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Excitement is Stacking Up at the Zoo with Debut of Nature Connects: Art with LEGO Bricks

January 10, 2017 – Jacksonville, FL – Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens (JZG) is excited to introduce the award-winning exhibit, Nature Connects: Art with LEGO bricks, on Friday January 13. The exhibit is free with Zoo admission and runs from January 13 to May 7. Grand opening weekend celebrations include live entertainment, crafts and games in the Range of the Jaguar Saturday the 14th and Sunday the 15th.

Nature Connects features 13 larger-than-life sculptures created out of nearly half a million LEGO bricks. It includes animals like the jeweled chameleon, with vibrant blue, red and orange LEGOs accentuating the five and a half foot statue; a polar bear mother guarding her three cubs in a massive sculpture with more than 125 thousand bricks; and an eight foot long snow leopard ready to pounce.

Each sculpture highlights a strong conservation message as many of the animals are listed as vulnerable or endangered in the wild. The disappearing rhino is sure to amaze guests; from one angle the guest sees a complete animal, but as one traverses around the sculpture, the animal begins to vanish. This connection between the Zoo, the exhibit and the plight of rhinos in the wild is what makes Nature Connects both an educational platform and a means of artistic expression.

New York artist Sean Kenney hopes that the exhibit inspires children and adults alike to build and express themselves through art while also connecting to the outdoors. He sees this exhibit as a way of teaching that everything in nature is interconnected. Whether it is a monarch butterfly on a milkweed bloom, or the shared space of zebra and wildebeest, we rely on each other and like LEGOs, are better when we build with each other.

The 13 sculptures will be distributed throughout the Range of the Jaguar, the Play Park area and the Asian Gardens. A scavenger hunt will accompany the signage prompting guests to post pictures on Facebook and find animals at the Zoo that are related to the animal sculptures. Activity stations like the build-a-car racing platform and the free-build tables invite guests to let their imaginations go wild. Be on the lookout for LEGO themed events and a special building block Spring Camp while Nature Connects is at the Zoo.

About Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens

For over 100 years, the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens has aimed to inspire the discovery and appreciation of wildlife through innovative experiences in a caring environment. Starting in 1914 with an animal collection of one red deer fawn, the Zoo now has more than 2,000 rare and exotic animals and 1,000 species of plants, boasting the largest botanical garden in Northeast Florida. **The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is a nonprofit organization and a portion of every ticket sold goes to the over 45 conservation initiatives Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens supports around the world, and here in NE Florida.** JZG is proud to be an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. For more information, visit jacksonvillezoo.org.

About Sean Kenney

Sean Kenney is a renowned, award-winning artist and "professional kid" who uses LEGO® pieces to design and create contemporary sculpture for high-profile clients, major corporations, and venues around the globe. A lifetime fan of LEGO toys, he has a lot of fun creating art with LEGO bricks! Children love Sean's work. In using LEGO bricks as an art medium, Sean hopes that children will become inspired to visualize their imagination and create great things themselves. Read more about Sean Kenney.