



News From

Maggie Brooks

Monroe County Executive

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BROOKS INTRODUCES SNOW LEOPARDS AT SENECA PARK ZOO

Endangered species join the Zoo's population

Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks today was joined by officials from the Seneca Park Zoo Society, Seneca Park Zoo, Monroe County Parks Department and Bank of America and Merrill Lynch Private Banking and Investment Group to introduce a brother-sister pair of snow leopards to Monroe County's Seneca Park Zoo. The pair arrived last Friday from Los Angeles Zoo in California.

"Monroe County has been a great home to snow leopards and we are thrilled to once again have these beautiful felines back in our community," said **County Executive Brooks**. *"These majestic cats are an excellent addition to our Seneca Park Zoo's animal collection and represent an outstanding commitment to conservation."*

The snow leopards become the Zoo's 16th Species Survival Plan (SSP) animal. The SSP is a cooperative population management and conservation program of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums for selected species of threatened and endangered animals in accredited institutions. Less than 7,000 snow leopards are believed to exist in the wild worldwide. The last time snow leopards resided in Monroe County was in 2003.

"Our Zoo has an outstanding legacy of success with snow leopards and their reproduction, with 26 of our past 41 snow leopards being born right here in Rochester," said **County Zoo Director Larry Sorel**.

Snow leopards are considered a medium-sized cat and are native to the mountain ranges of Central and South Asia. Their fur is long, thick and has a smoky-gray color with dark gray to black rosettes and spots. Their body is about 4- to 5-feet-long, with a 3-foot-long tail.

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“Having these animals at the Seneca Park Zoo is great for the community,” said **Rachel Baker August**, Executive Director for the Seneca Park Zoo Society. *“Education is at the core of the Zoo’s mission and we know that these animal ambassadors will help educate the community about the problems these cats face in the wild.”*

Bank of America and Merrill Lynch Private Banking and Investment Group are the presenting sponsors of this new exhibit.

“Our support of the Seneca Park Zoo reflects a shared commitment to the cultural vitality of Monroe County,” said **John Pitton**, Rochester market president for Bank of America. *“These new additions will further the Zoo’s reputation as a premier attraction for residents and visitors alike.”*

Monroe County’s Seneca Park Zoo invites the entire community to participate in a naming contest to help name our new snow leopards. All are welcomed to submit their suggestions electronically to snowleopards@senecazoo.org. More details on the naming contest can be found at www.senecaparkzoo.org and at area Bank of America locations.

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