



For Immediate Release
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Media kit with photos, facts, and BROLL available here: <http://bit.ly/hhpzqator>

New American Alligator Exhibit in San José *Alligator exhibit now open at Happy Hollow Park & Zoo*

San José, CA – On May 26, Happy Hollow Park & Zoo welcomed over 4,200 guests to view a brand new American alligator exhibit. “Bayou,” an American alligator, was less than 2-feet long when the California Department of Fish & Wildlife rescued him from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. He is now over five feet long, and his trainers estimate his age is between 10 to 12 years old.

You read it right – Bayou participates in several training sessions a week where he learns a variety of behaviors using positive reinforcement. This choice-based training method makes it easier to move and transport him, as well as perform routine medical procedures. This type of training focuses on getting the alligator to willingly cooperate with certain maneuvers, and keeps handlers safer during routine interactions.

“Bayou has actually been living at Happy Hollow since he was quite small,” said Lori Morper, one of Bayou’s trainers from the Zoo Education program. “We adopted him to become an animal ambassador for our Zoo Education program. Now that he is much larger, Bayou is ready for his new career and new home, on exhibit in the Zoo in the Hollow.”

Thanks to funding from generous donors, and years of planning and construction, Bayou’s new exhibit gives him plenty of room to grow. His habitat allows ample space for him to roam, swim and sunbathe, and a night house with heated flooring.

“It is thrilling to finally see this magnificent creature make himself at home,” said Amy Pizarro, the foundation’s executive director. “Happy Hollow Foundation was proud to partner with the zoo to provide funding and support for this exciting new exhibit — Bayou is a perfect example of what Happy Hollow does best.”

Happy Hollow has been accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums for over 20 years, and participates in many wildlife conservation and education efforts. The zoo also has an extensive enrichment program, which stimulates each animal’s natural behavior and provides variety in their daily routine. This is accomplished by providing the animals with different stimuli, such as items to tear apart, scents, sounds, and cognitive tasks through positive-reinforcement based training.

“Happy Hollow Park & Zoo is a place that connects people to people, and people to nature through play,” says Justin Long, Deputy Director of the City of San José Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services Department. “People of all ages can come and see animals in a natural setting while learning about their care, conservation, and habitats. It’s part of what makes coming to Happy Hollow such a fun and memorable experience.”

Visitors are invited to watch Bayou’s training and feeding sessions in his exhibit every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday at 2:30 p.m. This is one of the many ways Happy Hollow is working to educate guests about animal wellness, conservation, and care.





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This summer, beginning July 11 through August 19, Happy Hollow will also have a “Backyard Bayou” exhibit open to the public, featuring an assortment of swamp critters. For more information, please visit www.happyhollow.org

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The mission of Happy Hollow Park & Zoo is connecting people to nature through play. Happy Hollow is a division of the City of San José Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services Department, and supported by the Happy Hollow Foundation.



*Parks, Recreation and
Neighborhood Services*