

# Rafiki Discovers NC Zoo



RAFIKI ROMPS THROUGH HER NEW HABITAT at the park on her first day on exhibit. Visitors can see Rafiki and two other elephants daily.

ASHEBORO - An African elephant that arrived at the North Carolina Zoo last month from the Toledo Zoo in Toledo, Ohio, went on exhibit for the first time at the state zoo last week.

Following a mandatory 30-day quarantine period and introduction to the zoo's other female elephant in their off-exhibit holding facilities, Rafiki, a 21-year-old female, entered the N.C. Zoo's 3.5-acre outdoor elephant exhibit for the first time around 10 a.m. Monday. Weather permitting, she will remain on exhibit for the next few days with the other female, 25-year-old Little Diamond. Thereafter, the females will be exhibited alternately with the male until all three animals can be introduced together.

Rafiki was transferred to North Carolina following a recommendation by the American Zoo & Aquarium Association's (AZA) African elephant Species Survival Plan (SSP). The zoo is currently in the planning stages for a \$6 million dollar expansion of its elephant and rhinoceros exhibits and holding facilities that will double the size of each exhibit by 2006

and enable the zoo to house up to 12 animals of each species.

The Toledo Zoo had opted to move Rafiki following unsuccessful efforts to work her in with another adult female and calf. Experts at both zoos concluded that the protected contact elephant management style, utilized for the past 10 years at the N.C. Zoo, would prove better suited for Rafiki's sometimes unpredictable demeanor. The protected contact method maintains a barrier between the keeper and the elephant at all times, while the Toledo Zoo continues to utilize the "free contact" method in which keepers work inside the enclosure directly with the elephants.

Rafiki is one of a limited number of reproductive-age female African elephants currently in captivity and the N.C. Zoo's 29-year-old male, C'sar, is one of only 12 breeding age African bull elephants in the country.

The zoo is an agency of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, William G. Ross Jr., Secretary; Michael F. Easley, Governor.

## KIDS' CORNER



RAFIKI, A 21-YEAR-OLD AFRICAN ELEPHANT, newly arrived at the North Carolina Zoo, enjoys a mud bath on her first day on exhibit at the zoo.

## Color the Picture Below

