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JUST IN TIME FOR MOTHER'S DAY, A BISON CALF IS BORN AT NORTHWEST TREK WILDLIFE PARK

More bison and elk calves, plus bighorn sheep lambs are expected; beaver also due to give birth soon

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EATONVILLE, Wash. – It's baby season at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park. And just in time for Mother's Day, there's a newborn bison calf in the Free-Roaming Area meadow.



The calf was born Sunday and appears to be doing well, sticking close to mom and walking on still wobbly legs, head keeper Ed Cleveland said.

Visitors to Northwest Trek may get a look at the new mom and baby during the wildlife park's signature 50-minute, naturalist-narrated tour of the Free-Roaming Area. The tours, aboard comfortable trams, are free with admission.

**BEAR CAMP & MORE ACTIVITIES
SCHEDULED MAY 16-17**

The spring and summer of fun at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park is just getting started.

Visitors can celebrate bears and learn more about them during the weekend of May 16-17 at Bear Camp & More!

They can attend a keeper chat, view bears up close and ask questions about some of the most powerful mammals in North America.

With camping season in full swing, Bear Camp & More also includes demonstrations on how to keep campsites safe for bears and humans.

Plus, there will be bear-themed crafts and activities all weekend.

The wildlife park will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day.

For more information about Bear Camp & More and a complete schedule, go to www.nwtrek.org.

The new calf brings the Northwest Trek American bison herd to 17 – for the moment. More births are expected in coming weeks. Several other bison and elk cows are pregnant, as are half a dozen bighorn sheep ewes, Cleveland said.

And an 8-year-old beaver is expecting a kit any day.

“Baby season is always enjoyable because there’s the anticipation of something new each day,” Cleveland said. “It’s also fun to watch the newborns as they grow, sticking very close to their mothers at first and later gaining stronger legs and more confidence and venturing a bit farther away.”

With a glorious forecast for the coming weekend – and Mother’s Day on Sunday – this is a great time to make plans for a family visit to Northwest Trek, where native Northwest animals live in natural habitats.

The 435-acre Free-Roaming Area is home to the herds of bison, elk and sheep, plus moose, deer and other animals that wander at will through the meadows and forested lands of the gorgeous landscape.

American black bears, a grizzly bear, wolves, foxes, cougars, Canada lynx, bobcats, river otters, owls and other animals are viewable from up-close platforms along forested pathways. And keepers bring small animals out daily for scheduled Trailside Encounters in which visitors get a great look at them and ask questions.

Because there’s always something new to see at Northwest Trek – from baby animals to elk bugling to the beauty of changing seasons – Mother’s Day is a great time of year to consider purchase of an annual membership. That will let a family make memories at the wildlife park all year long. And Mom would love the gift.

A household membership is a bargain. It’s \$115 and includes unlimited admission for a year to two named adults and dependent children under 18. The membership also includes discounts on Northwest Trek programs, a 10 percent discount in the gift shop and a 20 percent discount to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. A household membership could pay for itself in just three visits to the wildlife park.

There are other membership packages available for individuals, grandparents, sponsors and patrons.

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, a facility of Metro Parks Tacoma, is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2015. It's located 35 miles southeast of Tacoma off State Highway 161.

Photo: A bison calf on wobbly legs sticks close to its mother in the Free-Roaming Area at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park. The calf was born on Sunday, May 3. Bison calves are a distinctive orange color when born but turn the dark brown of their parents as they grow.

Photo credit: Centioli Photography for Northwest Trek Wildlife Park