



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 13, 2008

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## **Waste Management Works with National Elephant Center to Create Habitat on Nearly 300 Acres of Company Property**

*Elephants from all over the U.S. will find paradise in Okeechobee, Fla.*

**San Diego, CA**— Always a popular vacation spot, Florida attracts thousands of visitors annually, and soon elephants also will unpack their trunks in the Sunshine State. With help from Waste Management, the National Elephant Center will provide long- and short-term housing for elephants across the country, and will offer this service to a total of 77 zoos nationwide, including the San Diego Zoo and San Diego Wild Animal Park.

The National Elephant Center, which is located on about 300 acres of Waste Management property in Okeechobee, Fla., includes open spaces for elephants to roam and also a variety of natural watering holes to enjoy. It is adjacent to property that Waste Management maintains as a natural area certified by the Wildlife Habitat Council and provides food and food shelter for several threatened species. About 900 acres of open space separate the center from Waste Management's nearby sanitary landfill, which serves the surrounding communities.

“When we look at landfills, Waste Management sees them as a form of recycling - beneficial reuse of the land at our sites,” said Carl Scherbaum, District Manager, Waste Management of San Diego. “The landfills that Waste Management owns nationwide provide power to our communities through landfill gas to energy projects. They also supply tens of thousands of acres for community parks, recreation centers and wildlife habitats. We are proud of our ability to provide one of our landfill resources for a program that helps ensure the future of one of nature's most majestic resources, elephants.”

Nearly 290 elephants are in 77 North American zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). This facility will support those institutions in a variety of ways, including population management, artificial insemination and breeding, research and conservation activities, as well as training for keepers, curators and veterinarians. Photographs from the announcement and video of the facility are available for download at [www.thenationalelephantcenter.org](http://www.thenationalelephantcenter.org).

This collaboration between Waste Management and the National Elephant Center is an example of AZAs long-range vision to foster more public and private partnerships that help save wildlife globally. AZA-accredited zoos are committed to building the world's largest wildlife conservation movement with the help of generous corporate partners such as Waste Management.

Facilities for the center, including barns for the elephants, are under development, and the project is being built with the support of numerous public and private donations. The site is set to start receiving elephants by 2009.

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“Elephants are among the most endangered species in the world and their future depends largely on the success of facilities such as these,” said Melissa Perez, Communications Manager, Waste Management of San Diego/Orange County. “Waste Management’s support of the project includes leasing the land to the National Elephant Center and also providing \$150,000 each year for the next three years to support this very important program. We look forward to providing the perfect home for these animals.”

The San Diego Zoo’s Elephant Mesa has an African bush elephant and two Asian elephants. The San Diego Wild Animal Park’s Elephant Overlook has a herd of Asian elephants and a herd of African bush elephants. You can see Asian elephants in the Park’s daily elephant show.

### **About Waste Management**

Waste Management, based in Houston, Texas, is the leading provider of comprehensive waste management services in North America. Its subsidiaries provide collection, transfer, recycling and resource recovery, and disposal services. It is also a leading developer, operator and owner of waste-to-energy and landfill gas-to-energy facilities in the United States. Customers include residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal customers throughout North America. More information about how Waste Management Thinks Green can be found at [www.thinkgreen.com](http://www.thinkgreen.com)