

Los Angeles Zoo Unveils Campo Gorilla Reserve

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New \$19 Million Habitat is the Final Phase of the Great Ape Forest

The Los Angeles Zoo will unveil its newest habitat on November 8, 2007 with the opening of the new \$19 million Campo Gorilla Reserve. Zoo visitors will journey along a forested pathway for close-up views of gorillas living in two separate habitats; one for a family troop of gorillas led by a silverback male named Kelly and the other habitat for a pair of bachelors.

WHAT: CAMPO GORILLA RESERVE GRAND OPENING: New immersion style habitat featuring six lowland gorillas

WHERE: Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens, 5333 Zoo Drive, Griffith Park

WHEN: NOVEMBER 8, 2007, 9:00 A.M. Please plan on parking in the Zoo's main lot near the bus circle and a member of the PR staff will escort you to the press event. Plan on arriving between 8:30-8:45 a.m. to allow transport time to Campo Gorilla Reserve

WHO: Two troops of western lowland gorillas; Councilmember Tom LaBonge; Zoo Director John Lewis; GLAZA President Connie Morgan

Campo Gorilla Reserve closely resembles the gorilla's native West Central African environment with trees, brush, flowers, waterfalls, climbing opportunities, a sunny grass area, and a dark shady retreat. The family habitat includes Kelly, a 20-year-old silverback, and three females— Evelyn, age 31; Rapunzel, age 23; and her daughter Glenda, age 2, who are returning to the L.A. Zoo after a four-year stay at the Denver Zoo during construction of their new home. The bachelor group consists of two young male gorillas, Hasani, age 13, and Jabari, age 10, that are from Disney's Animal Kingdom in Florida.

After four years, it's exciting to finally welcome home our gorillas back to the heart of the L.A. Zoo," Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said. "Thanks to the Zoo's and GLAZA's committed staff and donors that home is now a world-class jungle that I hope every Angeleno has the curiosity and courage to explore."

"If ever there was a reason to visit the Los Angeles Zoo, this Campo Gorilla Reserve is it," said Councilmember Tom LaBonge. "It's an amazing experience to be close up to our gorilla residents inside a re-creation of a West Central African jungle. You can't miss it!"

“Historically, gorillas have been a major part of the L.A. Zoo,” states Zoo Director John Lewis. “Right now is an extremely critical time for gorillas in the wild as they are facing the challenge of both habitat destruction and being hunted in the bushmeat trade” adds Lewis. “Campo Gorilla Reserve will allow the L.A. Zoo to explain to our visitors why gorillas are endangered, what we can do to help them and instill in them the passion to care about these great apes.”

Campo Gorilla Reserve was funded by the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association (GLAZA) a private, non-profit support organization, by Proposition CC, a bond measure passed in 1998 by Los Angeles voters and through City funding. The three-quarter acre Campo Gorilla Reserve completes the Zoo’s Great Ape Forest and distinguishes the Los Angeles Zoo as one of only a handful of zoos to house three species of great apes: chimpanzees, orangutans and gorillas.

GLAZA’s support for Campo Gorilla Reserve will continue well beyond its opening. GLAZA-trained docents will tour thousands of adults and children expected to visit the Reserve on a weekly basis. Also, a GLAZA-sponsored Discovery Cart at the exhibit, funded by the Flora L. Thornton Foundation, will be staffed by Los Angeles Zoo educators to enhance public understanding of gorillas.

According to GLAZA President Connie Morgan, “Campo Gorilla Reserve's magnificent beauty and its extraordinary environment for the Zoo’s six gorillas far exceed our expectations. We are proud to have played a key role in this fine accomplishment for the Los Angeles Zoo.”

Campo Gorilla Reserve allows Zoo visitors to view the gorillas from five different areas, two of which are glass fronted which allows the possibility for extremely close observation of the apes in their habitat. The reserve is landscaped with hundreds of plants including bamboo, palms, pomegranates, ferns and much more. Campo Gorilla Reserve is proudly sponsored by Nestlé Juicy Juice.

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The Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens is located in Griffith Park at the junction of the Ventura (134) and Golden State (5) freeways. The Zoo is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. For general information, call 323/644-4200.