

BIRMINGHAM- Congressman Spencer Bachus toured several exhibits under construction at the Birmingham Zoo today. He and the Birmingham Zoo Board of Directors discussed the progress of the construction of the new Children's Zoo and the Alabama Wilds, a group of exhibits that will showcase wild animals native to our state.

The Alabama Wilds exhibits will give scores of visitors their only real life experience with many of the wild animals found in Alabama. Zoo officials expect to complete the Children's Zoo in time to commemorate the Birmingham Zoo's 50th Anniversary in April 2005.

In July, the Congressman secured a \$250,000 appropriation for the zoo, which has passed the House Appropriations Committee. The appropriation will help to continue the expansion and improvements to the Birmingham Zoo.

“I have long been dedicated to conserving those places in Alabama that offer opportunities for education and understanding of nature and the outdoors. The Cahaba River Refuge, the Ebenezer Swamp in Montevallo, and the Birmingham Zoo are some of those places.

Great things are happening at the Birmingham Zoo, and the recent appropriation acknowledges the progress we’ve witnessed under Dr. William Foster and Mr. Colin Luke,” said Congressman Bachus.

Colin H. Luke, President of the Birmingham Zoo, Inc. Board of Directors, had this to say: “Congressman Bachus is a great friend of this community and we are fortunate to have him in Washington.

The Birmingham Zoo is an important community asset that is moving forward with great momentum since becoming an independent not-for-profit organization five years ago.

We have made many improvements, opened the first half of a new Children's Zoo, and become a destination for families from this community, for school outings, and for tourists from throughout the state and surrounding states.

We will be able to continue to enhance the Zoo with the leadership and generous investments such as the appropriation from Congressman Spencer Bachus.”

Dr. William R. Foster, Chief Executive Officer of the Birmingham Zoo, said, “Congressman Bachus recognizes that the most successful and valuable resources in any state, including Alabama, are supported by a partnership of public and private investment. Our Birmingham Zoo, the largest zoological park in the state, has many needs on this, the eve of its 50th birthday.

His support will help us accelerate our plans for continued improvement of facilities and programs.”

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