

## ZOO OPENS ITS AMUR LEOPARD HABITAT



The Staten Island Zoo's 4,500 square foot Amur Leopard Habitat has been completed and is now open to the public.

The towering exhibit cost \$3,545,000 to complete.

At three-stories high, it is one of the largest outdoor Amur Leopard exhibits in the country. The carefully designed habitat represents the Amur River valley (where Siberia meets China), the leopards' native territory. The Staten Island Zoo's participation in the international Species Survival Plan (SSP) is part of the global effort to restore the species in nature. Amur Leopards are considered the world's rarest cat, with fewer than 40 existing in the wild. The Zoo had acquired two young males.

Their endangerment is an international concern in which the Staten Island Zoological Society is an active and enthusiastic participant. The Staten Island Zoo joins cooperating organizations in this SSP to breed and sustain these leopards in captivity, and possibly save the species from extinction. The Species Survival Program is an initiative of the national Association of Zoos and Aquariums to cooperatively manage specific,

and typically threatened or endangered, species population.

The Staten Island Zoo's mission, under the SSP plan, is to identify Amur leopard population management goals and recommendations to ensure the sustainability of a healthy, genetically diverse, and demographically varied population. Visitors to this natural exhibit may feel an appreciation of the issues that endanger wildlife habitats, which is part of the Zoo's mission of conservation education

