

Hamilton Family Children's Zoo at the Philadelphia Zoo

Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Client: Philadelphia Zoo

Size: 2 acres

Cost: Estimated Total Project \$18 Million

Status: Completed April 2013

Viridian Landscape Studio, working in conjunction with SMP Architects, C7A, and Meliora Environmental Design, developed a new Children's Zoo at the site of the historic Pachyderm House at the Philadelphia Zoo. This new addition is expected to greatly increase visitorship and set a new standard in stormwater management and sustainability practices for the Zoo as a whole. The design provides a venue for children to discover the natural world through exposure and interaction with animals and plants in a setting that references the natural and agricultural landscapes of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Viridian has transformed the old paddocks, formerly inaccessible to visitors, into exhibit yards tied together with a graceful loop path. Visitors are greeted by goats climbing over a bridge at the entry courtyard and then can move on to watch squirrels navigate an obstacle course and feed ducks before they enter the building which holds further delight. After learning about chickens, donkeys and mini-horses, visitors traverse a bridge that mirrors an adjacent goat raceway. Above are raceways for primates and at the center of the site is a play structure that highlights the ways in which humans are similar to and different from the exhibit animals.

Viridian Landscape Studio has endowed the Children's Zoo with a sense of place through the use of native plants that reflect the plant communities and character of the region while ensuring the preservation and incorporation of significant trees into the design.

