



Friends of Bear Hollow, Inc.
% Memorial Park
293 Gran Ellen Drive
Athens, GA 30606
friendsofbearhollow@gmail.com

friendsofbearhollow.org
Facebook: [/bearhollowfriends](https://www.facebook.com/bearhollowfriends)

January 14, 2019

Dear Neighbors and Friends,

Greetings from the Friends of Bear Hollow, Inc! We are a non-profit organization run by volunteers in support of Bear Hollow Zoo in Memorial Park. The Zoo is an important part of our community and we want to give back to the animals and facility we love. We are happy to let you know that we are here and ready to work!

Our first Zoo project - SPLOST proposal

Our first project has been to submit a SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) project proposal that would completely renovate the zoo. Working with the Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services staff, we submitted a proposal that implements nearly all of the zoo improvements that were envisioned by the community at the Memorial Park visioning sessions held in 2017. If our project is included and the SPLOST package is supported by the voters, the zoo will be completely rebuilt and replaced to create a facility that is modern, convenient, and reflects the deep commitment and respect our community holds for environmental education. The project includes:

- New entryway, new perimeter fencing, and behind-the-scenes staff vehicle access
- Restrooms for visitors, located inside the zoo
- New walking pathways for visitors which offer greater accessibility
- New educational signage and exhibits that are modern and unique
- All new, naturalistic habitats for the animals
- New buildings to house the reptile collection and animal nutrition kitchen
- Creation of a wetland garden exhibit
- New program animal and quarantine spaces
- Infrastructure necessary to support a modern and environmentally conscious facility

Why should we renovate the zoo?

It's been over 30 years since significant investment was made in the facility. It's been well-loved over the years - thousands of visitors, students, scout and civic groups have enjoyed the environmental education programming and visiting the non-releasable, native wildlife that call Bear Hollow home. We have reached a critical moment, and the zoo risks being "loved to death" without significant reinvestment. We thank you for your help and support in working towards a rejuvenated facility for our community.

You can help!

Support the project! A citizen review committee will recommend which projects should be included in the final package that will go to the voters. Time is of the essence! Reach out and make your voice heard! Here are the ways you can show your support:



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1. **Send us a letter in support of the project.** Tell us why the zoo is important to you and why you want to see it remade. Pictures that we can share with the committee would be very helpful. You can [complete a testimonial](#) form on our website, as well. **We need these letters and testimonials by Jan. 24th.**
<https://friendsofbearhollow.org/SPLOST>
2. **Comment on your support during the public comment period.** The presentations will be posted online and the county will announce when public comments on projects can be made. Visit the county SPLOST website to review the presentation and make your comments.
<https://www.accgov.com/splost>
3. **Contact your commissioner and the mayor to express your support for the project.** Contact information is available here:
<https://www.athensclarkecounty.com/DocumentCenter/View/60/Mayor--Commission-Contact-Information?bidId=>
4. **Check our website for updates and other ways to get involved.**
friendsofbearhollow.org/SPLOST

Thank you for your support and for being a friend to Bear Hollow!

Sincerely,

*Jenny Kvapil
Joan Sheldon
Sherrie Hines
Chris Sparnicht
Mo Carter*

The Friends of Bear Hollow, Inc.

