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MAKE “BEAR TRACKS” AT NORTHWEST TREK WILDLIFE PARK!

Black and grizzly bears; plus bear crafts, forage walks, teddy bear check-ups and more at new event May 17-18.

EATONVILLE, Wash. – It’ll be beary, beary fun – for humans and bears alike.



At “Bear Tracks,” a new spring event May 17-18 at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, visitors can not only meet grizzly and black bears up close, but learn all about them in a weekend full of bear-themed fun.

Hands-on activities include bear crafts, foraging walks, teddy-bear check-ups, a bear conservation booth and demonstrations by Washington’s first canine wildlife detective, K9 Benny. With a new name and brand-new activities, Bear Tracks builds on previous bear events at the wildlife park.

Of course, the stars of the show will be new grizzly cubs Hawthorne and Huckleberry, and black bears Benton and Fern, who will be showcased each day in keeper talks, feedings and the incredibly popular camp-site demonstration.

On Saturday morning, Benton and Fern will explore an “unsafe campsite” set up in their habitat by keepers to show visitors the importance of being bear-aware when outdoors. On Sunday, keepers will show how to store food safely in bear country.

In between, all four bears will be their usual adorable selves: splashing in the pools, climbing logs, foraging for food or just soaking up the sun.

Hawthorne and Huckleberry are now over one year old, and growing fast. Orphaned in the wild as cubs, they were given a “forever” home at Northwest Trek and now live together in a newly-renovated habitat that was funded by a Metro Parks Tacoma bond approved by Tacoma voters in 2014.



Black bears Benton and Fern have lived at the park for five years, and are visitor favorites.

“We’re excited to share our bears with guests, and at the same time help people learn more about them,” said Education Curator Jessica Moore. “Bears are incredible animals, native to the Northwest and really important for our ecosystem. But to protect them, we have to learn how to live with them. ‘Bear Tracks’ helps us learn about and celebrate these amazing animals.”

Here’s the schedule for the weekend:

Saturday

10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m.: Learn about wild edible forest foods and how to spot bear signs on a naturalist-led foraging walk on the paved nature trails

11 a.m.-4 p.m.: Teddy Bear Check-Ups. Bring your teddy bear for a wellness check-up!

11:30 a.m.: Watch black bears explore an unsafe campsite, with keeper talk

2 p.m.: Grizzly bear feeding

All day: Learn about protecting bears at the Conservation Northwest booth.

Sunday

10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m.: Learn about wild edible forest foods and how to spot bear signs on a naturalist-led foraging walk on the paved nature trails

10:30 a.m.-4 p.m. (every half-hour): Watch K9 Benny demonstrate how he sniffs out illegal wildlife products

11 a.m.-4 p.m.: Teddy Bear Check-Ups. Bring your teddy bear for a wellness check-up!

11:30 a.m.: Black bear feeding

2 p.m.: Grizzly bear food storage demo

Guests also can stop at the Teddy Grahams booth for bear-shaped snacks, courtesy of event sponsor Teddy Grahams. Mary Bridge Children’s Hospital is the other event partner.

The Northwest Trek gift shop will be offering a 10% discount (20% for members) on all bear plush toys throughout the weekend.

“Bear Tracks” is free with Northwest Trek admission or membership.

The wildlife park is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays and 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays.

For more information, visit www.nwtrek.org/bear-tracks.

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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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