



Northwest Trek
Wildlife Park

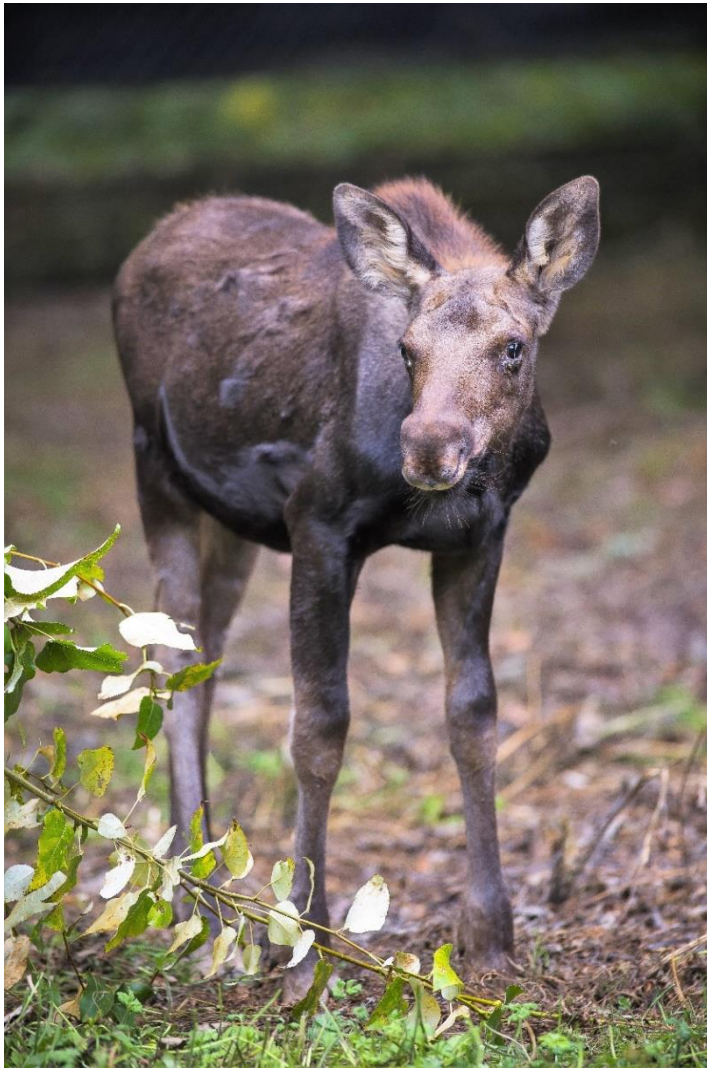
METRO PARKS TACOMA

AND THEN THERE WERE THREE: ORPHANED MOOSE CALF NAMED ASPEN MEETS NEW BUDDIES SPRUCE AND WILLOW AT NORTHWEST TREK WILDLIFE PARK

All three young moose are getting to know one another in a fenced meadow and will be released together into the Free-Roaming Area sometime next month

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EATONVILLE, Wash. – Little Aspen got a rough start in life. But she’s in good health now, is growing and curious and just met two young moose intended to be her new herd mates.



Keepers and veterinary staff at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park introduced Aspen, who was orphaned in Idaho this summer, to her new buddies, Willow and Spruce Wednesday morning.

There was a bit of sniffing and getting acquainted between Aspen, a female estimated to be about 4 ½ months old, and Spruce, who is close to her age, before the two lay down in the grass about 20 feet from each other, wildlife park veterinarian Dr. Allison Case said.

Yearling Willow also got in on the greetings, conducted in a special pen so the three young moose could become accustomed to one another.

“They all are pretty relaxed,” Zoological curator Marc Heinzman said. Things are going well.

“She’s gained a good amount of weight since she came here, and she seems to be settling in,” he added.

Dr. Case described Aspen as healthy with the exception of some eye irritation for which she is being treated.

The young calf is thriving at Northwest Trek, munching on a diet of specially formulated chow for moose as well as browse – the leaves and branches of maple, alder and other trees that make up a moose’s staple diet.

She arrived in late August and weighed in at 192 pounds on Sept. 1. Today, she tipped the scale at 256 pounds.

Aspen, orphaned in Idaho, has a new home at Northwest Trek.



Spruce was born June 12 to parents Connie and Ellis in the Free-Roaming Area at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park.

Once the three young moose are comfortable together, they'll be released into Northwest Trek's 435-acre Free-Roaming Area, where visitors may be able to spot them during the wildlife park's tram tour.

Spruce is 3 ½ months old; his sister Willow is 14 months old. The addition of Aspen – named by keepers at Northwest Trek – brings to six the number of moose at the wildlife park.

Connie and Ellis are Willow and Spruce's parents. They were both orphaned in Idaho and came to Northwest Trek four years ago as foundlings. The sixth moose, Nancy, was orphaned in Alaska. She also arrived at Northwest Trek in the summer of 2012.

Aspen was wild born in Idaho but found wandering alone and orphaned several weeks ago on the Fort Hall Reservation near Pocatello. Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Fish and Game officials searched for the calf's mother but could not find her. They took the calf to Zoo Idaho for care. Officials there looked after her and launched a search for a permanent home.

Northwest Trek was the answer. The wildlife park participates in the Species Survival Plan® managed breeding program for moose.

"Moose are a signature species at Northwest Trek, and we are proud to offer our visitors a chance to see them up close and personal in their natural habitat," Heinzman said.

Moose play a crucial role in helping people learn more about Northwest ecosystems.

“Providing opportunities for our visitors to experience moose across all stages of life and see them exhibiting natural behaviors helps foster a sense of empathy and appreciation for the species, which we hope will in turn lead to caring about wild moose and the places they call home,” Heinzman said.

No one likes to see a moose orphaned in the wild, he added. But Aspen’s story is one with a wonderful outcome.

“It’s a rewarding feeling to know that we are having a positive impact on the health of this animal,” he said. “The collaboration of the tribal officials who found her, zookeepers at Zoo Idaho and staff at Northwest Trek has resulted in a healthy, growing young moose. We think she will quickly be at home in the woods and meadows of our Free-Roaming Area.”

Northwest Trek is open this week from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Hours change beginning Monday, when the wildlife park will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and closed Mondays through Thursdays.

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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.

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