ATLANTA – May 8, 2012 – Zoo Atlanta’s ZooMobile will make summer stops at each branch of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System branches in a partnership designed to support the educational needs of children and the community during the libraries’ 2012 Summer Reading Program.

Zoo Atlanta and the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System have joined forces with Science in Circulation! a two-year project, made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services. Zoos and libraries are community institutions that share common goals to increase literacy and to provide informal learning resources that both stand alone and augment formal education in the classroom. This year’s Summer Reading theme is Dream Big Read! And what better way to do that than learning about amazing animals and their habitats?

Starting in June, each circulating branch of our Library System will receive two visits from Zoo Atlanta’s ZooMobile outreach program. The 45-minute programs include a trained educator who gives an exciting presentation using small live animals, hands-on teaching tools and entertaining educational activities. This will provide a life-enriching opportunity for the family that is not only educational but also available to them free of charge.

“We are thrilled that Zoo Atlanta is coming to our libraries this summer. It’s a natural extension of our already successful Zoo Pass collaboration, and we look forward to making this summer very special for our young patrons and their families with ZooMobile visits,” said John F. Szabo, Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System Director.

The ZooMobile regularly travels to schools, hospitals, senior centers, daycare centers, open house events and festivals within a 65-mile radius of Zoo Atlanta. The program features encounters with mammal, reptile and amphibian ambassadors from around the world, creating connections to wildlife that illustrate science and conservation concepts in a fun, engaging way.

“The ZooMobile is one of our most important programs for its ability to transcend the borders of Zoo Atlanta and take our mission on the road, with personal encounters with animals many children might not get to see otherwise,” said Raymond King, President and CEO of Zoo Atlanta. “We’re proud to collaborate with the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System on an initiative that encourages education, conservation and exploration of the natural world.”

Grownups and children will discover the amazing animals in Georgia and their habitats in their own backyards and beyond with the “Naturally Georgia” program. Or the “Wild Features” program serves Pre-K children, and compares the body parts of animals and humans to show how we use our senses just like animals. To support the curriculum needs for 7th grade students, some branches will offer “Creature Connections,” where students will discuss the delicate balance of species in the food web by examining animal skulls and learning about predator and prey relationships.

Zoo Atlanta has an existing partnership with the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System allowing families up to four to visit Zoo Atlanta one time per year, just by checking out the Zoo Pass free with their library card. Last year over 6,000 Fulton County residents visited the Zoo free of charge.

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About Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System
Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System is the largest in the state, with 34 libraries and a collection of more than 2.5 million items. It offers innovative programs, services and virtual resources tailored to meet the needs of each branch’s community. Children, teens and adults may choose from a variety of classes, visit exhibitions, listen to authors discuss their work, check out videos, DVDs and CDs, attend book club discussions, get homework help, hear music and see live performances. Last year patrons borrowed more than 4.2 million items, made 4 million visits to the libraries and our website had over 4 million hits.

About Zoo Atlanta
An accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Zoo Atlanta inspires value and preservation of wildlife through a unique mix of education and outdoor family fun. From well-known native wildlife to critically endangered species on the brink of extinction, the Zoo offers memorable close encounters with more than 1,500 animals from around the world. A slate of new up-close-and-personal experiences opened in spring 2012: giraffe feeding, permitting guests to hand-feed Earth’s tallest living land mammals, and Wild Encounters, three new behind-the-scenes adventures with African elephants, giant pandas and Komodo dragon. Other highlights include the nation’s largest collection of western lowland gorillas, the nation’s largest zoological collection of orangutans and a global center of excellence for the care and study of vanishing reptiles and amphibians. The Zoo is open daily with the exceptions of Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Keeper talks, interactive wildlife shows, education programs and special events run year-round. For more information, call 404.624.WILD or visit zooatlanta.org.