



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE



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**MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO
BREAKS GROUND ON \$135 MILLION DOLLAR
SENECA PARK ZOO TROPICS EXHIBIT**

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today broke ground on the Seneca Park Zoo Tropics Exhibit and Front Entry Building capital project, a \$135 million investment that will provide an immersive experience for Monroe County residents and visitors, connecting guests with a wide array of new species and ecosystems at the heart of conservation efforts.

The major zoo expansion will feature the Tropics, an impressive indoor and outdoor tropical habitat including a tropical forest, tropical island, and Pacific reef habitats. The new building will house 60,000-gallons of aquatic habitats including a 30,000- gallon Amazon River tank, a Komodo dragon pool, a Madagascar cichlid tank, a coral reef tank, and a shark touch tank. Anticipated species include the lemur, Komodo dragon, giant day gecko, Borneo eared frog, Siamang, coral cat shark, Amazon fish & rays, jellyfish, mudskipper, and giant Pacific octopus. In addition, the project will bring orangutans back to the zoo.

The expansion will also include new education space, event space, administrative offices, and the zoo gift shop, enhancing the Seneca Park Zoo's outreach offerings and providing more opportunities for visitors to engage with the zoo's wide-reaching conservation efforts year-round.

"The Tropics Exhibit is more than just an expansion; it will be a globally immersive conservation experience rooted in Rochester's identity and the Seneca Park Zoo's educational mission," **said County Executive Adam Bello**. "We are excited to work with an amazing team to bring this vision to life and to build a zoo for the next generation of residents, inspiring them to explore, appreciate, and protect the natural world. As we celebrate 100 years of Monroe County Parks, this project is another opportunity to honor the legacy of our public spaces and ensure they continue to serve our community for generations to come."

Monroe County is investing a total of \$67.6 million in the Seneca Park Zoo Tropics Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza project with an additional \$42.5 million from Empire State Development and \$1.9 million from the New York State Historic Preservation Office. The Seneca Park Zoo Society

has committed to raising the remaining \$23 million to support the completion of this capital improvement project.

Empire State Development CEO, President and Commissioner Hope Knight said, “Governor Hochul recognizes the importance of the tourism economy, which supports jobs and regional growth. The upgrades at Rochester’s Seneca Park Zoo - including the new Tropics Complex Exhibit - will provide a more engaging and welcoming experience for visitors, while further advancing the zoo’s focused mission to inspire the community through local and global animal conservation efforts.”

The Tropics Exhibit will invest in both the zoo’s infrastructure and its animals. By working closely with Seneca Park Zoo staff and following AZA guidelines, the exhibit will further the Zoo’s goals of conserving and protecting our natural environment.

“The Tropics Complex is an investment in growth, strengthening not just Seneca Park Zoo, but our entire region. We are excited to engage donors in being part of creating a place of joy and wonder for a new generation, inspiring them to care about wildlife and wild places. This is a project that benefits our entire community,” **said Pamela Reed Sanchez, Seneca Park Zoo Society President & CEO.**

Massachusetts-based design firm, CambridgeSeven, has worked closely with the County throughout the process.

“It is an immense privilege to collaborate with Monroe County and the Seneca Park Zoo to bring the new Entry and Tropics another step closer to reality,” **said Chris Muskopf, AIA, NCARB, Principal at CambridgeSeven.** “The project will bring back Orangutans to Seneca Park Zoo, revitalize the guest experience by introducing a 21st-century entry with visitor amenities, and a Tropics Rainforest exhibit. Ever since we were invited to join the effort, CambridgeSeven has been greatly appreciative of the entire project team’s commitment to deliver extraordinary public spaces rooted in the local community and serving the Zoo’s global conservation efforts.”

Construction of the Tropics kicks off as Monroe County recently announced its Parks 100 celebration, a year-long homage to the 100th anniversary of the County parks system. The zoo is located in Seneca Park, a Frederick Law Olmsted-designed park, and Rochester landmark that sees more than 350,000 visitors annually, connecting them with wildlife and providing educational opportunities.

The Tropics Exhibit is expected to be completed in late 2029.

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.

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