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ZOOLights is Back Bigger and Brighter at Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens!

December 7, 2016-- Jacksonville, FL – Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens will be celebrating the holidays with the *wildest* holiday event in North Florida – ZOOLights! The Zoo transforms into a lighted wonderland with hundreds of thousands of twinkling LED lights wrapped around trees, moving sculptures and dazzling displays through the 80-acre park.

ZOOLights lights up the Zoo from December 9th-11th and 16th- January 7th (closed Christmas Day.) A special, sold-out ticketed event *Illumination* will kick off the festivities on Thursday, December 8, complete with a VIP dinner and a sneak peek of the lights.

ZOOLights has quickly become a not-to-be-missed family favorite. The Zoo setting offers a unique holiday light experience – from Giraffe Overlook, guests will be delighted by the vibrant giraffe figurines in the Savanna Blooms Garden or the herd of giraffes on exhibit. Catch a glimpse of our jaguars enjoying the dancing palms trees in Range of the Jaguar, and the rays swim in Stingray Bay surrounded by magical under-the-sea sculptures created by UNF students.

Guests at ZOOLights can enjoy cool weather festivities such as sipping hot chocolate, roasting marshmallows for s'mores, gliding around the "ice" skating rink, taking a ride on the illuminated train or getting a holiday picture with Santa!

The glow of the lights and hot chocolate are not the only things to keep you warm at ZOOLights this year – wear your best tacky Christmas sweater on Saturday, December 17th, put on your favorite footie pajamas on December 18th for a family-friendly Pajama Party or bring your favorite light saber for an out-of-this-galaxy Star Wars night on Thursday, December 29th.

This year's ZOOLights bring top regional performers to the Zoo. The line-up includes Dalton Cyr, Mama Blue, Jacksonville Children's Corus, The Florida ballet and more!

ZOOLights is presented by Community First Credit Union. The Zoo will continue to have regular park hours each day, closing at 5 p.m., and re-opening at 6 p.m.

Admission starts at \$8 for members, \$10 for non-members, and children ages two and younger are free. This year the Zoo is debuting a Value Ticket which includes admission, train rides, 4D Theatre, Stingray Bay and carousel. Parking is free.

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.