and waste water bio-filtration system and bio-retention basin. In addition, many of the trees cleared have been used in other areas of the zoo as part of animal enrichment and a new nature play space for children. As an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), the Rosamond Gifford Zoo is among the top 10 percent of zoos in the country. The project exceeds standards as part of accreditation.

The zoo broke ground on the life support and bio-filtration systems in December 2015. The life support system was designed by Robert Satchell and the team at Satchell Engineering & Associates, a firm with a wealth of experience and innovation in aquatic life support services engineering. Site work began on the pool in mid-January. The pool was designed by architect Craig Rhodes of GLMV Zoos. A nationally renowned leader in zoo and aquarium design, Rhodes has been involved with more than 100 projects for over 40 AZA-accredited zoos in the last 20 years. Project management was handled locally by Appel Osborn Landscape Architecture. Construction and site work was carried out by primary contractor McGinnis Nelson, with pool fabrication and artistic design by Cemrock.

Although the pool was designed to look like one large pool, it is actually two. The design mimics a typical watering hole elephants would encounter in the wild, with gentle sloping sides and a flat bottom. The first pool has a depth of three feet, perfect for calves and adults that may prefer a shallow area. The second has a depth of six feet per AZA regulations. In total, the pool measures 100 feet long by 40 feet wide. It holds 50,000 gallons of water. For comparison, the average bathtub holds 58 gallons; the pool's capacity is equal to 862 tubs filled.

"The new pool provides our elephant herd with a more diverse natural environment and encourages social interaction. It allows the herd to engage in wallowing, wading, splashing, cooling and bathing. It also adds variety to our enrichment program, an integral part of animal husbandry and care. The use of wet areas in elephant habitats also assists with skin care and protection from sun and insects," says Zoo Director Ted Fox.

For zoo guests, the pool adds a unique opportunity to observe elephants engaging in natural behaviors and helps increase public understanding of elephants' needs in both zoos and wild habitats.

"It is our mission to continue to make connections between our visitors and animals on behalf of their wild counterparts in order to inspire worldwide conservation and actions to help save our planet's species from extinction," says Fox.

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Founded in 1914, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park is among the top 10 percent of zoos in the country as an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is dedicated to connecting people to the natural world by providing engaging guest experiences, exceptional animal care, and unparalleled conservation education.

The zoo actively collaborates with Friends of the Zoo to provide its guests "the best day ever," ensuring experiences that excite, memories that endure, and knowledge that inspires worldwide conservation.

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$8 for adults (19-61), \$4 for youth (3-18) and \$5 for seniors (62+). Children two and under are free. For more information, call the zoo at (315) 435-8511 or visit rosamondgiffordzoo.org.

One Conservation Place, Syracuse, NY 13204 • (315) 435-8511 • (315) 435-8517 fax

www.rosamondgiffordzoo.org

County Executive, Joanne M. Mahoney • Commissioner of Parks & Recreation, Bill Lansley
Rosamond Gifford Zoo Director, Ted Fox • Friends of the Zoo President, Janet Agostini

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