**PRESS RELEASE**

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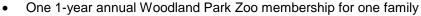206.548.2550 | woodlandparkzoopr@zoo.org

# The baby gorilla needs a name!
## *Woodland Park Zoo holds contest to name its gorilla baby*

SEATTLE– Woodland Park Zoo is seeking your help in naming its new baby gorilla. The winner will receive a variety of great gifts from the zoo, including a chance to visit the gorilla up-close!

To enter, participants must choose a female name from the African languages of Hausa, Yoruba or Igbo, and submit an entry form via mail, online at www.zoo.org/babygorilla or by dropping it off at any ballot box located on zoo grounds between Tuesday, February 16, and Monday, February 29.

One winner will be selected by a judging panel of zoo staff to take home the Grand Prize:

- One 1-year annual Woodland Park Zoo membership for one family
- One ZooParent gorilla adoption
- One opportunity to join a gorilla staff member for a private meet and greet for up to five people at the public viewpoint of the gorilla exhibit once the baby is on view (arranged at a mutually agreeable time)
- One framed photograph of the newly-named gorilla infant

For official rules and terms of participation or to submit an entry online, visit www.zoo.org/babygorilla.

The baby gorilla was born on November 20, 2015 to mom Nadiri and dad Vip. "Nadiri is a first-time, inexperienced mom," said Martin Ramirez, mammal curator at Woodland Park Zoo. "Knowing that, we planned for different outcomes while she was pregnant, including the need for human intervention."

Nadiri gave birth naturally but did not show strong maternal skills initially; as a result, staff immediately stepped in for the safety and welfare of the baby and to allow the new mom to rest. Since her birth, the zoo's gorilla and veterinary staff have been providing 24/7 care for the unnamed baby gorilla behind the scenes in the gorillas' sleeping quarters in a den next to Nadiri.

Multiple times a day, the mom and baby gorilla spend time together in the same den. "During recent sessions, the two have lain just inches apart, played and eaten together. The close proximity is a good sign they're comfortable together and getting to know each other," said Ramirez.

The baby gorilla remains off view where she is growing and thriving. "She's developing normally; introductions are progressing slowly but steady," said Ramirez. Currently, there is no time frame for when the baby will be on exhibit.

In the meantime, zoo staff is excited to officially give the baby gorilla a name. "As an ambassador for her species, an authentic regional name helps share the story of her counterparts in the wild," said Ramirez.

Nadiri and her baby both carry very valuable genes for the Gorilla Species Survival Plan (SSP), a North American cooperative breeding program to help ensure a healthy, self-sustaining population of gorillas for the next 100 years. Woodland Park Zoo participates in 95 SSPs, overseen by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums.

The baby gorilla's father is 37-year-old Vip, who has sired six other offspring with three different females at the zoo. He currently lives at the zoo in another group with two females.

The western lowland gorilla lives in seven countries across west equatorial Africa: southeast Nigeria, Gabon, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Angola and Equatorial Guinea. All gorillas are endangered; the western lowland gorilla is critically endangered. The estimated population of western lowland gorillas in the wild is about 95,000. There are three primary reasons gorillas are endangered. One is habitat destruction caused by logging, mining, and slash and burn agriculture. The bushmeat trade, facilitated by logging, has become an immediate threat to the western lowland gorilla population, particularly in Cameroon. Additionally, infectious diseases such as the Ebola virus have recently become a great threat, killing many gorillas.

Woodland Park Zoo supports conservation efforts for the critically endangered western lowland gorilla through the Mbeli Bai Study. The study researches the social organization and behaviors of more than 450 lowland gorillas living in the southwest of Nouabale-Ndoki National Park, Republic of Congo. The data collected enables scientists to assess the vulnerability of populations to habitat threats and predict their ability to recover from decline.

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