



**THE GOOD ZOO IS
GREAT & GETTING
BETTER EVERY DAY!**



Long-term, Strategic Plans are set in motion to improve Oglebay's Good Zoo

The thing about planning is it doesn't happen overnight. Once plans are in place, it feels like so much time has been spent on getting started that any sign of progress seems far off in the future, unless you look at Oglebay's Good Zoo.

In late fall 2016, Oglebay's Good Zoo team was asked, "What does the zoo need to double or triple its impact and visibility in the community?"

With that challenge, zoo leadership under the direction of Dr. Joe Greathouse set out to draw-up a five year plan to grow membership, enhance the zoo experience and expand the animals in its care.

Before putting pen to paper on the plans, Dr. Greathouse asked a simple question, "What do current zoo members want?" Dr. Greathouse wanted to know what members saw as both opportunities and obstacles for members to both extend their visits as well as enrich the experiences they had when they visited.

The zoo set out to survey its 8,000 plus members, asking them to identify: wants, needs, and must haves to enhance the current zoo experience. The survey was done in mid October (ending October 22, 2016) to coincide with the busiest season and largest events (Boo at the Zoo and Brew at the Zoo) to ensure the response rate would include the largest number of participants.

Feedback showed that guests' priorities include repairing the walking paths that connect the outdoor animal habitats, adding more animals, and improving the train ride through the zoo. To that priority list, zoo leadership added parking lot repairs, outdoor lighting upgrades and making a second restroom ADA-compliant.

With these important needs identified, the zoo team sat down and wrote out a five year plan with the initial phase focusing on addressing these priorities. But surveying members isn't a one and done job. To ensure that the plans stay relevant and meet members' ongoing needs, the zoo team catalogs member feedback from social media and surveys approximately 16,500 guests each year through guest satisfaction questionnaires.



This spring the Good Zoo begins to implement infrastructure improvements that need to be addressed. There is no point in repairing the zoo's walking paths, replacing asphalt and concrete that has sustained damage from 20+ years of use, unless underlying drainage issues are resolved. Tackling both of these problems will give zoo guests safer pathways to explore and enjoy the zoo.

The plan to improve the pathways includes installing new outdoor, energy efficient lighting and replacing worn trash receptacles.

The other major work that is taking place is the renovation of the Family Farmyard area's restrooms, located in the Red Barn, (among the first restrooms outside the main building built in 1977). These new restrooms will include both environmentally friendly, low-water use fixtures and add the much needed ADA-compliant features to accommodate our guests.

These projects are foundational and necessary steps that will increase guests' comfort and safety, and that will allow the next phases of the aforementioned long-term plan to be implemented as funding is available. To make these infrastructure improvements possible, however, a significant financial investment must be made. The Oglebay Foundation is lining up potential funding sources and has applied for federal support from the Land & Water Conservation Fund. If funded, this grant would cover half the cost, with the Oglebay Foundation securing the required matching monies.

Once these improvements are in place, expansion will continue with:

- **New animals**
- **Expanded habitats**
- **A trackless train to explore more of the property, and**
- **Wildlife carousel**

Together, all steps of the long-range plan will yield increases in zoo attendance, membership and revenue.

For a sneak peek at some of the plans, see pages 14-17 in the [Winter 2020 edition](#) of the American Ideal. As improvements are implemented and expansion opportunities come together, we'll be sure to keep zoo members informed. Thank you for your ongoing support, stay tuned!