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ZOO, ZOOM! ZIP LINE/CHALLENGE COURSES OPEN FOR SEASON ON SATURDAY AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM; IT'S EPIC FUN FOR AGES 5 AND UP

Two courses test physical agility and mental toughness – and anyone can conquer them

Tacoma, Wash. – Zip line/challenge adventure ZOOM reopens Saturday, April 6, at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

ZOOM is more than a zip line; it's an aerial activity course that includes a number of challenges such as a swinging log bridge strung between trees; a high wire to walk; and a fishermen's net strung between trees to climb through. And lots more.

And, yes, there are sections of zip line to put some zing into the adventure experience.

ZOOM will be open weekends through June 14. It opens daily for the summer season on June 15.

There are two distinct circuits to ZOOM, one for kids as young as 5, sized just right for smaller children, and one with appeal for a range of ages, including adventure-seeking adults.



A Discovery Course challenger starts down a section of zip line at the zoo.

Super Kid

Ages: 5 and up

Minimum rider height: 3 feet,

3 inches

Course height off ground:

5.5 feet

Cost: \$19.95, plus zoo admission or membership

Discovery

Ages: 8 and up

Minimum rider height: 4 feet Course height off ground:

Up to 30 feet

Cost: \$29.95 plus zoo admission or membership

Beginning Saturday, Zoom will operate these hours during the spring, summer and early fall.

April 6-June 14: Saturdays and Sundays only, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

June 15 – Sept. 2: Daily, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sept. 3-Sept. 29: Saturdays and Sundays only, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Members of the military and groups of 15 or more receive a 10 percent discount. In addition, zoo members will receive discounts on specific dates to be announced.



Both ZOOM circuits are cousins to the popular Zip Wild zip line/challenge courses that opened last summer at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park near Eatonville.

Zip Wild will resume operations for the season there on May 4.

All of the courses were built and are operated by Deep Forest Challenge, a company with extensive experience in the industry.

A young boy carefully walks a high wire on the Discovery course.

Though there are some family resemblances, the ZOOM courses at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium are quite different than those at Northwest Trek.

They're laid out differently, the challenges vary and the overall experience is distinctive.

On the Super Kid course, participants scale a short wall, clamber through a net, navigate a slatted wooden tunnel and conquer a number of other challenges.

Discover course riders negotiate a swinging, slatted bridge, walk between aerial platforms on a series of logs, and navigate a high wire, in addition to other aerial obstacles.

One of the more interesting challenges is a series of zig-zag steps, each suspended from ropes. Riders also will zip over the fence that encloses the main zoo grounds. They then must conquer a horizontal climbing net between two high-in-the-trees platforms before zipping back.

"These are far more than zip lines," said Donna Powell, the zoo's business and administrative services manager. "They're challenging, and the obstacles along the way are designed to test participants and provide a sense of exhilaration and adventure."

"They also encourage people, particularly kids, to get outside and enjoy nature, which is one of our key goals here at the zoo," she added.

Participants must be in good health, and there is a 275-pound weight limit in addition to the height restrictions.

Closed-toed shoes are required on ZOOM; long pants are recommended. Dangling jewelry is not permitted and hair must be tied back.

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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo and aquarium, promotes responsible stewardship of the world's resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).