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Public can view sanctuary's newest residents

BY CHESTER ALLEN

THE OLYMPIAN

TENINO -- The public will get a first look today at Wolf Haven's seven new wolves from California.

"They're very curious about what's going on," said Julie Palmquist, communications manager at the wolf sanctuary. "The wolves have acclimated very well."

The pack - two parents and five pups - arrived at Wolf Haven in early December.

The wolves, which were born in captivity, were the property of a Southern California family that could no longer care for them.

Wolf Haven built a 2.5-acre enclosure for the new pack.

Their old enclosure in San Bernardino was much smaller and did not have the natural ground cover that is part of their new home.

Guides will take visitors to the wolves every hour from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The new pack joins Wolf Haven's 28 gray wolves and two red wolves. Wolf Haven also has five Mexican gray wolves, but they are not on display, as they will be released into the wilds of Arizona or New Mexico as part of an effort to restore the animals to the southwestern United States.

The new wolves soon will have a two-level waterfall and pond.

Todd Harris, owner of Olympia-based Stone People Water Garden and Landscape Masonry, is donating his time to build the pond.

Harris' parents donated \$1,500 for materials, and the pond will honor Harris' grandmother.

Harris said he hopes the pond will be completed by today.

Harris said he does not know how many hours it will take to build the pond.

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"We'll see by the time it's done," he said. "It will probably be 60 hours or so."

Wolf Haven International, a nonprofit organization, provides sanctuary to wolves that were born in captivity and cannot be released into the wild.

The California pack probably will be kept together.

The wolves will be sterilized to ensure they do not reproduce. Wolf Haven does not believe in breeding captive wolves.

The new wolves are very interested in visitors, Palmquist said.

"We've been bringing small groups of volunteers and staff up to see them," Palmquist said. "They're still excited to see people."

If you go

- What: Wolf Haven sanctuary near Tenino
- Hours: Today from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Cost: Admission, which includes a guided tour, is \$7 for adults and \$5 for children between three and 12 years.
- Notable: Wolf Haven is closed to visitors in February because wolves go into mating season. While wolves can't have pups, their behavior becomes more aggressive during mating season, and they don't tolerate human intrusions well, said Julie Palmquist, Wolf Haven communications manager.
- Getting there: To get to Wolf Haven from Olympia, drive south on Interstate 5 to Exit 99. Turn right onto 93rd Avenue, go over I-5 and continue east about four miles to Old Highway 99. Turn right onto Old Highway 99. Follow Old 99 toward Tenino. Turn left onto Offut Lake Road and follow signs to Wolf Haven.
- Information: Log onto www.wolfhaven.org.

