

Family Fun at Alpaca Acres

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 Photos provided by Alpaca Acres



A young visitor enjoys feeding an alpaca at Alpaca Acres.

Mornings begin early on Alpaca Acres. The owners check the fields and provide fresh hay, grain, and water for the animals. The alpacas will eat and drink all day. The “boys” like to be sprinkled with water on hot afternoons. The herd receives regular health checks and monthly weigh-ins. During the season, visitors often come to the farm by appointment to see the animals and enjoy a campfire and other activities, weather permitting.



The Hott family began raising alpacas for the fiber. Alpaca “fur” is sheared each year, cleaned by hand in a process called skirting, and sent to a fiber mill, where it is processed through 11 different machines to be spun into skeins of yarn. Some of Alpaca Acres yarn is sold; the rest is turned into scarves, shawls, gloves, sweaters, hats, blankets, finger puppets, and other items that are sold in The Hay Barn farm store.



Some of the family (*left to right*): Raelyn, Stormy, Maebelyne, Maverik and Rosie.

Alpaca Acres started with three alpacas. The herd increased as the owners started breeding with an eye to continually improving fiber quality. The Hotts quickly realized that alpacas are addictive because they are fun to be with and very calming. During the summer of 2020, the owners felt that opening the farm for free tours would be beneficial to the many people feeling housebound by the pandemic. The people who came were grateful for the chance to have fun in the outdoors, and they had a great time getting to know the alpacas, who each have unique personalities.

The summer of 2020 confirmed that visitors were eager for family friendly activities suitable for all ages, and Alpaca Acres has engaging animals, plenty of space, and fabulous views, so for the 2021 season the Hott family has created an official framework for farm visits. Make an appointment. Register at the Red Barn when you arrive. Take a guided walk to

visit the alpacas with an opportunity to feed them grain (provided). Then play! Whoosh down a 200 foot mountain slide, climb a hay pyramid, bounce on a jump pad, ride a barrel train, or try a game of cornhole. Campfires can be arranged in advance for visitors who want to watch the flames dance and enjoy cooking out. It's even possible to pick up s'mores kits at the farm store.

In addition to welcoming individuals, couples, and families, Alpaca Acres also offers field trips for groups and special days to celebrate grandparents, the glories of fall, alpaca products, and holiday giving. This year, Spookley the Square Pumpkin will join his friends at Alpaca Acres in an anti-bullying campaign celebrating kindness, acceptance, and inclusion with various farm activities and field trips



Spookley
the Square Pumpkin

throughout the month of October. October is Bullying Prevention month, and Spookley is the official spokes-pumpkin.

The Hotts intend to continue growing the alpaca herd and putting the fiber to good use. They also plan to expand the range of activities and attractions at Alpaca Acres, so it will definitely be a place to return to again and again.

The alpaca farm experience is available just outside Oakland, about 20 minutes from most Deep Creek Lake locations. The season extends from Memorial Day weekend to Halloween, and it is open seven days a week during the season. It is, of course, dependent on weather and availability. The website provides details on activities, special events, and farm policies. It's a great place to know about if you're looking for something fun to do in the outdoors.

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Top left: A visitor feeding a few of the "girls."

Top right: Charlie smiling for the camera.

Other photos: Fun things to do around the farm include climbing on the hay pyramid, barrel train ride, and bouncing on the jump pad.

