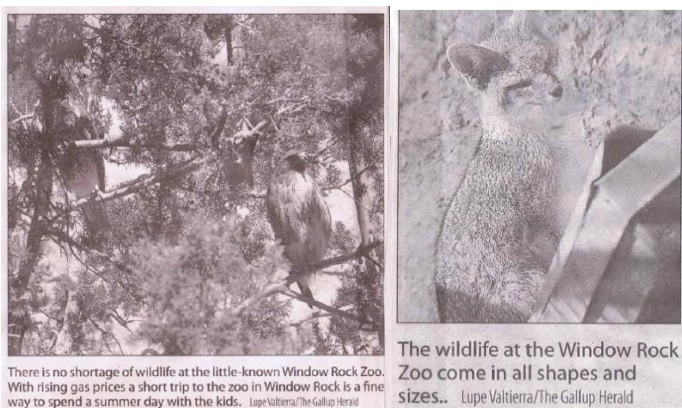


Wednesday, December 17, 2008

Saving Wildlife at the Window Rock Zoo

Thursday
June 23, 2008



Left: There is no shortage of wildlife at the little-known Window Rock Zoo. With rising gas prices a short trip to the zoo in Window Rock is a fine way to spend a summer day with the kids. **Right:** The wildlife at the Window Rock Zoo come in all shapes and sizes.

By Jay Dominguez
Gallup Herald

WINDOW ROCK — As the sun rose over the tall, orange-tinged sandstones in the Navajo Nation Zoological & Botanical Park in Window Rock early Tuesday morning, visitors could hear the zoo animals scurrying around making their presence known.

“The zoo is a fun place for people to enjoy looking and learning about animals, plants and trees,” said Matthew R. Holdgate, zoo curator.

Among the natural attractions at the zoo, nestled among the red rocks are, black bears, mountain lions, elk, gila monsters, Mexican wolves, and golden eagles to name a few.

“They are going to start rebuilding the zoo starting with reconstruction of the indoor exhibits, adding new plants and animal life to the scene as well as waterfalls, rocks, and new landscape. A children’s entrance center is being worked on for entertainment and education,” said Holdgate.

The zoo has an animal adoption program that helps with feeding, maintenance and upkeep of the zoo.

The zoo was worth the trip from Berlin, Germany for Yolanda Belsinger.

“American wildlife is so traditionally fascinating,” said Belsinger. “However it would be nice to see more animals and tree growing on the trail.”

Window Rock resident and field worker Joe Begay says, “the zoo takes donations of rocks, trees, plant life and animals. Also, any donations of materials would help for the construction of the exhibit. The

adopt-an-animal program will help put up the new exhibits.”

Terrance Begay, 19, groundskeeper at the zoo and resident of Window Rock, works hard pulling weeds at the wildlife park. Despite the work, he says he enjoys doing what he does very much. His duties include weeding, watering plants and feeding animals three to four times a day. His favorite animals are the bobcat, cougar, and eagle. Begay said that some animals come in injured but are nursed back to health. Usually the turnout is good for those animals.

“The wildlife animals should be better protected in the wild from poachers, trappers and hunters. The fines should be stiffer,” said Brent Manyows, 21, Window Rock. “That is why it is good that the zoo is here for some of the animals from the wild that have been hurt or injured by these individuals. Some of these animals should be healed and released into the wild.”

Among the prized attractions at the zoo is the American eagle. There is a \$1,500 fine for trying to tamper or harm the American eagle.

At the zoo these animals are safe until released into the wild. Then they are monitored by wildlife law enforcement officials, park rangers, and environmental researchers.

Zoo hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission to the zoo is free. For more information, contact the zoo website at www.navajofishandwildlife.org.