



For Immediate Release

Zoo Reopens to Public on Thursday, January 3 **San Francisco Zoo to Enhance Security at Tiger Enclosure, Invites Zoological Association to Make Safety Recommendations**

SAN FRANCISCO (December 31, 2007) - The San Francisco Zoo announced today that it has requested representatives from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) to make a site visit to familiarize themselves with the Zoo's present big cat grottos and to provide their comments on the enhanced security barrier that will be built to further protect the safety of both visitors and tigers.

"We are working with the City of San Francisco's Recreation and Parks Department, which has promised to build as expeditiously as possible a new safety enclosure to protect the public as well as the tigers," said San Francisco Zoo Director Manuel A. Mollinedo. "We will work with the City to create a secure and proper enclosure."

The Zoo's beloved Siberian tiger Tatiana escaped from her enclosure on Christmas Day and killed one teenager and mauled two other individuals. Police and other investigations into what may have caused the 350-pound cat to escape are ongoing.

"Our hearts go out to the family of Carlos Sousa Jr. and the surviving individuals and their families," Mollinedo said.

"As a Zoo and as conservators of animal life, we also mourn the loss of Tatiana, who was a beloved member of our Zoo family," said Mollinedo. The tiger was shot dead by police.

The new security enclosure will be designed by CA Architects, which also designed the recently completed Hearst Grizzly Gulch, a \$3.7 million habitat at the San Francisco Zoo, which opened in June, as well as the future hippopotamus exhibit renovations.

"We have worked with CA Architects before and have confidence in their abilities to do a great job," said Mollinedo. He said the City's Recreation and Parks Department has authority over certain building projects and said the Zoo will work closely with the city agency.

Mollinedo said the Zoo has asked the AZA to assemble a group of prominent zoo directors to visit and consult with San Francisco Zoo management on safety issues. This panel is being assembled and should visit at the early part of next week.

Founded in 1924, the AZA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of accredited zoos and aquariums in the areas of animal care, wildlife conservation, education and science. AZA is America's leading accrediting organization for zoos and aquariums and accredits only those institutions that have achieved rigorous standards for animal care, education, wildlife conservation and science.

The Zoo reopens to the public Thursday, January 3.