

JULY 2023

# GRT ANNUAL REPORT

A 15 year plan to grow the ABQ BioPark



# Thank You!

*Burqueños,*

Exciting developments are underway at our ABQ BioPark. These range from the construction of captivating new exhibits that will endure for years, to the behind-the-scenes infrastructure upgrades that make it all possible. These advancements will provide an enriching experience for our community as well as the visitors from around the globe who enter BioPark gates each day.

This year, visitors to the BioPark will see the realization of major projects funded by the Gross Receipts Tax (GRT), as approved by the voters. The construction of cutting-edge Australia and Asia exhibits is currently in progress, while our Botanic Garden enthusiasts can look forward to all 11 acres of the Heritage Farm being renovated to include new livestock barns, larger animal habitats, more orchards, outdoor classroom space, and a new train.

The investments we make in the BioPark demonstrate the profound level of care and concern that we all hold for this invaluable resource that connects our families with the wonders of nature. In the following report, you will learn more about how and where the GRT funding is being utilized to enhance and expand New Mexico's most popular attraction. I extend my gratitude to the New Mexico BioPark Society, the Board, and our dedicated team of employees for their tireless efforts in improving and managing the BioPark. And I am immensely grateful to the Albuquerque community for your unwavering support, which keeps this cherished institution thriving.

Sincerely,



Tim Keller  
Mayor, City of Albuquerque



*Dear Albuquerque,*

Thank you for another year of helping shape the future of our beloved ABQ BioPark.

Your support of the Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) has allowed the BioPark to continue leading the field in animal care and conservation. Implementing the Facility Plan also significantly strengthens the BioPark's role as a community anchor and economic influencer for greater Albuquerque.

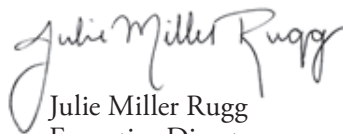
It's hard to believe we are already halfway through the GRT cycle. So far, we have seen the creation of the otter habitat at the Aquarium, the Penguin Chill and elephant birthing barn at the Zoo, and the less exciting but equally important infrastructure improvements, including expansion of utilities throughout the BioPark, new roofs, HVAC systems and more.

Coming soon is the opening of Asia, a nearly 7-acre, immersive experience transporting guests to a diverse landscape of wild floodplains and lush mountains and filled with nature-focused discovery education and interactive adventures for the entire family. Asia construction is setting a new standard for what excellent animal well-being looks like at the BioPark, followed by the upcoming Australia opening and expansions and improvements at the Heritage Farm inside the Botanic Garden.

With revitalization and innovation, we will continue to serve our community and the plants and animals in our care.

Together, we are building a better BioPark.

Thank you,



Julie Miller Rugg  
Executive Director  
New Mexico BioPark Society

NEW MEXICO  
**BIO PARK**  
SOCIETY



# JULY 2023 SUMMARY

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When the original BioPark master plan was developed in 2014, it laid out a dream list of projects to transform the ABQ BioPark. Thanks to the voters who approved the 1/8 cent Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) in 2016, some of those dream projects have become reality.

As we approach the halfway mark of the 15-year GRT funding, we look back with pride on the incredible projects we've completed and wait with excitement for new projects opening later this year.

We also find ourselves in the position to reimagine the dream list of projects as construction costs rise and as the needs of our community, animals and plants evolve.

To navigate the final years of the GRT, a 2023 Facility Plan will guide the BioPark to continue its transformation with amazing new animal habitats, inviting new guest amenities and the infrastructure to provide industry-leading care for plants and animals. This plan builds on the original dreams from the 2014 plan, and it sets clear goals and expectations for what is achievable in the next eight years.

Read on to discover the most recent impact of the GRT and get a sneak peek at what's to come. We look forward to celebrating this transformation with you!



# JULY 2023 PROJECTS COMPLETED

## Electric Shuttle—\$960,000

All aboard! Guests with combo tickets travel in style from the Zoo to Tingley Beach and the Aquarium/Botanic Garden.

## Hippo Pool—\$1.4 million

A new heated pool will provide a private behind-the-scenes space for hippos to rest and quarantine space where new hippos can acclimate to the BioPark.

## Facility Plan Update—\$96,000

An updated plan to guide the BioPark for the final eight years of GRT funding is based on evolving priorities of plants and animals, and it reflects the modern costs of construction.

## Zoo Restrooms—\$563,000

The Zoo's busiest restrooms received makeovers with updated fixtures, efficient lighting, and increased accessibility.



# JULY 2023 PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

## Asia—\$31.8 million

This new area on 4.5 acres of previously undeveloped land at the Zoo will provide dynamic, state-of-the-art homes for orangutans, siamangs, Malayan tigers, snow leopards and Steller’s sea eagles. Expected opening in fall 2023.

## Australia Phase 1—\$12 million

Two immersive free-flight habitats will allow guests to connect with Australian shorebirds, including little penguins—the world’s smallest penguin species—plus colorful lorikeets from Australia’s tropical forests. Expected opening in early 2024.

## Heritage Farm Renovation—\$13.2 million

All 11 acres of the Heritage Farm at the Botanic Garden will be renovated to include new livestock barns, larger animal habitats, more orchards, outdoor classroom space and a new train. Expected opening mid-2024.

## Zoo and Aquarium/Garden Entrance Designs—\$620,000

Renovations will make your arrival at the BioPark a faster, easier and more welcoming experience. At the Aquarium/Garden, guests will enter one gate and cross a beautifully landscaped plaza to move between each facility. Zoo improvements include a grand, shaded entrance and modernized ticket scanning stations.



Lorikeets/Australia



Siamangs/Asia



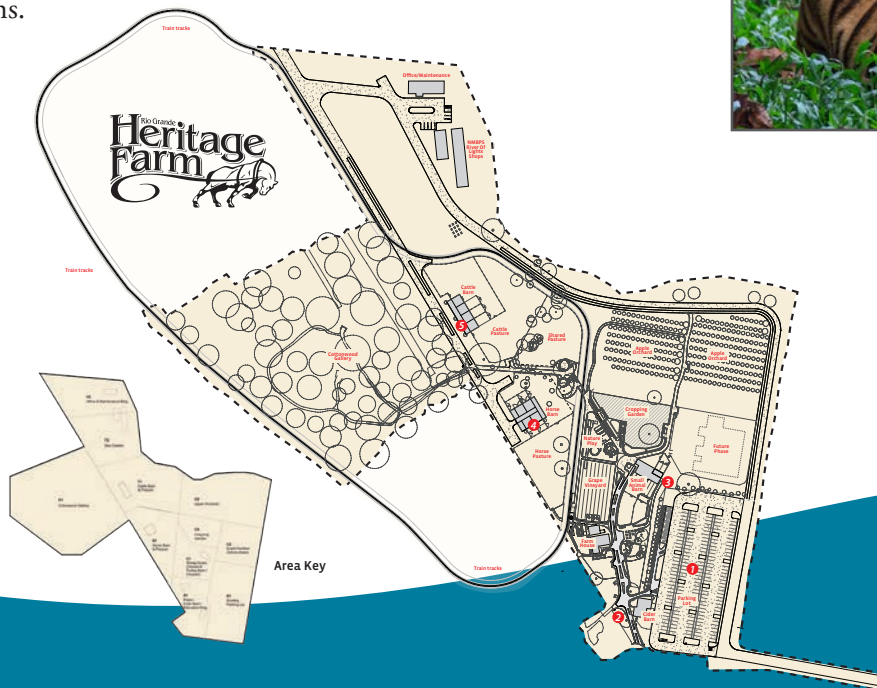
Little penguins/Australia



Horse stables/  
Heritage Farm



Malayan tigers/Asia



ABQ BIOPARK

# JULY 2023 UPCOMING PROJECTS

## **S.H.A.R.C. at the Aquarium—\$14.7 million** *(Science, Health and Aquatic Research Center)*

This new behind-the-scenes building at the Aquarium will support critical operations for aquatic animal care. Here, young fish will grow up, new animals will acclimate, rare corals will be raised, and more.

## **Tingley Shoreline Improvements—\$5 million**

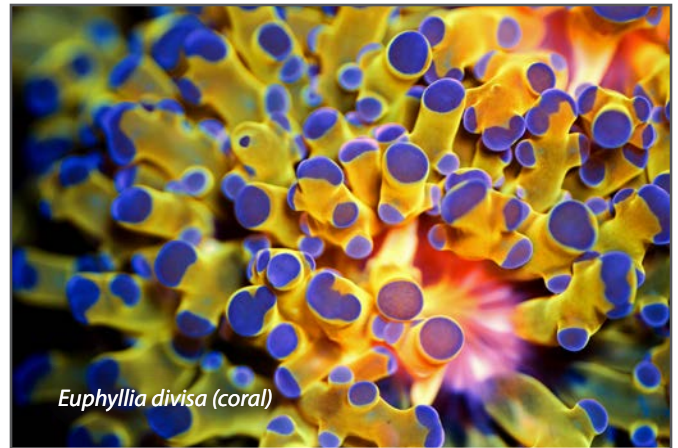
Repairs to pond liners will improve water quality and fish habitat, and new shoreline stabilization will improve safety and ease of access to these unique and beloved ponds.

## **Event Pavilion at Botanic Garden—\$650,000**

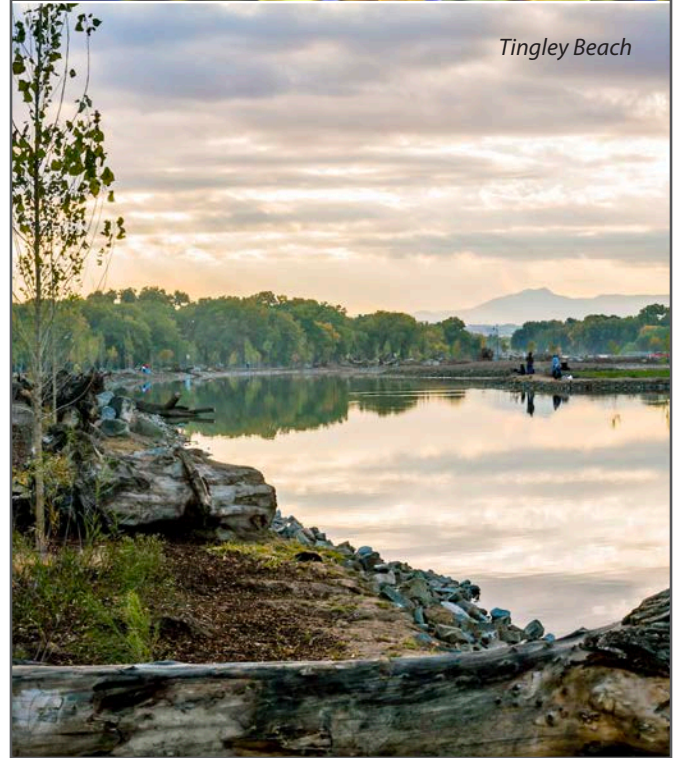
From summer concerts to private parties, a new shaded stage will become the heart of the Festival Green.

## **Aquarium Boat Dock—\$50,000**

Wishing fair winds to the Candy M, the shrimp boat docked at the Aquarium, the BioPark will begin planning designs for a new interactive outdoor space for landlubbers and ocean explorers.



*Euphyllia divisa (coral)*



*Tingley Beach*



ABQ BIOPARK

JULY 2023  
**FINANCIALS**

	Projects Completed	Repairs and Renovations	Total Expended
FY17	\$2,854,482.57	\$537,061.29	\$3,391,543.86
FY18	\$11,123,961.83	\$1,103,250.16	\$12,227,211.99
FY19	\$4,552,990.44	\$996,147.03	\$5,549,137.47
FY20	\$7,023,136.18	\$3,762,832.05	\$10,785,968.23
FY21	\$6,459,052.23	\$1,196,106.30	\$7,655,158.53
FY22	\$20,439,417.19	\$1,582,071.94	\$22,021,489.13
FY23	\$28,212,577.69	\$2,896,960.55	\$31,109,538.24
Total expenses	\$52,453,040.44	\$9,177,468.77	\$61,630,509.21

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# LOOKING BACK AT THE GRT

Thanks to your support of GRT funding, the ABQ BioPark created many exciting new exhibits and experiences to benefit animals, plants and you! From giant new habitats to the infrastructure that makes it all possible, the GRT is transforming the BioPark. Here's a look back at what happened with the first half of the GRT.

- **Elephant Birthing Barn**
- **North American River Otters**
- **Penguin Chill**
- **Butterfly Pavilion Renovation**
- **Aquarium Cooling Towers**
- **Asia Phase 1: Elephant Overlook**
- **Electric Shuttle**

