

Zoo's newest grizzly bear cub has a name!
Cub will soon make public debut

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo's newest bear cub, a female grizzly, is growing and thriving, and she now has a name. Culturally resonating with the abundance of fern throughout the Pacific Northwest, the cub's name is Fern!

Fern was named by special friends of the zoo. Maryanne Tagney and David Jones are longtime supporters of Woodland Park Zoo's conservation efforts. Maryanne's active role in Northwest conservation issues and environmental politics for more than 30 years has moved the needle on the zoo's ability to preserve and recover landscapes and learn to coexist with wildlife. "We were honored to be asked to name little Fern, the zoo's adorable new rescued grizzly cub! She is a living and breathing example of the critical wildlife conservation work that we have been supporting since the zoo first created the Living Northwest Conservation Program," said Tagney. "We were delighted to arrange a family meeting with our grandchildren to choose a name which evokes the forests and alpine meadows where grizzlies live and gives hope that we can coexist with wildlife and wild places."



Fern lost her mother in September in Montana and arrived at the zoo October 3. She is currently at the zoo's hospital in quarantine, which is among standard practices at the zoo for new arrivals to ensure the wellness of all its animals.

The mother of Fern had a history of conflicts with humans such as breaking into a fenced compound, frequenting a home that had no unsecured attractants or natural foods and killing chickens that were secured by electric fencing. Hazing efforts, which included rubber bullets, paintballs, electric fencing and noise-making devices, proved unsuccessful. The bear also had been captured and relocated twice in prior years because of similar conflicts. Due to the recent conflicts and the bear's history, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) consulted with the U.S. Fish Wildlife Service and euthanized the mother bear.

Fern was born this past winter and was too young to survive on her own. Bear cubs learn everything about being a bear directly from their mother including hunting, foraging and other skills to survive. In addition, brown bears are not rehabilitated.

According to Kevin Murphy, senior director of Animal Management at Woodland Park Zoo, becoming familiar with humans during a rehabilitation process creates an incredibly dangerous situation later in life. "Bears are extremely smart and resourceful and can have more than a 2,000-mile home range. Even moving 'problem' bears to a remote location is generally not successful in the long term, as was the experience for this cub's mother," said Murphy.

The new grizzly cub is the second bear rescued this year by Woodland Park Zoo. In July, a female brown bear cub, named Juniper, was rescued in Anchorage, Alaska. Juniper is also a winter cub and is about the same age as Fern.

After Fern is moved to the bear habitat, she will go through behavioral training and get acquainted with her caretakers. The animal keepers will begin a series of introductions to the outdoor habitat and to Juniper. "Juniper has fast become the zoo's new darling and has endeared herself to zoo-goers and fans. Our community is going to love watching Juniper and Fern grow up and we're confident the two bears will bond and become companions for many years," said Murphy.

The bears live in the zoo's Living Northwest Trail. Another brown bear, a 28-year-old, male grizzly named Keema, also lives in the bear habitat. He and his brother, Denali, arrived in 1994 as 10-month-old cubs from Washington State University Bear Center. Denali passed away in December 2020 due to geriatric age-related issues. Keema can still be seen on a rotating schedule.

The naturalistic setting for the brown bears in the Living Northwest Trail offers a wealth of enrichment including a braided, flowing stream; a bear-sized swimming pool with live fish; exhibit "furniture" such as rocks for basking in the sun; tree stumps that make great scratching posts; browse and novel scents; and a quiet cave for winter naps.

Brown bears are an iconic species, and these new cubs are a symbol of hope to restore grizzlies in the North Cascades. Stay tuned for updates on both cubs at: www.zoo.org/brownbear.

Brown bears and grizzly bears belong to the same species, *Ursus arctos*, although the common name, "brown bear," typically refers to a coastal bear, while "grizzly bear" usually refers to a (smaller) inland bear. Scientifically speaking, all grizzlies are brown bears, but not all brown bears are grizzlies. Meanwhile, American black bears are an entirely separate species (*Ursus americanus*), although some black bears do have brown fur!

Brown bears are generally solitary in nature but come together during mating season and in concentrated feeding areas such as at salmon spawning sites.

Visitors can discover brown bears, elk, wolves and other regional wildlife at the zoo's Living Northwest Trail where they can be inspired to discover, recover and coexist with local wildlife: #IAmLivingNorthwest.

Woodland Park Zoo is a proud member of the [Friends of the North Cascades Grizzly Bear Coalition](#), advocating the restoration of a healthy population of grizzly bears to Washington's North Cascades Ecosystem. Last week, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process to evaluate options for restoring and managing grizzlies in the North Cascades, where they were killed off by people a century ago.

Here in this region, Woodland Park Zoo is a proud member of the [Friends of the North Cascades Grizzly Bear Coalition](#). "Decades of effort and research make it clear that grizzlies—once a critical component of the North Cascades Ecosystem where they roamed for thousands of years—are now unable to recover without human assistance," said Robert Long, PhD, director of Woodland Park Zoo's Living Northwest Conservation Program and a carnivore research ecologist. "Grizzly recovery is not only logistically feasible and ecologically important but supported by a majority of Washingtonians. It's time to bring the grizzly back to the North Cascades."

Woodland Park Zoo advocates for saving species and spaces around the Pacific Northwest through its [Living Northwest Program](#), including wolves, wolverines and many others. The recently reimagined Living Northwest Trail exhibit is home to the zoo's brown bears, wolves and other native wildlife. The exhibit and its companion website, ["We Are Living Northwest."](#) provide visitors with numerous conservation actions to take to help the species that share the region's iconic landscapes. Anyone can share how they are living Northwest using #IAmLivingNorthwest on social media—they may even be featured on the website!

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