

EXHIBITS

TRAILS OF AFRICA OPENS AT BIRMINGHAM ZOO

The Birmingham Zoo opened its highly acclaimed *Trails of Africa* exhibit on 21 April. The Grand Opening kicked off with a ribbon-cutting ceremony under the new *Trails of Africa* portal with African dancers and drummers. Special guests include state and local officials, local community leaders, partners and members of the media.

With 14 acres, *Trails of Africa* is a mixed-species exhibit featuring a wide variety of mammal species native to the continent. It provides new homes for red river hogs, rhinos, antelope and more. The exhibit's largest attraction, a herd of African bull elephants, is an innovative development in the global conservation effort for this threatened species. Two African bull elephants, Bulwagi and Callee, have already taken residence in the

Trails of Africa exhibit and two more are making their way.

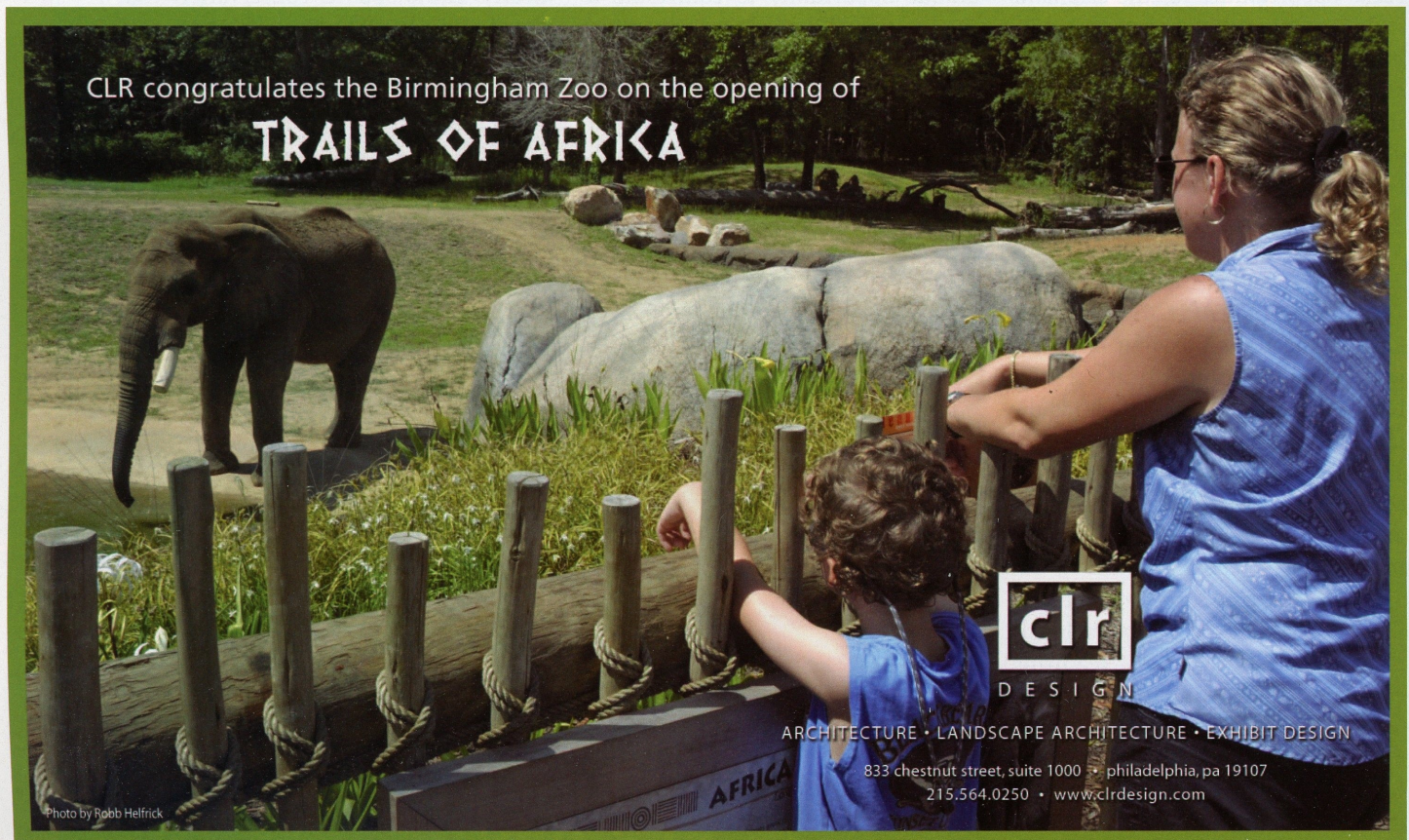
The *Trails of Africa* exhibit began several years ago as a concept with some of the plans on paper. The Zoo announced plans for the exhibit in 2007 and began clearing and constructing the land area in 2009. It elevates the Birmingham Zoo on a national scale and is the first major project completed since the Zoo finished the *Children's Zoo* in 2005.

"We wanted Birmingham to plant the flag as a zoological destination for all of the United States and even globally, and we believe *Trails of Africa* does just that," said Dr. William R. Foster, president and CEO of the Birmingham Zoo. "There are so many facets of human experience that the Birmingham Zoo now touches – education, conservation, cultural awareness and recreation, and maybe best of all, it's the most fun a family can have.

We hope all Alabamians and many others from around the world get the chance to come see what we have for them at the Birmingham Zoo."

With animal care and well-being as a top priority, the design of the *Trails of Africa* exhibit also enhances the entire visitor experience. Visitors can walk the exhibit's trails protected by unobtrusive natural barriers, alongside the open territory over which the bull herd and other animals will roam. As they explore, they can learn about the care and conservation of threatened African elephants and the challenges throughout Africa that impact various animals' survival in the wild.

Natural water habitats, where the elephants will migrate daily, are placed strategically throughout the exhibit. Spacious panoramas provide unique vantage points for guests to sit and watch. The Safari Café's open air pavilion also affords another view-



ing point, while *The Trails'* boma yard will be used for elephant encounters and educational opportunities. The *Boma Play Area* brings the wonder of the African plains to life for children through interactive conservation activities, as well as opportunities to play authentic djembe drums and don African masks.

ASIAN ELEPHANT PRESERVE OPENED AT THE ROSAMOND GIFFORD ZOO

County Executive Joanne M. Mahoney joined the staff at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo for the grand opening of *Asian Elephant Preserve* in late June. The exhibit, once a seasonal destination for the Zoo's female elephants, will become the permanent home for the entire herd.

In addition to the four-acre preserve, the new exhibit includes a 10,000 plus square foot barn with a viewing window that will allow Zoo visitors to freely view the elephants' day-to-day activities and care, an experience never before offered at the Zoo.

Features of the new exhibit include:

- An elephant overlook to allow visitors and families the opportunity to pause and spend time observing the elephants.
- 10,000+ square foot barn (*Pachyderm Pavilion*).
- Four-acre naturalized habitat.
- Three additional outdoor exercise enclosures.
- Misters and sand wallows.
- Oversized shade structures.
- Giant scratching post.
- World-class technology, allowing for the safe housing and handling of the elephants
- A private maternity ward with separate breeding and calving rooms.

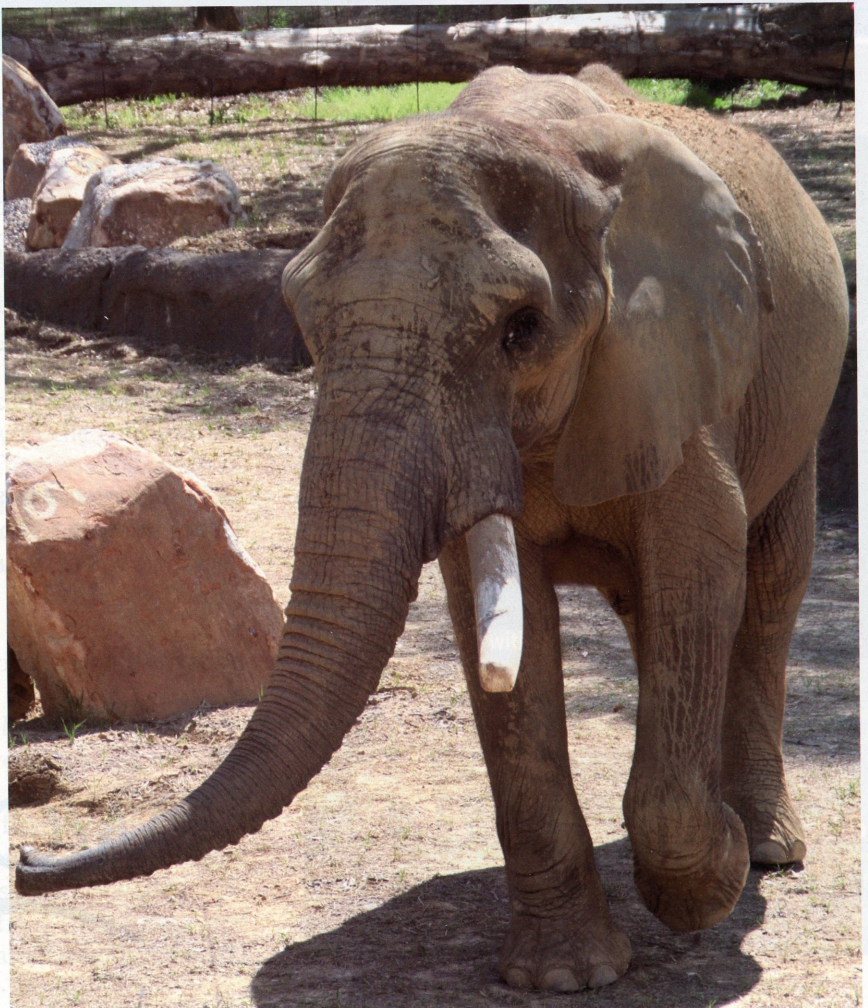
Prior to the elephants entering the preserve, Janet Agostini, president of Friends of the Zoo and Jack Luchsinger,

chairman of the board, presented Mahoney with a \$250,000 check, payable to Onondaga County, as part of

Friends of the Zoo's \$1.6 million commitment to the capital improvement projects. ■



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