

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Media link for video and photos:

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## Zoo breaks ground for new forest exhibit *Design and site development are underway*

SEATTLE—May 4 was a day of celebration as Woodland Park Zoo broke ground for a new exhibit that shines hope for the future of forests and the animals and people who depend on them.

The immersive, best-in-class exhibit will be home to Matschie's tree kangaroos, red pandas, keas and forest reptiles. The opening of the exhibit in three years will mark the first time that visitors will have an opportunity to get up close and personal with tree kangaroos in a decade!

The forest exhibit will be built on the site of the former Day and Night Exhibits, which permanently closed in 2016 after a fire that caused extensive structural damage to the aging building.

This initial groundbreaking phase of work is anticipated to be completed by September 2023. Design and site development are underway, and construction for the new exhibit is expected to begin in 2024. The exhibit is scheduled to open in 2026.

Exploring among the treetops and along the forest floor, zoo-goers will have up-close encounters with endangered Matschie's tree kangaroos and red pandas, keas (alpine parrots native to New Zealand) and forest reptiles. Visitors will also learn about communities protecting forests around the world, including the community-led work supported by Woodland Park Zoo's [Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program](#) in Papua New Guinea. Importantly, visitors will emerge with simple ways to engage with conservation issues and actions around forest-friendly consumer choices, climate change, empathy for wildlife and sustainability; and will be inspired to join the zoo's global movement to save wildlife.

The zoo and its design partner, LMN Architects, teamed up with community-based consultants Hummingbird Community Cooperation and Headwater People to initiate community engagement, including a racial equity analysis, focus groups and a public online survey. Design elements and experiences in the exhibit will be informed by this community feedback. With assistance from Hummingbird, the zoo will host additional community feedback with open houses in 2023. The zoo's general contractor partner, Sellen Construction, will help bring that vision to life with a focus on sustainability and intends to recycle 90% of the materials from the former Day and Night Exhibits.

"Why forests? The answer is simple: they are home and habitat to more than 75% of our planet's terrestrial life and they protect the health and well-being of all living creatures. Today, forests all over the planet—and the lives and communities they sustain—are in danger," said Alejandro Grajal, President and CEO of Woodland Park Zoo. "And yet, people continue coming together around a shared passion for safeguarding nature, animals and the beloved forests that unite us. Woodland Park Zoo has a key role to play in the fight for nature and invite you all to be a part of this growing effort with us."

Commissioner of Public Lands, Washington State Department of Natural Resources Hilary Franz and Seattle Parks and Recreation Assistant Superintendent and Chief of Staff Christopher Williams joined the zoo and special guests at a ceremony that moves the zoo forward in transforming the heart of the zoo with a new powerful forest platform.



“Healthy forests help us tackle climate change and strengthen communities here in the Evergreen state and all around the world,” said Franz. “The future of forests is inextricably linked to ours. It’s time to join together, locally and across the globe, to safeguard our forests, empower our communities and build a sustainable future.”

Exhibit highlights:

**Canopy Path:** Explore among the treetops where tree kangaroos and red pandas make their home on this two-story, elevated pathway offering viewpoints unlike anywhere else in the zoo.

**Trailhead Pavilion:** Meet the wonders of wildlife at all layers of the forest in the Habitat Gallery featuring boisterous keas, tree-dwelling reptiles, colorful amphibians and fascinating invertebrates.

**Conservation Action:** Discover how endangered wildlife is linked to your everyday consumer choices and practice forest-friendly actions at the zoo, from sipping shade-grown coffee to upcycling green materials.

**Community Power:** Connect to global communities in mountain forests much like the Pacific Northwest who are leading solutions to protect, restore, and sustain forests for animals and people.

The new exhibit, which is estimated at a total project cost of \$35 million, is the final, capital anchor of the zoo’s \$110 million Forests for All campaign. The exhibit will be funded in part through an insurance settlement from the 2016 fire and an additional \$19.5 million in campaign contributions. To date, generous philanthropic donors and public sources have already contributed \$8.3 million to the exhibit; this includes a Washington State Legislature Local Community Project grant. **Consider making a seed donation to the signature forest exhibit!** Visit [www.zoo.org/forestsforall](http://www.zoo.org/forestsforall) to make a gift and help create a space that supports healthy forests, thriving animals, and a place to foster community engagement, equity and action.

For more information or to become a zoo member, visit [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org) or call 206.548.2500. Follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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