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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AZA GRANTS RE-ACCREDITATION TO GREENVILLE ZOO

Designation held by less than 10 percent of animal exhibitors in the United States

Greenville, SC – The Greenville Zoo earned re-accreditation by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (AZA) independent Accreditation Commission at the annual AZA conference held last week in Houston, TX. The accreditation denotes that the Greenville Zoo has met or exceeded the AZA's standards, which include all aspects of operations, management and animal care.

“AZA accreditation is very important to the Greenville Zoo,” said Dana Souza, City of Greenville Parks and Recreation Director. “With this designation, the Greenville Zoo can continue its important work of animal conservation and protection of rare and endangered species that is best fulfilled through the AZA.”

To achieve AZA accreditation, the Greenville Zoo underwent a detailed application process and a meticulous on-site inspection by a team of trained zoo and aquarium professionals. The inspection team observed all aspects of the institution's operation in areas such as animal care; keeper training; safety for visitors, staff and animals; educational programs; conservation efforts; veterinary programs; financial stability and other areas. Top officials were also interviewed at a formal commission hearing.

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“The Greenville Zoo is one of the best in the world because it has met the highest standards in the world,” said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy. “It takes hard work and dedication to meet Association of Zoos and Aquariums Accreditation Standards.”

AZA requires zoos and aquariums to successfully complete the rigorous accreditation process every five years in order to maintain their accredited status within the association. Out of approximately 2,600 facilities licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as animal exhibitors, less than 10 percent carry an AZA accreditation.

“I am very proud that the Greenville Zoo has once again been accredited by the AZA,” said Greenville Zoo Director Jeff Bullock. “I am grateful for the hard work and dedication our staff provides each and every day, which is truly what enables us to be an AZA accredited facility. They care deeply about the animals that live here and about the important conservation education mission the Greenville Zoo fulfills.”

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. With its more than 200 accredited members, the AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and the public’s link to helping animals in their native habitats. For more information, please visit www.aza.org.

About Greenville Zoo

The 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.