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Brookshire Brothers' employees spend day at zoo

Group of volunteers from company devote day to making repairs and improvements to various parts of zoo

By STEVEN ALFORD
The Lufkin Daily News

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Ninety-degree temps and lots of roaming peacocks couldn't keep Brookshire Brothers' employees from working at the Ellen Trout Zoo Friday afternoon for the fifth annual "Zoo Work Day."

Once a year a group of volunteers gets together from Brookshires and devotes a day to making much-needed repairs and improvements to various parts of the zoo. This year's group tackled 23 projects in the sweltering heat — and they all did it with a smile.



Joel Andrews/The Lufkin Daily News (ENLARGE)

Lynn Duke, left, a Brookshire Brothers employee, works at the Ellen Trout Zoo Friday afternoon during the company's fifth annual 'Zoo Work Day.'

"It's a lot of hard work, but it's a great project to be a part of," said Lereigh Mason, a Brookshire Brothers' employee, who has taken part in the event for four years. "It makes you feel good to devote some of your time to helping the community."

The work groups tackled a whole host of complicated and sorely needed projects, including adding a new gate to the giraffe cage, re-doing material on the large cats area, adding new wiring the Kimono dragons' pen and carrying heavy road base to fill in a drainage ditch at the Malayan tiger's cage.

"It sure does help us out a lot," said Gordon Henley, zoo director. "They get a lot of things done out here and they were way ahead of schedule today."

Henley, who has been working at the zoo for 33 years, said they always appreciate the Brookshire Brothers' employees who come fix parts of the zoo. Staff at Brookshire Brothers came up with the workday concept five years ago and have been coming back each year since to find something new to repair.

"They are all 'can do' people. I haven't heard a single person complaining out here today," Henley said. "When things went wrong, they figured out a way to make it work."

Gloria McDonald, a spokeswoman for Brookshire Brothers, said a majority of the employees are maintenance workers from the company, as well as about 10 extra employees from the Campbell Group, located in Diboll.

"We had a lot of hard-working people out here today," McDonald said. "I'd say it went smoother than it has in the past."

The workdays are usually scheduled for early March, but this year the date they chose happened to be pouring rain when it came time to work. Even though the date was pushed back two months closer to summer, McDonald said they still had a strong turnout and accomplished a lot in a short amount of time.

"It was either a torrential downpour with 50-degree weather, or we work today in the sun with 90-degree weather," she said. "But it's all for a great cause, and we're always happy to help out our neighbors at the zoo."

Brookshire Brothers is donating a portion of the sales of their Hy-Top animal cookies to help support the Ellen Trout Zoo. A portion of the proceeds of the sale from each box of crackers will be directly donated to the zoo.

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