

# ZooLex presents

## African Wild Dog Exhibit at Woodland Park Zoo

### Location

Woodland Park Zoo - 601  
North 59th Street - Seattle, WA  
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Fax: (001) (206) 684 4858  
URL: <http://www.zoo.org>



### Keywords

Streambed, Naturalistic Habitat, Floodplain-Riverbank  
Habitat, Environment, African Wild Dogs

### Animals

Family: Canidae  
Species: *Lycaon pictus*  
Common Name: African Wild Dog, Hunting Dog, Painted  
Dog/Wolf, Cape Hunting Dog  
Number: 4

### Description

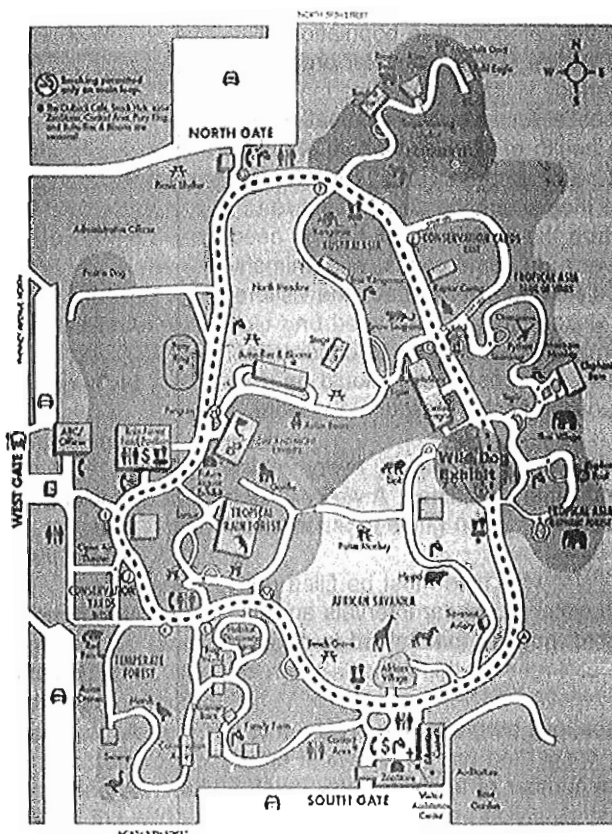
The African Wild Dog Exhibit completes Woodland Park Zoo's area of naturalistic exhibits featuring animals of the African savanna. A grassy plain is bordered in the background by high mud banks crowned with vegetation and in the foreground by a streambed with sandy banks. The streambed will fall dry at certain times to simulate the dry season in Africa. The exhibit features highly realistic looking artificial termite mounds, artificial tree stumps, dead fall and real dead trees; also three heated dens and a mulch digging area. Visitors have long and short vistas of the East African streambed. A path with interpretive signage runs parallel to the streambed. From here, visitors overlook the grassy plain. A second path heads for a sheltered viewing area, shared with the lion exhibit. From this vantage point, the background of the exhibit opens up to the visitors. A tunnel entrance affords a peek into one of the heated dens to view more intimate pack life. The indoor holdings are not accessible to the public. The dogs are housed in the renovated hyena holding facilities.

### Size

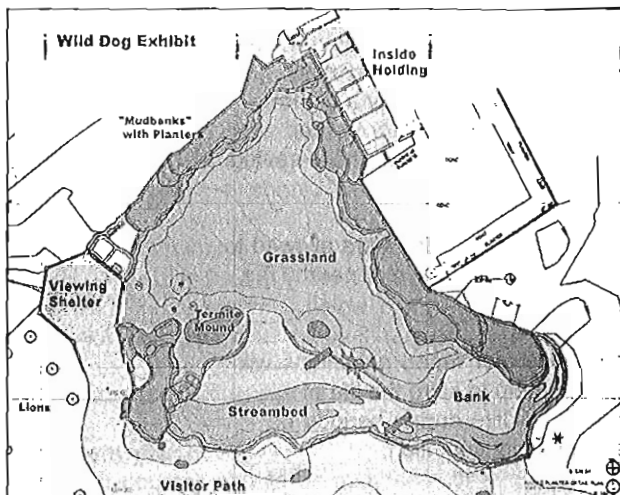
Size of the Wild Dog outdoor exhibit: 930 m<sup>2</sup>. The exhibit is part of the African Savanna, which has a total area of 1.8 hectares. The remodeled indoors holding area is part of the feline house.

Space allocation in square meters:

| use      | indoors    |       | outdoors   |       | total exhibit |
|----------|------------|-------|------------|-------|---------------|
|          | accessible | total | accessible | total |               |
| animals  | 32         | 42    | 465        | 465   | 507           |
| visitors |            |       | 235        | 465   | 465           |
| others   |            |       |            |       |               |
| total    |            | 42    |            | 930   | 972           |



The Wild Dog Exhibit is part of the bigger African Savanna Area. © Woodland Park Zoo



The bigger portion of the exhibit simulates grassland. At the border between grass and streambed, a tree stump and two termite mounds dominate the view. The streambed has a wide, sandy bank. Visitors see the exhibit from the shelter and from the path in front. The indoor facilities, which are shared with the feline house, face the shelter.

### Costs

US Dollar 1,410,000 including 14% for design. The final construction contract cost, including all change orders but excluding sales tax, was \$1,028,098.

Opening Date: June 28, 2002

## Design

Beginning: June, 1999

· Architect of record: pja architects +  
landscape architects, p.s., Seattle,  
WA

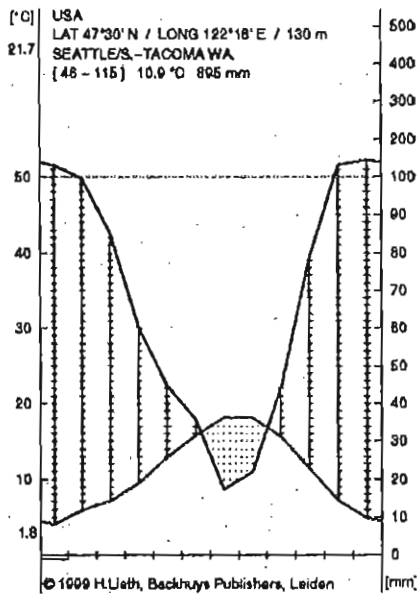
## Construction

Beginning: November 5, 2001

Construction: PCL Construction  
Services, Inc., Bellevue, WA  
Exhibitry (rockwork and artificial  
trees): Turnstone Construction,  
Seattle, WA

## Local conditions

This is a climatic diagram for the  
closest weather station.

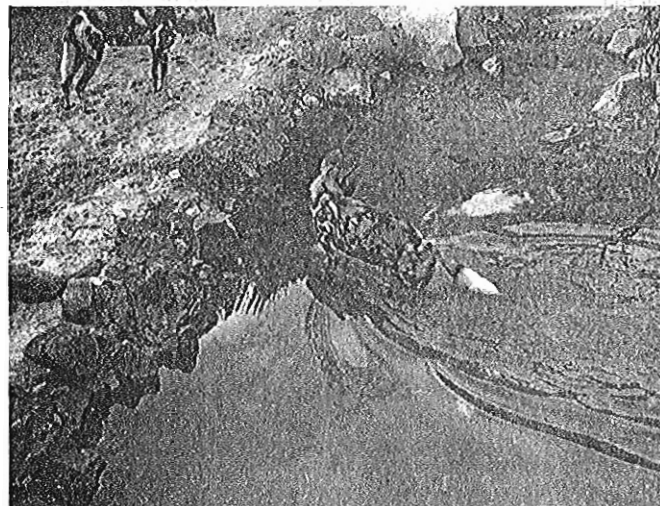


## Plants

There were no large trees in the exhibit, but large trees on the perimeter remained. Many plant species were selected for an immersion effect and interpretive purposes. Some mimic *Acacia* trees, such as *Sophora japonica* (Japanese Pagoda Tree) and *Robinia pseudoacacia* "tortuosa" (Black Locust). Others mimic drought resistant plants on a savanna with their evergreen and leathery leaves such as *Berberis verruculosa* (Warty Barberry), *Berberis julianae* (Julienne Barberry), *Garrya elliptica* (Coast Silktassel). Others have gray foliage that reflect sun and convey an "arid look" such as *Shepherdia argentea* Silver (Buffaloberry), *Hippophae rhamnoides* (Sea Buckthorn).



Wild Dog Portrait. ©pja architects & landscape architects, p.s., 2002



Mtima, the lead  
dog, explores  
the streambed.  
©pja architects  
& landscape  
architects, p.s.,  
2002

The Wild Dog  
Exhibit is  
part of the  
bigger  
African  
Savanna  
Area.  
©Woodland  
Park Zoo



Scrubby bushes mimic scrub savanna such as *Lonicera standishii* (Standish Honeysuckle).

Thorny species were also selected because of their resistance to browsing. Examples are *Crataegus crusgall* (Cockspur Hawthorn), *Berberis julianae* (Julienne Barberry), *Hippophae rhamnoides* (Sea Buckthorn), *Ribes divaricatum* (Pacific Currant).

Big grasses were chosen for a "savanna look". Examples are *Deschampsia caespitosa* (Tufted Hair Grass), *Stipa gigantea* (Giant Feather Grass), *Panicum virgatum* 'Rotstrahlbusch' (Switchgrass), *Festuca mairei* (Atlas Festuce). Tough grasses such as *Carex comens* 'frosty curls' (New Zealand Hair Sedge) and a pasture mix of turf grass were chosen to resist animal impact and to grow tall.

The plant list specifies the Latin names of the plants used for this exhibit.

#### Features dedicated to animals

Running space; Different areas and underground (stone, grass, sand, water); Off-view sheltered resting areas; Heated dens; Mulch and sand digging areas; Water; Possible visual contact with lions

#### Features dedicated to keepers

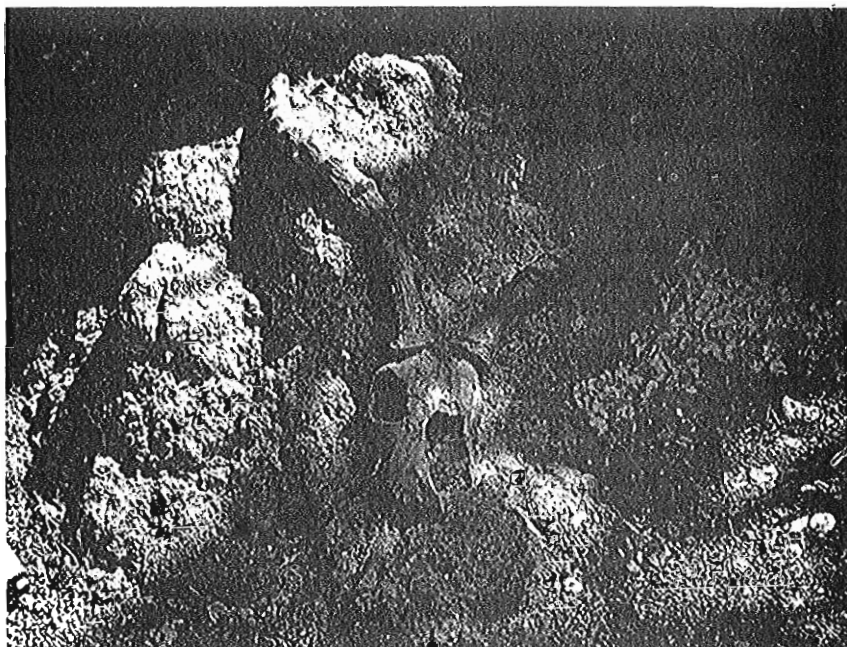
Hose bibs, hoses, and other equipment hidden in access boxes in the tree stump; Double doors; Access panel for horticulture crew; Above exhibit observation; Areas that support enrichment routines

#### Features dedicated to visitors

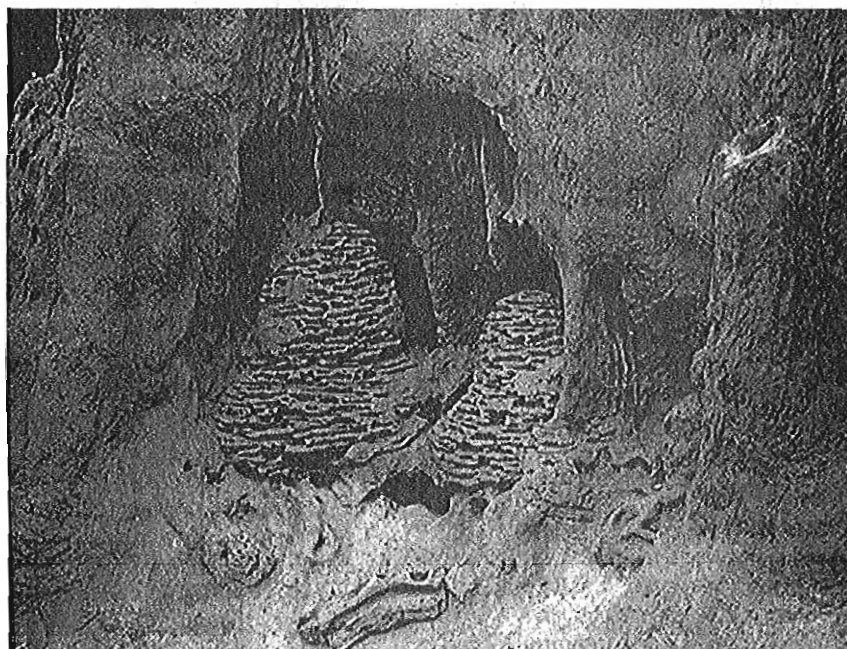
Covered glass viewing shelter; Den open for viewing; Artifacts along walkway; Interpretive signage; Long viewing and short viewing vantage points; Lions and wild dogs can be observed side by side from the viewing shelter

#### Interpretation

The zoo took a deliberate low-tech approach to the interpretation of the exhibit and emulated the look of signage actually used in African wildlife reserves. There are a total of seven signs—three in the sheltered



Imbedded in the rockwork are animal tracks, (artificial) elephant teeth, bee-eater burrows, and this impala skull. ©pja architects & landscape architects, p.s., 2002



Every rockwork feature is executed with attention to - naturalistic - detail as shown in this photograph. ©pja architects & landscape architects, p.s., 2002

overlook and four on the front path—that focus on the endangered status of the dogs and their shrinking habitat. The signs especially feature conservation efforts and the Botswana Wild Dog Research Project of Dr. J. W. ("Tico") McNutt, a conservation partner of WPZ. Docents and ambassadors, who receive special and ongoing training about African Wild Dogs and their environment, provide further

interpretation.

Many details were incorporated into the design of the exhibit to provide 'interpretive' opportunities. From the interpretive primer for docents and ambassadors: "(...) As already mentioned, the whole floodplain and riverbank scene is beautifully and accurately depicted, and the realistic termite mounds are sure to draw comments. (While you're in the

viewing shelter, notice the exposed, chambered interior of the large termite mound. The hard, outer wall of the mound was apparently breached by an animal—an aardvark, perhaps—seeking a nutritious meal of termites.) (...) When it comes to smaller details, you can point to the nesting burrows (shown above) in the riverbanks. These 2 1/2" holes, which lead to tunnels that incline upward, simulate cavities excavated by white-fronted bee-eaters (...). You might also ask visitors to study the depressions in and around the stream; we've included the tracks of lions, hippos and Grant's gazelles here.(...) Two features will reward the visitor who stays alert while walking down the path into the viewing blind. One is an entire Impala skull, complete with horns, that appears to have fallen from a partially collapsed riverbank and landed at the edge of the trail. (...) The other trailside feature is a set of elephant scrapes and gouges in the riverbank. These simulate the digging of an elephant as it searches for the salty mineral deposits that are essential to its health. (...) Looking down, you can see that some of the soil the elephant broke loose fell in a heap at the edge of the path, and one of the elephant's molars came loose and landed in that heap of soil. (...) The Impala skull and elephant molar are artificial, but were made with molds taken from a real skull and molar. The zoo's Exhibits Department worked closely with Turnstone Construction to create these detailed, realistic features."

#### Management

**Behavioral Enrichment:** The exhibit offers a naturalistic habitat with distinct areas — grassland, sand, and water. The digging pits encourage natural den digging behavior and can also be used to hide treats. A gate in the rockwork separating the lion and wild dog enclosures allows for visual contact of the two species at the keepers' discretion. The exhibit can be used for a breeding pair.

#### Conservation:

Dr. J.W. "Tico" McNutt is a researcher studying wild dogs in Botswana since 1989. A Seattle native, the zoo approached him when the planning



Visitors are interested in the interpretive signs on the main pathway. ©Gary Mozel, Zoo Naturalist, 2002



Descriptive signs can be found in the viewing shelter. ©pja architects & landscape architects, p.s., 2002

phase started. The relationship between Dr. McNutt and Woodland Park Zoo has grown from lectures and support for research, respectively, to a fully established conservation partnership.

#### Local resources

From design to engineering through construction only local companies were employed. The zoo utilizes trees that are cut during routine upkeep as deadfall features in exhibits.