

Cincinnati Zoo Receives Grant for Cats

Funds totaling \$1.5 million will help finance an endangered cat breeding project.

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With \$1.5 million in funds from a state capital bill, the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden will build the Cat Canyon/Small Cat Reproduction Center, the Cincinnati Enquirer reports. The program will be the "first dedicated breeding facility for endangered and small cats at any North American zoo," according to a statement issued by the zoo.

"I would like to personally thank the legislatures of both Hamilton and Warren County for their support of this exciting new project," said Thane Maynard, Cincinnati Zoo executive director.

The program will be located on land the zoo owns in Turtlecreek Township, Ohio. Careful breeding programs will attempt to match genetically valuable endangered cats with other cats from zoos across North America. Resulting babies will be transported back to the recently refurbished Cat Canyon facility at the Cincinnati Zoo, where zoo visitors can observe them and the other 18 species of large and small cats already on display.

Currently, visitors can see large cats including Malayan tigers, snow leopards and Amur leopards in a large, naturalistic outdoor environment. A new indoor facility will display smaller cats in environments that mimic what the cats would experience in the wild. For example, a tunnel camera will show sand cats in underground burrows, while another display will let visitors see the fishing cat diving in water for food.