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**Nature
Boardwalk**
LINCOLN PARK ZOO

New Urban Oasis Unveiled June 24: Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo *Offers Environmental Education Programming Geared Toward Families*

Chicago, IL (April 26, 2010) — Visitors to Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo will be able to immerse themselves in a multi-sensory, interactive ecosystem, which will open to the public for the first time on June 24, 2010.

“The landscape of this newly naturalized oasis in the heart of the city has been completely transformed thanks to the generous backing of many donors, private and corporate foundations that supported the vision of what we are creating,” said Kevin Bell, President & CEO of Lincoln Park Zoo. “The new environment will now provide a haven of native trees and plants for local wildlife and will offer unique opportunities for visitors to engage and connect with the natural world like never before.” Educational programming will be a key feature of the pond ecosystem experience between Lincoln Park Zoo and the Farm-in-the-Zoo Presented by John Deere.

The massive revitalization of what was once a dilapidated manmade pond will now provide shelter to native minnows, pumpkinseed, bluegill and largemouth bass. More than 100 newly planted hawthorns, birch, oaks, service berry and other trees will provide shade, food and ideal nesting for native and migratory birds, such as owls, waterfowl and the rare and endangered black-crowned night heron among many others.

Surrounding the pond and stretching across this 14-acre haven is switch grass, milkweed, sunflowers, golden rod, purple corn flower, water willow and other prairie and wetland vegetation indigenous to this region. These plants will not only provide wildlife habitat, and be aesthetically pleasing, but will serve a crucial environmental role as a natural filtration system that maintains the pond’s healthy water quality. An estimated half-mile of boardwalk surrounds the entire body of water, giving the public maximum access to enjoy the serene environment.

Educators will host daily tours and talks called “Feathered Friends,” “Fishy Fun” and “Exploring an Ecosystem,” among other themes that serve as fun and engaging educational experiences. There will be ample hands-on opportunities to learn and interact.

New adult and family-oriented special programs launch at Nature Boardwalk this summer including yoga, and a family overnight camping program.

Architectural highlights include the boardwalk itself – made entirely of Earth-smart recycled materials (the largest single usage of these environmentally friendly products ever created), and the turtle shell-inspired Peoples Gas Education Pavilion designed by award-winning and notable architectural design firm Studio Gang. Additionally, an architectural design that is literally for the birds has been installed underneath the Lester E. Fisher Bridge. These unique structures are designed to serve as prime swallow habitat to encourage nesting.

The zoo has created a model urban ecosystem. Wildlife ecologists will be studying the effects of this transformation for years to come. Some species, like painted turtles, will be reintroduced to the area later this year, while others like frogs, birds, and mammals will eventually find their own way to what will soon become a lush new haven. Biologists will be conducting wildlife surveillance, and studying the health of the wildlife and plant populations to ensure sustainability of the habitat.

On the north end of Nature Boardwalk sits the beautiful and historic Café Brauer. This landmark will feature a new contemporary eatery called the Patio and will offer a full cocktail bar, outdoor waterside seating and fresh menu items designed for sharing. The Patio will be open for lunch daily, as well as dinner until dusk Mondays – Thursdays to offer Chicago professionals a unique new after work destination. It is open for lunch only on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The Great Hall at Café Brauer is a popular private rental space for weddings and special events, and the Patio will be available for private rental on Friday and weekend evenings.

Educational programming will take place at Nature Boardwalk daily during regular zoo hours, but the boardwalk and ecosystem will remain open and accessible around the clock. Lincoln Park

Zoo and Nature Boardwalk are free to the public, and open every day of the year. Nature Boardwalk is easily accessible via CTA bus routes #156, 151, 36 and 22. Paid parking is available at Cannon Dr. and Fullerton Parkway.

Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo has been made possible through the support and generosity of the Chicago Park District, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Brooks McCormick, Robert R. McCormick Foundation, Peoples Gas, The Regenstein Foundation, the Women's Board of Lincoln Park Zoological Society as well as the generosity of numerous zoo friends and other private and corporate foundations.

Plunge into this fresh new natural ecosystem this summer! To learn more, please visit www.lpzoo.org.

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ABOUT LINCOLN PARK ZOO

Lincoln Park Zoo, a historic Chicago landmark founded in 1868, is dedicated to connecting people with nature by providing a free, family-oriented wildlife experience. A leader in conservation science both globally and locally, the zoo exemplifies the highest quality animal care and educational outreach. The not-for-profit zoo, managed by The Lincoln Park Zoological Society, is a member-supported organization and one of the nation's only free, privately managed zoos. For more information, call (312)742-2000 or visit www.lpzoo.org.