



Photo credit:
Dean Barney

Cypress, a nine-month-old Timber Wolf

Wolf Mountain Nature Center News

562 Hopkins Crandall Rd., Smyrna, NY 13464
(607) 627-6784

twmncwolves@yahoo.com
TheWolfMountainNatureCenter.org

(a non-profit 501(c)3 organization)
Founded in 2006 by Will Pryor

Head Animal Caretaker's Message...Will Pryor

Reflections from a frozen place...

Winter brings with it various kinds of challenges—frozen water buckets, frozen keyholes, and frost heaved gates. I always recall Ralphie on the Christmas Story movie when I'm blowing into an ice-jammed pad-lock. Thankfully I have not gotten my tongue stuck to a frozen flag pole! I'm one of those people that simply doesn't like to wear gloves, but this winter with its -20-degree temperatures has been hard on my hands.

That being said, the animals are all okay with this winter and its arctic-like temperatures. Apart from a few older wolves who simply retreat into their cozy cabins, most of the wolves, especially the young ones, seem to have more energy for chasing and playing with each other. The Arctic foxes will actually turn their faces into the winds as if sunning themselves like it was a day at the beach.

Winter is my favorite time of year for planning the upcoming spring and summer projects. On my list for 2018 will be a new puppy development and growth habitat (both an indoor and outdoor area), a spacious new exhibit for Eastern Coyotes, and the usual fence repairs/improvements, tree planting, driveway upgrades, etc...

I'm most excited about the wolf puppies expected in April 2018! Last season's pups born to Dyani and Sequoyah went to Wolf Park in Indiana as a trade for some of their wolf pups so both facilities would have some "new blood". Already staff has witnessed Sequoyah mounting Dyani, so we anticipate another litter of pups this year. This time however, we have decided to keep all Dyani's puppies here at Wolf Mountain as the parents are of a rare genetic lineage. Already our trained and experienced puppy parents are excited and ready to work with the new puppies!

So, despite the frozen tundra and boreal look outside our cozy caretaker cabin windows, the days are getting noticeably longer, the sun is moving higher in the sky, and the changing howls of the wolves are announcing that spring and breeding season are rapidly approaching!

As always, with spring building/maintenance projects comes a need for strong workers who can do physical labor. Our work crews do not necessarily need any skills—just a strong back and dependable work ethic. This type of manual labor is done either outside of existing animal enclosures or in construction of new areas, so be assured, you will not be in enclosures with any wolves, foxes, or coyotes! Contact us if you would like to help!

Ah ho!

Will





Sequoyah & Dyani

Niko &
Khewa
(10 days old)



Niko & Khewa (about one month old)
photos by Monty Sloan, wolfphotography.com

The Ancient Dance

by Will Pryor & Pam Mennis

Breeding season has arrived! Our wolves in the North Woods Pack have “solved” several of the biggest issues when it comes to successful breeding; they have an established territory protected against invading wolf packs, have a reliable food source, and have access to a compatible mate. Depending on the latitude at which they live, wolves typically breed around February-March and the females give birth after the worst of winter weather has ceased. Gestation is around 61-65 days which gives young pups approximately 6-8 months to develop, grow, and learn to survive before the onset of the next winter season. Unlike dogs, wolves only breed once a year and the opportunity to do so lasts for only a few short weeks.

Prior to breeding, the pair will “court” each other. A proximity in sleeping space, mutual muzzle greetings and nuzzlings, walking side-by-side, scent marking over the other’s urinations, and genital investigating are all signs a breeding relationship is forming. Soon, perhaps on a quiet moon-lit night with the snow softly falling in the forest, it will be time for The Ancient Wolf Dance to be played out as it has been since the beginning of the species.

Two of our wolves, Sequoyah (male) and Dyani (female) are currently our “breeding pair” and have been showing many signs of things to come this spring. Sequoyah’s howling has increased, and due to increased levels of testosterone, he often patrols his nine-acre territory, urinating frequently to mark his space. He is very protective of Dyani; sometimes he even growls at the male caretakers, perhaps reminding them that Dyani is his “woman” and that they are in his domain. Okwaho, who also resides in the pack, has smartly learned to keep his distance and to respect the natural course of pack dynamics. Once bred, Dyani becomes very affectionate with female caretakers, yet creates an invisible bubble around the den site into which none of the other pack members are allowed. All three have been seen doing renovations of the den site which is a steep, winding tunnel tucked safely under an old fallen tree root system. Den interiors are typically long, narrow, and have sharp turns (likely as a protective guard to deter predators/invasers). The actual birth room is a raised level of ground at the end of the tunnel which prevents flooding of the “nursery” should a heavy rain occur.

Dyani and Sequoyah bred two beautiful pups last season and it is expected they will do so again, perhaps producing a larger litter. While we wait for spring to arrive, caretakers will watch for signs of pregnancy and the hope that the spirit of the wolf will continue once again.



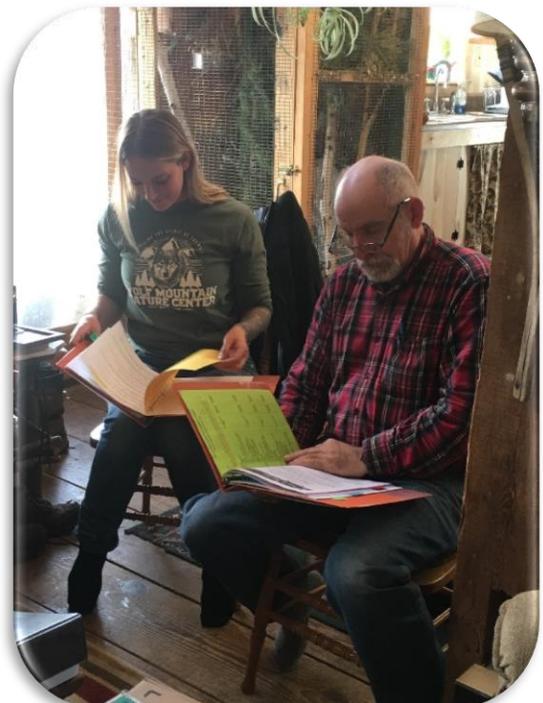
Animal Caretaker Training

Weeks and weeks of long, chilly winter weather when we are closed to the public (it's just too cold & icy) can get boring for our super dedicated and motivated staff, but it affords a wonderful opportunity for everyone to reflect on the successes and challenges of the past year and to turn thoughts towards the new season.

On one such day in January, our five animal caretakers, along with five caretaker assistants working towards becoming caretakers, met for a day of classroom training and hands-on practice. While we have many more volunteer staff, not everyone is able to enter animal enclosures for various reasons; it may be due to an individual's personality, a physical limitation, an unaccepting wolf, lack of proper education and/or experience in working with wolves, etc. Not including Will, our Head Animal Caretaker, our four main caretakers have almost 30 years of wolf experience between them, while our caretaker assistants have 2-3 years each (working on an almost weekly basis) and are just now beginning serious training to work directly with the wolves.

Bottom line? No one goes in with the wolves until they have demonstrated attributes such as dedication, responsibility, commitment, knowledge, work ethic, and more!

At our most recent caretaker training, staff reviewed topics such as safety and emergency protocols, discussed "normal" vs unusual animal behaviors, created a more thorough and efficient animal inspection and observation documentation procedure, discussed new station responsibilities, and talked about what to expect with the upcoming (it's here!) breeding behaviors. After an amazing luncheon, the crew broke into smaller teams to enter enclosures and practice some of the techniques previously discussed in the morning session.



Are you a Teacher? Youth Group Leader? Scout Leader? Outdoor Club Advisor?

Although its only late winter we are already beginning to book dates for spring-summer field trips to Wolf Mountain! For groups of 20 or more, we will schedule a guided off-hours tour customized to your group's ages and area of study. Fee is \$5 per person. Tours include educational visits to all animal exhibits. Additional programs are available such as forest hike, tipis & Native American Life, wolf howl and communication, alternative energy (we operate entirely on wind and solar power), and ecologically based field games. We have several picnic tables for your lunch time break and a gift shop with lots of "wolf" memorabilia to remind you of your visit to Wolf Mountain!

***Teachers* Did you know???**

Grant monies to defray admission fees are available through the DCMO BOCES' Arts-in-Education Program. Your school district must be a member of the DCMO network to qualify. Contact us for more information.



Wishes and Wants: As a non-profit we rely heavily on donations. Below are some of the many items that would help the center. If you can help, please contact us or simply bring the item(s) on your next visit! Thank you!

Animal Care

- Red meats
- Chicken (store bought)
- Venison
- Non-latex gloves (lg)
- 5-gallon buckets w/ handles
- Water lines (black plastic)
- Walkie-Talkies

Landscaping/Maintenance

- Concrete mix
- Picnic tables & benches
- Fence Posts
- Used or new fence
- Lumber
- Plow truck
- Use of bobcat with auger
- Small equipment repair
- Routed signs

Office/Classroom

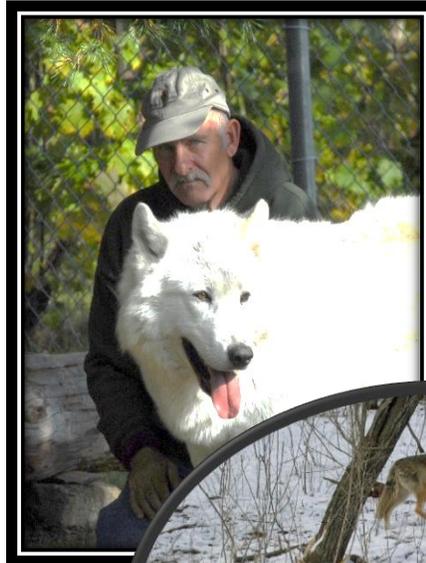
- Postage stamps
- Printer paper (all colors)
- Cardstock paper (all colors)
- Printer ink (hp 902XL/902)
- Sanitizer
- Baby wipes
- AA batteries
- 30 or 55-gallon garbage bags
- Brown paper lunch bags

Dave Conner has been volunteering at the Center since 2011. A retiree, he spends an average of 500 hours per year helping wherever and however he is needed. Dave is often found running Arctic Fox programs, but his true love is the Eastern Coyotes. As an Animal Caretaker, he stays busy working on enclosures and caring for the animals, but he also assists with school field trips, especially with the leading of guided tours on the woodland hikes where he can identify much of our local flora. Dave has also been disguised as The Grinch at our Winter with the Wolves event!

When not caring for the center's animals, Dave cares for several canines of his own. Summers are often spent at his lake house.

He loves hiking and has hiked the "Adirondack 46" many times over. He creates and designs the walking sticks found for sale in our gift shop.

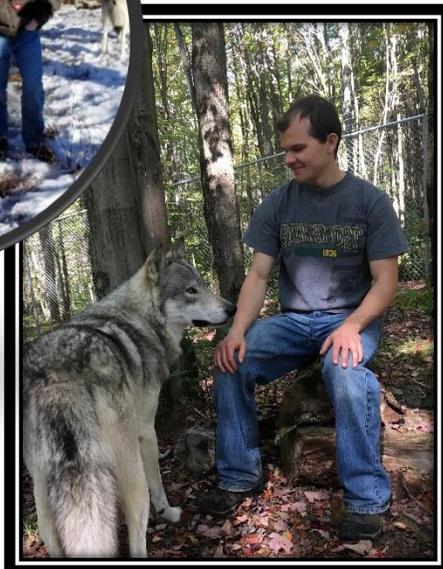
Volunteer Spotlight: Dave Conner



Volunteer Spotlight: Dean Barney

Dean Barney is a relative newcomer to the Center, having been with us since 2016. He had just moved to the area and was looking for something to do with his spare time and discovered Wolf Mountain! During his first visit he jumped right into worker mode and served hot cocoa to visitors! Dean has a personality that easily connects him with the animals and he quickly became a puppy parent last spring raising Cypress & Tauriel. He loves physical labor, especially filling buckets with gravel; he says it's better than a day at the gym! He is currently training to become an Animal Caretaker with the adult wolves.

Dean is a Special Education teacher with a passion for art and photography. He loves hiking, working out, and is learning to create some amazing vegan dishes!



Open Hours and Admission Rates

*Last admission is 30 minutes prior to closing time.

	Sundays	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fridays	Saturdays
Regular Season September 1 – June 30 (closed in January)	Open 12 – 4 pm Various animal enrichment programs; Self or Guided Tours	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Summer Season July 1 – August 31	Open 12 – 4 pm Various animal enrichment programs; Self or Guided Tours	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Open 11 am – 3 pm Various animal enrichment programs; Self or Guided Tours	Open 12 – 3 pm Various animal enrichment programs; Self or Guided Tours
Admission	Children 5 & under Free Folks 6 & up \$5.00	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Children 5 & under Free Folks 6 & up \$5.00	Children 5 & under Free Folks 6 & up \$5.00

2018 Special Programs

Wolf Communication Programs

Learn the variety of methods used by wolves to communicate including scent marking, body language, and vocalizations. Understand why wolves howl and the distinct types of messages behind each howl. We finish with a pack howl!

March 3 4pm – dark
 March 31 5pm – dark
 April 28 6pm – dark
 May 26 6:30pm – dark
 June 30 7pm – dark
 July 14 7pm – dark
 July 28 7pm – dark
 August 11 7pm – dark
 August 25 7pm – dark
 September 22 5pm – dark
 October 20 4pm – dark
 November 24 3pm – dark
 December 22 3pm – dark

All Howl Programs are held on Saturday evenings and include tours of all wolf & coyote exhibits. (Please note that our Arctic Fox exhibits are closed during this program.) This is a group tour/lecture—visitors are expected to remain with the group at all times.

Admission is \$5.00 per person (5 and under are free)



Photography Options

Arctic Fox Sessions
 (pre-registration preferred;
 walk-ins accepted if space permits;
 \$50 fee; must be at least 16 yrs. old;
 limit of four persons per session)

Begins with a 30-minute classroom presentation; participants will then be guided to our two Arctic Fox habitats where they will be able to photograph foxes in their habitat for up to 45 minutes. Long pants & close-toed shoes mandatory.

Sundays at 12:30 pm

February 4
 February 11
 February 18
 February 25
 March 4
 March 11
 March 18
 March 25

+++++
Wolf Photography Sessions
 (requires pre-registration; \$75 fee;
 limit of ten persons per session)

Begins with a 30-minute classroom presentation followed by a 10-minute easy hike to the photography platform situated above fence lines where participants will have up to two hours to take pictures.

February 17 9am – noon
 Mar 3 9am – noon
 September 25 8am-11am
 October 20 8am – 11am

Special Events

Visit our website as specific events approach for more details and for additional special events and programs. All Special Events include tours of wolf, Eastern coyote, & Arctic fox exhibits.

Admission \$5.00 per person
 (5 and under free)

Wolves & Watermelons

July 29 12 pm – 4 pm

Honoring the Spirit of the Wolf

October 7 11 am – 4 pm

Winter with the Wolves

December 9 11 am – 3 pm

Camping with the Wolves

(requires pre-registration; \$75 fee; must be at least 12 yrs. old)

Overnight program which includes camping near the wolves (bring your own tent!). Price includes dinner, breakfast, snacks, tours, Howl and animal enrichment programs, guided hike, tipi campfire program, & more!

July 14-15
 July 28-29
 August 11-12

