

# Oregon Zoo's 'Elephant Lands' habitat now complete (Photos)

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 [oregonlive.com/multimedia/index.ssf/2015/12/oregon\\_zoos\\_elephant\\_lands\\_hab.html](http://oregonlive.com/multimedia/index.ssf/2015/12/oregon_zoos_elephant_lands_hab.html)

The crowd stood on the bridge, overlooking the south habitat of the Elephant Lands exhibit at the Oregon Zoo, eager with anticipation. A small cheer went up when the first elephant poked its hairy head through the gate.

Today was the grand opening of the completed Elephant Lands habitat, a project that [took nearly four years for planning and construction](#), and quadrupled the size of the zoo's previous elephant habitat. The \$57 million exhibit was funded through a 2008 zoo bond measure and with additional private funding.

The new exhibit covers 6-acres, of which 2/3 are accessible to the elephants, according to elephant curator Bob Lee.

"It's filled with choice and variety. Lots of different topography. There's hillsides for them to run around. There's mud walls for them to play in. Massive pools for them to dunk themselves in. We couldn't be happier with all the work that's gone into it," says Lee.

"We took 60 years of knowledge and information that we've gathered from working with elephants here and really put it into design of this new habitat," says Lee.

The south habitat was the final piece in the exhibit, which allowed the elephants access to the [north habitat](#) and Forest Hall from the encounter habitat opened in February 2014.

The zoo's interim director Teri Dresler said the completion and opening of Elephant Lands was a "momentous occasion."

"It's truly a magnificent masterpiece of a project. and we are so proud to be here sharing it with all of you."

--Kristyna Wentz-Graff

[Oregon Zoo elephants test new pool's waters](#) The Oregon Zoo's new Elephant Lands habitat includes a new 160,000-gallon pool. On Saturday, December 12, 2105, 3-year-old Lily and her mom, Rose-Tu tested the waters.

# Elephant Lands Now Open at Oregon Zoo

[zoonation.org/elephant-lands-now-open-at-oregon-zoo/](http://zoonation.org/elephant-lands-now-open-at-oregon-zoo/)

1/18/2016

The \$57 million Elephant Lands expansion at the [Oregon Zoo](#) in Portland is now open.



Zoo Nation

Elephant Lands at the Oregon Zoo has been an eight-year project in the making, and from the looks of the new exhibit, the hard work is really paying off.



Zoo Nation

The former elephant exhibit gave the elephants about a quarter of the space that they can now access and the new exhibit has been designed to maximize comfort for the animals.



Zoo Nation



Zoo Nation



## Zoo Nation

One aspect of the design that will promote the health of the elephants is the 3 to 4 feet of sand that covers the habitat. Walking on sand is better for the animals' foot health.



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According to zoo officials, elephants will have more choices and opportunities in the new exhibit which offers pools for swimming, indoor and outdoor spaces, and options of when and where to eat and drink. Zoo guests will also be able to get closer to the elephants than they could on the previous habitat.



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