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Austin Zoo Says Goodbye to Lion Cubs

Anastasia and Memphis Move to The Texas Zoo in Victoria, Texas

AUSTIN, Texas – March 27, 2010 – Austin Zoo announced today that the two lion cubs, Anastasia and Memphis, relocated to The Texas Zoo in Victoria, Texas this week. The two lions cubs were born at Austin Zoo to parents Cleopatra and Caesar. The two adults did not go with the cubs and will still be living at Austin Zoo.

"This is a very bittersweet day for us," said Patti Clark, executive director of Austin Zoo. "At the end of the day, our priority is to do right by the rescued animals in our care. We realized we would not be able to keep Anastasia and Memphis due to space constraints. The Texas Zoo has graciously agreed to take them in and care for them in the same way we would. And they have the space to accommodate both the cubs as they grow up and become beautiful lions."

Austin Zoo is still awaiting results of the DNA testing to determine whether Anastasia and Memphis are Barbary lions and would, therefore, possibly be part of the The Barbary Lion Project. Leaving Austin Zoo will not change the cubs' potential participation in the project.

Clark added, "The Barbary Lion Project is still very important to us and we will see this effort through to the end. If it's determined Anastasia and Memphis are Barbary lions, we will work very closely with the Texas Zoo and the Barbary Lion Project as part of our agreement to ensure we do all we need to do to help repopulate this subspecies of lion."

The Barbary Lion Project is an ambitious program by WildLink International in conjunction with Rabat Zoo in Morocco, to resurrect the Barbary lion population and to ultimately release the lions into a national park in the Atlas Mountains in Morocco. While the Barbary lion is believed to be extinct in the wild, strains of the DNA still exist in lion populations in captivity. The Barbary Lion Project program will isolate the strongest candidates for breeding to ensure the comeback of the Barbary lion.

"We are very excited to welcome Memphis and Anastasia to their new home in Victoria," said Andrea Blomberg, executive director of the Texas Zoo. "They will be in a great enclosure and will be very well cared for here. We will certainly keep in touch with Austin Zoo and provide regular updates on the cubs. We also encourage folks from Austin and around Texas to come down and visit them."

About Austin Zoo

Austin Zoo is a 501(c)(3) registered non-profit organization, and we rely on private donations, gate admissions, grants and sponsorships to continue to care for the animals we have, and to be able to take in new animals that need a safe home. Austin Zoo currently houses more than 300 animals from more than 100 different species. For more information, visit www.austinzoo.org.