



The Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens is a 501(c)3 non-profit education and conservation resource that provides experiences that excite and inspire children and adults to learn and act on behalf of wildlife.

Media Inquires

Contact the PR & Marketing Specialist at 407.323.4450 ext. 105 or stephannia@centralfloridazoo.org

Image Request

To request access to general Zoo images or to request a specific image, email information@centralfloridazoo.org

Name

We are the Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens and we ask that whenever listed it reads as such. If you would like to include our location, please refer to us as the Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens in Sanford.

Location

The Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens is located in Seminole County in Central Florida, situated between Orlando and Daytona on the Interstate-4 corridor, at exit 104.

Physical Address: 3755 W. Seminole Blvd., Sanford, FL 32771

Mailing Address: PO Box 470309, Lake Monroe, FL 32747

Hours of Operation

Daily Zoo hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with last admission being sold at 4:15 p.m. and the last Zoo entry at 4:30 p.m. The Zoo is open all holidays except Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. The Zoo may close without advance warning in event of extreme weather or for special events.

Admission Information

Adults (13-59): \$19.50

Children (3-12): \$13.75

Seniors (60+): \$15.95

Children under 3: free

Parking is free.

Approximately 300,000 people visit the Central Florida Zoo every year.

Zoo Annual Pass Information

The Zoo offers a variety of annual pass options that include free admission for a year, excluding select special events and general Zoo closures. Zoo pass holders also enjoy discounts for select education programs and camps, ZOOper birthday parties, and gift shop purchases of \$5 or more. Central Florida Zoo annual pass holders may bring a guest to the Zoo for the discounted admission price of \$10 and also receive discounted admission to over 150 AZA member institutions.

Annual Pass Holder Levels

Single: \$55

Senior Plus: \$69

Family: \$99

Premier Family: \$145

Mission

A conservation resource providing experiences that excite and inspire children and adults to learn and act on behalf of wildlife.

Vision

The Zoo will empower our guests to respect, value and care for our natural resources, as we commit to contributing globally to the conservation and preservation of wildlife. As a regional resource in the Central Florida area and beyond, we will provide innovative and creative solutions through collaboration, practices and partnerships. The continued growth and development of the Zoo will further enhance its attraction to visitors outside the local community enabling us to bring national and international attention to the importance and ongoing efforts of wildlife sustainability.

Animals

The Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens cares for over 350 animals, representing over 100 species. Many of these species are rare or endangered. Feed one of our three giraffes daily from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. See our colorful macaws or watch North American river otters playing in the water. Check out our family of cotton-top tamarins or pet goats, llama, and alpaca in the Barnyard Buddies Children's Zoo. Get close to and feel one of the world's largest land animals during an encounter with our greater one-horned rhino PJ. Venture inside the Herpetarium to see amazing venomous snakes from around the world, such as the Gaboon viper or Egyptian cobra. See cheetahs, warhogs, alligators, lemurs, and more! Check out our daily schedule of presentations, such as the Venom! Show. Behind the scenes, the Zoo has its very own Medical Hospital and Animal Nutrition Center. These are staffed by full-time veterinarians and an animal nutrition team to ensure the highest care for our animals.

Additional fees may apply for certain experiences.

Botanical Gardens

In 2007, we earned the status of Botanical Gardens. The Zoo is situated within a protected wetland. All of our grounds are carefully maintained by our experienced Horticulture staff. We feature a variety of destination gardens, including Butterfly, Health & Wellness, Succulent, Spiny Plant, and Wildflower Gardens. The entire Zoo is surrounded by lush, tropical foliage, including native vegetation and interesting cultivars from around the world. Visit the Browse Garden to learn about how we propagate and grow our very own plants for our animal's health and enjoyment! Bring your little ones to the News 13 Children's Garden for some hands-on, nature play.

AZA

The Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, the nation's highest standard for animal care and wellbeing. Every five years the Zoo undergoes a rigorous inspection to maintain accreditation. The Central Florida Zoo has been continuously accredited since 1986.

The Zoo also participates in a variety of AZA programs, including the Species Survival Plan[®], or SSP. These programs are breeding programs designed to ensure the genetic diversity and survival of certain species in a coordinated effort across zoos and aquariums. Currently, the Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens participates in approximately 30 SSPs, including giraffe, greater one-horned rhino, clouded leopard, and more. Notable SSP births in recent years include cotton-top tamarins, red-ruffed lemur, Grand Cayman rock iguanas, and clouded leopard.

Other Attractions

Other attractions at the Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens include the Kaboom! Playground and Wharton-Smith Tropical Splash Ground that are included with general Zoo admission. Guests can also enjoy face painting



on the weekends, carousel, and the Little Florida Train for an additional charge. ZOOM Air Adventure Park, where you can climb through the trees and soar on ziplines, is a separate company that operates on Zoo grounds.

Additional fees may apply for certain activities. Admission to the Zoo is not included with, nor required, for ZOOM Air.

Events

The Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens hosts a variety of annual events throughout the year, including Zoo Boo Bash, Hippity Hop Adventure, and Brews Around the Zoo. We also host a variety of “Conservation Days” throughout the year to help our guests connect with the animal residents of the Zoo and learn how they can help their counterparts in the wild, such as International Cheetah Day, World Rhino Day, and more.

The Central Florida Zoo is available for rental for a variety of private events, including weddings, birthday parties, company picnics, and more. We have one of the largest meeting rooms in Seminole County and an outdoor pavilion.

Education

Every year, the Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens hosts over 150,000 students through a variety of education programs, including formal curriculum programs and guided tours of the Zoo. Visits to local schools, libraries, and events allows this reach to expand even more into the community. Other educational programming at the Zoo include summer camp, school break camps, Wild Art & Wine, Night Hikes, Girl and Boy Scout programs, Cub Club for preschoolers and more. The Central Florida Zoo also supports local college programs through internships and job shadow opportunities.

Conservation

The Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens is more than just a place to look at animals. By inspiring our guests, we encourage each and every person to act on behalf of wildlife. Education programs help our youngest guests learn to appreciate the natural world from an early age. Participating in AZA SSP programs allows us to coordinate with other zoos to ensure that populations of endangered species are around for future generations to learn about and see.

The Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens operates the Orianne Center for Indigo Conservation. This state-of-the-art facility works to breed and raise the threatened eastern indigo snake for future reintroduction. Currently, the Zoo participates in reintroduction programs in southern Alabama and the Florida panhandle. This conservation center is offsite and not open to the public. Support of the Zoo in turn supports these efforts to restore populations of eastern indigo snake.

Volunteer

The Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens relies greatly on the hard work and dedication of its volunteers. Volunteer positions include docents (volunteer teachers), Zoo Crew, Teen Teamers, interns and more. The Zoo hosts numerous corporate groups for large projects throughout the year.

History

1920s

The Central Florida Zoo was first established as the Sanford Zoo in 1923 when a rhesus monkey was given to the Elks Club in Sanford by a traveling circus. More animals were added to the collection, held by the Sanford Fire Department, including a female monkey, a bulldog, a skunk, an opossum, a raccoon and a squirrel.



1940s

The Sanford Zoo relocated to new facilities on the shores of Lake Monroe in downtown Sanford. Visitors enjoyed watching playful spider monkeys on 'Monkey Island' and lion vocalizations could be heard throughout downtown Sanford. Sanford City Hall presently occupies this corner site.

1970s

July 4, 1975: With the support from a group of dedicated citizens, and the donation of a 106-acre piece of land from Seminole County, the Central Florida Zoological Park opened at its current location along Lake Monroe, with Jack Hanna as Director.

1978: The first animal hospital was constructed on Zoo property that included an operating room and laboratory.

1980s

1984: The Reptile House was reconstructed and opens with 45 venomous and non-venomous snakes, lizards and amphibians.

1986: The Central Florida Zoo becomes an accredited member of the American Zoo & Aquariums Association, today now known as the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA).

1990s

1991: The Animal Adventure Petting Zoo opened.

1993: A network of elevated boardwalks was constructed providing visitors enhanced viewing of animals and better access for those in strollers and wheelchairs.

2000s

2003: Little Florida Coastline Train, Champ the Train, comes to the Zoo. The quarter scale G-16 miniature train was built in 1951 and modeled after the Florida East Coast "Champion" streamliner.

2005: The Wayne M. Densch Discovery Center and ZOOLab open. The buildings feature classroom and hands-on instructional space, as well as a multi-purpose banquet room for available for private meeting and event rentals.

2007: The Zoo officially announces its botanical garden status and becomes the Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens. The same year, the Wharton-Smith Tropical Splash Ground opens to the delight of visitors of all ages.

2011: Two hundred volunteers show up at the Zoo to help build a KaBOOM children's playground in one day.

2012: The Zoo receives a young mated pair of clouded leopards to continue our breeding success as part of AZA's Species Survival Plan program. A new home is built for our North American River Otter pair, featuring a guest viewing panel.

2013: Jahi and PJ, two young male greater one-horned rhinos, become part of the Zoo's animal collection.

2014: Giraffes become part of the animal collection at the Zoo for the first time. Giraffe feedings are offered and volunteer Giraffe Ambassador assist guests in learning more about these amazing animals.

2017: The Zoo unveils an interactive educational habitat, featuring two young Florida Black Bears!

