

Maymont Foundation – Animal Exhibit Site Improvements City of Richmond, Virginia

NARRATIVE

As Maymont approaches its hundredth anniversary as a public space in 2025, the Maymont Foundation is embarking on a \$11.75 million series of enhancements designed to enrich guest experience, expand accessibility and capacity, and ensure a more resilient future. The Maymont Foundation has secured an \$8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) awarded under a program to boost tourism throughout the country, and the Maymont Foundation will raise \$3.75 million in private funds.

Our vision for a resilient future: Maymont thriving as a public space for another hundred years (and beyond).

The Investment

This \$11.75 million project will enhance two of Maymont's most public-facing assets: the Maymont Mansion and the Virginia Wildlife Trail at Maymont. Work is scheduled to begin in Fall 2023.

In the Maymont Mansion, funds will be invested in replacing the 60-year-old roof, returning it to its original red slate, and modernizing its ventilation, fire suppression and safety systems. The new roof and environmental systems will better protect the building and its collections well into the 21st century, so more guests can experience what Maymont teaches about this pivotal period in Virginia at the turn of the 20th century.

Throughout Maymont's rescued native Virginia wildlife habitats, funds will be invested to reconfigure a more fluid connectivity between locations and to accommodate more guests at a time, with viewing options for people of different abilities. The redesign will incorporate facilities for enhanced educational programming and provide the animals and their caregivers with safer spaces as well. Two additional species will also be added to tell a wider story of Virginia's ecosystem.

The Impact

The project will steward Maymont's historical and environmental resources to accommodate the preservation, adaptation and enrichment of experiences it provides to over 700,000 guests per year. Here are the areas that Maymont 2025 will enhance, building more resiliency at Maymont so that no matter what life-changing events it faces over the next century it will remain a thriving public space of Virginia history, environment and education.

The Virginia Wildlife Trail at Maymont

Maymont cares for over 300 native and domestic animals, including more than 85 different species, many of which are rescued, rehabilitated wildlife that cannot be released to the wild. The Virginia Wildlife Trail highlights keystone predators, birds of prey, and animal rescue and recovery stories, while educating guests about some of our region's most important animals.

Beginning at The Robins Nature Center, the first component of the trail features aquatic and semiaquatic animals of the James River and Chesapeake Bay, such as fish, turtles, sturgeon, and river otters. The second component starts at Maymont's bison habitat and concludes at its black bear habitat, with habitats for wildlife such as bobcats, coyotes, elk, raptors, porcupines, and red foxes along the way.

This project will allow more Maymont guests to learn about longstanding native species, species that are no longer considered native but once were, as well as some of Virginia's newest regional additions. Enhancements provided by the Virginia Wildlife Trail will include two new habitats, adding porcupine and coyote, and improvements to the existing bobcat, fox, bear, and raptor habitats.

Accessible connections are proposed through the new and renovated habitats. To reduce impervious cover and limit grading impacts on tree roots, these new connections take the form of elevated metal boardwalks that allow water to drain through to the ground below. These boardwalks will be a combination of weathered steel, stainless steel, galvanized steel, and aluminum components. Weathered steel posts were selected to bring a natural earth tone into the material palette. Stainless steel mesh netting was selected for the railing infill due to its light visual impact, allowing visitors to see through to the habitats beyond. The mesh netting will be either a coffee brown or matte black color to help it blend in with the environment. For continuity of materials palette, galvanized steel handrails were selected to match the galvanized wire mesh enclosures and chain link fence located at various habitats. Finally, galvanized steel decking was selected for the boardwalks due to its weathered gray color, ease of maintenance, and the ability to one day be recycled. This decking will be affixed to the substructure in a manner to create a solid feeling surface to pedestrians, free of bounce or metallic "clanking" with the use of a combination of tack welding, and/or nylon sleepers and washers as part of the bolt down system.