



Contact:

Kris Sherman: 253-404-3800; 253-226-6718 or kris.sherman@pdza.org

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A RARE BIRTH: FIRST MOOSE CALF IN 15 YEARS WOWING VISITORS AT NORTHWEST TREK WILDLIFE PARK

Visitors regularly spot the 1-month-old and her mother from a narrated tram tour through fields and meadows

EATONVILLE, Wash. – “Mooooooooooooooooooooo!”

A child excitedly raises her voice and eagerly points out the window of a visitor tram as it meanders through the forests and meadows at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park near Eatonville, Wash.



“Ohhhhhhhh,” the child exclaims. It’s a *baby* moose! It is, indeed. Necks turn. Heads crane. Dozens of pairs of eyes follow the child’s outstretched arm as she points to Northwest Trek’s newest resident, a 1-month-old female moose calf.

For her part, the calf is oblivious to the visitors, nipping instead at mom Connie’s flank for a bit of nursing, then turning to poke her nose into a pile of branches and leaves on the ground.

Help name the moose calf

Visitors and fans can help choose a name for the moose calf by choosing one of three proposals through Aug. 31.

To make your pick, go to www.nwtrek.org/moose.

The choices, selected by Northwest Trek staff, are:

- *Willow*
- *Lily*
- *Aspen*

The winning name will be announced Sept. 1.

Moose sightings aren’t guaranteed during a visit to Northwest Trek, but they have become a regular occurrence in recent weeks. Visitors frequently depart

from the 50-minute, naturalist-narrated tram tour chattering about the moose family they saw and showing off just-snapped photographs.

It's an exciting time at Northwest Trek, a 725-acre wildlife park that's home to moose, American bison, Roosevelt elk, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, deer, grizzly and black bears, wolves, coyotes, foxes, Canada lynx, bobcats, beavers, fishers, wolverines and a variety of other native Northwest animals.

This is the first moose calf born at the wildlife park in 15 years. And – even further cause for celebration – she arrived on July 17, which was Northwest Trek's 40th birthday.

Short of a vacation to Canada, Alaska or some of the great National Parks of the mountain west, there are few places where humans can view a moose and her calf. And none are as convenient to an urban area as Northwest Trek, which lies just about an hour's drive from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

A day or overnight trip to Northwest Trek is convenient from anywhere in Washington state, as well as from the greater Portland area and other spots in Oregon.

It's a rare treat to view so many native Northwest animals up close in their natural habitat.

The moose calf now weighs about 45-55 pounds, keepers estimate. In addition to nursing, she eats a combination of grain set out by keepers and natural browse, or the tender shoots and leaves of plants and trees.

Her mother, Connie, is named for Northwest Trek co-founder Connie Hellyer. Her father, Ellis, is named in honor of Dave Ellis, the wildlife park's longtime deputy director. Both died in 2012, the year the animals arrived at the wildlife park.

Northwest Trek has one other moose, also a female, named Nancy.

Seeing Connie and her offspring in the forests and meadows isn't just a sweet tableau, it's also a piece of a very nice story. All three of Northwest Trek's adult moose were rescued as orphans and brought to the wildlife park three years ago. Each needed special care, and they were all nursed to health and hand-raised by keepers.

Northwest Trek is open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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.