

## PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

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### Woodland Park Zoo to break ground for new forest exhibit scheduled to open in 2026

**WHAT:** We need forests and forests need us. Matschie's tree kangaroos and red pandas will be the iconic faces of Woodland Park Zoo's new forest exhibit. Up in the treetops and along the forest floor, the signature exhibit will present a new and hopeful view on the future of forests and the animals and people who depend on them.

Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz and Seattle Parks and Recreation Assistant Superintendent and Chief of Staff Christopher Williams will be among the special guests speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday, May 4.

The new 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.

The heart of the zoo will be transformed into a powerful forest platform where zoo-goers will experience an immersive, best-in-class exhibit and up-close views of endangered Matschie's tree kangaroos and red pandas, keas (alpine parrots native to New Zealand) and forest reptiles. Communities protecting forests around the world will be showcased, including the community-led work supported by Woodland Park Zoo's [Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program](#) in Papua New Guinea. Visitors will discover simple ways to engage with conservation issues and actions around forest-friendly consumer choices, climate change, empathy for wildlife, and sustainability; and be inspired to join the zoo's global movement to save wildlife.

**WHEN:** The groundbreaking ceremony will take place on **Thursday, May 4, 2:00–2:30 p.m.**

**WHERE:** Meet PR staff at the West Entrance on Phinney Ave. N. between N. 55<sup>th</sup> & N. 56<sup>th</sup> Sts. Park in the Penguin or Otter Lot.

**WHO:** Speakers: Hilary Franz, Commissioner of Public Lands, Washington State Department of Natural Resources; Christopher Williams, Seattle Parks and Recreation Assistant Superintendent and Chief of Staff; Nancy Pellegrino, former Chair of Woodland Park Zoo's Board of Directors; Anders Brown, Chair of Woodland Park Zoo's Board of Directors; Alejandro Grajal, President and CEO of Woodland Park Zoo; and Lisa Dabek, Senior Director of the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program and Senior Conservation Scientist of Woodland Park Zoo.

**INFO:** 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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