

Understand the Pacific Northwest



PACIFIC NORTHWEST TODAY 410

What are the hot-button issues that everyone's discussing in the Pacific Northwest? Sustainability, politics, sports and more.

HISTORY 413

From first inhabitants to explorers, trappers, settlers and later migrants, the region has always attracted those in search of adventure.

LIFE AS A PACIFIC NORTHWESTERNER 421

Nature-loving hippies, outdoors nuts, latte lovers, beer geeks... all comers enjoy the Northwest's laid-back lifestyle.

MUSIC & THE ARTS 425

Ground zero for right-brain thinkers and mind-blowing art, there's creativity galore in this progressive and inspiring region.

BEERVANA & BEYOND 429

Food and drink writer Lucy Burningham explores the region's microbreweries, coffee culture and burgeoning wine industry.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST CUISINE 432

Lucy Burningham eats locally and sustainably from a rich bounty of produce, and samples gourmet delights at a Portland food cart.

WILD THINGS 436

The best places to spot bald eagles, orcas and the Northwest's signature animal, the Roosevelt elk.

SUSTAINABLE PACIFIC NORTHWEST 441

The region is a leader in recycling, bike friendliness, public transportation, storm-water management, renewable energy use and green architecture.



population per sq mile

WASHINGTON

OREGON

USA



= 40 people

Pacific Northwest Today

Recent Times

Since the bursting of Silicon Forest's high-tech bubble in 2000, the Pacific Northwest has had ups and downs trying to regain a foothold in this now-fickle field. In recent years, many companies of all kinds have either shut down, moved away or laid off workers. As an example, Boeing – the world's number-one aircraft manufacturer – moved its corporate offices to Chicago in 2001, but despite layoffs has fortunately remained responsible for thousands of Seattle-area jobs. Unemployment has always been an issue, especially in Oregon, and the recent world economic crisis has certainly not spared this region.

At least the seriously dampened real estate market has cut over-inflated housing prices down to size, making it more affordable for young people to buy a house – *if* they've managed to get and keep their job. And transplants from the north, south and east continue to journey westward, as the pioneers did hundreds of years ago, looking for a higher quality of life – even if it means taking a serious pay cut and dealing with gloomy weather more attractive to vampires than sun-worshippers.

The Pacific Northwest keeps exerting a strong pull on the adventurous of spirit. And though today's Northwest populations tend to be driven by espresso rather than the desire to chart new territory, there remains a culture founded on restless idealism and the sense that there's still more prospecting to do – and always the hope that the economy will once again head north.

What You Talkin' About?

Mention the Northwest to folks outside this area and you'll start a conversation on the region's lush forests, snow-dusted volcanic mountains and amazing waterways and coastlines. Then you might gab about the

The highest point in the Pacific Northwest is Mt Rainier at 14,410ft.

Top Films

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975) Oscar-winning movie about a mental institution and its inhabitants, filmed in Salem, Oregon (where the novel was based).

Sleepless in Seattle (1993) Romantic comedy that highlighted Seattle's Space Needle and its houseboat communities.

Twilight (2008) Highly popular vampire saga that catapulted sleepy Forks, Washington (as well as other Pacific Northwest locations) onto the world's center stage.