



## **Fusenot Foundation Grants Contribute to History Making Exhibit at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park**

(San Diego, CA) November 2019 – Funding grants from the Georges and Germaine Fusenot Charity Foundation contribute to the newly opened Platypus Habitat at the San Diego Safari Park. This history making exhibit within the Walkabout Australia section of the Park features two platypuses, an 8-year-old male named Birrarung and a 15-year-old female named Eve from Australia's Taronga Zoo in Sydney.

According to the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, this is the only zoo outside of Australia to house platypuses—and is the first time in more than 50 years that platypuses have been cared for outside of Australia.

Long time benefactors to San Diego Zoo Global, the Georges and Germaine Fusenot Charity Foundation earmarked funds specifically for this habitat. Their contributions are recognized with a ceremonial plaque at the park, designed in harmony with the Aussie outback theme, a classic postal mailbox.

Representing the Fusenot Foundation at the official opening activities on November 22, 2019 was Trustee Norm Walker and his grandson Roy.

### **San Diego Zoo Safari Park Notes:**

The Safari Park's world-class platypus habitat includes three pools, naturalistic river banks, extensive tunnels and nesting areas. The habitat was built more than a year ago, in anticipation of the platypuses' arrival, through the generous gifts of more than 500 donors.

The platypus is a semiaquatic, egg-laying mammal found along the eastern coast of Australia, within the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania. They live in freshwater streams, creeks, and rivers. Platypuses are most active during dusk and nighttime hours, and they generally sleep during the day. To allow Safari Park guests the best possible viewing opportunity and also provide an optimum environment for the platypuses, the lighting cycle in their habitat has been reversed so it mimics nighttime during daylight hours and daytime during nighttime hours.

The platypus is listed as Near Threatened on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, primarily due to habitat destruction, climate change, predation and direct human contact. Scientists do not know the number of platypuses in the wild, but estimates range from 10,000 to 100,000.