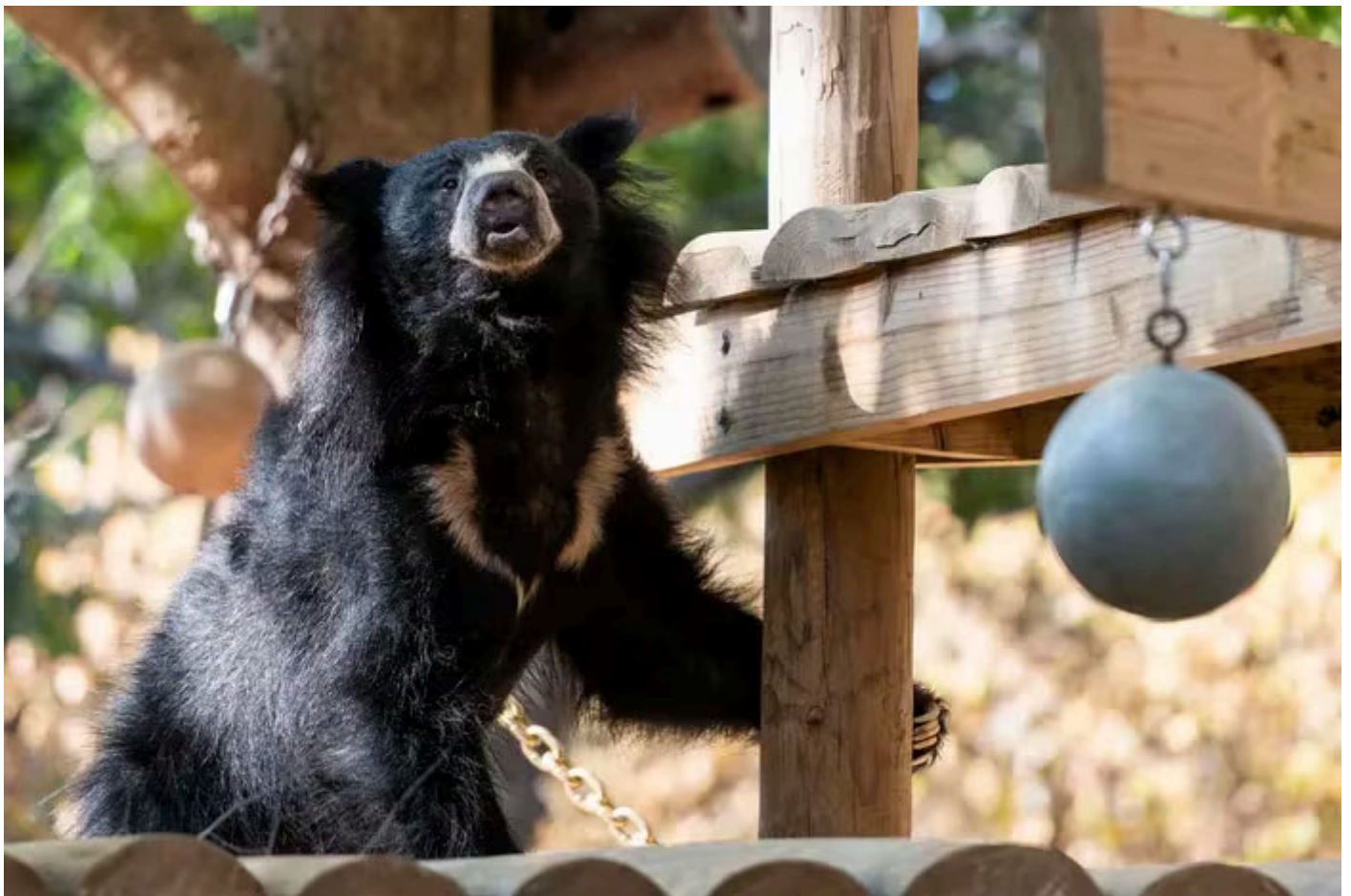




## The Philadelphia Zoo announces a \$20 million bear exhibit expansion

The Bear Country expansion signals a growth for the Zoo's bear breeding program. Plus the bears get heated pools.



Bhalu, a Sloth Bear, plays inside the bear enclosure at the Philadelphia Zoo. The zoo announced a new bear enclosure after receiving a \$5 million gift from the W.P. Carey Foundation. The project will expan ... [Read more](#)  
Allie Ippolito / For The Inquirer

by Rita Giordano

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America's first zoo announced Thursday that it will soon embark on a \$20 million transformation of its Bear Country exhibit. The project, which will begin later this year or early 2025 and be completed in 2026, includes creation of a state-of-the-art third bear habitat, renovation of the two existing bear habitats, and extending the zoo's innovative Zoo360 trail system.

"This project is the first major renovation in our campus in over 10 years," said Jo-Elle Mogerman, zoo president and CEO, at an event Thursday to announce the expansion.

"Bear Country is being designed with contemporary natural spaces that will allow the bears to thrive and engage in a greater range of natural behaviors just like they would in the wild," Mogerman said. "It will allow our guests to come and experience bears in ways that they haven't been able to do before."



New glass viewing areas will allow zoo visitors to get closer to the bears, and the planned enhancements will create new learning opportunities, according to zoo officials.

The renovation and expansion will also mean lots of new benefits for the bears — new climbing structures, digging pits, and heated pools.

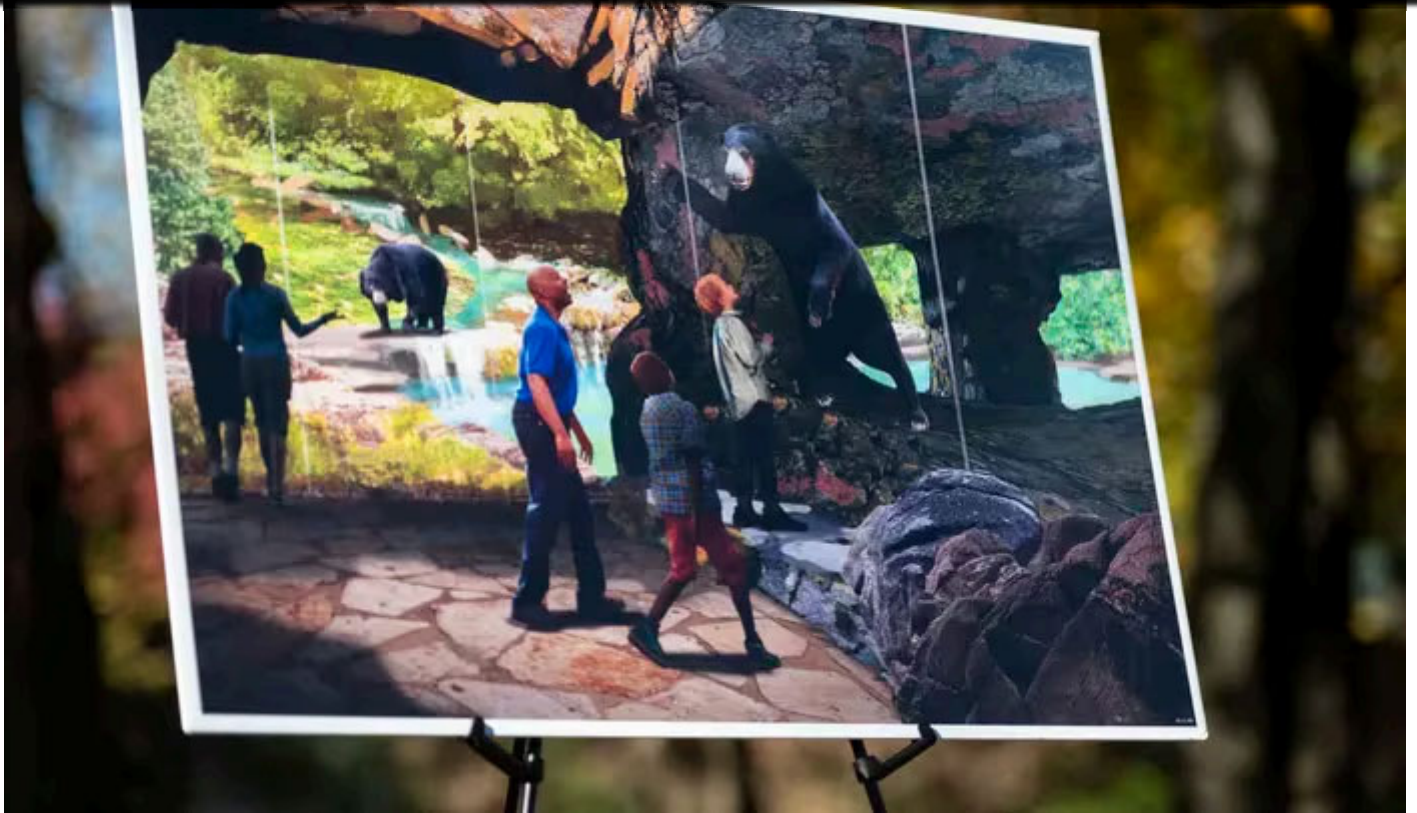
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“I’m not joking. They’re getting heated pools,” said Rachel Metz, the zoo’s vice president of animal well-being and conservation. “We’re also building a new cub-friendly yard that will allow new baby bears to learn how to be bears in a safe and comfortable way with their mother.”

In addition to improved habitats, the bears will have more space — all of which will aid in the zoo’s bear breeding program, according to Metz.





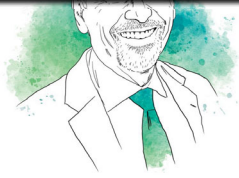
A rendering of the new bear enclosure at the Philadelphia Zoo is on display at an event at the zoo to announce a \$5 million gift from the W.P. Carey Foundation on Thursday.

Allie Ippolito / For The Inquirer

During the construction, the zoo's two sloth bears, Bhalu and Kayla, will be moved to another [Association of Zoos and Aquariums](#) facility as will the zoo's colony of Humboldt penguins. Sinchi, the zoo's Andean bear, has been paired with a female at another zoo. But Metz said the zoo will get a mating pair of Andean bears when the Bear Country expansion is complete.

Funding for the Bear Country project is coming from the zoo, private donors, and public support including the [William Penn Foundation](#), the City of Philadelphia, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

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The project received a major boost in the form of \$5 million donation from the [W.P. Carey Foundation](#) in honor of family patriarch Francis J. Carey, nicknamed G-Bear for his love of bears.

His grandson, foundation chairman William P. Carey II, said he and his family are looking forward to the expanded and improved exhibit and the possibilities it will create.

“My grandfather was always pushing us all to have lots of kids, and I’ll be doing the same thing for the bears — lots of cubs — because it’s awesome to see them, and something that’s very special for all the kids,” Carey said.

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William P. Carey II, President of the W.P. Carey Foundation, speaks to a crowd at the Philadelphia Zoo to announce a new bear enclosure after receiving a \$5 million gift from the W.P. Carey Foundation c ... **Read more**  
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