Hello Everyone! I hope you are enjoying your summer and surviving the heat wave. There have been so many changes and updates at the park… that I want to focus on some of the updates. Here they are!

**STAFF**: There have been many staffing changes at the park, as a result of the pandemic. We have 7 full-time staff at the park, currently, and no part-time staff. Click on the collage picture of our hardworking staff, which will open a page with larger photos, so you can get to know us! Also, there is a photo of 3 of our most dedicated volunteers that you may see around the park during a visit.

**BARNYARD GRAND RE-OPENING**: We cordially invite you to come visit us for our Grand Re-Opening of the Barnyard on August 15, 2021! What follows are all the events that brought us to this fateful reopening: On February 27, 2019, we were forced to close the Barnyard to the public due to the threat of a very contagious bird disease called Virulent Newcastle’s Disease. This mandatory quarantine affected all facilities that displayed birds to the public in L.A. County (and surrounding counties). Our birds were fine and healthy – the quarantine was designed to keep them protected. From that quarantine, we rolled right into a Barnyard closure because of Covid-19 and the inability to socially distance groups of people in the aisleways of the Barnyard. And, finally, we had a rabbit quarantine that affected us as of March 2021, ending in late July 2021. RHD (Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease) is a very serious illness that only affects rabbits and hares (in both captivity and the wild).

So… after 2 ½ years of our Barnyard being closed to the public, we are VERY EXCITED to announce the Grand Re-Opening on August 15, 2021!! The hours will be 9am until 2pm. That day, we will have our staff and volunteers giving animal talks and doing animal presentations. Plus, there will be activities for children and giveaways! In addition, the Hart Park Gift Shop and the Bookstore will be open for the first time in 2 ½ years, as well. And, don’t forget to visit our bison herd, which are located in the 22+ acre enclosure to the west of the Barnyard (just off La Loma Road). Here are a few pictures of our critters to remind you of our AWESOME facility and why you should come visit! After August 15th, the Barnyard will be open from 9am until 2pm, on all days the park is open (Note: Park is closed on Mondays). (Hours/Availability to visit Barnyard are subject to change without notice, due to unforeseen circumstances.)

**DUCK PEN RENOVATION**: Since October 2020, our duck enclosure has been getting a major facelift! This has been a huge construction project, with multiple County crafts workers involved (i.e. general maintenance, masons, painters, plumbers, electricians, welding, etc.). It has been a very arduous process of demolishing the old pond, digging up and removing old plumbing/sewer/electrical lines, and expanding the perimeter fence on two sides. As of July 2021, the new pond – including waterfall, jets & filtration system – has been completed! It really looks great!! The fence and cement curbing got expanded, the electrical and plumbing/sewage systems got completed, and the duck house roof was remodeled – and lowered – to accommodate the aviary cover. Speaking of the aviary cover: It is being handmade by a company in Arizona to the exact measurements to completely go over the top and down the sides, to meet the metal fence. This will allow the waterfowl birds to be able to access the pond 24/7. Previously, we had to secure the birds in the house at the end of the day, due to threat of potential predators because the fence wasn’t tall enough. Once the aviary cover is placed on the top and sides of the enclosure, the birds will be completely safe and be able to enjoy the pond all the time. Yeah! This has been a personal goal of mine, since I started as the Park Animal Keeper here over 8 years ago. It has been a long, long road to get here…but it is an incredible feeling seeing this goal come to life!! The other change is the fence color. It is going from the turquoise blue color to a black color. Reason: Because in animal exhibits, you want the animals and their habitats to stand out – not the perimeter fence. So, we are getting closer to the completion of the project. We are awaiting the aviary cover to arrive. Then, it will need to be carefully installed. Afterwards, the opening in the fence (to accommodate the cover’s installation process) can be closed and painted. A few loose odds and ends will need to be finished off and then – it will be done!! I am so excited for our birds to have this new habitat. Down the road, we can add some landscaping features inside the enclosure but, for now, the goal is to get it done and the waterfowl birds moved in. I have shared some pictures of the process. Again, it is not finished yet…but the end is in sight! A big THANK YOU to all of the Crafts departments’ staff for their hard work on this project. Also, a big THANK YOU to FOHP for buying the odds and ends, here and there, that weren’t a part of the County bid process! There was no way to figure out every single little item that would be needed for a project of this magnitude, so to have the FOHP to help support the process, has been such a blessing! THANK YOU!

Well, I believe those are the main updates. We, like everyone else, are gearing up for some new and exciting things to bring to the park. The pandemic put a damper on everything and everyone for over a year, and now it is time to start bringing some joy back to all our lives. William S. Hart Park is a GREAT place to visit and explore! We hope to see you all soon!