



## Client

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo (2011)

## Project Type

Multimedia guide

## Industry

Zoos and Aquariums

## Solution/Module

 inSitu Foundation

 inSitu MyMobile - iOS Edition

## Case Study

# Cleveland Metroparks Zoo



## About Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo creates compelling experiences that connect people with wildlife and inspire personal responsibility for conserving the natural world. The Zoo is home to 3000 animals in six bi thematic zones, including a large and diverse collection of primate species. The Zoo's educational staff provides conservation programs to youth, schools, families and the general public, with the goal of teaching respect for animals. They also hold several popular special events per year, such as Boo at the Zoo, an annual Halloween event. The Zoo aims to be a family and educational destination, attracting over 1 million visitors every year.

## The Challenge

For Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, there were two main challenges:

The first challenge was that Cleveland Metroparks Zoo is a large site, 183 acres in total. It is challenging for many visitors to navigate, because the paper map cannot show the scale of the site, or help guide them to some of the more remotely located exhibits. The Zoo needed a way to assist visitors with wayfinding, guide them to special activities or help them to find amenities such as restaurants or gift shops. Jeanne Debonis, project leader, added: "...as funny as it may sound, it is also important to show visitors where they can find something to eat, or use the washroom!"

Second, it is not practical to present graphic signs within animal exhibits that display large amounts of text, but this leaves visitors without some vital material that could significantly enhance their experience. The Zoo needed a way to give visitors access to additional information about the animals they were viewing onsite, on the spot.

*“We are using inSitu to enhance our relationship with our visitors by providing them practical, accurate and real time information.”*

Sue Allen

Zoo’s Director of Marketing and  
Public relation

## The Solution

Ms. Debonis remarked that to be attractive to visitors, it is important for the Zoo to offer something fun and interactive.

For several months, the Zoo had been examining the possibility of addressing these issues using a multimedia guide. Jeanne DeBonis, who spearheaded this project, elaborated: “We wanted a practical, GPS-enabled application that could help visitors by telling them exactly where they are, and guide them to the exhibits they want to see. When they are at an exhibit, we wanted them to have access to more information rather than having to wait until they could look it up at home. InSitu was in line with our draft and met our needs.” The Zoo needed an app that could be easily updated by non-technical staff, and easily changed as new information became available, exhibits changed, etc.

The app was launched along with a new elephant exhibit. The focus of this new exhibit is on showing how people and animals live together (especially in Africa); inSitu provides this contextual information, along with audio and video content.

The new exhibit is 5 acres and has its own map. inSitu allows clients to place maps and points on larger maps, which allows for multiple levels of navigation. Each map is GPS enabled, providing guidance for visitors on how to navigate the site. Points of Interest on the maps show visitors where special events are happening and provide schedules.



## The Benefits

Using inSitu Solutions™, the Zoo is reaching out to visitors in a new and dynamic way; the application is fun, easy to use and easy to update. It is an effective informational, educational and promotional tool.

Visitors are able to explore information relating to the exhibit while they are onsite, rather than having to go home to view it online. Parents can use the app to help their children better understand and appreciate the animals and their habitats. Eventually, the Zoo can choose to extend the app to other devices (such as Android phones), and online using the web-version of the app. This will assist in promoting pre and post visit activities, and provide additional information for educators.

With this application the Zoo can also highlight the different stores and restaurants inside the site. It allows stores to attract people and visitors to find what they need.

The content development team can not only continuously work on developing extended materials for other exhibits at the Zoo but also improve the available visitor experience thanks to the analytics provided by the system. This ensures that information will remain current, special events Points of Interest can be added and removed as needed, and visitors can be updated of specific, practical items (such as washroom closures, changes to navigation, etc.).

As an added bonus, the app reduces the need for paper maps and reduces printing and environmental costs. This is a major benefit to the Zoo, which aims to be a leader in green site management.

