

TREK TRACKS

PUBLISHED FOR THE FRIENDS OF NORTHWEST TREK WILDLIFE PARK



Moose calf wows visitors to Free-Roaming Area



Come watch Willow and other calves and lambs grow amid the changing seasonal landscape

Gifts of nature make perfect presents for the holidays

Gifts from Northwest Trek Wildlife Park foster an appreciation for wildlife. Find something for everyone on your list at nwtrek.org/gifts

- Memberships make visiting Northwest Trek convenient and cost-effective. Starting at \$50, an annual membership allows unlimited visits to the wildlife park for a year. Try a household or grandparents' membership for \$115—both provide admission for two adults and all dependents up to age 18. Like visiting Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, too? Consider a combo membership, starting at \$95.
- Keeper and photo tours give animal lovers and photo buffs special access to our forests, meadows and exhibits. Join *Continued on page 2*

To see Willow the moose calf in a stand of trees, munching on branches and leaves with mom Connie nearby is a study in contrasts.

She's gangly with long legs. Yet also stout with a sturdy torso. Graceful as she inclines her head just so to snare a mouthful of tender shoots for munching.

She's fond of big-leaf maple, alder browse and cottonwood.

She's growing. The calf born on July 17 – Northwest Trek's 40th Birthday – now weighs north of 110 pounds.

And still impossibly cute. She is the first moose calf born at Northwest Trek in 15 years.

So if you saw her in July or August, or even September, put another visit to Northwest Trek on your calendar and come see how *Continued on page 2*



Moose calf wows visitors *Continued from page 1*

she's grown. In fact, with the changing of the seasons from late autumn into winter, now is a wonderful time to check out the growth among all of the bison and elk calves, deer fawns and bighorn sheep lambs born during the spring and summer. There are more than a dozen.

As the weeks and months go by, their coats change. The once distinctively orange bison calves are darker now. The spots on the Roosevelt elk calves and deer fawns disappear as they mature. And all of the animals learn the behavior traits of their parents.

It's always fun to try and spot the differences and note the growth in the juvenile animals during a narrated tram tour of the 435-acre Free-Roaming Area.

"They're still small, but they act like adults," said Ed Cleveland, Northwest Trek's head keeper. "They want to explore away from their mothers, but not necessarily the entire herd. They're just testing their independence."

Keep an eye out for Willow, her mother Connie (named for Northwest Trek co-founder Connie Hellyer), and her father Ellis (named for longtime wildlife park Deputy Director Dave Ellis). A fourth moose, Nancy, also hangs out in the Free-Roaming Area forest.

The animals—young and old alike—have been active this fall, enjoying some of the cooler temperatures after an unusually hot summer.

Each season is different at Northwest Trek. The rut, or breeding season for hooved animals, began in early September. By late fall, the rutting season is complete, but the bull elk will retain their magnificent antlers for a few months before their racks fall off and the growing cycle begins anew.

As the weather gets even colder and wetter, you'll see animals develop their heartier, shaggier winter coats. And of course, many trees are shedding their fall foliage.

So join us this fall and winter and bring your family to watch our family grow.

Gifts of nature *Continued from page 1*

keepers on their feeding rounds or take a tram set up specifically for photographers.

- Be a gift-giving Superhero. Present someone on your list with a gift card for a bucket-list adventure through the Northwest Trek tree canopy on one of five Zip Wild zip line/challenge courses.
- Go unique. The Northwest Trek gift shop has toys, jewelry, clothing and one-of-a-kind nature-themed items for everyone on your list.

- Donate to the Animal Enrichment Fund and provide a variety of stimulating opportunities for Northwest Trek's resident animals. The fund helps Northwest Trek purchase feeder balls, mirrors, chew toys, and special food treats and training supplies that keepers use to encourage natural behaviors.

To buy gift cards for Northwest Trek admission tickets, programs or Zip Wild, call Tanya Cash at 360-832-7166 or email her at Holiday@nwtrek.org
To buy gift cards for memberships, call Jeannie Clay at 360-832-7170 or email her at Holiday@nwtrek.org.

Kids' Trek scheduled for Spring 2016 opening

Northwest Trek Foundation's Champions Challenge raises \$61,000 to help fund nature-themed play area, and you can help, too; donations are still being accepted



Playing outdoors is in a kid's nature, and it's about to get a whole lot more fun.

The \$1.9 million Kids' Trek play area is on track to open next spring, thanks in part to the Northwest Trek Foundation's Champions Challenge.

The half-acre nature-themed play area near the Forest Café will feature a tunnel slide, climbing wall, rock slide, stream system, toddler playground and picnic pavilion.

The Northwest Trek Foundation set a goal to raise \$40,000 in 40 days for Kids' Trek in honor of the wildlife park's 40th birthday in July.

Donors rose to the challenge – and then some – contributing about \$61,000 during the campaign.

The Foundation met half the goal on the first day of the Champions Challenge, when an anonymous donor matched the first 10 contributions.

“It was definitely a community effort,” said Northwest Trek Development Manager Tyra Larson. “We exceeded the goal, and we're thankful for that.”

You can still play a role in the construction of Kids' Trek, which is funded in part by a Metro Parks Tacoma voter-approved bond issue. Fundraising by the Northwest Trek Foundation; grants; and other donations are still coming in. Help us reach our goal and make a difference in kids' interaction with nature by donating today.

For more information about Kids' Trek, or to donate, contact Tyra Larson at tyra.larson@nwtrek.org or visit nwtrek.org/kidstrek

Photos: A worker delicately rolls the leaves of a sword fern into wet cement during construction of the Kids' Trek play area. Such touches will help children connect to and learn about nature as they play. The 20-foot-tall simulated tree stump behind him is one of the play structures.

A mountain goat sculpture has a perfect rocky perch from which to gaze over the many features kids can explore, clamber over and climb on at Kids' Trek.



CONSERVATION CORNER

On a mild October day, some 1,180 Oregon spotted frogs leaped into a Pierce County wetland, darting through the knee-high grasses and burrowing into the mud.

Northwest Trek Wildlife Park staff members, who reared 254 of the



Oh Hoppy Day! Northwest Trek staff and partners release endangered Oregon spotted frogs into area wetlands

amphibians from eggs, watched them go, the last of the frogs to be released through a seven-year, multi-agency effort to recover this endangered species.

In the last few years, more than 7,300 Oregon spotted frogs were launched into new lives in a local wetland. More than 1,600 of them were reared at Northwest Trek.

Staff members raised the frogs from eggs through the tadpole stage and into juveniles, giving them a “head start” in life as they grew under controlled conditions, away from predators.

“We're helping encourage recovery of this endangered species by putting large numbers of healthy juveniles into the environment,” Northwest Trek keeper Dave Meadows said.

This year, the award-winning project is being carefully evaluated.

“This has been one of the biggest partnerships in the recovery of a species in South Puget Sound,” said Michelle Tirhi, a biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. It included Woodland Park Zoo, Oregon Zoo, the Sustainability in Prisons Project and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.



Northwest Trek Wildlife Park
11610 Trek Drive East
Eatonville, WA 98328-9502

General Information:

360-832-6117 | nwtrek.org

Winter Hours

Open: Fridays - Sundays: 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
through March 17, 2016

Closed: Mondays - Thursdays

Holiday Closures: Nov. 26, Dec. 24, Dec. 25

Special Holiday Openings:

Winter Break, Dec. 26-Jan. 3

Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, Jan. 18, 2016

Presidents Day, Monday, Feb. 15, 2016

JEANNIE CLAY, *Membership Coordinator*

360-832-7170 | Jeannie.Clay@nwtrek.org

Northwest Trek, accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, is a 725-acre zoological park devoted to the display, interpretation, research and conservation of North American native wildlife.

Connect with us:    

Thank you to our Community Partner: 

Answer the Call of the Wild at Northwest Trek in 2016

Kids 'n' Critters: Feb. 13, 14, 15

Get your hands on family activities throughout Presidents Day weekend. And bring your friends. Up to four kids get in free per paying adult.

Career Day: March 5

High school and college-age students receive free admission to Northwest Trek and a chance to learn how zookeepers work and what they do. Reservations are required and limited to the first 50 students. They will be available in January at nwtrek.org

Photo Tours: March 6, April 9, May 7

Snap! Click! Got it! Photo memories to last a lifetime are as simple as hopping aboard a tram for a special Free-Roaming Area Photo Tour. You'll have the chance to take amazing, up-close pics of animals like bison, elk, bighorn sheep, mountain goats and maybe even a moose. Go to nwtrek.org for a complete list of 2016 Photo Tours and information on how to reserve your spot.

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WINTER Wildland

DEC. 26 - 27

Take a break from the hectic holiday-season and chill out at Northwest Trek while you watch our animals get holiday-themed enrichments like evergreen trees decorated with snacks, ice piles and snowmen.