ZSL Whipsnade Zoo takes the natural approach

ZSL Whipsnade Zoo is a hidden gem in the heart of the Bedfordshire countryside. Opened in 1931 and now covering 600 acres with nearly 500,000 visitors every year, the Zoo plays a key role in the Zoological Society of London's (ZSL) mission to promote and achieve the worldwide conservation of animals and their habitats.

As part of this work, the Grounds and Transport Team at the Zoo use a range of natural, environmentally-friendly products from SpillAway Projects to keep the Zoo clean. These products have no negative impact on the animals' habitats or the surrounding countryside. ZSL's focus on the conservation and preservation of the natural world means that the Zoo is keen to use sustainable solutions and natural products wherever possible.



Steaming through the Zoo

One of the most popular attractions at ZSL Whipsnade Zoo is Whipsnade Steam Railway, which allows its passengers to get amazing views of animals in their natural environments. The Zoo owns two classic steam engines and recently, Mick Shillingford, Grounds & Transport Manager, noticed oil dripping from the engines onto the track at the station. The oil was collecting behind a wall and the Zoo was keen to quickly prevent it from leaking any further into the grounds.

The challenge was finding a way to quickly remove this build-up of oil that was also environmentally friendly. Burying contaminated soil was clearly not going to be a viable solution for a wildlife conservation charity. One potential solution would have been to remove contaminated soil and send it away to be cleaned, but this would cost around £230 per tonne, totalling a hefty sum that ZSL would far rather spend on its vital conservation work.

The Natural Solution



Instead, after testing samples of the soil, Jon Swain from SpillAway Projects suggested treating the affected area with a combination of three of their products – FleetKleen, Liquid Remediact and HC300. Part of the unique cleaning power of these products is that they contain bacteria which digest, or bioremediate the hydrocarbons from which oil is comprised. The fluid was allowed to work its way through the ground and, after a total of sixty days, tests showed that all the oil had been completely removed by the bacteria. The SpillAway Projects solution cost the Zoo just £36 per tonne to completely clear the problem, leaving nothing behind and not affecting the natural environment in any way.

Above (left and right): The Whipsnade Steam Railway at ZSL Whipsnade Zoo

BBQ Bonus

In June 2014 SpillAway Projects introduced another product to ZSL Whipsnade Zoo to help clean up the BBQ area, ready for summer visitors, FKA contains bacteria that eat food fats. This makes it ideal for removing the slippery mess left by burger fat and spilt ice cream, giving visitors a much nicer place to sit and enjoy their BBQ. Being totally natural, the product doesn't damage the grass or the wider environment and leaves nothing behind but a pleasant citrus smell.



Mick Shillingford and his team continue to work with SpillAway Projects, as they will always help to find a solution to any issue. "I like to be able to phone them and ask if they can help solve a problem that's arisen," explains Mick "I trust them to try out different solutions to see what works best and they will keep going until they find the best way to clean the spill, helping us to continue our work on living conservation."

Above: SpillAway Projects and ZSL staff meet to discuss solutions

For more information on ZSL Whipsnade Zoo and to plan a visit, take a look at www.zsl.org/zsl-whipsnade-Zoo.

Note from ZSL: Partnerships with the private sector are essential to promote and achieve the worldwide protection of animals and their habitats. ZSL is interested in partnership requests from organisations wishing to support our aims. Please contact Sandra Crewe, ZSL Corporate Partnerships Manager sandra.crewe@zsl.org