



2024 ASLA Florida Design Awards

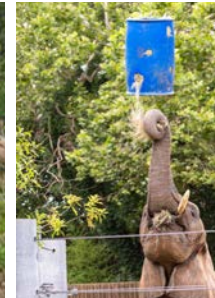
A Theme of Caring: Master Planning a
Teaching Zoo to Reveal Back-of-House
Operations at The Santa Fe College
Teaching Zoo, Gainesville,



- How will the feature impact the animal?

- How will the feature impact the zookeepers ability to care for the exhibit?

- How will visitors benefit from the feature?



Themed environments—parks, gardens, zoos—are living stories, transporting visitors to adventures. Behind the scenes, caretakers ensure animal welfare and educational experiences.

Project Goals & Objectives

Educate the Public



1. Demonstrate back-of-house operations
2. Designated teaching and learning spaces
3. Conservation opportunities

Incorporate Theme/Storyline



1. Use the zookeepers back-of-house operations as storyline
2. Signs and interactive displays
3. Sense of peace

Improve Animal Enclosures

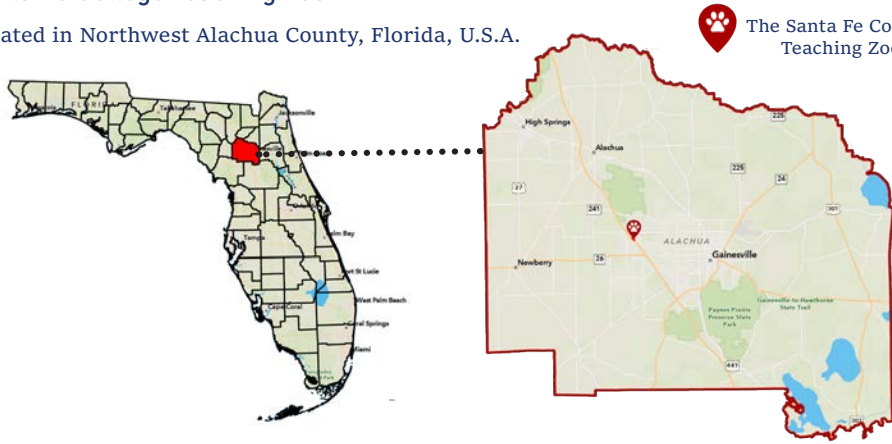


1. Improve animal well-being
2. Animal interactions
3. Design otter exhibit

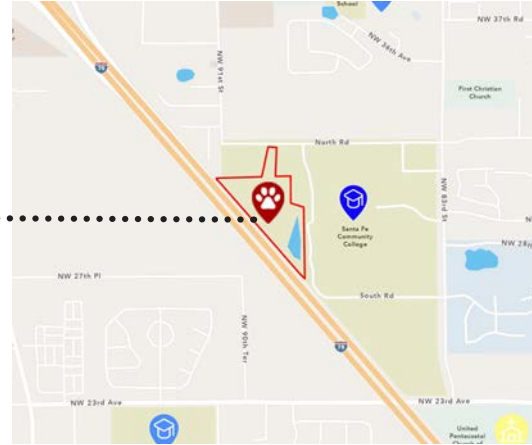
Enhance public understanding of zoo operations through interactive exhibits, focusing on zookeepers' daily routines. Improve animal enclosures for welfare and visitor engagement.

Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo

Located in Northwest Alachua County, Florida, U.S.A.



The Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo



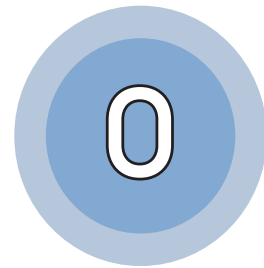
Strengths

- Accredited education program supported by Santa Fe College
- Unique character of mature woods
- Shady



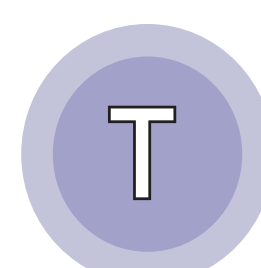
Weaknesses

- Limited operating staff
- Overall site issues negatively impact visitor experience
- Limited ADA accessibility



Opportunities

- Community engagement
- Areas for expansion/animal enclosures
- Successful local conservation efforts



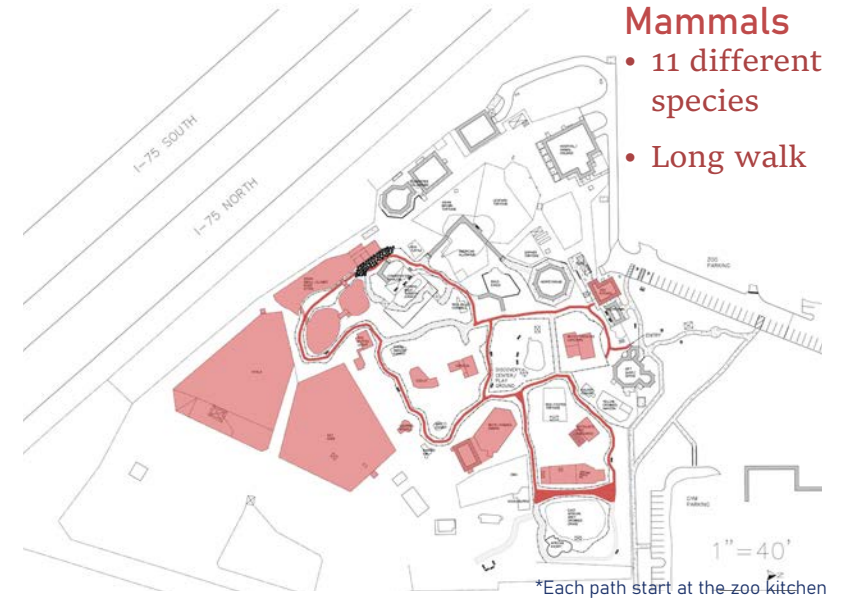
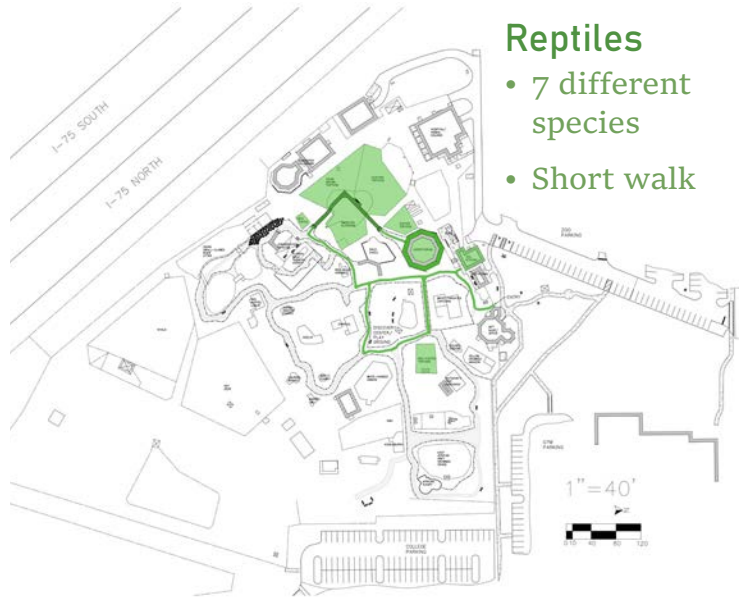
Threats

- Lack of way-finding/confusing signage
- Limited displays of conservation work
- Only one restroom location outside the park



Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo, in Gainesville, Florida, spans 10 acres. Students in the zoo animal technology program manage 70+ species. Accredited by AZA.

Way-finding & Organization



Park pathways now mirror zookeeper routines, allowing visitors to experience caring for specific animal species, with VIP tours tailored accordingly.

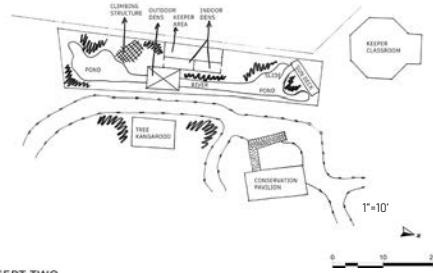
Master Plan



A map for park visitors, displaying animal enclosures, zookeeper and visitor buildings, restrooms, and locations of each animal.

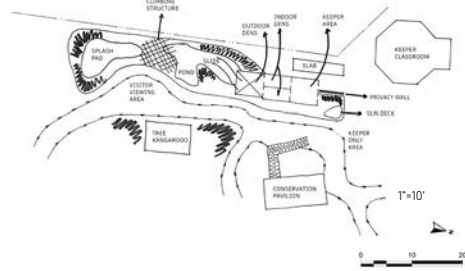
Otter Outpost Design

CONCEPT ONE
WATERFRONT HIDEAWAY



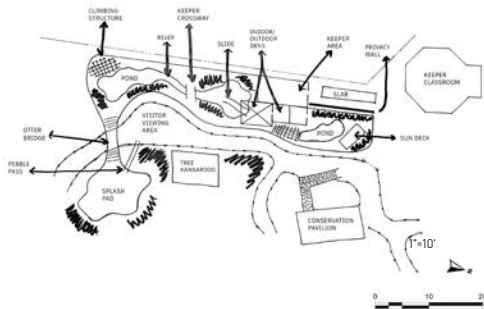
- Expansion of Enclosure
- Inside/Outside Dens

CONCEPT TWO
AQUA OASIS



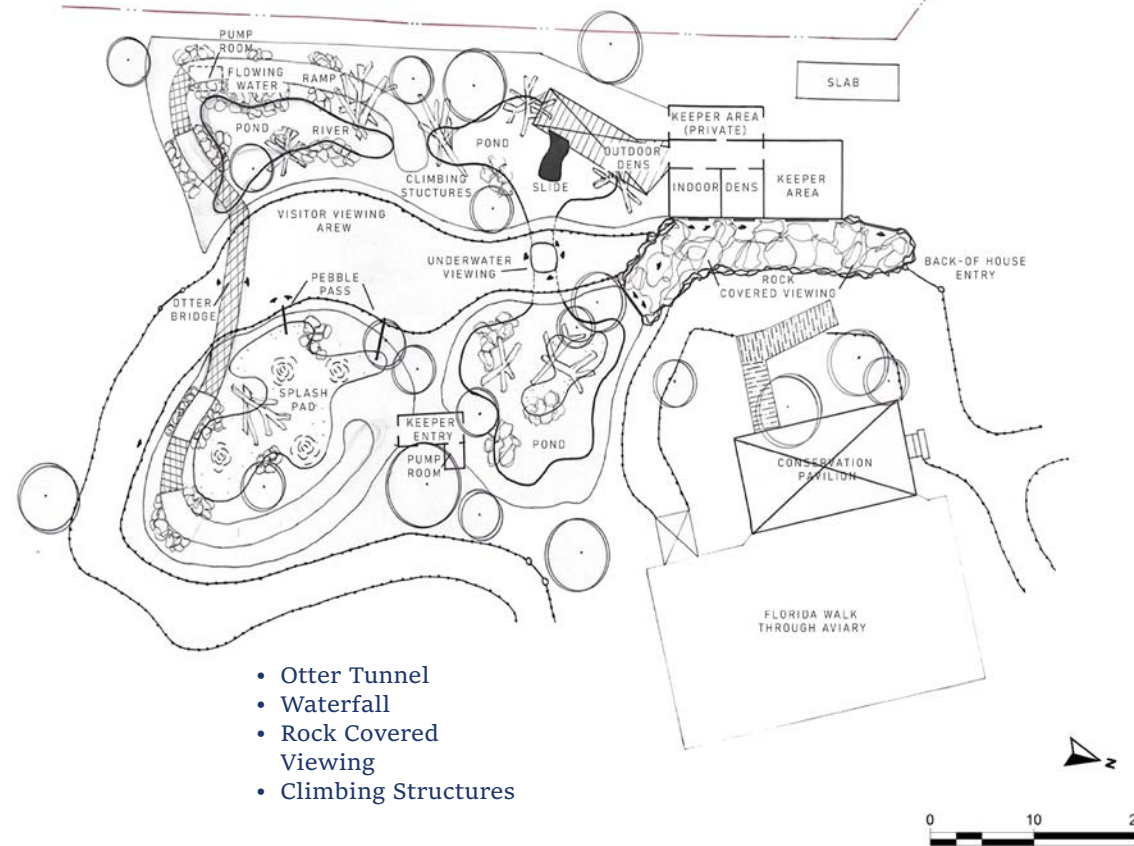
- Expanded Visitor Area
- Expand Keeper Area "Slab"

CONCEPT THREE
OTTER HIDEAWAY



- Otter Bridge
- Splash Pad
- Pebble Pass Interaction

FINAL CONCEPT
OTTER OUTPOST

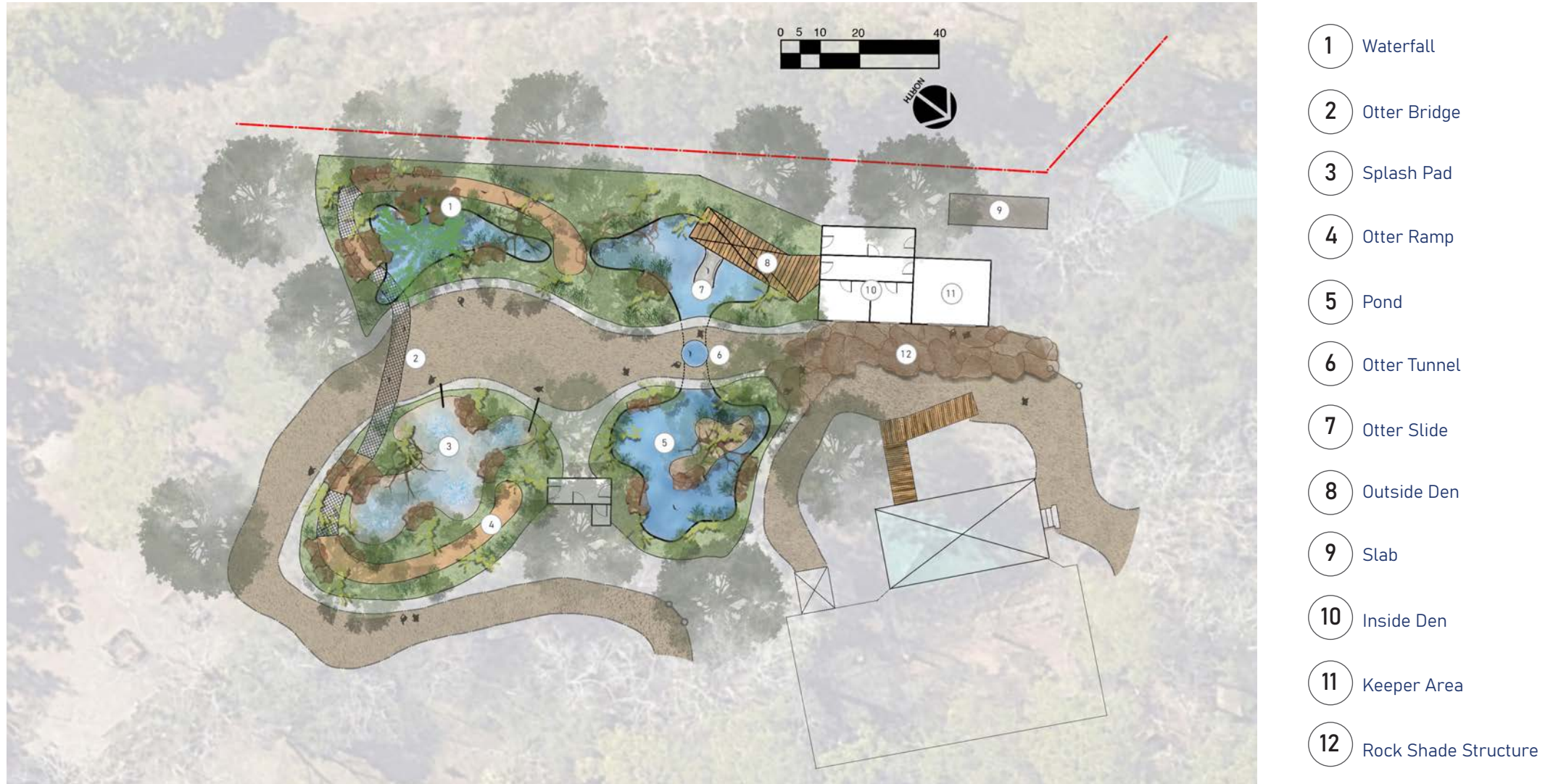


- Otter Tunnel
- Waterfall
- Rock Covered Viewing
- Climbing Structures



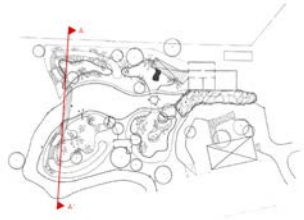
Otter outpost exemplifies integrating care themes into otter exhibit design. Evolving from a simple upgrade to multiple enclosures for immersive visitor experiences.

Otter Outpost Master Plan

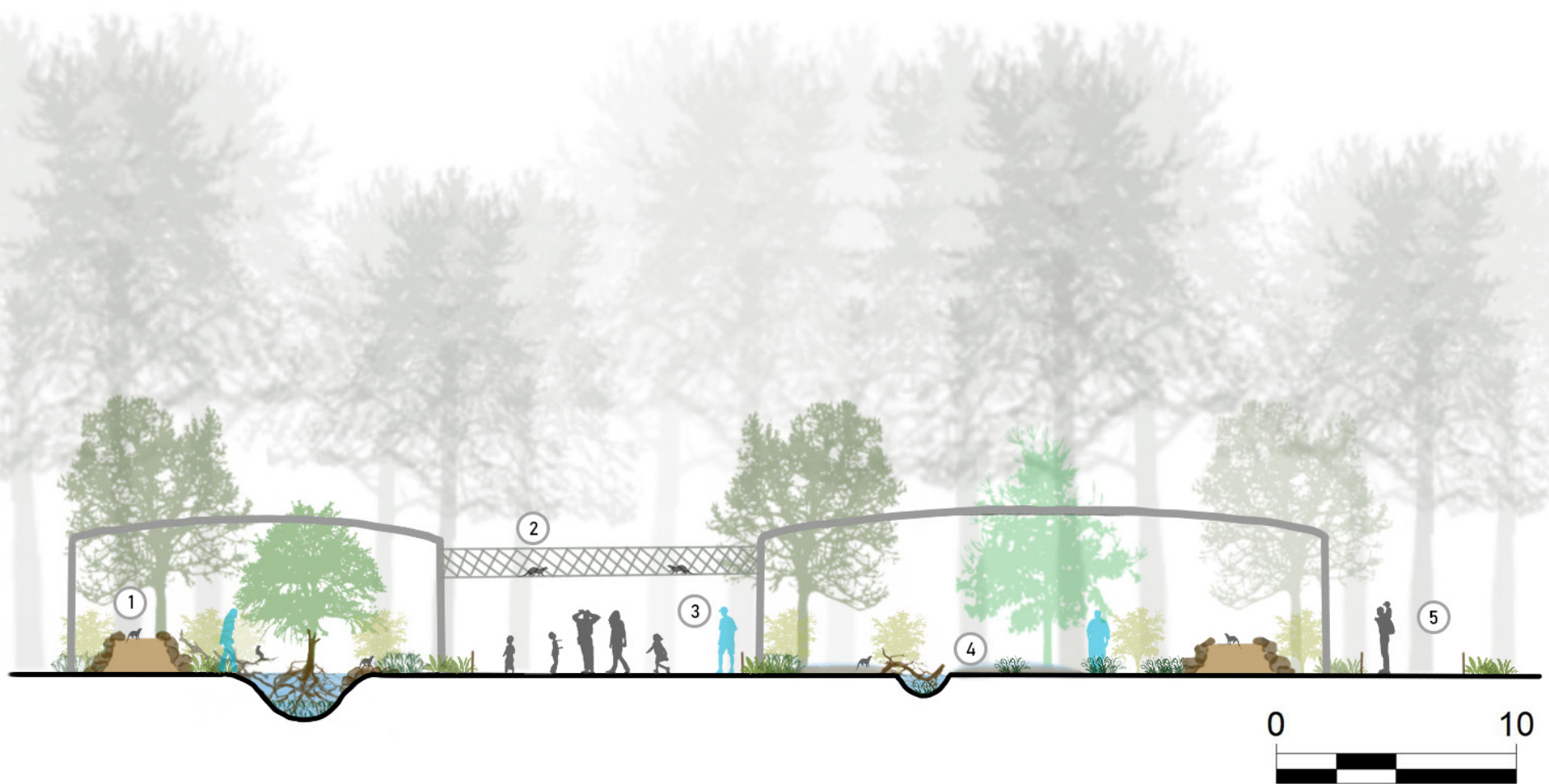


Otters, as aquatic mammals, need varied water areas. Offering three swim spaces and a splash pad enriches their enclosure, enhancing visitor experiences.

Otter Outpost



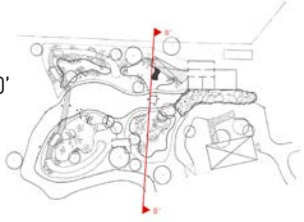
- 1 Otter Ramp
- 2 Otter Bridge
- 3 Zookeeper and Visitor interactions
- 4 Splash Pad
- 5 Visitor Viewing



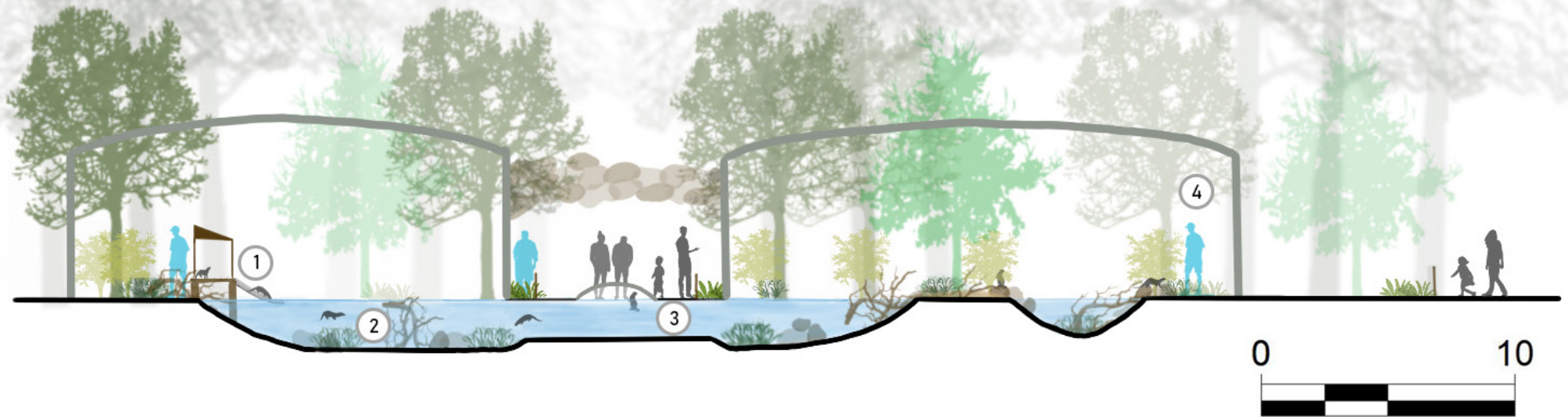
Incorporating different design elements that have been implemented for other animals such as a corridor or sky bridge gives visitors the chance to see otters in ways they haven't before.

Otter Outpost

1"=10'



- 1 Otter Slide
- 2 Pond
- 3 Otter Tunnel
- 4 Zookeeper Interactions

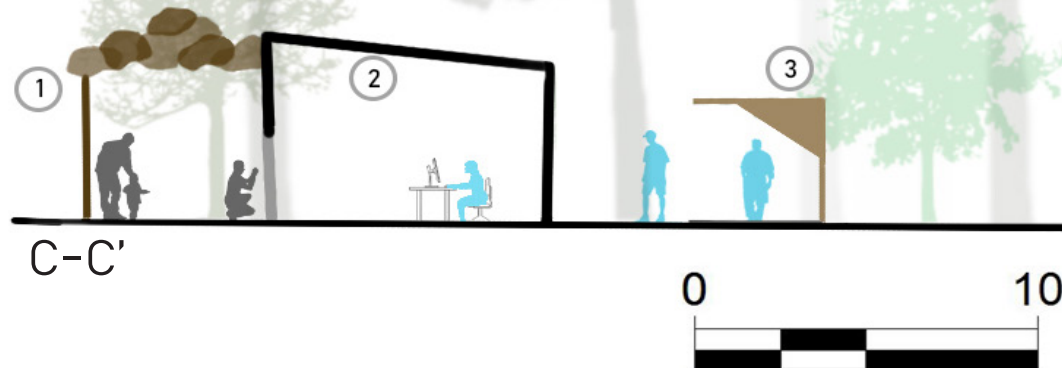
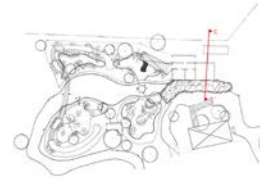


Creating pathways like the otter tunnel lets visitors view otters swimming below, with a dome feature allowing otters to interact.

Otter Outpost

- 1 Rock Shade Structure
- 2 Zookeeper Area
- 3 Slab

1"=10'



A window into the keeper area and otter dens reveal caretaking efforts. An added work space for zookeepers enhances visitor insight into zoo maintenance.

Otter Pebble Pass



Otter Dome



Enhance visitor experiences with pebble pass, where they interact with zookeepers, and otter dome for better underwater otter viewing.

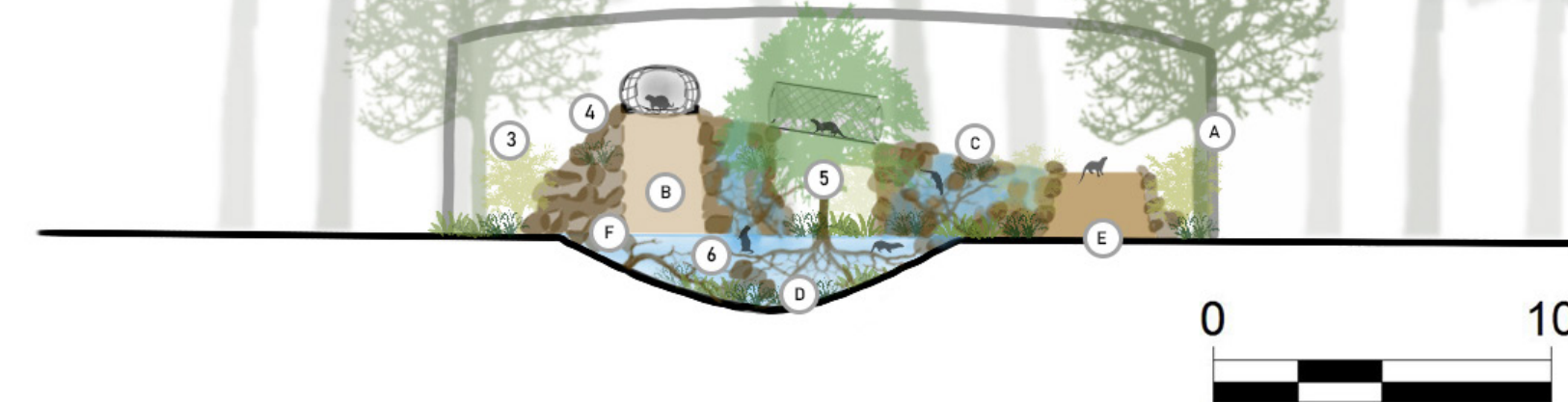
Planting and Enclosure Materials

Plants

- 1 Pine Trees
- 2 Ligustrum japonicum
- 3 Heavenly Bamboo
- 4 Argentine Bahia Grass
- 5 Red Mangrove
- 6 Butterbur

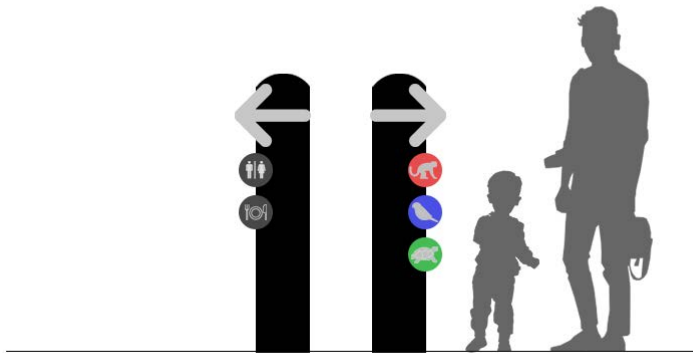
Enclosure Materials

- Vinyl Coated Wire Mesh (A)
- Natural Substrate (B)
- Rocks (C)
- Sand (D)
- Cement (E)
- Branches/Logs (F)



Choosing enclosure materials requires consideration for animal safety. For instance, otters' scavenging habits necessitate avoiding harmful plants. Enrichment through varied activities is vital.

Signage



Directional



Informational

Directional signs guide visitors to animals, while informational signs throughout the park educate about horticulture, zookeeping, and conservation.

Conclusion

Zookeepers are..

Conservationists

Behaviorists

Caretakers

Chefs

Architects

Educators

Inventors

Scientists

Veterinary Assistants

Trainers



Zoos intertwine narratives to illuminate wildlife, caretakers, and operations, deepening visitor understanding and enhancing animal welfare, education, and conservation efforts.