



San Diego Update: Bonsai Pavilion Expansion at the San Diego Wild Animal Park

Submitted by Maria Barbosa and Ilyn Stevenson

CURRENT BONSAI EXHIBIT

San Diego Zoo's world famous Wild Animal Park is not only a showcase of the planet's wild and endangered animals, it is also a unique showcase for many unusual and exotic trees and plants, including a beautiful bonsai exhibit built and maintained by the San Diego Bonsai Club (SDBC) and San Pu Kai (SPK). Both non-profit clubs joined work forces with the Wild Animal Park to build the Bonsai exhibit within the Park in 1987 coinciding with the Park's 15th anniversary celebration. Sensei John Y. Naka cut the inaugural ribbon to officially open the Pavilion to the public.



John Y. Naka at the rededication of his "Wild Dragon" bonsai in 1997



Entrance to existing Wild Animal Park Pavilion

The current exhibit features excellent examples of bonsai and suiseki from many notables including: Bruce and Yaeko Hisayasu, Harry Hirao, Melba Tucker, Mas Takanashi, Ko Tsushima, Stan Childs, John Jackson, Dr. Frank Dixon, Cap Puliafico, Brian Jackson, and Kaz Yoneda. The original trees in the Pavilion include John Naka's California Juniper, "Wild Dragon", and trees from the estate of Seymour and Joan Dayton.

There are approximately 60 trees in the collec-



Jim Kirshner, Steve Valentine and Jon Petrescu consulting plans



Construction Manager, John Jackson, putting up the new Pavilion's shade cloth



SDBC volunteers and Wild Animal Park's Tree-Trimming Operator assists in erecting the new pavilion's shade cloth.

PLANS AND PROGRESS ON THE NEW BONSAI PAVILION

The current 26 year old Bonsai Pavilion is about to give way to a larger bonsai garden that will triple the size of the current exhibit. The new area will emulate a Japanese garden complete with a waterfall, river, benches, and bridges. This new Pavilion space will contain dedicated areas for educational programs, growing stock and work areas, along with expanded display areas for bonsai amid a tranquil garden setting.



Volunteers like these 'pole painters' are the key to success

The SDBC and SPK volunteers who maintain the current bonsai exhibit are also simultaneously constructing the new pavilion area. This past year the clubs' volunteers erected stone walls, fence posts, structure poles for the

tion and about 45 trees are on exhibit at all times. Steve Valentine, the Pavilion's Curator, directs the volunteers each month in caring for the California Junipers, black pines, elms, ivies, grapes, olives, liquid ambers, ginkgoes, and other varieties. The clubs' volunteers gather regularly to trim, repot, reshape and generally maintain the trees. Through the years the Wild Animal Park has partnered with SDBC and SPK to provide upgrades and maintenance of the grounds, the pavilion's security, as well as periodic pest control. Visitors can view the Bonsai Pavilion's collection 365 days of the year during Park hours. There are admission and parking fees to the Park but no additional charge for visiting the Pavilion located in the Kupanda Falls area of the Park.



Project Manager 'lyn Stevenson



Trees on display in the Pavilion



The new Pavilion area

pavilion's shade cloth cover and later set up the shade cloth. Underground electrical, as well as drainage systems, are being installed in preparation for the waterfall and meandering creek bed that will lead the park guests through the exhibit.

The Pavilion Project Manager for this new area is 'lyn Stevenson. She is working closely with the volunteer teams of construction and finance committees as well as the Wild Animal Park Horticultural Staff. The SDBC Construction Manager is John Jackson. Jim Kirchmer is in charge of Grants and Donations. The SDBC has contracted for professional architectural

and landscape design for future details of the paths, bridges and water features. A projected completion date is yet to be determined. The photos included here show some of the pavilion's progress

The San Diego Bonsai Club has set aside a separate budget for this new Pavilion and is welcoming donations. A team headed by Jim Kirchmer and Marty Mann are soliciting organizations and foundations for funds, but bonsai friends from California, national, and international individuals and groups are welcomed. All funds will be acknowledged.

Categories for donations include:

Azalea (\$10 to \$99)
Elm (\$100 to \$499)
Juniper (\$500 to \$999)
Maple (\$1000 to \$4999)
Oak (\$5000 to \$9999)
Black Pine (\$10,000 up).

For tax donation purposes, the SDBC is a 501 (c) (3) educational, non-profit, organization.

Donations should be sent to:
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