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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SEQUOIA PARK ZOO BEARS SPLASH INTO NEW HABITAT

EUREKA, CA – Sequoia Park Zoo is excited to announce that Noni and Tule have started exploring the dynamic west area of the newest habitat at the Zoo. Affectionately called the “front yard”, this wild-inspired space includes a waterfall and pond to play in, log structures to explore and forage, and plenty of trees to climb.

American black bears, Noni and Tule, were found orphaned in the wild and taken to Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care (LTWC) for rehabilitation in spring of 2022. Despite the best efforts of their wildlife care team, California Department of Fish and Wildlife determined that the cubs were not suitable for release, and Noni and Tule were transferred to Sequoia Park Zoo in late May of 2023. Since then, the rambunctious yearling bears have delighted visitors, staff, and volunteers with their climbing antics and playful personalities.

“It’s amazing watching them explore,” says Amanda Auston, Animal Curator at Sequoia Park Zoo. “Animal care staff will be closely monitoring them, especially over the next few days, and all signs are positive for a continued and smooth transition to the full habitat.”

Introducing animals to a new habitat is a carefully coordinated process, and Noni and Tule have spent the past few months learning skills and behaviors that help Zoo staff care for them. One of the most important behaviors for Noni and Tule to practice and master is a “recall”, in which animal care staff call them from the habitat to the care quarters for treats and positive reinforcement. Asking animals to move from one space to another is a simple and critical skill that eases veterinary visits, reinforces training, and allows staff to clean and service the habitats.

Noni and Tule began their foray into the front yard on Monday morning and spent the day exploring the new space under the watchful eyes of staff and volunteers. Known for perching atop the redwoods in the familiar backyard habitat, Noni wasted no time in determining which trees are best for climbing and set to work “pruning” a new vantage point. Tule made himself at home searching for snacks among the logs and leaves and tired himself out chasing Noni up the trees. Both bears are strong swimmers, and they each spent time splashing in the pond and exploring the waterfall.

Animals at Sequoia Park Zoo have many opportunities to demonstrate a full range of natural behaviors and adaptations, and Noni and Tule can decide whether they want to explore the habitat, play in their covered patio, or sleep in their indoor den. Depending on where the bears choose to be, they might not always be visible to visitors. Guests are encouraged to check the feeding schedule posted daily at the front of the Zoo for the best opportunities to observe the animals and talk with staff and volunteers.

Noni and Tule’s habitat at Sequoia Park Zoo has been generously funded by Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria and is part of the recent expansion that includes the award-winning Redwood Sky Walk. Visitors can immerse themselves in the richness and beauty of the redwoods and learn about the amazing plants and animals that call the forest home.

ABOUT THE SEQUOIA PARK ZOO

Established in 1907, Sequoia Park Zoo is the oldest zoo in California and one of the smallest facilities accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA). Sequoia Park Zoo is home to over 150 individual animals representing over 50 species and includes the Redwood Sky Walk. Visit redwoodzoo.org and redwoodskywalk.com for more information.

The Sequoia Park Zoo inspires conservation of the natural world by instilling wonder, respect, and passion for wildlife.

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Photos Attached Courtesy: Sequoia Park Zoo.