



CONSERVATION NORTHWEST

RETURN OF THE WOLF

Wolves have been making the headlines lately and local conservationists are excited. Oregon researchers have documented the howls of a wolf pack and Washington researchers trumped those howls with actual photos of wolf pups.

Back in February the news seemed grim for wolves in the Northwest when gray wolves in the Northern Rockies were removed from the endangered species list by the Bush administration. While some called the 1,500 wolves roaming the Northern Rockies more than plenty, wolf-lovers in Washington and Oregon weren't seeing very many of the predators that were once were hunted into regional extinction by settlers.

Wolves were reintroduced into the Northern Rockies in the mid-1990s. From there the wolves were expected to migrate naturally back into Oregon and Washington. Until this month, only a handful of wolves had been confirmed as having entered Oregon. Of those wolves, three were found killed and one was returned to Idaho.

Conservationists, including the Eugene-based Cascadia Wildlands Project, challenged the lifting of the endangered species protection and U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy in Billings, Mont., issued a preliminary injunction July 18 restoring the protections for the Northern Rockies gray wolves. This meant planned wolf hunts in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming are not on the agenda, for now.

Shortly after that announcement made headlines, Oregon researchers announced that two years of standing outside and howling into the night in Eastern Oregon had paid off: Two adult wolves and two pups howled back. This means that Oregon may have at least one "breeding pair" of wolves. The Oregon Wolf Management Plan calls for at least four breeding pairs in three consecutive rules before state endangered species protections are lifted.

In Washington, Jasmine Minbashian of Conservation Northwest confirmed the group's remote cameras snapped photos of six wolf pups in Eastern Washington's Methow Valley (their cameras have also caught wolverines, moose, skunks and at least one hiker). That group recorded wolf howls as well, available on their website at www.conservationnw.org

Josh Laughlin of Cascadia Wildlands Project called the recent events "a landmark week for the wolf" and said, in reference to ranchers and others who are wary of the predator: "Time and human tolerance will be key to the success of their return." — *Camilla Mortensen*

DOWNTOWN CRIME DOWN

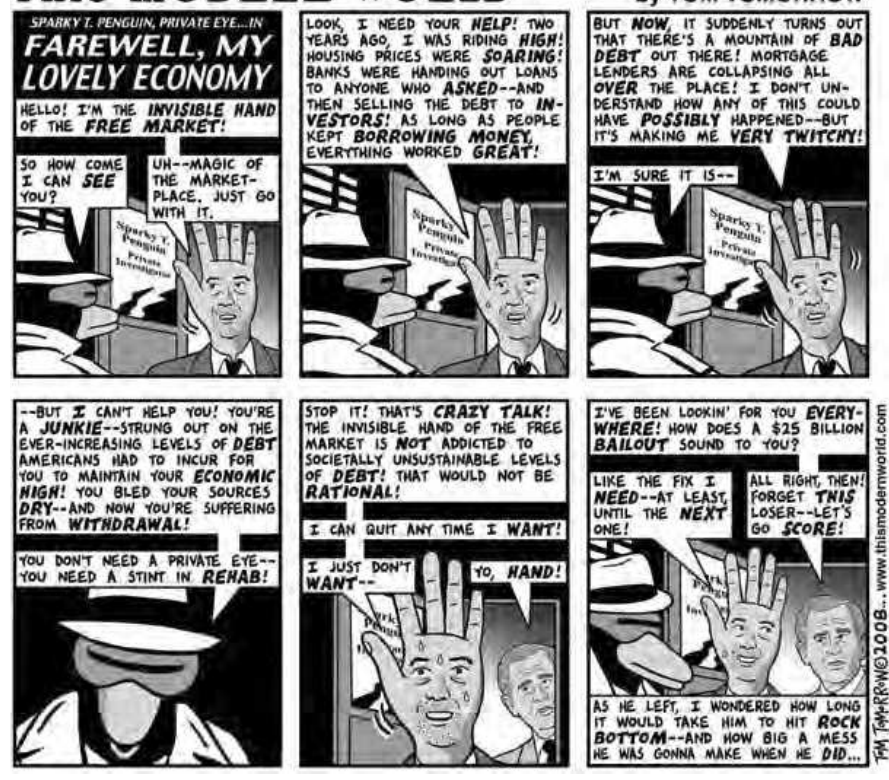
Some downtown business owners told the Eugene City Council last week that a dramatic increase in crime required the city to impose a new exclusion ordinance opposed by the ACLU.

But is crime downtown really increasing? Not according to recent Eugene police statistics on reported crime. In 2007 violent crime in the downtown neighborhood dropped 16 percent from the year before. Property crime was down 15 percent. Behavior crimes were down 3 percent. Vandalism dropped 6 percent downtown and disorderly conduct dropped 3 percent.

While some downtown businesses have advertised their area as unsafe in the media for decades, shopping malls are often more quiet about their crime problems. The Cal Young neighborhood that includes the Valley River Center mall, for example, actually had 233 more reports of theft and 19 more car thefts than downtown last year. — *Alan Pittman*

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



news Briefs

MORE ECO-INDICTMENTS

More than a year after Oregon defendants in the FBI's "Operation Backfire" case were sentenced, the aftermath continues. One of the two Washington defendants was sentenced last week and Wisconsin recently unsealed an indictment against three people accused of girdling genetically modified trees at a Forest Service Facility in Rhinelander, Wis.

On July 18 in Washington, Jen Kolar of Seattle was sentenced to five years of prison followed by five years of parole, as well as \$7.1 million in restitution for her involvement in the ecologically motivated arson of University of Washington Center for Urban Horticulture in 2001.

In the Wisconsin case, Katherine Christianson, Brian Rivera and Aaron Ellringer were indicted and charged with causing \$500,000 worth of damage by destroying 500 trees and defacing Forest Service vehicles "with references to ELF" (the Earth Liberation Front).

The federal indictment erroneously conflates ELF with a separate group, Earth First!, and mistakenly defines "direct action" as "acts of vandalism or arson designed to intimidate businesses, government and the general civilian population into ceasing activities that the individuals in these movements believe are harmful to the natural environment."

The phrase "direct action" actually originates in the labor movement — a strike is a direct action — and Martin Luther King Jr. defined nonviolent direct action as something that seeks to "create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has

constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored."

Oregon defendant Daniel McGowan was named a co-conspirator but not a defendant in the Wisconsin indictment. McGowan was recently held in a Madison, Wis., jail for refusing to give information to a grand jury other than his name and address, according to his wife, Jenny Synan.

McGowan is currently in transit, and Synan fears he will be transported to a rumored newly established "communications management unit" (CMU) in Marion, Ill. CMUs are not officially listed on the Bureau of Prisons website, but the *Washington Post* broke the story of the CMU at Terre Haute last year, calling it "a less restrictive version of the 'supermax' facility." — *Camilla Mortensen*

DISTANCE BIKER HURT IN EUROPE

Longtime Eugene human rights activist Neil Van Steenberg, 81, was reportedly run over by a tractor in Germany while on

WAR DEAD

Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq began on March 20, 2003

(last week's numbers in parentheses):

- 4,125 U.S. troops killed* (4,125)
- 30,324 U.S. troops injured* (30,324)
- 145 U.S. military suicides* (145)
- 314 coalition troops killed** (314)
- 1,123 U.S. contractors killed (accurate updates NA)
- 94,285 to 1.1 million civilians killed*** (93,880)
- \$540.6 billion cost of war (\$538.6 billion)
- \$153.7 million cost to Eugene taxpayers (\$153.1 million)

* through July 28, 2008; source: icasualties.org; some figures only updated monthly ** estimate; source: icasualties.org *** highest estimate; source: iraqbodycount.org; based on confirmed media reports; other groups calculate civilian deaths as high as 655,000 to one million.