



P.O. Box 2207
206 South Main Street
Greenville, SC 29602
www.greenvillesc.gov
www.greenvillezoo.com

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Jeff Bullock
Director
Greenville Zoo
467-4300

GREENVILLE ZOO'S TWO NEW AFRICAN LIONS MAKE PUBLIC DEBUT

Zoo to throw welcome party; offer free children's admission

Greenville, S.C. – Guests visiting the Greenville Zoo this weekend have the opportunity to meet its newest residents, two male African lions. Arriving last week from the Riverbanks Zoo in Columbia, SC on a breeding loan recommendation from the American Zoo and Aquarium Association's (AZA's) Species Survival Plan (SSP) program, the 2-year-old half-brothers Chuma and Saied underwent a routine physical before making their public debut today.

“Chuma and Saied have adjusted extremely well to their new environment,” said Greenville Zoo Director Jeff Bullock. “The pair are young and extremely energetic, and zoo guests will enjoy watching them play and showing off their individual personalities.”

The Greenville Zoo will celebrate the lions' arrival with a welcome party Saturday, December 11. The event will feature a keeper talk and enrichment activity at 2 p.m. The zoo will also offer free admission for children with a paid adult from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

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The zoo's last exhibited lions were not part of the cooperative breeding program and recently moved back to their original home at the Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo in Thurmont, Md. As part of the zoo's conscious effort to increase participation in captive breeding efforts, the decision was made to take the available space and use it for animals that are part of an effort to maintain a genetically diverse population of captive animals for many years to come. Though currently not considered endangered, the wild population of African lions has dwindled over the last two decades, making conservation efforts very important to the survival of the species.

According to Greenville Zoo Director Jeff Bullock, the lions will continue to grow and mature at the Greenville Zoo until the time comes when they need to be paired with a female. "The zoo will work closely with the SSP to determine when the Greenville Zoo should start its own pride," said Bullock. "This is a great opportunity for the zoo to help create a promising future for a species that is sharply declining in the wild."

About the Greenville Zoo

Accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), Greenville Zoo is rated one of the best tourist attractions in South Carolina, attracting over 270,000 people annually. Operated by the City of Greenville, the 14-acre facility features wildlife from around the world including giraffes, monkeys, giant tortoises and elephants. Visitors can also enjoy one of the zoo's most popular exhibits, the Reptile Building, which is home to a variety of lizards, frogs, turtles and snakes.

The Greenville Zoo is open seven days a week, except on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. The zoo's hours of operation are from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and the gates close at 5 p.m. For more information about the Greenville Zoo, visit www.greenvillezoo.com or become a fan on Facebook.

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