

Big Cat Crossing, Philadelphia Zoo

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



The oldest zoo in America, the Philadelphia Zoo, was built 155 years ago and started using galvanizing more than 25 years ago. Their affinity for this coating of choice primarily stemmed from how long it lasted – especially without any maintenance. Zoos are held to strict standards about visible rust and upkeep on their enclosures, so the use of hot-dip galvanized steel continues to grow in this market. Furthermore, life-cycle costs are a prominent driver of the zoo's decision making which leads to hot-dip galvanizing being specified quite often.

In May 2014, the Philadelphia Zoo opened The Big Cat Crossing, an elevated, caged walkway fourteen feet above the main visitors' walking path. The walkway winds around the park for over 300 feet providing the lions, tigers, pumas, snow leopards, and jaguars a path to stretch their legs and gaze upon the people below. The caged portion of the walkway consists of five foot diameter tubular steel rings and nearly hidden mesh netting that optimizes the free space for the animals and the visual experience for visitors.



The Big Cat Crossing is an extension of Zoo360, which aims to get the animals moving around and experiencing new things. The Philadelphia Zoo is the nation's first zoo to embrace this concept, and already has plans for more walkways and/or access for more animals. As the zoo market is tight-knit, the concept will also spread to other cities who are already keen on more naturalistic enclosures and designs to keep the animals engaged and active.

As is typical in such projects, the job needed to be completed for the opening of the new season. The predictability of the galvanizer's deliveries coupled with the lack of installation touch-up due to the galvanized coating made the date very achievable. Hot-dip galvanizing ensures the safety of the animals and visitors with its durable, long-lasting protection.

Now, the only question is "who is watching who?" ■



Galvanizer

American Galvanizing Co., Inc.

Fabricator

Joe Milani
Crescent Ironworks

Architect

CLR Design

Engineer

David Franseen
Krech Ojard & Associates

Other

WH Myers

Recreation & Entertainment