

A publication of the Seneca Park Zoo Society

# ZOO NOOZ

Internationally, and in our own backyard,  
we play a key role in species survival.

April 2021



A Spotlight on Birds

Seneca Park Zoo inspires our community to **connect**, **care** for, and **conserve** wildlife and wild places.

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### Hours:

November 1 – March 31:

- 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- last entry at 3 p.m.

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- 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- last entry at 4 p.m.

Members may always enter at 9:30 a.m.

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- 585.295.7399

## On My Mind: Hope

Pamela Reed Sanchez | President and CEO | Seneca Park Zoo Society



If you've read this column before, you likely are pretty familiar with the mission of the Seneca Park Zoo: we inspire our community to connect with, care for, and conserve wildlife and wild places.

The "easy" part of the mission is providing opportunities for people to connect with the animals in our care and connect with the nature in our region. Visit the Zoo: spend a few minutes looking in the eyes of snow leopard

Timila, or watching the movements of a poison dart frog, or interact with one of the swimming sea lions. Or join us on a nature trek or community cleanup led by one of our naturalists. As humans, we have a natural affinity to other species.

But, how do we move people to action? What can we do to inspire YOU to compost, choose sustainably-sourced proteins from the grocer, or use less energy in your home? Sometimes it's hard to see a direct link between these conservation actions and the survival of the species you encounter here at the Zoo. But those links do exist. Living more sustainably has a direct impact on our shared environment.

There is a lot of messaging at the Zoo aimed at educating guests on actions they can take from water conservation signage in the bathrooms to a variety of items in the ZooShop aimed at sustainable living. Even asking guests at admissions if they'd like to contribute to

saving snow leopards, or polar bears, is meant to remind people we all can take action to save species.

Social science studies tell us that the thing most likely to move people to change their behavior is **hope**.

**Hope** -- that we can affect change to move animals from endangered to not endangered.

**Hope** -- that our actions will make a difference.

**Hope** -- that there is time, if we act now.

It's a big job, and hard to define, and hard to measure whether guests feel hopeful after their visit to the Zoo. We try to make your visit as seamless as possible, from ticketing to exit. We work to ensure your distractions are minimal and you can focus on enjoying your time here, taking in the splendor

of the animals, reading a sign or two while you're here, interacting with staff and volunteers.

Last year, our members and guests contributed more than \$40,000 for conservation grants to our international conservation

partners, including Red Panda Network, Snow Leopard Trust, Africa Parks, Polar Bears International, and more. Your contributions at the front gate, in the ZooShop, and through additional gifts to membership, made it possible for us to continue giving our conservation partners hope and needed support during one of the most difficult years any of us have experienced.

Every time you walk into the Zoo, you make us feel hopeful. By sharing our love for wildlife, we know you also share our mission to ensure species survival.

Thank you.

*"Last year, our members and guests contributed more than \$40,000 for conservation grants to our international conservation partners..."*



Erick Machajewski

# Getting to Know Steve Lacy, Seneca Park Zoo's new Director



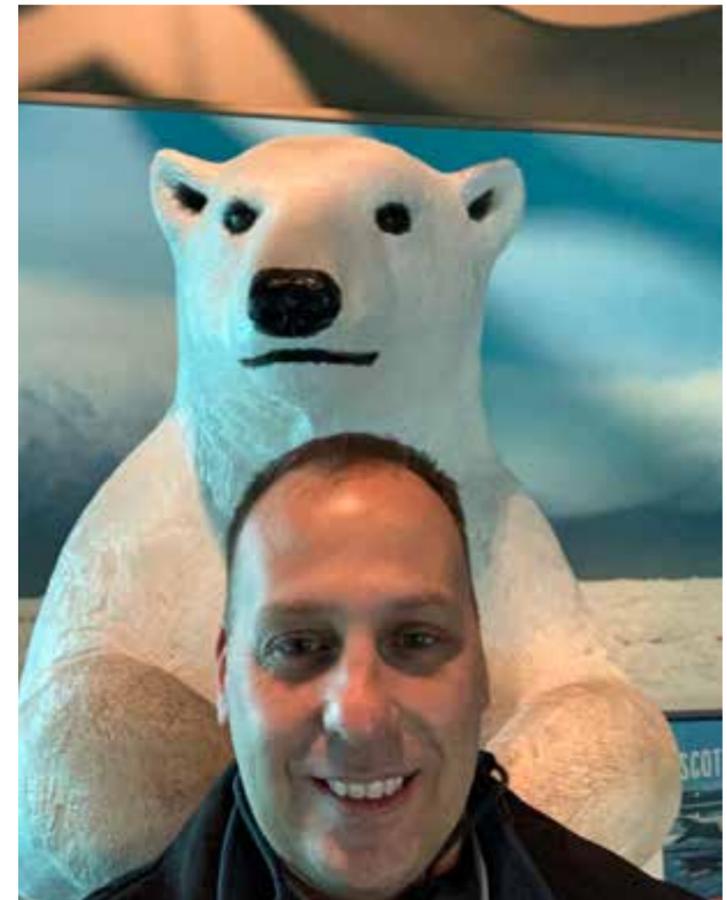
On a cold wintry day in the middle of a global pandemic, Steve Lacy began his tenure as the new director of Monroe County's Seneca Park Zoo. His extensive background in numerous roles at Sea World San Antonio, combined with Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in business and project management, give him a solid grounding to lead Seneca Park Zoo.

## What was your first impression of Seneca Park Zoo?

My wife Kristie and I visited the Zoo last November during the interview process. By that time, I'd already fallen in love with Seneca Park Zoo based on all I had read online and the vision I heard and shared with people on the Search Committee. But I still wasn't prepared for the incredible animal habitats that are here. I remember walking into the Animals of the Savanna Building, and my jaw dropped. Giraffes are simply amazing animals, but the space itself is one of the best in the country, and will be a place other zoo professionals use as a benchmark for what an indoor giraffe habitat should be. From both a guest experience and an animal welfare perspective, it's a knock out. And that's just one of the many spectacular spaces at Seneca Park Zoo that helps make this place a treasure for this community.

## Any favorite animals that are new to you?

I have so many favorites! I'm learning a lot about many species of which I have not had the pleasure to work with in the past. Anoki, the polar bear, is one of my favorites. Polar bears are resilient and powerful, and that intrigues me. And we're very lucky to have a polar bear, as they've become quite rare in zoos.





.....  
"I am surrounded by people who know the ropes, and who share my passion for the mission and vision of Seneca Park Zoo."

Believe it or not, the place that feels most familiar to me is the elephant barn, though I've never worked with elephants. The safety protocols in place for elephants and killer whales are similar, with safety lines that aren't crossed, protecting both humans and these magnificent animals. Both are intelligent species that animal care staff used to share space with, and no longer do.

### What is your vision for Seneca Park Zoo?

Quite simply, I want us to be the best in the nation. With the addition of a new Tropics Complex at the front of the Zoo, we can solidify Seneca Park Zoo as a world-class facility that inspires people from the moment they walk in. I want there to be no shadow of a doubt that the animals here receive the best care anywhere, by animal care staff viewed as experts in the field. When people leave, I want them to feel wowed and inspired by their experiences here. We already provide outstanding encounters with wildlife. Where else can you get as close to snow leopards and lions? And our animal care staff here is outstanding, with big hearts for the animals they care for, and many years of expertise.

### How have you spent your first few months on the job?

Listening. A lot of listening. And learning. Many of the elements of this job are familiar to me, and many are brand new. I've never worked for a government entity before, and there are different constraints than when



working for a private company. I wouldn't say there are more constraints, just different ones! But I am surrounded by people who know the ropes, and who share my passion for the mission and vision of Seneca Park Zoo. And those people include animal care and animal health staff, buildings and facilities staff, and our partners in the Zoo Society. To me, there's no limit to what we can do together.

People often hear me say "There's a lot of low hanging fruit," because there really is! Little things we can do or improve upon that will make a difference for our guests or for our staff or for the animals here. I'm truly excited about the potential and opportunity here.

### What will people see happening this summer that might be different?

One of the most obvious changes our guests will witness is the construction of the new Trailside Café. This outstanding new "concessions" area is an important next step toward building a better facility for our guests. Clearly the planning for this was underway long before I arrived, but it's exciting to see this next phase of the master plan come to fruition. And as the Trailside Café is being built,

we'll also be in the design phase for the front of the Zoo, with its expansive Tropics Complex and new guest-centered buildings. As plans are finalized, we'll find ways of sharing that information with our members and the public. We're creating experiences that will provide a more holistic, 21st century approach to a Zoo visit, giving people reasons to come often, during every season of the year.

.....  
"We're actively looking at ways we can engage with guests while ensuring all public health safety protocols are in place. We want to create magical moments for people, and we know our guests miss interacting with keepers and docents."

The other thing I hope we'll be able to accomplish this summer is to bring back more personalized experiences for our guests. Social distancing requirements and restrictions on people gathering have made it difficult for our staff and volunteers to share their knowledge with our members and guests. We're actively looking at ways we can engage with guests while ensuring all public health safety protocols are in place. We want to create magical moments for people, and we know our guests miss interacting with keepers and docents.

And, you'll see me out on the grounds quite a bit. I love watching our guests and hearing their conversations, and I love meeting our members. So I hope when members recognize me, they'll say hello and share some of their favorite things about Seneca Park Zoo with me. Our future together is truly bright.



# The Birds at Seneca Park Zoo

It's springtime in Rochester! The days become longer, temperatures start to lift, and more birds can be found singing outside your window. Spring also signals the beginning of birdwatching season. This is a time when many birdwatchers and enthusiasts head out into nature to see what bird species they can spot. Some even travel hundreds, even thousands, of miles planning road trips and vacations around where they can go to potentially see a new species. Fortunately, in addition to traditional birdwatching, visiting the Zoo is another way you can see some unique birds locally.

## The Birds at Seneca Park Zoo

Some people are surprised to learn that we have over a dozen different species of birds right here at the Zoo. Many of which are from places as far away as Africa that would be impossible to see in person without taking a trip halfway around the world! While we certainly encourage getting out there and exploring nature when you can, we love having a variety of birds here for people to learn about and see up-close. Here is a brief overview of the different types of birds that you may see during your next visit to the Zoo:

**African Penguin:** Did you know the Seneca Park Zoo is the #1 breeding colony in zoos in the US for African penguins? These medium-sized penguins typically grow to be 24 to 28 inches tall and weigh up to 7 lbs. African penguins live in large colonies along the coast of southern Africa, and prefer water temperatures between 40°F and 70°F.



**Bald Eagle:** The bald eagle is one of the greatest comeback stories in modern conservation history. At their lowest point, it's estimated there were as few as 417 breeding pairs left in the lower 48 states. Thanks to concerted conservation efforts, that number reversed exponentially and by 1997 that number had increased to more than 5,000 pairs. Today, there are more than 9,700 nesting pairs in the lower 48 states alone. Bald eagles live in North America from Florida to Alaska. They roost in tall trees near clean, fish-filled water in undeveloped areas.



**Buffalo Weaver:** The range of buffalo weavers extends throughout eastern Africa, from Tanzania to Somalia. Breeding pairs are monogamous. They build large, elaborate nests by weaving together twigs, branches, thorns, and grasses. Their abandoned nests are often used by other bird species!



**Congo African Grey Parrot:** The Congo African grey is found in Equatorial Africa, ranging from Angola to The Ivory Coast, inland from Kenya to Tanzania. These monogamous parrots also mate for life and are considered to be one of the best mimics of human voices/noises.



**Golden-Breasted Starling:** Found throughout eastern Africa, including Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. They prefer arid or semi-arid climates, and are usually found in savannas and shrublands. These birds exhibit cooperative breeding, where group members assist with nest-building and feeding the young. Did you know Starlings have been intentionally introduced to North America, Hawaii, and Australia to aid in insect control?



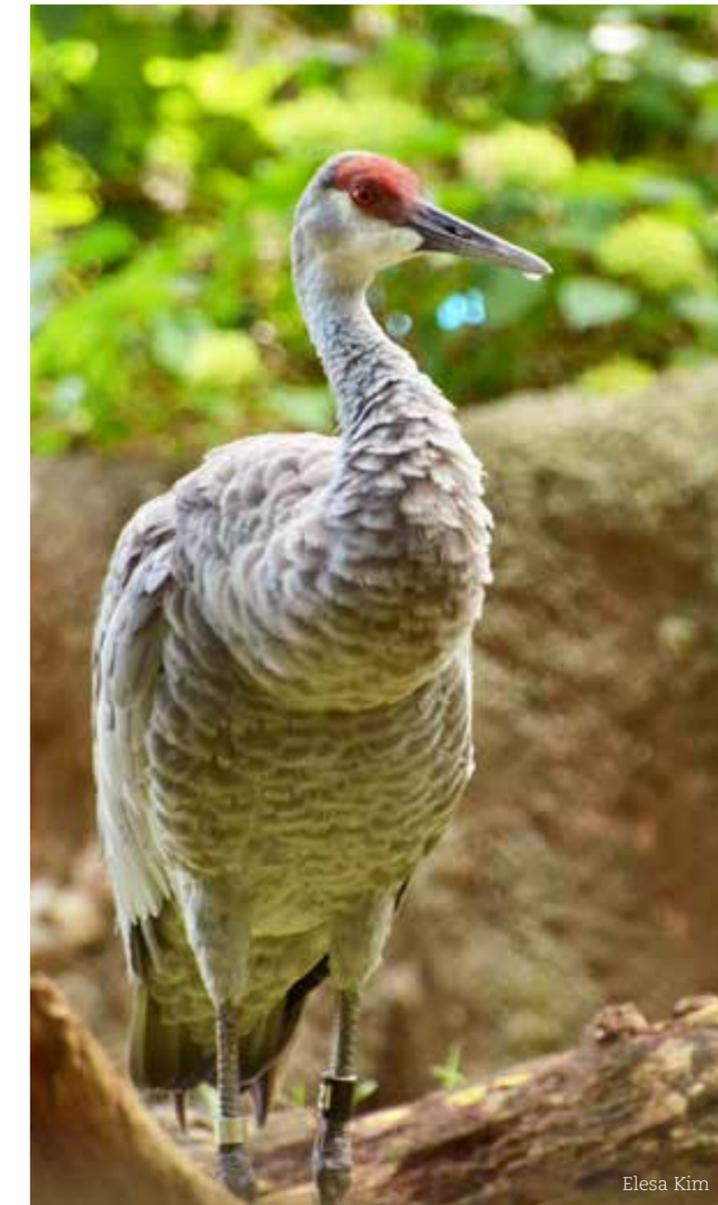
**Red-Tailed Hawk:** Red-tailed hawks are widespread and the most common hawk throughout North America. In Alaska and Canada, they migrate to avoid severe winters, with migration peaking in October/November. The eyesight of a hawk is 8 times better than that of a human's.



**Rouen (Mallard) Duck:** The mallard can be found in most of the United States and Canada, wintering throughout the United States and south to Central America and the West Indies. Naturally, mallards are also found in Europe, Asia and Africa and as an introduced species in Australia and New Zealand.



**Sandhill Crane:** Found in North America, except for the northeast U.S. Often spending summers in the arctic of Alaska and Canada and winters in Florida, Texas, northern Mexico and southern California.



**Senegal Parrot:** Senegal parrots can be found in north and central Africa.



**Snow Goose:** You have probably heard these loud, white-and-black geese passing high overhead during seasonal migration. Snow geese chicks are born well developed when they hatch, with down-covered bodies that already reveal whether the adult will have white or dark plumage.



**Snowy Owl:** Snowy owls are found circumpolar, most often in Arctic habitats where they breed including coastal Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. They can also be found in northern Scandinavia, Russia, southern Novaya Zemlya (a large island off the northern coast of Russia) and northern Siberia.



**Speckled Mousebird:** Speckled mousebirds range widely throughout sub-Saharan Africa.



**Spotted Dikkop/Cape Thick-Knee:** The spotted dikkop is mainly found in open, flat habitats of southern Africa.



**Superb Starling:** Found throughout East Africa, ranging from Sudan and Ethiopia, and south through Kenya and Tanzania.



**Taveta Golden Weaver:** Weavers are found in parts of Kenya and Tanzania.



## Caring For Our Birds

Our incredible animal care staff includes a team of bird experts who care for our feathery friends. Assistant Curator John Adamski has worked at the Zoo for more than 20 years and oversees the team who cares for the birds. Adamski's years of experience and first-hand knowledge have shown him that birds behave differently than many other animals. As a result, he takes behavior into consideration when defining a care plan for each individual species. To provide the best care possible, Adamski and his team continue to learn about bird behavior by studying and observing them over time.

"Avian behavior is very complicated," Adamski says. "Sometimes in birds it's flamboyant, like when we see breeding behavior - you'll see a male displaying to a female and it's really obvious to us what is happening. Yet sometimes, it's the more subtle behavior that indicates how we know a new chick is being cared for."

These subtle behaviors are often the most telling and are extremely important indicators of bird health. While caring for big mammals can be complex, it tends to be easier to notice changes in their behavior simply because they are larger and easier to spot. For example, if a lion starts limping or a wolf stops eating, it is much more noticeable than if a small bird is nursing an injury or starts eating less.

"Keepers will come to me sometimes and say things like 'you know, I think [Bird A] looks a little off today because of this [reason], and I'll never respond 'No - you're wrong,' Adamski says. "Birds and herps (reptiles and amphibians) are very similar in a way in that they display behavior that is sometimes really obvious and sometimes really not."

Even a comment from a guest can be useful to Adamski and his team. There have been times when a bird hasn't displayed a particular behavior in front of its keeper, but will do so in front of a guest who is watching from afar. Ryan Statt is one of the aviary primary keepers who has experienced this firsthand:

"We see it all the time - the animals act differently when we're around as opposed to when we're not," Statt explains. "I've had guests come up to me and say an animal is acting funny. Then when we approach, they don't display what the guest observed. That's when we might set up a GoPro camera to see if something's happening when we're not directly in front of them."

By closely monitoring behaviors, listening to observations from guests, and using technology, we can assess the birds' health and welfare and take a proactive approach should extra care be needed. Birdwatching is not only an enjoyable past time for bird enthusiasts, but a critical component of the care we provide for our birds at the Zoo.

Spring is a great time to begin your birdwatching, whether you're a longtime enthusiast or new to the hobby. No matter your experience level, we hope you'll visit soon to enjoy the sights and sounds of the birds at your Zoo!

# Birds as Bioindicators

Our world contains about 18,000 species of birds, which are found in almost every type of habitat. Scientists have studied many of these species extensively, resulting in a strong understanding of their biology and environmental needs. The combination of being well-studied, easy to find, and sensitive to environmental changes, makes birds an ideal species to indicate the health of an ecosystem.

The reduction of bird populations, or birds in an environment, can be one of the first signs that overall habitat quality is declining. Many bird species depend on insects as their primary food source. Birds naturally thrive in areas where insect availability is high. However, if insect populations decline, then the number of bug-eating birds will also decline. The same concept applies to seabirds that are dependent on healthy fish populations, and other bird species that are dependent on the abundance of fruits and seeds.

Major environmental changes, such as increased pollution levels or introduction of pesticides, are often difficult to spot in early stages. Yet, these subtle environmental changes, can be detrimental to every level of an ecosystem once they begin. By monitoring the diversity and population trends of bird species in an area, scientists can catch environmental problems in their early stages, preventing further habitat degradation.

The Seneca Park Zoo's support for international conservation efforts aimed at conserving lions, rhinos, elephants, and giraffes also supports the conservation of birds, by protecting the ecosystems they share with these larger, iconic species.

2021  
APRIL  
MAY



## Afternoon ZooCamp

Looking for something fun and unique for your child to do? Have them spend the afternoon at the Zoo! We will spend the afternoon learning about nocturnal animals and the senses that help them to rule the night. We'll have fun learning with crafts and activities in the classroom, as well as exploring animals out in the Zoo!

- Upcoming Dates:** April 28, May 19
- Time:** Half day only: 1 – 4 pm for ages 5-9
- Price:** Members: \$25 | Non-members: \$30
- Register:** [senecaparkzoo.org/afternoon-zoocamp](http://senecaparkzoo.org/afternoon-zoocamp)

## ZooTeens



Our ZooTeen program gives young adults the opportunity to work together with like-minded peers, as well as with the Seneca Park Zoo Society education team, to help educate guests about the animals in our conservation care and the importance of saving animals from extinction. ZooTeens act as ambassadors of the Zoo while exploring their interests in animals, ecology, and conservation. Returning ZooTeens have the opportunity to assist with ZooCamp.

- Age:** Any teen who is entering grades 8-12 or will graduate high school this year
- When:** Minimum of 2 days per week, July – mid August, 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Learn More:** [senecaparkzoo.org/zooteens](http://senecaparkzoo.org/zooteens)

Sarah Pearlman Ventura

## Register now for Summer ZooCamp!



Emily Trowbridge



Joel Vignare

Register now for ZooCamp, an immersive, week-long Zoo experience. Our summer ZooCamps will sell out, so sign up early! ZooCamp immerses kids in wildlife, the environment, and the need to protect and care for both, all in a unique setting: the Zoo! Campers explore nature and animals, create projects, share ideas, and make new friends. For full descriptions and to register, visit [senecaparkzoo.org/summer-camp](http://senecaparkzoo.org/summer-camp)



2021  
APRIL  
19-25

Laura Barrows

### Earth Day at Seneca Park Zoo

Join us for a virtual and onsite Earth Day celebration that will run all week! Learn all about environmental sustainability and the individual actions you can take to make a difference through virtual animal experiences, live discussions with local experts, an inside look at the Zoo's conservation programming, and more.

**Learn More:**  
senecaparkzoo.org/earthday



2021  
MAY  
JUNE

### Community Nature Hikes

Join a Seneca Park Zoo naturalist for a socially-distanced hike to explore nature and wildlife! Each hike is limited to 25 people and they always fill up fast!

**Upcoming Dates**

- May 1
- June 19

**Time**      **Price**  
10 a.m.      Free

**Registration is required**  
senecaparkzoo.org/hikes



### WILD About Trivia

Register for WILD About Trivia, a virtual happy hour trivia event. Team up with some friends and test your knowledge of all things Zoo and wildlife, past and present. Pour a beverage of your choice and tune in to the link that will be provided. Have fun and win prizes, all while supporting your Zoo!

**Upcoming Dates**      **Time**  
• May 13      7 p.m.  
• June 10

**Price**  
\$10 per person for teams of 2 – 5

**Register**  
senecaparkzoo.org/trivia



2021  
MAY  
JUNE

### Community Clean Ups

Get outside and join like-minded neighbors to help clean-up an area park. You'll be amazed at the impact a focused group can make in just three hours. Help us make Rochester a cleaner, greener city!

**Upcoming Dates**      **Time**      **Price**  
• May 22      9 a.m. – 12 p.m.      Free  
• June 27

**Registration is required**  
senecaparkzoo.org/cleanup



2021  
APRIL  
MAY



Tricia Chapman

### KinderZoo

Get out and get active! Bring your preschooler to a KinderZoo class to play, discover and learn in a fun and interactive way. Explore different animals and habitats through age-appropriate, social-distanced activities. Each class includes a meeting with an ambassador animal up close!

**Upcoming Dates:** April 20, May 7, May 8, May 11  
**Time:** 10:15 a.m. 18 months-2 years | 11:30 a.m. 3-5 years  
**Price:** Members: \$6 | Non-members \$8 plus Zoo admission.

**Register:** senecaparkzoo.org/kinderzoo  
**Note:** Registration is required. Be sure to make your timed admission reservations in advance as well.

### Scout Programs



Elesa Kim



Elesa Kim

#### ► Trek in the Twilight

Trek in the Twilight programs are an amazing nighttime experience at the Zoo. The evening is filled with activities and guests will enjoy a yummy dinner, animal presentation, and a guided tour of the Zoo! It's like our popular Bunk with Beasts program except you sleep in your own bed at home at the end of the night.

**Upcoming Dates:** April 25, May 15, May 21  
**Price:** \$25 per scout | \$20 per chaperone  
\$50 deposit due two weeks after booking

**Register:** senecaparkzoo.org/trek

#### ► Scout Workshops

Seneca Park Zoo offers an array of workshops, both in-person and virtual, private and pre-scheduled, for all levels of scout troops. Programs are designed to meet badge requirements and build skills. The Zoo offers both in-person and virtual workshops for both Scouts and BSA Merit Badges.

In-person workshops range from two-and-a-half to three hour sessions while virtual workshops range from 30 minutes to 1 hour.

For dates, pricing and more information or to register visit [senecaparkzoo.org/scout-workshops](http://senecaparkzoo.org/scout-workshops)

# Construction Update

## Progress At The Trailside Conservation Café



The Trailside Conservation Café and Pavilion will be breaking ground this year! The Trailside Conservation Café is a new restaurant offering both indoor and outdoor dining, with a strong focus on modeling and teaching sustainable practices. Zoo guests will soon enjoy first class amenities and a wider array of fresh, healthy dining options.

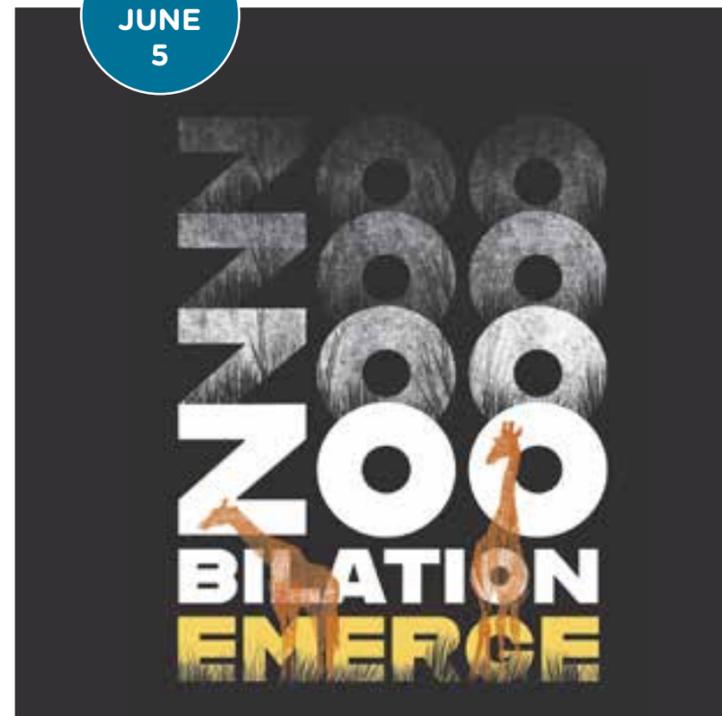
The Trailside Conservation Café is just one of many improvements and developments happening in our *Wilder Vision* transformation. As construction on the Trailside Café begins, you will see changes at your Zoo. The walking path will be shifted to accommodate the work site and there will be a construction staging area at the north end of the Tropics Playground. All areas will be fenced to ensure guest and staff safety. Eagle's Landing Cafe and the adjacent pavilion will remain open throughout construction.

Disruption will be kept to a minimum to ensure a great experience for our members and guests. To learn more or get updated on the progress of the transformation and our *Wilder Vision* Capital Campaign head to [senecaparkzoo.org/wilder-vision](http://senecaparkzoo.org/wilder-vision).

# Calendar of events

Mark your calendars for what's next at your Zoo.

2021  
JUNE  
5



## Zoobilation

Join us virtually for the 32nd annual Zoobilation Gala being held on Saturday, June 5, 2021. A uniquely virtual Zoobilation Gala, enjoy the evening's live-stream program from the comfort of your own home, with food and wine delivered directly to your door. This year's virtual format provides exclusive behind-the-scenes experiences, special guests, and early access to our live and online silent auctions.

Seneca Park Zoo Society's Annual Gala Zoobilation is the single most important fundraiser to support the Zoo Society's education and conservation programs for people of all ages in our community and beyond.

To register, or for sponsor information, visit [senecaparkzoo.org/zoobilation](http://senecaparkzoo.org/zoobilation) or contact Kim Cenzi, Special Events Manager at [zoobilation@senecazoo.org](mailto:zoobilation@senecazoo.org) or **585.295.7388**.

# Staff Update



Beth LaPierre  
Director of Marketing

Please help us welcome Beth LaPierre to the Seneca Park Zoo Society. Beth joins the Zoo as our Director of Marketing, and has more than 20+ years in marketing, brand communications, and customer management. A self-professed nerd, Beth's focus on digital will allow the Zoo to better communicate with members, visitors and guests across whichever channels they prefer.

A native of the Adirondacks, Beth brings a love of nature and wildlife to her role. When not at the Zoo, she can usually be found playing outside with her two boys.

2021  
JULY  
18-26



## Jungle Jog

Run or walk with your pride between July 18th – 26th to support the Seneca Park Zoo Society and our lion conservation efforts. You can run or walk individually or put a team together! Based on registration level, each registrant will receive a cool swag bag.

**Register:** Beginning May 1, 2021 at [senecaparkzoo.org/junglejog](http://senecaparkzoo.org/junglejog).

2021  
APRIL  
25

**The Sustainable Table**  
A FUNDRAISER FOR SENECA PARK ZOO SOCIETY

Prepared by Lento

## Spring Sustainable Table

Join us for our Spring Sustainable Table Dinner event (use Sustainable Table Logo) Sunday, April 25th at Restaurant Lento. Dine in (limited number of reservations available) or take-out, this three-course Spring menu will certainly please your palate. \$100 per person, dine-in; \$85 per person, take-out. See the menu and reserve your dinner now at [senecaparkzoo.org/sustainabletable](http://senecaparkzoo.org/sustainabletable)



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When you're finished, please share it with a friend.

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Internationally, and in our own backyard, Seneca Park Zoo plays a key role in species survival. Chartered as an educational institution in 1957 by New York State, the Seneca Park Zoo Society plays an integral role in supporting Monroe County, the owners and operators of the Zoo. Together, we are working to bring animals back from the brink of extinction.

[senecaparkzoo.org](http://senecaparkzoo.org) | 585.336.7200 | The Zoo is open 362 days a year.



Follow us socially. Visit [senecaparkzoo.org](http://senecaparkzoo.org)



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April 2021

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