Interactive Signage at The Willow Park Zoo
Haley Dutson

Objectives

• Learn how a zoo functions in terms of animal care, animal regulations, education and public experience.
• Learn about the biology of the animals at the Willow Park Zoo.
• Create signage that promotes education among zoo visitors by making the signs interactive.
• Learn about how zoos use signage to promote their mission.
• Learn about the production and design of signs and other educational scientific materials.

Methods

• Work with employees at the zoo weekly.
• Discuss the goals and objectives of the Willow Park Zoo with the zoo director, Troy Cooper.
• Decide on which exhibits and areas would be best suited for large, interactive, and educational signage. See Figures 1 and 2.
• Research educational information for the interactive signs.
• Compile information into a rough draft design of what the educational signs should look like. See Figures 3 and 4.
• Find and work with a graphic designer to create a final design. See Figures 5 and 6.
• Have zoo director approve of final design.
• Research sign printing options and have the signs printed on large weatherproof material.
• Mount signs in the proper locations for display and interaction.

Results

“How Do You Measure Up?” Sign
• A Grey Crowned Crane’s average wingspan is 6.56 ft.
• A 4 x 7 ft. sign, as seen in Figure 5 will be mounted next to the Grey Crowned Crane exhibit shown in Figure 1.

“How Far Can You Jump?” Sign
• An average flea jumps 13 in., grasshopper – 20 in., american bullfrog – 5 ft., and cottontail rabbit – 7 ft.
• A 4 x 8 ft. sign, as seen in Figure 6 will be mounted next to the 8 ft. long sand pit shown in Figure 2.

Discussion

• A 4 x 7 ft. sign showing a Grey Crowned Crane’s actual wingspan will allow visitors to see how they measure up.
• A 4x8 ft. sign showing the distances various organisms can jump, with a printed ruler along the bottom, will allow visitors to measure how far they can jump while comparing their distance with that of a flea, grasshopper, American bullfrog, and cottontail rabbit.
• Information is better retained when it is interactive. The large signs will grab the visitor’s attention, which leads to an increase in sign reading. Once engaged, the ability to interactively participate leads to increased enjoyment and retention of the information presented.