



Media Release

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Dublin Zoo Announces Plans for Exciting Gorilla Rainforest

Work to Commence on Gorilla Rainforest Development in 12 Months time

Dublin Zoo today announced major plans for an exciting development. A new Gorilla Rainforest is to be built at a cost in the region of €2m. Work is due to commence in January 2011 and the Rainforest will be ready in September the same year.

This exciting and innovative expansion is part of the ongoing evolution of Dublin Zoo and follows major developments such as the Kaziranga Forest Trail for elephants (2007), the restoration of Haughton House (2008), the African Savanna (2009) and most recently the Family Farm (2010).

Dublin Zoo has maintained western lowland gorillas for many years and is home to a balanced, relaxed, functioning, breeding group of healthy gorillas. Dublin Zoo's gorillas are part of a precious breeding population of approximately 400 animals currently living in European zoos.

The existing facility was constructed in the 1970s and the new Gorilla Rainforest will include undulating topography, rocky outcrops, streams and dense vegetation. This natural environment will allow the gorillas to forage and also move to private resting places away from fellow gorillas and zoo visitors.

Leo Oosterweghel, Director of Dublin Zoo said; *"This is a really exciting time for everyone at Dublin Zoo and we are delighted to be in a position to announce our plans for the new Gorilla Rainforest."*

This development has been a few years in the planning and when completed will be the envy of zoos everywhere. The western lowland gorillas are beautiful animals and the spacious 12,000 square metre habitat we are creating will provide the gorillas with a home that allows the troop to continue breeding and to encourage natural behaviours. The Dublin Zoo Gorilla Rainforest will be regarded as one of the world's best homes for gorillas.

Visitors to Dublin Zoo will be in for an amazing experience and will see an unrivalled example of gorillas in their natural habitat. Observation points will be hidden along the forest paths to allow visitors to observe the animals.

Mr. Oosterweghel concluded; *“At the heart of all our development plans over the last decade or more was the desire that our visitors would leave Dublin Zoo having been inspired to learn more about wildlife and conservation and the part they play in conserving the natural world for the future.*

This development is supported by the European Breeding Programme for the western lowland gorilla which controls the movements of all of the European representatives of the species. This is achieved with the aid of a studbook and ensures genetic variation and to prevent interbreeding.

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About Dublin Zoo

Dublin Zoo is easily accessible by bus, LUAS, and train and is open everyday with the exception of Christmas Day and St. Stephen’s Day (26th December). Admission prices and opening times can all be found on the website, www.dublinzoo.ie. Dublin Zoo is accessible by the less-abled and manual wheel chairs are available on request.