

# WOLF

## TRACKS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF WOLF HAVEN INTERNATIONAL • TENINO, WASHINGTON USA

**Home on the range**  
with wolves, cows & sheep

### **PRAIRIE PRIDE**

We're proud  
of our prairie!

### **Rescue mission – Idaho, revisited**

9 years later: bringing the last  
of the 'Idaho wolves' home

Washington  
has wolves  
and we've got  
pictures!



# Life on the prairie at Wolf Haven

Linda Saunders, *Director of Conservation*

## Before you go:

### Summer & Fall Sanctuary Hours (THROUGH JANUARY)

- Open every day EXCEPT TUESDAY, from now until the end of September.
- Weekends only October through March (closed to the public for the entire month of February)
- Wolf Tours start every hour on the hour: 10 am -3 pm; Sundays 12 pm -3pm. Gift shop closes at 4 pm.

**BUTTERFLIES FLIT ABOUT** and land on a big mound of blue violets, while a single wolf howl starts the chorus of many near the edge of the prairie. Where are we? Wolf Haven is the only place in the world where you can hear wolves howling while standing on native prairie, enjoying the plants and various critters that live here. Wolf Haven has about 50 acres of native mounded prairie, an ecosystem which has been reduced in Washington to less than 3% of its original size due to development. As the prairie is lost, so, too are its unique inhabitants: Taylor's checkerspot butterfly, mardon skipper, Mazama pocket gopher, golden paintbrush flower... species that depend on each other in ways we still don't fully understand. With the help of our partners, these species are slowly being brought back to our very own Wolf Haven prairie, saving them for generations to come.

How can you tell what butterflies are zipping by you? It helps to be quick with a net and have an expert eye! Wolf Haven has over 27 known species of butterflies and moths, with over 20 of them commonly seen. Surveys of butterflies tell us that we have the most diverse group of butterflies and moths on our site compared to other native prairies in Washington, and that we also have the greatest number of rare species. This spring, Vince Harke, a biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), volunteered his lunch hours to conduct butterfly surveys on our prairie. In June we hosted more biologists from the USFWS Recovery and Listing Branch, who surveyed our butterflies and moths and mapped the location of our most valuable butterfly nectar plants. Among other rare species, Wolf Haven's prairie has been chosen as a future release site for the vanishing Taylor's checkerspot butterfly, because we have the nectar plants critical for this beautiful creature.

Wolf Haven's prairie provides forage and nectar plants for butterflies, moths and many other insects such as wild bees, bumble bees, and beetles too numerous to name. Some butterflies need the plants for their nectar, others as a place to lay their eggs, and others to provide food for developing caterpillars. We have an abundance of early violet, the prime nectar plant for the rare Mardon Skipper; yarrow, which is dined upon by Lorquin's

Admiral; woodland strawberry, cherished by Sara's Orangetip; and common bearberry (kinnikinnick), loved by the hoary and brown elfin.

Some of you will remember that a couple of



Hoary elfin. PHOTO BY ROD GILBERT.

acres of our prairie were intentionally burned last fall to stimulate native plant growth, including important butterfly nectar plants such as spring gold (Lomatium) and common camas (see *Fall 2008 WOLF TRACKS*). A lush, green carpet greeted us on a visit to the burn this spring – the variety and vigor of the butterfly plants was amazing! Another couple of acres of our prairie will be burned again this fall, increasing the number of plants which attract rare butterfly species.

I was fortunate to help with one of the most important butterfly conservation projects occurring in Washington this year – the release of captive-reared Taylor's checkerspot caterpillars onto a neighboring prairie. There are only six known locations of the Taylor's checkerspot remaining in Washington, and in 2007, only 4 of these sites had over 10 checkerspots observed. We carefully picked up each one of the over 2,500 ½-inch or smaller caterpillars and placed them on a leaf of the plantago plant, which they now use as a substitute for their preferred golden paintbrush (absent from



Checkerspot butterfly caterpillars. PHOTO BY LINDA SAUNDERS.