



LOVE IS IN THE AIR: ELK BREEDING SEASON AT NORTHWEST TREK WILDLIFE PARK

Bugling, Sparring, Clashing: Experience elk rut in an open-air Jeep with a keeper

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Eatonville, Wash.—Antlers clashing and high-pitched whistling noises. Both are signs of the annual rut (elk breeding season) at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park. Guests can get up close to the excitement in the 435-acre Free-Roaming Area this September and October during a Keeper Adventure Tour.

The special two-hour Jeep tour guided by a Northwest Trek keeper gives guests plenty of time to keep their eyes and ears peeled for bugling calls, sparring and more. Watch as bull elk (males) compete for the attention of the cows (females). Guests will hear the bulls challenge one another, loudly bugling back and forth and eventually clashing antlers. Guests will also see the bulls rubbing their antlers aggressively against trees and shrubs, all part of the mating process. In the end, one bull will become the lead, asserting his dominance over the other males, claiming the nearby cow herd as his own.

“Fall at Northwest Trek is a magical time,” said Education Curator Craig Standridge. “Hearing the eerie, haunting whistle of elk bugling through the forest is really something special.”

The Jeep is open-air but has a roof so even on rainy days guests can stay dry as they take in the nature around them. The Jeep allows keepers to take guests off-road, granting them front row seats to not just elk, but mountain goats, bison, moose, caribou, deer and swans, too.

Upcoming tours: Sept. 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25; Oct. 1, 2 from 8am-10am

Cost: \$85 members/\$95 non-members. Includes park admission (walking paths to see black and grizzly bears, a cougar, gray wolves, bald eagles and more). Reservations required. Limit 8 people per tour.

Age: 13+

To learn more and book a tour, visit nwtrek.org.

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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo and aquarium, practices and promotes responsible stewardship of the world's resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA).

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