

Canadian Authors For Lucy

May 21, 2009

Mayor and Members of Council
City of Edmonton
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 2R7

Dear Mayor and Members of Council:

We, the undersigned, respectfully request that you intervene on behalf of Lucy, the lone female Asian elephant currently in residence at the Edmonton Valley Zoo, and facilitate her examination by independent veterinarians and other experts in elephant health, dentistry and welfare, to properly assess her health status and to determine the most appropriate method and time for Lucy's relocation to more suitable accommodation elsewhere. We make this request for the following reasons:

- Female members of all elephant species are highly social and live in relatively stable family groups their entire lives;
- Female elephant family groups communicate and remain in contact with each other 24 hours per day through sound (including infrasound), body postures, chemical cues and seismic vibrations;
- Female elephant family groups are typically comprised of a range of differently aged elephants from infants to grandmothers and include "aunts" who form important parts of the overall social life of the species;
- Female elephants are rarely alone during their lifetimes;
- Female elephant family groups inhabit home ranges measuring hundreds of square kilometers in size at their smallest to thousands of square kilometers;
- All elephants in the wild inhabit home ranges consisting of varied terrain and a range of complex, physical environments and stimuli;
- All elephants are specifically structured for movement;
- All elephants in the wild walk for substantial periods each day;
- All elephants are highly active animals that spend up to 20 hours per day traveling and foraging for food;
- All elephants in the wild are highly intelligent and exercise choice and control in their daily lives;

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- All elephants have evolved to live in tropical and subtropical climates;
- Lucy is socially isolated and lacks the company of other female elephants;
- Lucy's relationship with her keepers does not mitigate against the absence of other elephants;
- Lucy is alone during off-hours;
- Lucy's outdoor enclosure is grossly undersized being tens of thousands of times smaller than the smallest known home range of any wild elephant;
- Lucy's outdoor enclosure consists largely of a barren earth floor surface, a portion of it being hardpan (earth compacted to a concrete-like consistency), with no pasture or grass;
- Lucy is not physiologically structured to live in a cold climate;
- Lucy's medical records show she suffers from chronic foot infections, all too common in elephants in zoos;
- Lucy's medical records show she has arthritis, also common in elephants in zoos;
- Lucy's medical records show she sometimes has difficulty standing and walking and notes times when she has refused to eat or drink;
- Lucy's indoor enclosure features a concrete floor surface that provides no behavioural opportunities and may aggravate Lucy's arthritis and be problematic for her foot health;
- Lucy's medical records show that she suffers from chronic respiratory problems;
- Lucy's medical records show that the Valley Zoo has not been able to resolve her health issues;
- Lucy is inactive the majority of the time;
- Lucy engages in prolonged bouts of abnormal stereotypic behaviours (e.g., rocking, swaying), an indication of an abnormal interaction between Lucy and her environment;
- Zoo industry associations around the world recommend that female elephants should not be kept alone;
- Elephant scientists and field biologists agree that female elephants should not be kept alone;
- The Coalition for Captive Elephant Well-being recommends that facilities that keep Asian elephants keep no fewer than five individuals;

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- Studies show that even pairs or small groups of captive elephants should be amalgamated into larger herds for welfare reasons;
- Two accredited sanctuaries in the United States have offered a permanent home for Lucy;
- Both accredited sanctuaries have offered to transport Lucy at no cost to the Valley Zoo;
- The core requirements of all female elephants, being appropriate climates, room to roam, pasture and grassy areas and the company of other elephants, are not provided in Lucy's case.

The science is unequivocal. Female elephants are wide-ranging, extremely intelligent, highly social animals that should not be kept alone.

After spending the majority of her life at the Valley Zoo, Lucy deserves better. We urge you not to accept the erroneous claims of the zoo that Lucy is somehow, on the one hand, happy and healthy, and on the other hand, too sick to be moved. History, science and the evidence do not support that claim.

We urge you to intervene on behalf of Lucy and to facilitate her examination by independent veterinarians and other experts in elephant health, dentistry and welfare, to properly assess her health status and to determine the most appropriate method and time for Lucy's relocation to more suitable accommodation elsewhere.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Abbott

Margaret Atwood

Ken Babstock

Catherine Bush

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Sylvia Dolson

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Michael Helm

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Evelyn Kirkaldy

Barbara Kyle

Rob Laidlaw

Sue Lebrecht

Barry Kent MacKay

Atsuko Matsuoka

Susan McClelland

Michael Ondaatje

Karen Patkau

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