



Queen's Park Zoo Bear, circa 1910 - New Westminister Museum and Archives accession # IH001.26

It's A Zoo Out There!

The Victoria Long Weekend often is the 'unofficial' kick-off of the summer and New Westminster Parks and Recreation celebrates this with the opening of many summer park services including the Queen's Park Petting Farm.

The Petting Farm has been a unique and rare City attraction since it first opened as a Zoo in 1906. The origin of the Petting Farm first started out as an informal Zoo in the late 1800s. A city-sponsored zoo was proposed in late 1905 by the Chief of the Fire Department and the Warden of the Provincial Jail. The proposal was accepted by City Council, of the day, and opened in early 1906.

The Zoo contained a variety of wild animals including bear, wolves, coyotes, deer, and tropical birds. The *Weekly Columbian* newspaper, on April 10, 1906, p.

32, reported, "*The coyotes and cougars were brought up in cases by an express wagon, but the bears were led to their new quarters by Messrs. H Gilchrist and G. McDonald. They caused much amusement by their attempts to climb telegraph poles and railings*".

Maintenance and animal care was provided by the Park Ranger with a little help from the Queen's Park Fire Station firefighters who fed and cared for the animals in their spare time. The Zoo was phased out in the 1920s during tougher economic times, but was revived in 1960 as the *Queen's Park Petting Farm*, which has provided smiles, excitement and joy to children for the past 47 years.

Today, the Petting Farm boasts a wide range of farm animals such as pigs, chickens, bunnies, goats, calves, ducks and more. The Petting Farm is all about creating a special opportunity for urban children, and their families, to learn about farm animals and to experience the joy of petting them. *Farm Leaders* are on hand to teach you about the animals, answer questions and ensure that you have a positive experience. Lesley Cole, Farm Manager comments, "*It's priceless to see the look on*

a child's face when interacting with the animals. Children also like quizzing our Farm Leaders about the ages of the animals, what they eat and where their mommies are."

If you have not been to the Petting Farm recently, plan a trip soon. Queen's Park is the perfect summer family picnic destination with its concession, washrooms, playgrounds, picnic facilities and a spray park to cool down in.

The Queen's Park Petting Farm is open daily until Labour Day, from 10:00 am to 5:30 pm, and admission is by donation. For more details on the Petting Farm, please visit www.nwpr.bc.ca or call 604-777-5121.



Queen's Park Petting Farm Bison, circa 1905 - New Westminster Museum and Archives accession # IH007.56