



## CELEBRATE THE SLIMY HEROES OF THE FOREST WITH THE RETURN OF SLUG FEST AT NORTHWEST TREK

*Human slug races, tentacle headbands, and other slug-like activities for the whole family  
July 30-31*

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EATONVILLE, Wash.— Once upon a slime, in the beautiful forest just outside of Eatonville, banana slugs slowly roamed the grounds of Northwest Trek Wildlife Park... and they still do! Since its first festivities in 1983, guests to Northwest Trek have kept the annual Slug Fest event sluggin' along, celebrating the greenish-yellow banana slug year after year. This year, the unusual tradition returns July 30 and July 31 from 10am-4pm.

"It's the slipperiest, slimiest, and wackiest event in the Northwest," said Northwest Trek Education Curator Craig Standridge. "We're delighted to keep this longstanding tradition of celebrating slugs alive."

Why do we have this zaniest of festivals? Well, if you've ever hiked a Northwest forest, you'll know our slugs are among the biggest and best - especially the banana slug. But they're also vital to our ecosystem, breaking down organic matter and returning it to the forest floor, where it becomes food for our plants and trees.

"Banana slugs are more than mucous, slow-moving creatures," said Standridge. "They are incredibly beneficial to the environment and help increase the quality of soil, making the world a better place."

### **Slip, Slime and Slugs**

Events will include the always popular human slug races, in which participants inch their way, much like their animal counterparts, along a soapy and slimy water track on their bellies. Be the most slug-cessful contestant and you can proudly claim you "snailed it!" Waterproof slug costumes will be provided.

Register 15 minutes before the races begin at the tent near the Picnic Pavilion inside the front gates. Guests will be paired up with others in their age group (4-6, 7-9, 10-12, 13-17, and 18+). Race times: 11:30am, 1:30pm, 3:30pm.

Guests can also make their own tentacle headbands out of construction paper and pipe cleaners, craft snail suncatcher decorations, and learn to see the world through a slug's perspective. And make sure to stop by the newly reopened [Cheney Discovery Center](#) to see a banana slug up close. Plus, do a self-guided scavenger hunt in the nature trails- see how many paper slugs you can find!

Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife officials will also have a booth at Slug Fest focused on what people can do to support wildlife in their own neighborhoods. They will have native seed giveaways, instructions for how to make a bat box, and how to landscape your yard to help wildlife.

Feeling slug-ish? Remember - Wild Drive tours give you free admission to Slug Fest and core area animals, plus the chance to see elk, mountain goats and more from the comfort of your air-conditioned car. [Book now](#), spots limited.

Slug Fest is free with admission or membership to the wildlife park. To learn more about Slug Fest, visit: [nwtrek.org](http://nwtrek.org).

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*Northwest Trek, accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, is a 723-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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