



African Elephant Crossing

After breaking ground in the fall of 2008, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo is well on its way toward completion of its world-class elephant habitat and education center – African Elephant Crossing. The Zoo’s largest capital project since The RainForest in 1992, African Elephant Crossing will serve as a model for other zoos nationwide.

Construction continues through 2010 while the project remains on track to open in spring 2011. While the 5-acre, \$25 million project continues to unfold the Zoo’s three female African Elephants continue their stay at the Columbus Zoo with their keepers until their new state-of-the-art facility is complete.

“Jo”, “Moshi” and “Martika” will return to two sprawling yards to roam, deep pools for swimming, mud wallows for basking and expanded indoor sleeping quarters and a heated outdoor range. Their new exhibit will offer a naturalistic habitat for a multi-generational herd of up to 10 elephants. In addition to female elephants, the new habitat will be suitable for housing bull elephants and calves, as the Zoo hopes to one day breed African elephants.

Here’s the latest news surrounding African Elephant Crossing:

- Nearly 75 construction workers are on site daily.
- Currently, work is underway on the elephants’ swimming pool, a 26-foot-deep basement for the water filtration system, outdoor rock work, an addition to the former Pachyderm Building and reinforcing walls and ceilings to withstand the strength of male elephants.
- African Elephant Crossing is on track to become the first major animal exhibit in North America to be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified.
- 92 percent of construction waste from the African Elephant Crossing site is being recycled and diverted from landfills.
- About a third of materials being used to build the elephant habitat comes from recycled materials.
- A new water filtration system will cut water usage by 72 percent at the elephant habitat – from 26.3 million gallons per year to 7.5 million.

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- To date, Cleveland Metroparks and the Cleveland Zoological Society are within \$2.2 million of their \$25 million funding goal for the project.
- Exhibit design and fabrication are also underway for the other, non-pachyderm residents of African Elephant Crossing, which include meerkats, naked mole rats, African rock pythons and colorful birds.
- Daily progress at the construction site can be viewed via the Zoo's African Elephant Crossing webcam at clemetzoo.com/webcam/webcam-aec.asp
- The Zoo launched its new African Elephant Crossing website africanelephantcrossing.com

The opening of African Elephant Crossing will place Cleveland Metroparks Zoo at the forefront of modern elephant care. With the Zoo's more than 100-year commitment to caring for elephants, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo showcases its place as a national leader in efforts to protect these endangered animals. The population of African elephants in the wild has plummeted from 1.5 million to fewer than 500,000 in just the past 20 years. These majestic animals are in need of help, and the Zoo's African Elephant Crossing aims to connect people to elephants and teach them about the things they can do in their daily lives to help prevent elephants from becoming extinct.

For the latest updates on African Elephant Crossing, visit africanelephantcrossing.com or call the Zoo's Marketing & Public Relations office at (216) 661-6500.

Images available upon request.

Tours of the construction site are available upon request.