

THE IMPORTANCE OF AQUATIC LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS



When visitors to a zoo or aquarium enjoy an exhibit, they rarely ponder how much design and construction work has been done to provide them with their positive experience. No matter the size of an exhibit, or the species it will be home to, each aspect from planning and design to installation and maintenance play critical roles.

One of the important aspects of zoological and public aquarium exhibits is the life support systems – otherwise known as Aquatic LSS. The Aquatic LSS should be the central design point as it will determine the overall success of the exhibit and its ultimate success with patrons.

Without an Aquatic LSS, most exhibits with water cannot exist. From maintaining and sustaining healthy aquatic life to providing for a clean and healthy environment for animals to live – a good Aquatic LSS is critical. Another important factor is providing visitors with a positive experience, and this is accomplished through clean, clear water that provides a visually pleasing exhibit. Nobody wants to visit an exhibit that is cloudy, smells and detracts from their afternoon at the zoo or aquarium.

The design of the Aquatic LSS is the starting point to overall success. It is imperative to work with individuals and organizations that have knowledge of the species that will occupy the exhibit, understand water quality, and have systems experience. A number of companies entertain the idea of doing business in this industry, yet do not have the technical capacity to provide what facilities require – so step one is to find the company that is the right fit for your organization and the exhibit that you are looking to create.

With the design phase, it is imperative to create systems that provide efficient and effective filtration, disinfection and overall treatment while also providing the most management flexibility.

Most Aquatic LSS consist of an array of primary components such as pumps and filters that provide sterilization, disinfection and biological treatments. With all the valves, fittings, pipe and ancillary equipment, it is imperative to understand each component and how they all work together to provide the most ideal system.

The next phase in most projects is the installation and start up of the Aquatic LSS. This will help ensure the long term success of the system and its components – and the exhibit. Having qualified companies with experience in the installation of Aquatic LSS is vital to ensure proper long term operation.

Just as important to the long term operational success is the education of the operations team with the facility. The final phase of most exhibits is proper operation and maintenance of the systems. Most Aquatic LSS require significant care to ensure longevity of all components so that they provide years of use. Items incorporated into Aquatic LSS are some of, if not the most durable products available, however, they do require care and the knowledge of how they operate. This is the key responsibility of the installation team to ensure this is accomplished through proper training after start-up. It is important that operators know how each item works individually and as a system so that they are capable of handling the day to day operations of the systems and ongoing maintenance.

The benefits of Aquatic LSS to zoological and aquarium facilities are priceless. From animal safety and comfort to visitor satisfaction – it is imperative to understand the importance of selecting the proper Aquatic LSS for your operation.

VICKI CORVO IS A SYSTEMS DESIGNER WITH
AZA COMMERCIAL MEMBER AREA

Based in Homestead, Fla. She can be reached by phone at (800) 257-2732, by fax at 305/248-1756, and by e-mail: info@areainc.com.



By Vicki Corvo