



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** July 20, 2017

## **E.T. WALRUS SCULPTURE IS IN THE WORKS, AND PUBLIC IS INVITED TO SEE A MODEL**

*Small version of the larger-than-life-sized bronze will be displayed at 5:30 p.m. Monday in the Metro Parks Tacoma lobby*

TACOMA, Wash. – E.T. the walrus, who entertained and enthralled visitors to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium for 33 years, is being re-created in a larger-than-life-sized bronze sculpture that will greet guests at the zoo's front gate.



The sculpture, now being poured at a foundry in Oklahoma, is due to be installed in September. A date for its unveiling will be announced soon.

But members of the public can get a sneak peek at a desktop-sized version of the bronze E.T. during a preview from 5:30 to 6 p.m. Monday at Metro Parks Tacoma headquarters, 4702 S. 19<sup>th</sup> St.

The Zoo Society raised about \$100,000 from businesses and community members to pay for the bulk of the sculpture and associated installation costs.

**Members of the public will be able to view a 6-inch-long-by-11-inch-high version of the E.T. sculpture during a sneak peek at 5:30 p.m. Monday at Metro Parks Tacoma headquarters, 4702 S. 19<sup>th</sup> St.**

Remaining costs were funded through Metro Parks Tacoma's 1 percent for public art program and the zoo's operating budget. The total project cost is \$148,500.

The artwork was designed and sculpted by San Juan Island artist Matthew Gray Palmer, who was competitively selected from a pool of artists. Palmer met Pacific walrus Joan, Basilla and Kulu during a visit to the zoo, then created the artwork while referring to a photograph of E.T. giving his signature wave. The finished piece celebrates the walrus' legacy in Tacoma.

E.T. was a much loved community icon who came to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in 1982 as a calf who was orphaned on Alaska's North Slope. The zoo provided the little guy with a home, and he grew into a massive adult ambassador for his species, sometimes weighing as much as 4,000 pounds during the mating season.

Generations of zoo visitors grew to know and love Pacific walrus through E.T., a gentle giant with an amazing – and entertaining – range of vocal sounds. He died at age 33 in 2015.

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*Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo and aquarium, practices and promotes responsible stewardship of the world's resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).*

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