

An enthusiastic and excited crowd of about 150 came to the East Park Reservoir on September 29 to celebrate the official groundbreaking for The Discovery Center. Speakers included Mayor Jim Kenney, Council President Darrell Clarke, Wm. Penn Foundation President Janet Haas, Managing Director Michael DiBerardinis, Parks & Recreation Commissioner Kathryn Ott Lovell, State Reps Vanessa Brown and Donna Bullock, DEP Commissioner Cindy Dunn, Tonnetta Graham, as well as representatives from Outward Bound and Audubon.



All of the speakers spoke to the importance of The Discovery Center to the community, the City, the region and the state. The excitement was palpable that this vision, which has taken years and much collaboration, is finally coming to fruition.

As an added treat, the McLane Family Challenge Course was already under construction on September 29, so attendees could get a glimpse of the fantastic new structure in progress. The Challenge Course was completed the following month.



Promptly after the official groundbreaking ceremony, our construction manager, Intech Construction, got right to work. The first steps included clearing trees and vegetation from the building site. After that, the crews quickly moved into grading and preparing the ground for construction. Fortunately, the historic berm didn't yield any major surprises and this work was completed by November.

By mid November the outline of the foundations began to rise and the underground utilities were installed.



Amazingly, the hundreds of birds who call the Reservoir their home have continued to flock to its waters, seemingly unperturbed by the construction going on at the southern end.

In late January, we paid a visit to The Challenge Program, a nonprofit that teaches construction skills to at-risk youth. Our architects, DIGSAU, have worked with TCP on a number of projects and, together, DIGSAU and TCP have created a unique and beautiful design for wood panels that will clad the Reservoir Drive side of the building. One of the most unique features of the panels is that they have little "caves" built in that can serve as shelters for birds - making The Discovery Center not only a bird sanctuary but an actual bird house! The panels will be installed after Intech completes its work.



While we may have lost a little time in the schedule, we are still on track for Outward Bound and Audubon to move into the building over the summer.



Stay tuned for the grand opening in September 2018!

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