



MAYOR
Oscar Leeser

**INTERIM
CITY MANAGER**
Cary Westin

CITY COUNCIL

District 1
Brian Kennedy

District 2
Alexandra Anello

District 3
Cassandra Hernandez

District 4
Joe Molinar

District 5
Isabel Salcido

District 6
Art Fierro

District 7
Henry Rivera

District 8
Chris Canales

**NEWS
RELEASE**

12/ 21 / 2023

El Paso Zoo & Botanical Gardens Providing Specialized Care for Asian Elephant Savannah

EL PASO, Texas— The El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens is currently providing special care for Savannah, the 71-year-old Asian elephant, who is suffering from arthritis and localized cancer in her ears.

According to veterinary staff at the zoo, Savannah has progressing arthritis in her joints, with her left elbow being the most affected, which is causing her discomfort and decreased mobility. She is currently on multiple oral pain medications, joint supplements, and an injectable joint supplement. Zoo staff have started stem cell therapy, which has shown success in helping decrease the inflammation and pain associated with arthritis.

The El Paso Zoological Society has graciously funded the treatments through a dedicated donor and longtime elephant enthusiast, Ms. Barbara Bowman.

Savannah also has localized early-stage cancer in her ears, which is most likely due to sun exposure over her long life. Zoo staff applies animal-safe sunscreen to her ears to protect unaffected areas, but the sunscreen cannot reverse the already present damage. The Zoo is working with oncologists at Texas A&M for a localized treatment. Savannah is being monitored very closely by zookeepers and veterinarian staff to assess her comfort and welfare.

“Savannah remains comfortable, and we hope she will respond to both of these new therapies,” said El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens Director Joe Montisano. “For now, Savannah will remain on display daily except cold mornings and days where she will choose to stay in her heated barn.”

Asian elephants are listed as “Endangered” in the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List. The life expectancy of Asian elephants is 45 to 50 years old. Savannah’s longevity is supported by high-quality daily care from zookeepers, excellent nutrition, preventive and corrective veterinary care, and a safe environment.

About the El Paso Zoo

The El Paso Zoo is a 35-acre facility that houses animals representing over 220 species, including critically endangered species. Accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), the El Paso Zoo celebrates the value of animals and natural resources. It creates opportunities for people to rediscover their connection to nature. To learn more, visit www.elpasozoo.org.

###



Promoting **Transparent & Consistent Communication**
Among All Members of the Community

Media contact: Rick Isaias
Strategic Communications
Isaiasra@elpasotexas.gov
(O): 915.212.1077
(M): 915.355.6611