



For Immediate Release

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ZOO ATLANTA GRANTED ACCREDITATION BY THE ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS

Atlanta – March 30, 2009 – On the heels of its 120th birthday, Zoo Atlanta was granted accreditation by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (AZA) Independent Accreditation Commission.

To be accredited, Zoo Atlanta underwent a thorough investigation and onsite inspection to ensure it has and will continue to meet ever-rising standards, which include animal care, veterinary programs, conservation, education, and safety. AZA requires zoos and aquariums to successfully complete this rigorous accreditation process in order to become members and maintain membership by the Association. Members are required to resubmit to this process every five years.

"I am proud that Zoo Atlanta has again earned this coveted accreditation; however, the visiting committee did express concerns that Zoo Atlanta's highly regarded reptile and amphibian program and collection need to be housed in a new facility (Zoo Atlanta's reptiles and amphibians are housed in a facility that was built in the 1960's). The good news is, Zoo Atlanta is embarking on an exciting master plan and one of the first projects will be a new reptile and amphibian house," said Dennis Kelly, Zoo Atlanta President and CEO.

"Zoo Atlanta has been awarded AZA accreditation because of its high standards in every aspect of its operations," said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy. "Atlanta should be proud to have one of the top zoos in North America as a valuable community asset and economic engine."

The mission of the AZA Accreditation Commission is to establish, uphold, and raise the highest zoological and aquarium industry standards through self-evaluation, on-site inspection, and peer review. The accreditation process includes a detailed application and a meticulous on-site inspection by a team of trained zoo and aquarium professionals. The inspecting team observes all aspects of the institution's operation in areas such as animal care (including living environment and daily enrichment), keeper training, safety for animals, staff, and visitors, educational programs, conservation efforts, veterinary programs, financial stability, risk management, visitor services, and other areas. The inspection team prepares an extensive written report for the Accreditation Commission. Finally, top officials are interviewed at a formal Commission hearing, after which accreditation is granted, tabled, or denied. Any institution that is denied may reapply one year after the Commission's decision is made.

"Zoo Atlanta's Board of Directors is proud of all the hard work done daily by the Zoo's Staff and Volunteers. We are honored to be part of the Zoo Atlanta family," said Mickey Brown, Georgia Power Executive Vice President Customer Service Organization and Chairman of Zoo Atlanta's Board of Directors.

About AZA

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation. Look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting an institution dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. With its more than 200 accredited members, the AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and your link to helping animals in their native habitats. For more information, please visit www.aza.org

About Zoo Atlanta

An accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Zoo Atlanta inspires value and preservation of wildlife through a unique mix of education and an outdoor family experience. From well-known native wildlife to critically endangered species on the brink of extinction, the Zoo offers memorable close encounters with more than 800 animals from around the world. One of only four zoos in the U.S. exhibiting giant pandas, Zoo Atlanta is also home to one of the nation's most recognized collections of great apes and is a global center of excellence in the care and reproduction of vanishing amphibians and reptiles. Zoo Atlanta is open daily with the exceptions of Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Keeper talks, interactive wildlife shows, education programs and special events run year-round. For more information, call 404.624.WILD or visit zooatlanta.org.

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