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READY, SET, SLIME! SLUG FEST WEEKEND IS JUNE 24-25 AT NORTHWEST TREK WILDLIFE PARK

Annual event features human slug races, games and activities for kids of all ages

EATONVILLE, Wash. – People interested in all things cool about marvelous mollusks have a bit of time to plan to attend Slug Fest at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park. The packed-with-fun festival is more than a month away.



But don't be too sluggish about making plans – or this zaniest of events on the Northwest Trek calendar could slide right on by before you know it.

Slug Fest has been delighting generations of visitors to the wildlife park near Eatonville for more than three decades. The annual event is a celebration of sliminess and silliness with activities for kids and the young-at-heart. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. June 24 and 25.

The guest of honor, of course, is a slug. A Pacific banana slug, to be exact.

Unbeknownst to some, the banana slug has an important role to play in forest ecosystems. Banana slugs are decomposers that break down organic matter and return nutrients to the soil.

So what's there to do at Slug Fest?

Imagine large trams equipped with tentacles as they make their way through the wildlife park's 435-acre Free-Roaming Area on an animal-watching journey.

And human slug races? Yep, those too. Contestants can inch their way down a soapy, slimy track to victory. They'll get gear to help protect their clothes while they're in the race – although they may still get a little wet.



Crafts, art projects and a photo booth with props will also add to the celebratory atmosphere.

In addition, Master Gardeners will be on hand to talk about slugs and gardens.

And, as always, each admission to Northwest Trek comes with a 50-minute, naturalist-narrated tour on a tram through the Free-Roaming Area, which is home to American bison, Roosevelt elk, woodland caribou, moose, deer and other animals.

Plus, visitors can walk the paved paths through forests of tall evergreens to natural exhibits of wolves, coyotes, Canada lynx, black bears, a grizzly bear, and a wetlands exhibit that includes beavers, raccoons, and other small animals.

A ton of fun for toddlers to tweens at the nature-themed Kids' Trek play area also is included with admission.

All activities are free with admission or membership to Northwest Trek.

For more information, visit 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.

Photo captions:

Top: A contestant inches his way down the track during a human slug race as part of Slug Fest.

Bottom: Two girls pose atop a huge wooden slug at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park.

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