

## Wolves Return to the Northwest

by Emily Platt

It's an exciting time for wildlife recovery in the Northwest and here in Gorge. First there were photos that confirmed the presence of the rarest and most elusive of North American mammals—the wolverine—on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and the Yakama Nation. And now wolves have returned and been documented in northern Washington and eastern Oregon. As these wolf populations grow, individual wolves will disperse to new areas, and the Mount St. Helens area offers some of the state's best habitat for wolf recovery because of the large roadless areas and elk herds.

Watching and supporting the restoration of a threatened species like wolves in our backyard is a once-in-a-lifetime chance, and the view from the Gorge should be spectacular. Yet this isn't just about the return of a rare species to its historic haunts. In Yellowstone, the thriving wolf populations have ushered in new economic opportunities that include scientific research, tourism, and photography. And the wolves in Yellowstone have also led to the recovery of aspen and cottonwood groves, cooler stream temperatures for fish, improved habitat for beavers, and a host of additional ecosystem benefits. Wolves have helped restore the biodiversity and resilience of Yellowstone's ecosystems, which in turn helps local fish and wildlife species adapt to a changing climate. It will be fascinating to see how wolf recovery leads to natural restoration here in the Northwest.

To learn more about wolves in the Northwest or Washington's draft wolf management plan, please visit [www.gptaskforce.org](http://www.gptaskforce.org).



Photo: Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

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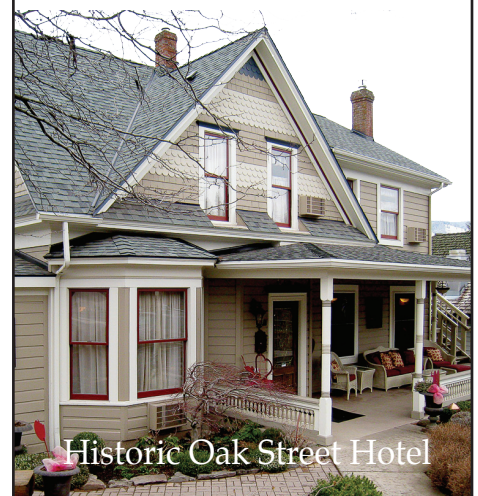


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