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SHE'S EARNED HER STRIPES: ZOO'S FIRST SUMATRAN TIGER CUB MAKES EXHIBIT DEBUT

February 9, 2016 – *Jacksonville, FL* – Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens' (JZG) first tiger cub in 35 years will make her public debut on Saturday, February 13 at 10:00 a.m.

The 18-pound cub will be on exhibit for the first time this weekend in JZG's Land of the Tiger. The award-winning exhibit features a fortified trail system for her to explore that spans the length of two football fields—plenty of choices for the adventurous cub.

"It has been so much fun watching our tiger cub grow and play, and I can't wait to share her with our visitors," said Elana Kopel, Senior Mammal Keeper at JZG. "It is my hope that when they see her, it inspires them to support the conservation of these incredible, endangered animals."

This will be an exciting time for the cub, allowing her the first opportunity to explore her new surroundings with her feline curiosity. She has spent the first few months of her life in a den off-exhibit to encourage and strengthen the loving bond with her mother, Dorcas. Her impressive new home provides a fully immersive experience for both guests and animals, and JZG can't wait to introduce the Jacksonville community to this adorable youngster.

The Zoo will also announce the cub's name, given by a generous donor, when she makes her exhibit debut.

Sumatran tigers are the smallest of the six subspecies in existence today and are only found on the island of Sumatra in Indonesia. Originally, nine tiger subspecies were found in parts of Asia but three have become extinct in the 20th century. Less than 400 Sumatran tigers remain in the wild.

To combat extinction of tigers in the wild, Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens supports a Wildlife Protection Unit on the island of Sumatra. The unit patrols the national forest, removing traps and snares that harm Sumatran tigers and their prey.

The lively cub is growing bigger each day and still has items on her wish list. Enrichment items like wind chimes, Boomer balls and bungie cords are an integral part of her daily care and enhance her well-being. These toys can be purchased by anyone and shipped directly to the Zoo via JZG's Amazon Wish List: www.jacksonvillezoo.org/wishlist.

All Media are invited. Please contact Lucas Meers at meersl@jacksonvillezoo.org to reserve your spot.

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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 an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. For more information, visit jacksonvillezoo.org.