



Northwest Trek
Wildlife Park

METRO PARKS TACOMA

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NEW CANADA LYNX MAKES DEBUT AT NORTHWEST TREK

Nuka, now on view, is eventually to be paired for breeding through the Species Survival Plan

EATONVILLE, Wash. – There’s a new cat in town, and this weekend (Feb. 24-25) is the purr-fect time to see her at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park.



Nuka recently arrived at Northwest Trek and will move on and off exhibit as she settles into her new home. She will eventually be paired with Omak, a male who has lived at the wildlife park since 2014.

Since her arrival Nuka has been a delight to care for, say Northwest Trek staff.

“She is a perfect, beautiful lynx and is quite interactive with the keepers who care for her,” said Northwest Trek veterinarian Dr. Allison Case, who gave Nuka a full exam soon after her arrival.

“She’s so spunky,” said keeper Haley Withers, who helps care for Nuka. “When she knows we’re there, she runs over. And she loves birds – stalking them, chasing them.”

She also likes stalking keepers, said fellow keeper Angela Gibson. “She hides behind things and follows us. And she loves to bat things around, like any cat.”

With their thick speckled fur, black-tufted ears and huge paws for stalking prey on snow, Canada lynxes are stunning cats to look at – and Nuka is no exception. But it’s not just her playful nature and good looks that make her a draw at Northwest Trek. Nuka is also part of a strategic breeding plan that ensures healthy diversity and survival of the zoo-based lynx population.

The Species Survival Plan, managed by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, is a long-term project in which AZA-accredited zoos – like Northwest Trek – collaborate to make sure that endangered and threatened species continue to thrive.

Nuka's a part of that plan.

At 21 pounds, Nuka is just a bit smaller than Omak, her intended mate, and is young and healthy. Time will tell, though, how well the two cats will settle in together.

“We are hopeful that they may successfully mate in the future,” said Northwest Trek Zoological Curator Marc Heinzman.

Canada lynx are endangered in Washington. The species is pressured by a number of factors, including the 2017 forest fires that destroyed much of their native habitat in Okanogan County, according to the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife.



In addition to Canada lynx, Northwest Trek is home to a variety of carnivores including bobcats and wolves; to wetlands animals like beavers and river otters; and hooved roaming animals like American bison, Roosevelt elk, moose and deer.

Every visit to Northwest Trek comes with a naturalist-narrated, 50-minute tour of the 435-acre Free-Roaming Area aboard a heated tram. Nuka, along with her fellow carnivores, can be found on the paved walking trails leading out from the visitor entrance.

Northwest Trek is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday to Sunday, and 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily from March 17. For more information, go to www.nwtrek.org.

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Northwest Trek, accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, is a 725 acre zoological park dedicated to conservation, education and recreation by displaying, interpreting and researching native Northwest wildlife and their natural habitats. The wildlife park is a facility of Metro Parks Tacoma and is located 35 miles southeast of Tacoma off State Highway 161.

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