

# BREC BATON ROUGE ZOO FACT SHEET

## Marine life aquarium

### History

Since 1960, BREC's Baton Rouge Zoo has been a dream of the Recreation and Parks Commission. Five years later, that dream was made possible by taxpayers who passed a millage election that provide three-quarters of a million dollars needed to build the facility. A Zoo Director was then employed and plans were under way for the zoo.

After three years of construction, BREC's Baton Rouge Zoo opened to the public on Easter Sunday, 1970. The zoo was fully embraced by the residents of East Baton Rouge, and the community felt proud of their zoo. Buckskin Bill, a television personality, said "Baton Rouge need a zoo" and this helped to rally the residents of East Baton Rouge.

In 2005, the possibility of adding an aquarium was first recognized. After years of talk and planning, BREC realized that the only way they could add a zoo was if the zoo was to relocate. The zoo will be moving to a new and larger location this year. The construction for the aquarium will begin in May 2016 and will be completed in spring 2017.

The 250,000-gallon aquarium will be inhabited by multiple species of marine life including penguins, manatees, sharks, sea turtles and various species of fish. Throughout this exhibit, there will be an interactive penguin exhibit as well as an interactive shark exhibit.

### A Facility of BREC

BREC's Baton Rouge Zoo is owned and operated by the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC), a public government agency. BREC was created by an act of the Louisiana State Legislature in 1946 and is governed by a nine member appointed Commission. BREC is funded by Ad Valorem taxes, fees and charges and grants, gifts and donations. The BREC system is accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies. BREC has won the prestigious National Gold Medal Award for excellence in Recreation and Park Administration in 1975 and 1991. BREC was a finalist for the award in 1998.

### Community Support Organization

BREC's Baton Rouge Zoo is supported by the Friends of the Baton Rouge Zoo organization. The Friends' mission is to support the Zoo and its programs. The Friends work closely with BREC to raise funds for the capital projects, increase attendance through events, and to promote community involvement. The Friends of the Zoo has a Federal Internal Revenue Service 501(c)(3) status.