

Rodger Ehnstrom Nature Center

Located at the Chahinkapa Zoo in Wahpeton, North Dakota, is the Rodger Ehnstrom Nature Center (ENC) which features a rock exhibit, an insect exhibit, big game mounts, four live animal displays and five televisions with more than 30 wildlife videos. It was dedicated in 1989 as the hub of all zoo education. The mission of Chahinkapa Zoo and the ENC is to promote wildlife conservation and understanding through a superior zoological park, environmental interpretation, quality management and maintenance and enjoyable use of leisure experiences. The Nature Center was named after Rodger Ehnstrom who was an early supporter of the Center. His family still lives in Wahpeton.

The Chahinkapa Zoo provides natural habitats for its animals and is educational for visitors as there is interpretive information throughout the zoo grounds. Over 200 magnificent animals make their homes at the zoo including: snow leopards, Bengal tigers, otters, wallabies, gibbon apes, llamas, elk, bison, cougars, elk, gemsbok, grizzly bears, camels, monkeys and 60 varieties of birds. Many of these animals housed at Chahinkapa Zoo are native, hardy animals similar to those in Moldova. In 2005, the zoo was accredited for the third term by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA).

Running adjacent to the Chahinkapa Zoo and ENC is a park that lies along the banks of the Red River of the North. This natural setting is a genuine haven for song birds, waterfowl and



wildlife. The early Native American Settlers named the site "Chahinkapa" meaning "end of the woods." Two rivers (Bois de Sioux and Ottertail) join here to form the Red River at the spot where the Minnesota timber land ended and the grassy plains of Dakota began.

In 1903, Wahpeton purchased the land from the federal government. Thirty years later the first Park Board was established under the direction of R.J. Hughes. The Chahinkapa Zoo was also established at this time with modest animal displays.

For more information:

http://www.chahinkapazoo.com/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

February 2010

