



Center for Great Apes

Wauchula, Florida



With a winding maze of chutes and walkways woven throughout the treetops, the Center for Great Apes is a charitable organization created to provide sanctuary for chimpanzees and orangutans that have retired from the entertainment industry, completed research, or formerly served as pets.

After working in Borneo tracking and observing orangutans in 1984, Patti Ragan developed a passion for great apes. She had the vision and desire to provide long-term care and sanctuary for the animals, who can never be returned to the wild, and worked to develop an enjoyable, functional, and durable facility to achieve this goal. Ragan bought a tract of land in south central Florida and created a facility that would provide the animals with a habitat as close to natural as possible.

It was also necessary for the structure to be hardy and durable, as the apes will scratch, chew, and abuse any building material. The humid coastal environment, corrosive ape wastes, and continuous habitat cleanings also would provide extreme challenges for corrosion protection. A duplex system of paint over hot-dip galvanized steel was the ideal solution to meet all of these needs.

A duplex system combines the superior corrosion protection of galvanized steel with the additional benefits of another corrosion protection system, such as powder coating or paint, to extend the life of the piece even further. It also allows you to match your project to a specific color scheme, if desired. For the Center, Ragan wished to paint the project in shades of green and brown in order to help the structures blend with the natural environment, without sacrificing the long-lasting, maintenance-free durability provided by galvanized steel.

The durable zinc coating of the galvanized steel is extremely difficult to penetrate, with zinc-iron alloy layers of up to 250 DPN hardness protecting the steel underneath. This means the galvanized steel can stand strong against the gnawing and pounding of the apes, unlike paint alone, which would simply flake off and be rendered ineffective for corrosion protection. The cathodic protection created during the galvanizing process also helps to this end. Cathodic protection means the zinc will ionically sacrifice itself to protect areas around small scratches – preventing rust and corrosion from spreading like wildfire across a structure upon the first small breach. →

Galvanizer

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Specifier

Center for Great Apes

duplex system



American Galvanizers Association



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The habitat areas are large domed or barn-shaped structures made of hot dip galvanized steel beam, angle, channel, and plate, with heavy wire mesh used to create the side panels. Inside the habitats you will find an assortment of toys and swings, where the apes spend their days playing, eating, and napping. There is a concrete night house equipped with hot dip galvanized steel cages where the apes go at night to sleep, as well as a veterinary clinic on site.

steel, these structures will require little to no maintenance for more than 75 years, making wise use of the donated funds. Because the apes can live to be 60 years old, a corrosion package with long-term efficiency is critical. After discussing the extended time to first maintenance and the benefits of hot dip galvanizing, Ragan replied, "It is good to know these structures will be here providing sanctuary to these apes long after I am gone."



The clinic, night house, and all habitats are connected by a system of chutes and walkways elevated 10–15 feet above the ground to give the apes the feeling of traveling through the trees. These chutes and walkways are also made of hot dip galvanized steel angle, channel, and mesh. They have tracks made of galvanized flat bar welded down the lower inside portion of the walkways in order to give the apes a smooth surface for walking.

Now home to more than 40 great apes, the Center will serve as a sanctuary for the life of its inhabitants. The duplex system of paint over hot-dip galvanized steel means the structure will stand strong and maintenance-free against corrosive moisture and waste, and general wear-and-tear from the apes. Galvanized steel will allow Ragan to achieve her dream of an efficient, safe, and happy home for these retired animals. 🐼

The Center for Great Apes is a charitable organization supported only by donors from across the globe. By utilizing hot-dip galvanized



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