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password: Hippo24

Zoo finds new home for its last hippo, Lupe ***Final day to see Lupe will be September 24***



SEATTLE—For more than 50 years, hippos have been a popular pachyderm and one of the most adored animals at Woodland Park Zoo. For the long-term benefits and well-being of its only hippo, female Lupe, the zoo will bid farewell and move her to a new home where she can thrive in the company of other hippos.

Lupe, 24, currently lives in the hippo habitat in the African Savanna. Tuesday, September 24, will be the last day to see and wish her well on her new adventure. Guadalupe, fondly called Lupe by her friends and fans, was born at Disney’s Animal Kingdom and moved to Woodland Park Zoo in 2003.

Lupe became Woodland Park Zoo’s last remaining hippo when its beloved geriatric hippo Lily was humanely euthanized in April due to declining health and quality of life following a cancer diagnosis. The zoo has been working with the Hippo Species Survival Plan to identify a new home. She will be moved to a zoo accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, like Woodland Park Zoo is. Out of respect for the hippo’s new home and their wish to make a big hippo splash announcing Lupe’s arrival, the name of the zoo is being withheld until Lupe arrives safely and settles into her new surroundings.

Lupe will travel in a specially outfitted, animal-safe transportation crate in a climate-controlled truck. To ensure a safe transport and reduce stress, crate training has been taking place for several weeks in the off-view hippo corral area to help her with crate comfort and desensitization.

“We understand the sentimentality around hippos at the zoo and the treasure trove of memories community members have cherished, particularly the joy in watching the countless pumpkins and watermelons tossed to the hippos in their pool over the years,” said Martin Ramirez, Interim Senior Director of Animal Care at Woodland Park Zoo. “We’re going to miss Lupe, and we know how much our zoo family and community will miss this wonderful hippo, too. While in some ways it was a tough decision to move her because she is so beloved, in other ways it was an easy decision because hippos are very social animals, and she needs the companionship of other hippos so she can continue to thrive. Her well-being and a healthy, long life remain our priority and we’re fully confident in the expertise and dedication of the animal care team at her new home.”

When Lupe departs, it will mark the end of many decades of hippos living at Woodland Park Zoo and new hippos will not be brought in to reside in the existing habitat. Water sustainability is a significant consideration in the zoo’s decision to no

longer house hippos. Woodland Park Zoo acquired its first hippo in the late 1960s, and the species has remained an all-time favorite for more than five decades since. However, the hippo habitat, which opened in 1980 as part of the African Savanna, has aged and is no longer sustainable for these semi-aquatic mammals; water usage in the hippo pool accounts for almost 20% of the zoo's total annual water usage.

The zoo is exploring future possibilities for the space and is thoughtfully assessing how best to use the current hippo habitat moving forward with an eye on animal care standards, environmental sustainability and guest experience.

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