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**Micke Grove Zoo Celebrates Grand Reopening Following COVID-19 Closure**  
***Residents are Welcomed Back Starting October 26<sup>th</sup> to See What's New at the Zoo***

After being closed to guests since mid-March due to COVID-19, the Micke Grove Zoo is thrilled to announce their grand reopening on October 26, 2020 with enhanced protocols and procedures in place to ensure the health and safety of Zoo guests, staff and animals.

The grand reopening begins Monday October 26 - Sunday, November 1, 2020 with new hours from 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Beginning on Monday, November 2 through February 23, 2021, the Zoo operating hours will remain the same from 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. but will be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. The first 25 guests each day during the first week of the reopening will receive a free Micke Grove Zoo face mask. The Zoo is limited to 75 guests at a time due to COVID-19 restrictions.

“While this time away from our guests has been difficult for our animal residents and Zoo staff, we have taken advantage of the closure opportunity to ensure that all animals have safe and well-functioning exhibits and living areas that would normally be more difficult to achieve when open to the public,” said San Joaquin County Parks and Recreation Administrator, Judy Vasbinder. “Many of these improvements are not visible to guests, but they ensure that our animals are receiving a high standard of care.”

Some of the improvements include:

- Investing in structural improvements for the animals.
- Conducting annual exams for all animals and implementing training programs with many species to assist with enriching the health and quality of life for all that reside at the Zoo. Visitors might catch a glimpse of a training session while visiting the Zoo.
- Taking extra safety precautions due to COVID-19 – such as masking and PPE – to ensure the health and well-being of the animals, especially since some of the Zoo’s species are susceptible to the virus.
- Creating a presentation area to allow for animal ambassador encounters.
- Deep cleaning of animal exhibits and large areas of the Zoo.
- Preparing for the Zoo’s newest addition which was acquired early this summer and will be introduced to the public in the immediate future.

Micke Grove Zoo is home to over 170 individual animals representing over 51 different species including mammals, reptiles, birds, amphibians and invertebrates representing six of the world's seven continents. Many of the species are endangered or threatened in the wild. The Zoo is also home to a variety of animals native to California such as the golden eagle. These animals have been injured and rescued from the wild and are non-releasable.

To ensure a safe and healthy guest experience, Micke Grove Zoo officials have enacted a range of temporary changes that comply with guidelines outlined by local and state health authorities which include:

- A maximum of 75 guests will be allowed in the Zoo at one time to ensure proper social distancing.
- Masks will be required for all guests over two years old.

- Social distancing of six feet is strongly encouraged.
- Increased number of handwashing and sanitizing locations throughout the Zoo.
- Maintaining robust cleaning routines.
- Some exhibits will have additional COVID security measures.

“We are thrilled to once again welcome guests back to Micke Grove Zoo which, a favorite of San Joaquin’s kids of all ages. While things won’t look exactly the same for the time-being, just having the opportunity to visit the zoo and interact with the animals brings true joy to families and makes things feel a little more normal during this stressful time,” said San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors Chair, Kathy Miller. “The Zoo is a very special place which provides a safe outdoor experience that is family friendly, where people can relax, learn, connect with nature and find ways to support the Zoo’s mission to conserve and enrich wildlife.”

For more information about the Micke Grove Zoo Grand Reopening or to purchase annual passes, visit [www.sjparks.com](http://www.sjparks.com) or call (209) 331-7400.

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