PRESS RELEASE

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RESCUED BOBCAT MOVES INTO NEW HOME
IN MAYMONT WILDLIFE EXHIBIT

Maymont welcomed a new addition to its Wildlife Exhibits this week – a one-and-half-year-old male bobcat. For the past year, the feline has been housed inside Maymont’s Nature Center as its new home was enlarged and more climbing areas were added. While living in the Nature Center, Maymont’s zoologists have worked with the bobcat on animal husbandry training that will allow him to carry out behaviors such as sitting on a scale, opening his mouth and showing his paws when prompted.

In Spring 2008, a Bath County couple rescued the animal, which they believed was a domestic kitten, on the side of Route 29. As the animal grew, distinctive markings led the couple to realize the kitten was actually a bobcat – illegal to maintain as a pet in Virginia, and they contacted the Wildlife Center of Virginia. Due to the length of time in captivity and his corresponding tame behaviors, he was classified as non-releasable which made him unable to return to the wild. After spending two months at the Wildlife Center, the bobcat found a permanent home at Maymont where zoologists could provide further care and training for the animal.

Bobcats are native to Virginia and common in the South. They can be found throughout the United States with a population estimated between 700,000 to 1.5 million. Though these secretive nocturnal hunters are common in Virginia, they are seldom seen. Excellent hearing and vision helps them hunt small mammals, such as mice, squirrels and rabbits, and these medium-sized cats also can attack sick or small deer. They hunt from the ground, but will pounce on prey from trees. Bobcats get their name from their unusually short tails which can be anywhere from three to seven inches in length.

Maymont’s bobcat habitat is located between the Children’s Farm and Raptor Valley, closest to the Children’s Farm entrance at Spottswood Road. The Maymont Nature & Visitor Center is located at 2201 Shields Lake Drive. For more information, call Maymont at 804-358-7166 or visit www.maymont.org.

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