

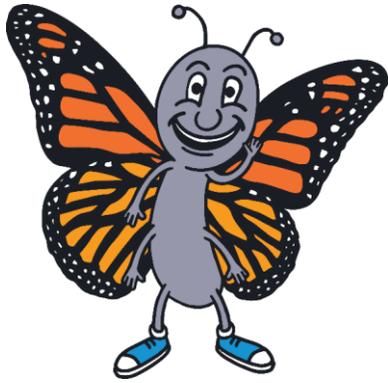
Discovery Zone Picture Guide



NEW Zoo & Adventure Park

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Completed in 2024



Welcome to the

Discovery Zone

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Animal Habitats

- One (rectangle) repurposed from zoo grounds
 - Needed minor paint touch ups
 - Creates a “Vacation Station” for a subset of our indoor education animals to rotate being outside.
 - Armadillo, turtle, skink, Guinea pig, rabbit
- Two (circular) purchased from “Custom Cages”
 - Assembled on-site. This was a challenge, since they are meant to be on a cement pad. We preferred dirt and grass which required more leveling and prep work than anticipated.
 - Meant for permanent seasonal residents (may go in at night time), such as small parrots.
- Each are accompanied by a combined species + personal sign
 - Created yard signs (with heavy duty metal legs) to easily move when animals change and rotate
 - “Empty Habitat” sign placed near habitat when animals not able to come out









Masha



Meredith



Squeegee

ABOUT US:

 **Birthday:**
Masha: Oct. 15, 2020
Meredith: Feb. 1, 2022
Squeegee: Feb. 1, 2022

 **Zoo Food:**
Lots of hay, guinea pig chow, fruits and veggies, plus a boost of Vitamin C.

FAVORITES:

 **Things to Do:**
Squeal when their zookeeper brings breakfast and make "popcorn" jumps during play time

 **Snacks and Treats:**
Squeegee loves her food snacks, Masha enjoys head scratches, and Meredith is our hide-and-seek expert!

MASHA, MEREDITH & SQUEEGEE

GUINEA PIGS

These three piggy pals have been together since July of 2022, when Squeegee and Meredith arrived to join Masha. Guinea pigs are very social animals that thrive best in small herds like ours. The girls all take turns participating in a variety of zoo programs and they're considered "fan favorites" during our birthday parties!

Squeegee is the loudest squeaker of the group (and she takes meal times very seriously!).

MEET MY FRIENDS!








wide tail curl up into a ball to take a nap!





ABOUT ME:

 **Birthday:** Jan. 2, 2019

 **Zoo Food:**
Fruits & veggies, hard-boiled egg, crickets, mealworms, and "insectivore" chow

FAVORITES:

 **Things to Do:**
Atlas loves to run through tubes, under boxes, and under any other "hides" his zookeepers give him.

 **Snacks and Treats:**
Atlas loves his chow. We often find him with it squished all over his nose!

ATLAS

THREE-BANDED ARMADILLO

Atlas is a very energetic BALL of energy. When he isn't curled up asleep, he spends a lot of time running around to explore. Although armadillos are mostly nocturnal, he doesn't seem to mind being awake for "daytime playtime." He enjoys chasing balls and sometimes even does somersaults over them!

When weather is nice, he enjoys racing through the grass and digging for snacks like earthworms. Yum!

MEET MY FRIENDS!



Nature Play Area

1. Climbing Net

- Purchased from Amazon
- Installed by Adventure Park Team
- Large weight limit (400 lbs), allows for multiple kids or for grown-ups to join in.
- Playground mulch needed underneath for fall area.
- Great for multiple ages!



Nature Play Area Cont.

2. Dino Dig

- Panels purchased from Nature Watch online, <https://www.nature-watch.com/>
- Playground sand purchased
- Paint brushes and scoops provided (purchased). Need to replace when broken/lost.
- Installed by Education and Volunteers
 - Dug a small rectangle and leveled area. Placed large brick pavers underneath. Place two dig panels on top.
 - Sand box is slightly bigger than the 8x4 ft panel
- Scene contains a duckbill and Albertosaurus (similar to T.rex)
- Accompanied by a “Become a Paleontologist” sign with instructions and a picture key of bones (designed by staff and interns)
- Accompanied by a small T. rex statue (donated)
- Accompanied by GIANT dino cut outs compared to “life size” cutouts of birds... today’s modern dinos. (designed and installed by staff. Printed off-site)
- We needed to revisit the sandbox border and build it taller, since too much sand was getting out of the box.
 - Guests still scoop sand out of the box. Realizing this is the nature of this element, and replacing sand multiple times a year is needed.



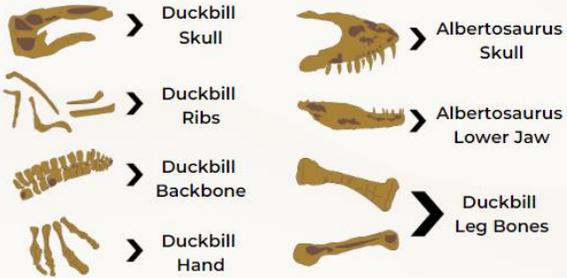
Be a Paleontologist

A paleontologist is a scientist who studies the fossils of plants and animals. Fossils are ancient, preserved remains that were buried by sediments like mud and sand.

Explore our **Dino Dig Site** to find dinosaur bones!



Can you find these fossils?



Take a Brush or Scoop - Return to a hook when you are done - Thank you!



Nature Play Area Cont.

3. Nature Playground

- “Choose your Own Adventure” signs inviting guests to start from either end.
- Cedar trees – already existed in the space. Great for climbing and imaginative play
- Large logs and rocks hauled in by maintenance team. Were already on zoo grounds left over from previous projects.
- Large posts dug into grounds as zig zag poles – repurposed fence posts
- Brick pavers set up for leaping and jumping – leftover from previous project
- Involves, running, jumping, climbing, balancing, teamwork
- Seen being used by multiple age groups.
- This area seems to be either really popular or empty.





Nature Play Area Cont.

4. Free Play, Mud Kitchen and House

- Large bench/pretend kitchen constructed by Zoo Volunteer
- Blue bins (purchased) full of natural items collected from nearby forest
 - Small sticks, bark, pinecones, tree cookies, acorns, etc.
- Log house purchased from www.naturalplaygroundsstore.com
- Items in this space tend to move often. Kids and adults will pick up the picnic tables to move locations. The loose, natural items will end up on the grass or across the Discovery Zone near the dino dig or photo-ops. While we figured this would happen overtime, on busy days we've been resetting items each morning with how spread out items become.
- *Bonus* Tinman statue used as an art piece during specific zoo events accompanies bird feeders. 😊
- Planning to add more to this space in future years.





Nature Play Area Cont.

5. Pebble Harp

- Purchased from www.naturalplaygroundsstore.com
- Purchased small rocks and large border rocks
- Installed by Education and Volunteers:
 - Started with landscape fabric underneath. This was not strong enough, AND people were taking the large border rocks to other places or overturning to find bugs—defeating the purpose of a border. Changed to put a layer of concrete underneath with the large border rocks cemented in.
- Accompany sign explaining how to use it:
 - Small rocks are scooped up from the ground and placed into the holes of the pebble harp. As they fall, the pebbles bounce off metal “strings” similar to the harp instrument. Sounds similar to rainfall!
- We have received many complements on this element.
- Many grown-ups enjoy this item.



Interactives & Games

Scavenger Hunt

- Sign and accompanying animal cutouts designed by Ed staff
- This activity encourages guests to look for local wildlife in multiple ways: embedded in a picture on the sign, by looking through the Discovery Zone for cutouts, and to search at home/park to find them in the future.
- Designed to have the cutout animals move locations... it's everchanging! They are screwed onto a tree, fence or other surface.
- Not a lot of use seen out of this element. Many people see the cutouts, but not all realize it's a scavenger hunt. Works well with guided groups when staff or volunteers encourage involvement.



< If you look closely, you may see the garter snake cut out...

Think like a bird to find the robin in this scene... >



Interactives & Games

Magnification Station

- Purchased from www.naturalplaygroundsstore.com
- Purchased a sign- to prompt people how to use it, and a small basket- to hold an assortment of natural items for people to look at.
- Close to the Pebble Harp, meaning we will occasionally find small pebbles in the basket. We will also need to refill the basket (usually by taken from the mud kitchen area, if items are not returned.)



Interactives & Games

Pebble Patch – Painted rock garden

- Purchased small rocks and landscape edging to surround the patch.
- We encourage people to take a rock or leave a rock.
- Times when we have a rock painting station available include during special events and privately during zoo camps. Here, we encourage people to paint a rock using the theme as inspiration (i.e. World Giraffe Day, Party for the Penguins, etc.)
- Found paint pens work better than paint + brushes. People can create more detailed designs and the rocks dry faster.
- We struggle with people wanting to take their painted rocks home (understandably so) vs. growing our pebble patch with colorful rocks. Have asked people to decorate two rocks—one to leave and one to take home.
- Have not needed to purchase additional rocks, but will need to in the future.



Interactives & Games

Balance Scale

- Purchased from www.naturalplaygroundsstore.com
- The unit did not come with the trays/buckets to place items on. We went through a few types until we decided on the same types of scales they use for produce at the grocery store. Added heavy duty chains.
- Place holding baskets and signage to the scale base to aid and explain what to do.
- Ended up moving this item since it was too close to the pebble patch and mud kitchen area. Items that were too heavy were being put in and breaking the scales. Added “No Rocks Please” sign to metal buckets and placed only tree cookie pieces for people to interact with at this station.



Interactives & Games

Spinning Puzzle

- Made possible by zoo volunteers! Idea for the puzzle researched (and highly wanted) by Ed Staff. Gave to a construction-based Zoo Volunteer to build, and a graphics and art intern painted on the images.
- Four animals: sea turtle, cheetah, polar bear, macaw
- Installed by Volunteers
- If we had to do this again: Wood blocks are 6in x 6in ... would go smaller. While we wanted to be mindful of potentially pinched fingers, we could make the distance between blocks smaller. Could be installed lower for younger kids to interact with easier... they can reach the bottom squares, but not the top.



Outdoor Classroom

- Space set aside for private programs, camps, scout groups, field trips, etc.
- Fenced in area with log bench seating and small stage.
- Enough area for movement games (not tag), but scavenger hunts, obstacle courses, and opportunities to spread out with large groups.





- Zoo Camp Obstacle course in action! (pictured above)
- Most of the use for this space so far has been for games vs. presentations.
 - The dino dig is on the other side of the fence - the space can become noisy.
 - It has been great to be able to set up a game and rope off the area so regular zoo guests cannot enter the private outdoor classroom

Photo-ops

A. Red Pandas

- Three red panda cutouts, surrounded by a bamboo background.
- Two of the red pandas do not have faces: people place their heads there for a picture. One red panda is a complete cutout.
- Even if people do not take pictures, we've heard comments of people expressing their love for red pandas and how cute they are as they walk by.



Photo-ops

B. Pollinators

- Large face-in-a-hole cutout with six openings.
- Accompanying sign with more details on each local pollinator: bumblebee, monarch butterfly, monarch butterfly caterpillar, ruby-throated hummingbird, goldenrod soldier beetle, Karner blue butterfly.
- Great for large groups! Many families and groups seen taking pictures with them.
- Observation: Many kids want to be the hummingbird, but it is high up.



Exploration Station

Fenced in space for multiple interactive opportunities

- Bamboo fencing- tall in the back, short in the front.
- Fake grass on the ground (previously shady/muddy location)
- Always led by a zoo staff, intern, or volunteer. Table and stool tucked behind or in nearby building.
- Some animals can be exercised in this space (weather permitting). Hedgehog, blue tongued-skink, and snakes on a snake climbing tree.
- Types of games and activities can be brought out to place on a table.
 - Poop Matching Game – match silicone poop molds to animal pictures.
 - Touch boxes – assorted biofact items and natural items for volunteers to choose what goes into the box
 - Guess the fur game
 - Rock painting station for pebble patch
 - Any of our Discovery Carts (mainly biofacts) used in the zoo could come here



