

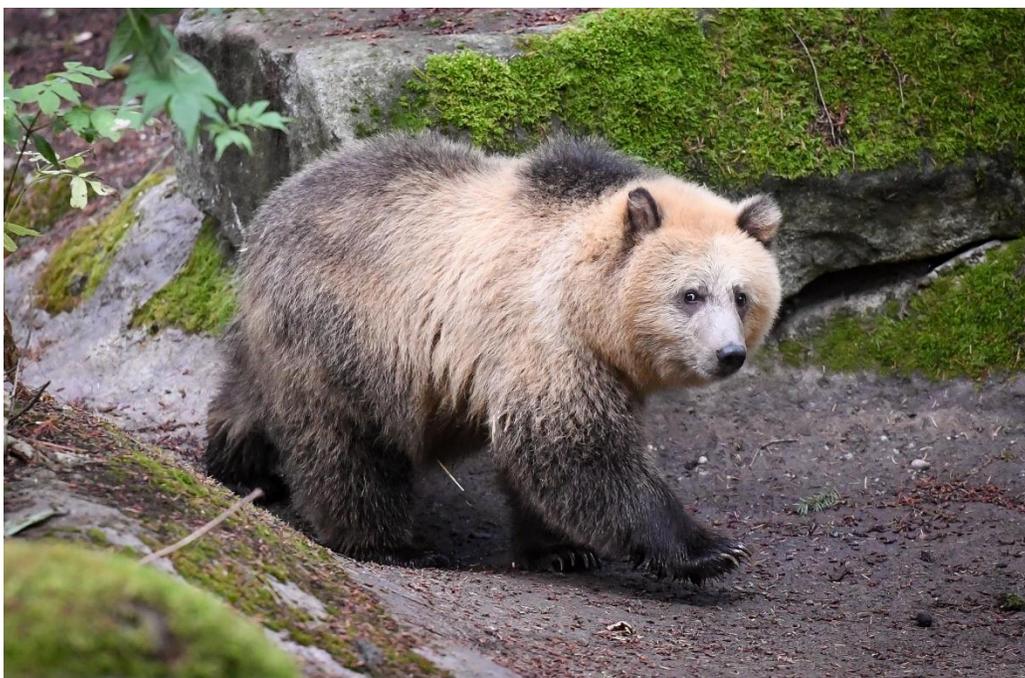
NEWS EDITORS: Here is the link to a gallery of downloadable photos and broll:
<https://pdza.smugmug.com/NWTrek/NWT-Media/Cubnames/>

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NORTHWEST TREK WILDLIFE PARK'S GRIZZLY BEAR CUBS GET THEIR NAMES; HUCKLEBERRY AND HAWTHORNE TO MAKE THEIR PUBLIC DEBUTS THURSDAY

Orphaned cubs from Alaska and Montana have a permanent home at Northwest Trek

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Eatonville, Wash. – It's time! Northwest Trek Wildlife Park's exciting, energetic and engaging grizzly bear cubs will make their public debut on Thursday beginning at 9:30 a.m.

The two orphaned cubs, one from Alaska, the other from Montana, will appear in their renovated habitat separately at first. Each bear needs time to explore on his own and the adopted "brothers" need to get to know one another a little better before they share the forested exhibit space, bear keeper Angela Gibson said.

Huckleberry is the name for the buff-colored bear who was orphaned over the summer in Montana.

And they have names!

Who could resist a buff-colored grizzly bear cub named Huckleberry? Or a chocolate-colored "brother" bear named Hawthorne?

Well, Northwest Trek Wildlife Park's fans clearly could not.

Those are the picks members of the public made for the two grizzly bear cubs in a five-day online poll.

More than 2,100 votes were cast. Northwest Trek staff members supplied three choices for each cub: Bandera, Glacier or Huckleberry for the Montana cub; Hawthorne, Kenai or Sitka for the Alaska cub.

Members of the public can expect to see the cubs at these times daily:

Hawthorne: 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; **Huckleberry:** 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.



Hawthorne, the orphaned cub from Alaska, explores a log in his renovated habitat at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park near Eatonville.

“These are the first grizzly bear cubs at Northwest Trek in the wildlife park’s 43-year history, and we are delighted that so many of our guests and social media fans took the time to think about and vote on fitting names for them,” said Metro Parks Tacoma Commissioner Erik Hanberg.

The two bears arrived at Northwest Trek last month. Human intervention was needed to assure the bears health. They likely would not have survived alone, officials in Alaska and Montana said. They are not releasable back to the wild.

The Tacoma community played a huge role in bringing the cubs to Northwest Trek, Hanberg said. The timing was perfect. A new home was waiting.

The bulk of the nearly \$600,000 cost for completely renovating the quarter-century-old grizzly bear habitat was paid for with bonds approved by Tacoma voters in 2014 to build and upgrade facilities across the sprawling Metro Parks Tacoma district. Metro Parks owns and operates Northwest Trek Wildlife Park and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, both of which are award-winning zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums.

The cubs’ names are in keeping with the wildlife park’s recent tradition of naming animals for geographic features, regions, towns, cities or trees, plants and flowers of the Northwest.

And now, after some seven weeks of settling in and getting to know their keepers, the cubs are ready for their all-important public introduction. As ambassadors for their species, they will inspire Northwest Trek guests to learn more about grizzly bears and the challenges they face in the wild.

But some patience will be required.

“Although we feel that Hawthorne and Huckleberry are ready to roam their exhibit and make their debut for the public, the hours they’re viewable will be limited at first,” said Northwest Trek Zoological Curator Marc Heinzman.

“Like human toddlers, these cubs will run hard and play hard, then be ready for lunch and a nap,” Gibson said. “They’re highly energetic, leaping logs and exploring every corner of their habitat.

“They eat several times a day,” she added. “It takes a significant amount of nutritious food to fuel their growing bodies and curious nature.”

Based on the cubs’ behavioral cues, Northwest Trek’s animal-care staff will decide when they’re ready to share the exhibit. Each has his own den behind the scenes. The wildlife park will post updates on its website at www.nwtrek.org and on social media channels so members of the public will know the best times to come and see them.

Northwest Trek has been home to grizzly bears since 1993 and actively works on behalf of grizzly bear conservation issues with a number of public and private agencies and groups.

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Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, 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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