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Summer tours at Great Ape Trust fuel record number of annual memberships

Memberships increase more than 2 ½ times at great ape research facility, summer tours filled for remainder of season

Des Moines, Iowa – July 27, 2007 – A seasonal public visitation program at Great Ape Trust of Iowa increased annual memberships to record levels at the world-class scientific research facility in southeast Des Moines. Since this spring when Great Ape Trust made tours available to Trust members and their guests, memberships have increased more than 2 ½ times to nearly 600 memberships.

“We’re extremely pleased with this substantial increase and the commitment from our members,” said Al Setka, director of communications at Great Ape Trust. “Their contributions will go toward breakthrough scientific research, innovative educational opportunities and great ape conservation efforts in Africa, Borneo and Sumatra.”

Because of the surge in annual memberships, Great Ape Trust announced today the summer public visitation program has been filled for the remainder of the season. The twice-weekly member tours will conclude on August 30.

Great Ape Trust has set aside September and October for free educational tours to schools and students. This will include more than 300 students in 13 Des Moines middle school programs who are part of Great Ape Academy, an educational pilot project announced July 17 by Great Ape Trust and Des Moines Public Schools.

NEWS RELEASE

GREAT APE TRUST BACKGROUND

Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a scientific research facility in southeast Des Moines dedicated to understanding the origins and future of culture, language, tools and intelligence. When completed, Great Ape Trust will be the largest great ape facility in North America and one of the first worldwide to include all four types of great ape – bonobos, chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans – for noninvasive interdisciplinary studies of their cognitive and communicative capabilities.

Great Ape Trust is dedicated to providing sanctuary and an honorable life for great apes, studying the intelligence of great apes, advancing conservation of great apes and providing unique educational experiences about great apes. Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization and is certified by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). To learn more about Great Ape Trust of Iowa, go to www.GreatApeTrust.org.

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Insights through collaborations with apes