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Cincinnati Zoo Receives Allocation for Cat Canyon Project

First Breeding Facility for Endangered Small Cats at Any North American Zoo

CINCINNATI– The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden recently received a \$1.5 million allocation from the State of Ohio Capital Bill to assist in development of the Zoo’s Cat Canyon/SCaRCE project as part of its current capital campaign. The Cat Canyon/ Small Cat Reproduction Center (SCaRCE) project is the perfect blend of public exhibit, education and scientific research.

“I would like to personally thank the legislatures of both Hamilton and Warren County for their support of this exciting new project,” said Thane Maynard, Executive Director of the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. “Impacting more than one million visitors each year, the Cincinnati Zoo regularly welcomes visitors from 15 surrounding Ohio counties, including: Adams, Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Fayette, Greene, Hamilton, Highland, Montgomery, Preble, Pike, Ross, Scioto, and Warren.”

The objective of SCaRCE is to establish the first dedicated breeding facility for endangered small cats at any North American zoo. Of the world’s 36 wild cat species, most (28 species) are small in size, weighing less than 50 pounds. Like their larger cousins, many of these small cat species are threatened with extinction in the wild. At SCaRCE, cats will participate in a managed breeding program, pairing up the most genetically-valuable individuals in cooperation with other North American zoos to increase the population of these endangered cat species. Many of the resulting offspring will be transported back to the Zoo to give visitors the opportunity to learn about and view these amazing creatures at Cat Canyon. SCaRCE also will serve as a research base for scientists from the Zoo’s Center for Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife (CREW) involved in ongoing efforts to improve our basic and applied knowledge of small cat reproduction.

The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden is the only public zoo in North America where visitors can see as many as 18 species of large and small cats. Cat Canyon will feature a dramatic outdoor exhibit of large predators such as Malayan tigers, snow leopards and Amur leopards living in expanded, naturalistic habitats. A new indoor facility will show small cat species in larger exhibits featuring more complex, multi-dimensional natural environments. For example, visitors will have the unique opportunity to view, through a tunnel camera, black-footed cats and sand cats scampering through underground burrows. Other vantage points will allow visitors to observe the aquatic fishing cat diving underwater for food and watch the arboreal ocelot climbing up into the treetops.

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The world famous Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden was rated the #1 attraction locally and one of the top zoos in the nation by Zagat Survey. It has also been recognized by Child Magazine as one of "The 10 Best Zoos for Kids." Over one million people visit the Zoo's award-winning exhibits, and more than 500 animal and 3000 plant species annually. The Zoo is an accredited member of the American Zoo & Aquarium Association (AZA) and the American Public Gardens Association (APGA), is internationally known for its success in the protection and propagation of endangered animals and plants, and engages in research and conservation projects worldwide.