

Big Cat Exhibit Opens at Hogle Zoo

\$6 million Utah exhibit will practically bring humans, felines face-to-face.

The new, \$6 million Asian Highlands exhibit at the Hogle Zoo has opened in Salt Lake City. The exhibit, which opened Thursday, June 23, utilizes a lot of glass in order to let people get up close and personal with the animals, according to Craig Dinsmore, the zoo's executive director. Unlike many zoos, which put the big cats hundreds of feet away and separate humans and felines by vast yards, large ditches and chain-link fences, the Asian Highlands exhibit takes a unique approach, putting human and beast face-to-face. Through landscaping and architecture that incorporates thick glass, strong mesh and the Utah hillside, the cats are clearly visible from numerous viewpoints. For the felines, the zoo's hills were an advantage when creating a replica Himalayan village because it's instinctive for them to go to higher ground, said Stephanie Natt, animal-care supervisor. The area features 15,000 square feet of outdoor habitat and five separate yards. Posted: June 30, 2006, 5:00 a.m. EST