



Tribal "Tails" from the Navajo Zoo

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The sandhill crane, as always, was the first to become aware of their presence. With a mighty trumpet she announced the news to an electrified audience. Everywhere ears pricked and noses were raised into the air. Those with keen eyesight turned to the East to verify the crane's incredible news. The pack is back. The wolves have returned.

If you believe that patience is a virtue, then the supporters of the Navajo Nation Zoo deserve sainthood. For decades they have waited for the caterpillar to become a butterfly; waited for the Zoo to fulfill its potential and become a premiere destination for education, recreation, and conservation. Their dreams, and ours, come true in 2009.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION: PLEASE BEAR WITH US

The Discovery Center is rapidly becoming my favorite place at the Zoo. The building is currently closed as extensive renovations take place, but will reopen this spring. Zoo staff have literally demolished every old exhibit, and are rebuilding from the ground up using modern zoological tips, techniques, and training. New features will include a native fish display, nocturnal exhibits, waterfalls and ponds, videos and slide shows, and interactive educational displays!

SHICHEII AND FRIENDS COME HOME

A beetle and a scorpion. A native fish and a frog. Even grandfather, the horned lizard (aka horny toad), will be among the new animals featured at the Zoo in 2009. They will join our 2008 additions, which include spotted skunks, raccoons, coyotes, salamanders, chipmunks, and porcupines, all who came aboard to help educate and entertain. In January two wolves were transferred from the Rio Grande Zoo to the Navajo Zoo. Please come and welcome "Rico" and "Esperanza" to the tribe – just don't ask for their CIB!

FRIENDS, FEATHERS, FUNCTIONS, AND FUNDRAISERS

The staff at the Zoo deserve praise for their hard work, but we also have friends who contribute to our success. The Office of Youth Development should be congratulated for their role in providing work experience for tribal youth (keep sending them to us; we'll put them to work)! The Water Resources and Forestry Departments are always willing to assist, and we are supported by our co-workers in the Fish and Wildlife Department. Thanks also to my "cousin-brother" at the Navajo Museum, Director Manuelito Wheeler, who is a constant source of encouragement and Chicken McNuggets.

The evolution of the Zoo is guided by many factors, but at the core we focus on the unique traditions and sovereignty of the Navajo tribe. In support of this, the Zoo is seeking to develop an eagle aviary to distribute thousands of bald and golden eagle feathers to tribal members. Please urge your government officials to identify funding for this exciting program!

Zoo events are a great way to show off our achievements to our customers – the public. ZooFest 2008 was the largest event ever held at the Navajo Zoo. The 3,000 attendees enjoyed free face painting, games, giveaways, inflatable castles and slides, and more! ZooFest 2009 (Saturday, May 2) will be even bigger and better - mark your calendars!

As the Zoo grows, fundraising is becoming more and more vital. Please help us continue to expand and provide care for our new animals by donating to the Zoo. The adopt-an-animal program is a great way to show your support! For a \$100 donation, your school, family, program or Department can sponsor an animal. You will be recognized on the adoption plaque at the Zoo (and at ZooFest 2009), receive a certificate and framed photo, and be part of the historical rebirth of the Navajo Nation Zoological and Botanical Park.

We, the 5 fingered beings are related to the 4 leggeds, the winged beings, the spiritual beings, Father Sky, Mother Earth, and Nature. We are all relatives. We cannot leave our relatives behind.

-Betty Tso