



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**April 21, 2017****MEDIA CONTACT:**

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Chacoan Peccary dies*Guests now will see Sandhill Cranes in Elm Creek Backyard*

ABILENE, TEXAS – Guests may notice some different residents among the native species in the zoo’s “Elm Creek Backyard” section.



The zoo lost its Chacoan Peccary to cancer this week, vacating the large enclosure across from the cougars.

“It’s always difficult for us to lose an animal, but we strive to do what’s best in each situation,” said Executive Director Bill Gersonde. “We can’t let the animal live in discomfort. Euthanasia was the kindest option.”

Native to South America, “Cindy” was nearly 17 years old, a senior citizen for her species. The animal was demonstrating behavioral changes regarding diet, which tipped off animal keepers that her health had

changed. A medical exam confirmed the pig had developed mammary cancer and was experiencing kidney failure. These diseases would require drastic medical intervention, and considering her advanced age, treatment wasn’t an option.

Chacoan Peccaries are part of an Association of Zoos and Aquariums’ Species Survival Plan because of their endangered status. The animals’ populations are declining and becoming more fragmented, estimated to be about 5,000 in Paraguay and several thousand in Argentina and Bolivia.

The vacated space now will house the zoo’s two Sandhill Cranes, a North American species that can be seen migrating through Texas each year. Mates for life, cranes are known for their dancing behavior.

About the Abilene Zoo:

Since its founding in 1966, the Abilene Zoo has stood as a place of learning and adventure, where visitors make memories, share the joy of discovery and become inspired to preserve wildlife. Situated on 16 acres in the award-winning Grover Nelson Park, the zoo has more than 1000 animals of 270 species from around the globe. The zoo is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Last admittance is 4 p.m. The zoo is open until 9 p.m. each Thursday all summer, with last admittance at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$4.50 for children ages 3-12, \$6 for seniors aged 60 and older. Members are admitted free. www.abilenezoo.org. 325-676-6085. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Mission Statement: *The Abilene Zoo is a place of learning and adventure, where families make memories, share the joy of discovery and become inspired to preserve wildlife.*