



## TORONTO FIRE SERVICES AND THE TORONTO ZOO JOIN EFFORTS TO HELP ORANGUTANS "HANG ON" Fire hose donated to Malaysia Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre

**Tuesday, April 14, 2009, Toronto, Ontario:** This morning, the Toronto Zoo recognized the City of Toronto Fire Services for their generous donation of one thousand pounds (454 kg) of used fire hose, which equals three times the weight of the Zoo's male orangutan Molek, to the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in Malaysia, Borneo. The Sepilok Centre focuses on rehabilitating orphaned orangutans back to the wild. The donated fire hose, otherwise thrown out into landfills, will be used by the Sepilok Centre for enrichment and bedding for the orangutans. On hand for this event were Councillor Raymond Cho, Chair, Toronto Zoo Board of Management, William A. Stewart, Fire Chief, City of Toronto and Maria Franke, Curator of Mammals, Toronto Zoo. The Zoo has supported the Sumatran Orangutan Society (SOS) and the Bornean Orangutan Society (BOS) for several years and has had several staff help out by volunteering at the Sepilok Rehabilitation Centre.

In November of 2008, Maria Franke, Curator of Mammals at the Toronto Zoo traveled to Malaysia, Borneo where she visited Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre. The Sepilok Centre teaches the orangutans the various aspects of being wild. While at Sepilok, it was brought to Franke's attention the centre's need to acquire fire hose for climbing structures and to make hammocks for enrichment. Traditional ropes do not last long in the humid jungle environment. Upon Franke's return to Canada, she contacted Toronto Fire Services to ask them for their assistance.

"Toronto Fire Services immediately rose to the occasion and did not hesitate to help out with this generous donation," says Maria Franke, Curator of Mammals at the Toronto Zoo. "Not only will the donated fire hose help wild orangutans in need, but it is also being recycled and helping the environment. The orangutans at the Sepilok Centre will benefit in many ways from this donation."

Toronto Fire Services is also offering to hold onto future fire hose to donate to the Zoo for use with a number of species including our own orangutan family. Presently the Toronto Zoo's Sumatran Orangutan family has eight members; male Molek, females Puppe, Jahe, Sekali, Ramai; and babies Budi, Kembali and Jingga. The Sumatran orangutans are listed as critically endangered and the Bornean as endangered. There has been an estimated decline of orangutans, well over 50 per cent to 80 per cent during the last 75 years. The decline is predicted to continue at this rate, primarily because of forest loss due to conversion of forest to agriculture and fires. Last but not least, poaching and the pet-trade remain major threats to orangutans across most of Sumatra and Borneo.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**  
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#### Current Zoo Hours and New Admission Prices

Current Zoo Hours: 9:00am to 6:00pm. Last admission is one hour before closing. General Admission 13-64 incl. is \$21, Children 3 and under are free, Children 4-12 are \$13 and Seniors 65+ are \$15. Parking \$8. Events and admission prices are subject to change without notice. The Zoo is located at Meadowvale Road and Hwy. 401, Exit 389 east and west bound. For general information, call (416) 392-5929. The Toronto Zoo is open year round (except December 25<sup>th</sup>).

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