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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Dec. 1, 2015

**NORTHWEST TREK WILDLIFE PARK AND ITS VISITORS TEAM UP TO DONATE MORE THAN A TON AND A HALF OF FOOD TO FEED HUNGRY FAMILIES OVER THE HOLIDAYS**

*Donations through Help Out for Half Off during November will account for 2,804 meals to Pierce County residents through the non-profit Emergency Food Network*

**EATONVILLE, Wash.** – Generous visitors to Northwest Trek Wildlife Park dropped off cans of soup, vegetables and meats, like chicken, roast beef and ham. They brought in jars of baby food. And they came with armloads of peanut butter, packets of oatmeal, boxes of stuffing, gravy mixes, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese and myriad other shelf-stable foodstuffs.

Now, the count is complete, and during November, Northwest Trek visitors donated a whopping ton and a half-plus – a total of 3,504 pounds - for the non-profit Emergency Food Network, which distributes food to 73 food banks, hot meal sites, and shelters across Pierce County.

Northwest Trek conducted the Help Out for Half Off food drive during the month of November, offering half off general admission to guests who brought in donations of two or more items of shelf-stable food. The response was enormous, with many visitors bringing sacks of groceries when they came to spend the day with nature.

The food donated by the wildlife park's visitors will provide 2,804 meals to people in need this holiday season, said Merrit Reed, coordinator of volunteer activities for Emergency Food Network. That's enough to provide three meals a day to eight families of four for a month, she added.

Emergency Food Network distributes more than 15 million pounds of food annually to help the county's hungry, Reed said.

For more information about Emergency Food Network, go to [www.efoodnet.org](http://www.efoodnet.org).

For more information about Northwest Trek, go to [www.nwtrek.org](http://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, a facility of Metro Parks Tacoma, is located 35 miles southeast of Tacoma off State Highway 16. Northwest Trek is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015.*