



HUNTER, A 14 YEAR OLD TIMBER WOLF

# The Wolf Mountain Nature Center

## Head Animal Caretaker's Message ~ Will Pryor

As the seasons of Mother Earth continue to cycle, she has blessed us with a very wet, lush spring causing our newly planted trees, plants, and shrubs to grow exceptionally well. Our projects list has been delayed and some projects put on hold because of the numerous rainy days.

The wolves are doing well. The North Pack is moving on from the breeding season and the "happy hormone", Prolactin, has kicked in making the animals very friendly. Dyani continues to be her lovable, yet mysterious self. Sequoyah has grown into a confident young male wolf and often exhibits his dominant behaviors. Okwaho is clearly the lower ranking pack member unless a fresh deer carcass is brought in—then he takes over as long as Dyani will allow it. Nipahwi and Tashina have adjusted very well to being pack mates for the past nine months. Although their relationship was rocky at first, they now hang out together and peacefully share their man-made log shelter. Tashina is shedding chunks of fur as her coat prepares for the warmer months. Some days she looks more like a sheep than a wolf! Natani is now eleven years old and doing well. Back in March, she lost her packmate, Hunter, to old age. I thought perhaps putting her former mate, Nakoia, back with her might ease her loneliness, but Natani wanted nothing to do with him. Tamarack just turned two and is a

magnificent wolf and often a visitor favorite. His playful antics keep folks entertained and keeps Tala on her toes. The two are often seen running and playing together. Once completed in mid-August, the new retirement enclosure will become the home for Tala, Dancing Turtle, and Nakoia. Seneca and Cayuga continue their brotherly love and competition. Both are phasing with more white frost mixing in their fur, especially around their muzzles, making it look as though they are growing beards!

The coyotes have been their usual loud, vocal selves. Kenai continues to be the most outgoing, the most vocal, and the lowest ranking in the pack. Sitka and Kaliska have been warming up and allowing for more closer interactions with handlers. Denahi continues to thrive in his spacious enclosure away from his siblings. These animals are wonderful ambassadors for Eastern Coyotes and have allowed for many positive educational moments.

Our six Arctic Foxes are shedding quickly and rapidly acquiring their greyish summer coats.

Our focus is to continue to improve the lives of the animals who live here. Our dedicated, tight-knit family of volunteers keeps the center going and I am grateful for all they do!



At the end of March 2017, we said our farewells to Hunter, a 14 year old male rescue timber wolf who succumbed to old age. Hands-down a favorite among visitors and staff alike, Hunter and his piercing stare will be greatly missed.

Hunter photos credit: John Hancock

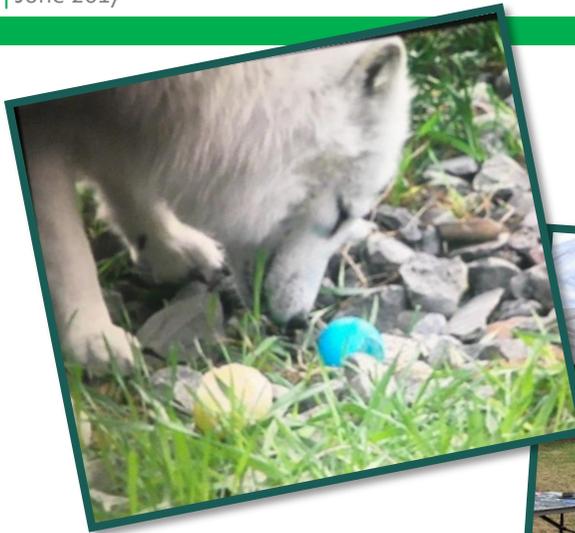


# Earth Day 2017

## April 22nd

Earth Day 2017 was a cold, damp day, but that didn't deter folks from coming out to celebrate Mother Earth with us! With lots of activities, there was something for everyone. Kids enjoyed environmental crafts and our interactive hands-on kids table where they could see if they could smell as well as a bee! Adults kept busy looking at our special earth day displays that covered everything from cell phone recycling to disappearing monarch butterflies to hummingbird feeding to the effects of DDT on eagles (with some amazing photos by John Novier).

Throughout the day, staff led animal enrichment programs including the egg hunts for the wolves, foxes, and coyotes! Wolves and coyotes are very quick to catch on to the "game" and ate the eggs as soon as staff put them down, but the foxes were easier to "trick" and they spent a bit longer searching for their treats. Amazingly, all the animals are able to pick up and carry the raw eggs without breaking them, even though their jaw strength allows for the crushing of animal bones!



### Wolf Birthday Party May 7

Another wet, cold event day, but it *is* springtime! All of our animals at the center are born in the early spring so we hold one huge celebration in their honor. This year our staff held their own cake decorating contest. Each staff baked and decorated a birthday cake for the animals; we then had visitors vote on their favorite design. Lea's bone shaped cake was clearly the favorite!



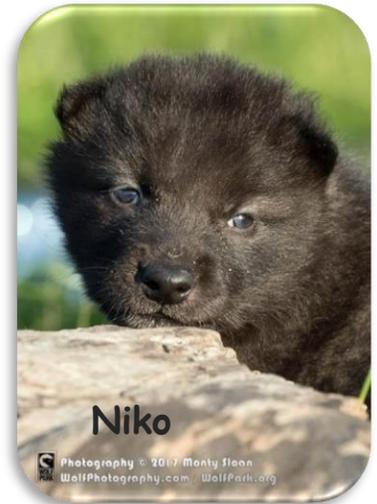


Khewa

Photography © 2017 Monty Sloan  
WolfPhotography.com WolfPark.org



Dyani's Pups



Niko

Photography © 2017 Monty Sloan  
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## Wolf puppies!!

Dyani, our two year old black phase female, gave birth to a black phase male & a gray female pup on April 22 (Earth Day!). Exactly two weeks earlier, on April 8, Timber, a female wolf at Wolf Park in Indiana, gave birth to a litter of five pups. All pups were retrieved at ten days old when the mother begins spending more time away from the den. This is also the critical age for caretakers to begin human bonding so that lifelong relationships between human and wolf can occur with success.

Our two pups were swapped with two of Wolf Park's pups so that each facility would have "new blood" in the packs.

Caretakers are now very busy with 24 hour care and socialization of the young pups. The pups, known as Cypress and Tauriel, spent the first few weeks in our classroom converted pup palace where it was fairly small and "den-like". At seven weeks, they transitioned to their outdoor puppy palace which they absolutely *love!*

Although Cypress and Tauriel are becoming acquainted with human caretakers, they are not yet ready to handle visitors. Once our caretakers feel the pups are ready, we will slowly allow visitors to see them.



Cypress &amp; Tauriel



## Camp with the Wolves!

Bring your own tent & sleeping bags and spend the night under the summer sky with the wolves nearby! Besides camping out, guests will be able to assist staff with animal feeding chores, enjoy dinner over a campfire, participate in our evening howl program, enjoy a movie in the classroom or storytelling in our tipis, receive a guided tour of the facility, hike through our woods to the photo platform and more! Total cost per person is \$75. Overnight guests *must* be at least 12 years old. This is a "reservation only" event and has a maximum of fifteen participants per session. Not interested in camping overnight or have kids under the age of 12? Join us for the Saturday only activities from 3-10 pm which include everything but camping & breakfast (fee is only \$50 per person; reservations required). For more information and details, call us at the center evenings at 607-627-6784.



July 15-16

July 29-30

August 12-13



### More upcoming events:

#### **Wolf Communication Programs: Every Saturday evening in the summer at 7pm beginning June 17**

Program includes tours of all wolf and coyote enclosures as staff lead discussions on how and why wolves communicate with each other—it is way more involved than just a simple howl. Wolves use a variety of scent marking, complex ethology, and numerous vocalizations to give messages to each other. The evening ends at dark with a pack howl! Admission: \$5 (kids under 5 free!) Gift shop also open.

#### **Wolves and Watermelons: Sunday, August 6 noon-4pm**

A celebration of summertime with watermelons. While visitors enjoy free watermelon treats, our animals receive whole melons to eat and play with. Yes, wolves eat watermelons! And pumpkins, berries, and apples!!

#### **Photography Session: Sunday, August 13 8-11am**

Meet us in the classroom for a brief presentation about the center and its animals, then hike our easy, short wooded trail to the photo platform where photographers can take pictures of the main wolf pack without the barrier of fencing obstructing views. Reservations required for this activity with a limit of 10 participants accepted. Fee: \$75 per person. Call 607-627-6784