

April's 27th Birthday Bash!

The day may have been a hot one, but the celebration to mark the very famous April the Tapir's 27th birthday was very cool. Over 150 people came to bring birthday greetings to this happy mountain cow.



April the Birthday girl munching away, and inviting her buddy Bullethead

A few of the parents remarked that they had come to April's birthday party years ago when she lived at the original Belize Zoo. Now they are sharing the fun and education experience with their own children!

Tapirs, in captivity, will live well into their 20's. April is still very much in the peak of health, and most likely will have a few more birthday parties to host at The Belize Zoo, even reaching the big 3-0!

The celebration began with the La Democracia pre-schoolers, "The Gibnuts," singing the "Mountain Cow" song for April. The big birthday cake was then brought on view, and what a cake! Constructed with horse chow, mashed vegetables and bananas, the decorations made of flowers and watermelon, all were in awe. April was visibly thrilled. After her initial gobbles, April, the generous mountain cow that she is, happily shared her birthday cake with enclosure tapir-pal, Bullet Head. Forest Department officials, Mr. Andre Lopez and Ms. Rasheda Sampson were there to assist with the presentation of the cake to April. Their visit also included a meeting with newly-acquired Tambo the tapir.

April's day reflects the happy mood our country puts forward about the protection of our important National Animal, the tapir. Tambo the tapir reminds us that all is not as it should be in the public realm of wildlife protection.

Tambo the tapir, not even two months old, became an orphan when his mother was shot. He was stolen from her to sell as a pet. Both activities are illegal. Shaken, shocked and injured, the baby tapir's bad fortune changed when he was rescued and brought to The Belize Zoo. Now, he faces a life bursting with TLC forever more.

April the tapir has given to Belize, a strong wave of awareness, both about the need to protect her species, now considered to be Endangered throughout its range, as well as knowledge about the important role the tapir plays in maintaining the health of a tropical forest. Tambo the tapir will carry on this vital legacy. Undoubtedly, with the fine tapir environmental awareness assistance from these professor mountain cows, all tapirs in Belize will stand a better chance for survival into the future.

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