



Opening of Pandora – The World of Avatar caps years of expansion at Disney’s Animal Kingdom Theme Park

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla., May 25, 2017 — As Walt Disney World Resort celebrates the opening of Pandora – The World of Avatar, Cast Members are reflecting on the many changes that have taken place during the multi-year expansion at Disney’s Animal Kingdom Theme Park.

“At first, when I told people I was working on the Animal Kingdom expansion, they would say ‘Oh, the Avatar project,’” said Roger Stevens, manager of Program Development for Disney’s Animal Kingdom Theme Park. “I would smile and say ‘Yes, the Avatar project, and so much more.’”

In 2014, the first noticeable changes took place with the relocation of the “Festival of the Lion King” from Camp Minnie-Mickey to Africa within the park. Each year since that time, Disney’s Animal Kingdom Theme Park has added new restaurants, merchandise offerings, entertainment experiences, additional animals within the park, and more.

The Africa expansion was completed in 2015 with the opening of Harambe Market and Zuri’s Sweet Shop. That same year, Discovery Island transformed with new animal carvings in the Tree of Life area and expanded walkways. This created a new home for the Winged Encounters show, bringing colorful macaws to the forefront of the park.

In 2016, the experiences extended from day to night, including the launch of after dark excursions on Kilimanjaro Safaris with hyenas and painted dogs, awakenings at the Tree of Life, street parties throughout the park and a signature restaurant, Tiffins. With the opening of “Rivers of Light” this year, 2017 has already been a banner year for the park.

“When I think about this expansion, I am honored to have been a part of it for the past five years and have seen firsthand the teamwork and collaboration that it takes to deliver a great experience for our guests,” Stevens said. “The completion and opening of this exciting new world, Pandora, is a great achievement for so many and in my opinion, the most exciting one.”