

## KOIN 6 "After Years, Oregon Zoo's Elephant Lands Opens"

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YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMxjD-OI9d0>

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KOIN 6 News "After Years, Oregon Zoo's Elephant Lands Opens"

### **Dan Tilken**

The new home for the elephants opens at the Oregon Zoo. The elephant keepers say it is all for the elephants quality of life but critics argue it is still inhumane. This is KOIN 6 news at 4 o'clock, I'm Dan Tilken.

### **Jennifer Hoff**

And I'm Jennifer Hoff. The new exhibit after millions of taxpayer dollars, years of construction, and a fair share of controversy.

### **Dan Tilken**

Zoo leaders describe it as a new era of elephant welfare. Protesters today argue it is a waste of money and far from adequate.

### **Jennifer Hoff**

So our Amy Frazier digging deeper today into both sides. She's live at the zoo. Amy?

### **Amy Frazier**

The new habitat is called Elephant Lands. Starting tomorrow you'll be able to come here to the zoo and check it out for yourself. Some say it promotes animal welfare, others argue the only real improvement is for visitors.

I found out Elephant Lands at the Oregon Zoo is on 6 acres and four times the size of the old habitat. I met with the zoo's Elephant Curator Bob Lee.

To Bob Lee: Is this a big enough space for these elephants to be healthy?

### **Bob Lee**

Absolutely. What we've done here is given them choice and determination. We keep them motivated to move and explore. That's the critical part. It's not just the space, it's the activity—

**Amy Frazier** 00:01:16

At a dedication ceremony zoo leaders say the \$57 million project, funded by taxpayers, allows elephants to be elephants, foraging for food, moving from space to space on what's designed to be cushioning sand and choosing whether to be outside or indoors.

**Teri Dresler** – Oregon Zoo Interim Director

We hope to really inspire people to create a better future for wildlife and what a better way to do that.

**Amy Frazier**

Others, though, disagree.

**Courtney Scott** – Free the Oregon Zoo Elephants

Elephants are like Orcas, uniquely unsuited to captivity.

**Amy Frazier**

A group called Free the Oregon Zoo Elephants and In Defense of Animals protested at the Oregon Zoo saying the new habitat is overpriced and inadequate.

**Courtney Scott** 00:01:56

The most inadequate thing is the space. It's really not much more space than what they had before when you subtract the areas for the visitors and the staff, it's about four acres.

**Amy Frazier**

Zoo leaders argue they're already seeing improvements in the animals.

**Bob Lee**

We've been seeing some changes already in the elephant's feet, the way that their pad looks. But one of the greatest parts about it is seeing that their activity levels have increased.

**Amy Frazier**

Still protesters say the zoo is not providing what the elephants need to thrive and they tell me they'll continue to fight against elephants in captivity and breeding.

To Bob Lee: Different groups are calling this an elephant wasteland. What do you say to that.

**Bob Lee**

Well, I think folks should come in and take a look for themselves at what we've offered for the animals. Take a look at the lives they're leading and make the decision for themselves.