



Contacts:

Kris Sherman: 253-404-3800; 253-226-6718 or [kris.sherman@pdza.org](mailto:kris.sherman@pdza.org)

Whitney DalBalcon: 253-404-3637 or [whitney.dalbalcon@pdza.org](mailto:whitney.dalbalcon@pdza.org)

### **CHAMPIONS CHALLENGE TO RAISE \$40,000 IN 40 DAYS TO CELEBRATE NORTHWEST TREK'S 40<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY**

*Northwest Trek Foundation fund-raiser will benefit Kids' Trek nature-themed play area to open in 2016*

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EATONVILLE, Wash. – Puget Sound residents have a wonderful opportunity to invest in the future – our kids - this summer by joining the Champions Challenge.



The Northwest Trek Foundation is raising \$40,000 in 40 days to celebrate Northwest Trek Wildlife Park's 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

The fund-raising campaign will benefit the Kids' Trek nature-themed play area.

The Champions Challenge kicked off over the weekend.

It's easy to join in.

Kids' Trek play area, shown in this pre-construction model, is now being built at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park.

Area residents can sign up to be a Kids' Trek Champion and pledge to raise \$1,000 through individual fund-raisers like walks, runs, garage sales, car washes, bake sales, etc. Find a Champion and support them. Or make a donation at [www.nwtrek.org/kids-trek](http://www.nwtrek.org/kids-trek).

Although construction has already begun on Kids' Trek, additional funds will be needed to complete the project.

The half-acre, nature-themed play area at Northwest Trek will encourage outdoor play and promote a greater appreciation of the environment among children who visit the wildlife park.

“We’re building for the future – all of the children who visit Northwest Trek,” said Deputy Director Alan Varsik. “Kids’ Trek will provide children with a place for fun exercise while at the same time stimulating their imaginations and helping them to learn more about the world around them.”

When completed and opened next year, the \$1.9 million project will include climbing, balance and agility challenges, multi-level play and adventure areas with stairs, bridges, tunnels, overlooks, a slide and lots of interactive play and learning activities.

Kids’ Trek also will have a dedicated play area for toddlers and will be ADA accessible.

Funds from a 2014 Metro Parks Tacoma voter-approved bond issue, grants and donations from businesses and individuals will pay the construction costs. The Northwest Trek Foundation is leading the fund-raising effort.

“We’re pleased that work has begun on this exciting, hands-on experience for children who visit the wildlife park,” said Gary Geddes, director of the Zoological and Environmental Education Division of Metro Parks Tacoma.

“We’re certain it will help them establish new and stronger connections with the world around them and add even more value to the memorable experience that is a day at Northwest Trek.”

The Champions Challenge will conclude next month during Northwest Trek’s 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration. The actual birthday is on July 17, but there will be a three-day celebration of fun and special activities July 17-19.

For more information about the Champions Challenge and how to participate, go to [www.nwtrek.org/kids-trek](http://www.nwtrek.org/kids-trek).

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 celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015. It’s located 35 miles southeast of Tacoma off State Highway 161.*