

THIS GUY...NEEDS A NAME



Shall it be Ash, Douglas or Spruce? Public invited to vote on name for Northwest Trek Wildlife Park's 2-week-old male moose calf



Northwest Trek
Wildlife Park

METRO PARKS TACOMA

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EATONVILLE, Wash. – Members of the public can vote beginning today on a name for Northwest Trek Wildlife Park's 2-week-old male moose calf. They can pick from one of three prospective names, Ash, Douglas or Spruce, by going to www.nwtrek.org/moose.

Voting ends at 11:45 p.m. on July 7.

The calf's name will be announced on Friday, July 8.

He is only the second moose born at the 725-acre wildlife park near Eatonville in the last 16 years. His sister, Willow, was born last July 17, a special gift on Northwest Trek's 40th birthday.

The calf, born June 12 to mother Connie and father Ellis, is healthy and growing quickly.

While nursing, a calf can gain up to three pounds a day.

Keepers report that he is sticking very close to his mother and picking his way through the foliage and under towering firs on still wobbly looking legs in Northwest Trek's Free-Roaming Area.

The calf's parents were named for Northwest Trek icons – Connie for the wildlife park's co-founder, Connie Hellyer; Ellis for longtime wildlife park deputy director and conservationist Dave Ellis.

But in keeping with the wildlife park's animal naming procedures that began a couple of years ago, Willow and the new calf will have identities that reflect the forests in which their species live.

The idea is for animals to carry names drawn from northwest geographic places or natural spaces.

Moose are the only residents of the wildlife park's Free-Roaming Area that are named.

Visitors aboard the narrated tram tours of the forests and meadows will see plenty of animals, though, many of them juveniles born this spring. There are six calves in the American bison herd, two calves in the Roosevelt elk herd, two calves in the woodland caribou herd, two bighorn sheep lambs and several deer fawns in the 435-acre Free-Roaming Area.



Meanwhile, over in Northwest Trek's central area, where visitors walk along forested pathways to view a wide variety of animals, three beaver kits born on May 5 are growing quickly, too, learning to swim and still spending time in their den with their parents.

The kits have yet to be named, but they, too, will carry Northwest-themed monikers.

Two of the three received wellness exams this week, and Northwest Trek veterinarian Dr. Allison Case declared them healthy. (The third was busy swimming and will get its exam at a later date.)



Top: A Northwest Trek Wildlife Park keeper holds a 7-week-old beaver kit during a veterinary exam on June 21, 2016.

Left: Northwest Trek Wildlife Park veterinarian Dr. Allison Case assesses a beaver kit's body condition during a wellness exam on June 21, 2016.

The male examined this week weighed in at 4.8 pounds; his sister is a bit bigger at nearly six pounds. The third kit's gender is yet to be determined.

The kits are still nursing, but their diets are gradually transitioning to vegetables, fruits, a variety of "browse" (woody stems, twigs, leaves) and some specialized animal chow, Case said.

"I couldn't be more pleased with how the kits are developing and how well their parents are caring for them," she said.

Visitors can look for the beaver kits on exhibit in the Wetlands area of the wildlife park. The Wetlands also are home to an energetic pair of 1-year-old North American river otters who arrived at Northwest Trek last month from ZooMontana. There's a new skunk on exhibit, too, along with a badger, wolverine and other animals.

Along other pathways, visitors come upon exhibits holding two young black bears, a grizzly bear, a family of wolves, red foxes, a cougar, coyotes, Canada lynx, bobcats and other animals.

And over near the main office and gift shop, the almost 3-month-old Kids' Trek is still wowing children from toddlers to tweens with its one-of-a-kind, nature-inspired play structures. Kids' Trek includes a 20-foot-tall replica of a hollow tree to play in; nets to climb on; a pole to slide down; three slides, including one through a tunnel with a 30-degree bend; a net ladder to scale forwards, backwards or even upside down; a stream in which to splash; a toddler zone featuring a sand play area and other amenities; and a "construction zone" with large sticks children can use to build forts or other imaginative structures.

Northwest Trek is open from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

For more information, go to www.nwtrek.org/moose or 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. It is located 35 miles southeast of Tacoma off State Highway 161.

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