



The eyes of Seneca

HOWL CHRONICLES

May 2019

The Wolf Mountain Nature Center

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

Well, it is May and we just let the woodstove at the Caretaker Cabin finally go out. It may be that I am simply getting older, but it felt like a very long winter! Years ago, we chose solar and a small wind generator to power the center and it is amazing how you notice the seemingly endless cloudy days here in upstate New York. So, the melting snows have given way to mud season, the grass is turning green and growing, the bugs are back, the peepers in the ponds are chirping, and the birds are busy nesting. Spring has arrived!

Now is the time for projects to begin: tree planting, equipment maintenance, driveway repairs, brush removal, firewood cutting, and enclosure improvements are all on the agenda. Our new coyote expansion project is underway and should be completed by September 1st. Part of securing animal enclosures means hauling gravel—if you are hard worker or need a service project for your

group, please contact the center to see how you can help! We always need persons willing and able to do physical labor (even if it is just for a single day, we can use you!)

With the change of seasons, we welcome new life of all types; all kinds of flora and fauna celebrate this time of renewal with new creation. We are incredibly thankful and blessed to have been gifted with the arrival of a new litter of wolf puppies from Dyani (along with Sequoyah's help)! Life is so fragile and precious and can bring even the toughest of personalities to tears of celebration and gratitude. Read more about the pups and their parents in this newsletter.

One of our major areas of focus for 2019 and beyond is to create more educational programs for the public. Displays, presentations, and educational tours will all be developed and expanded with the

intent of increasing public knowledge of not only our wolves and other species here, but to all of our environment which is seriously at risk of destruction. Regardless of your beliefs or political viewpoint, we only have one Mother Earth. It is way beyond past due time that we appreciate her and do more than our part to nourish, protect, and honor her.

Ah ho!
Walk in balance

Will Pryor





critter capers



Nipahwi & Tashina

Nipahwi and Tashina are doing great. Both are mellowing with age and have learned to respect each other's space while still sharing the enclosure together peaceably. They are often seen romping and playing with one another, though at eleven years old, Tashina tires quicker than

Nipahwi, now four. Several months ago, our Head Animal Caretaker, Will, made modifications to the platform in the enclosure to make it more useable for both wolves at the same time. Additional steps were added for ease in climbing and a lower platform off the ground was installed giving the animals an upper and lower deck from which to rest and watch over their territory. Both animals love to play and race

wolves in the adjoining enclosure, especially when the male hormones were in full gear during breeding season. Double layers of fencing ensure the two packs' safety. Poor Tashina had a fright a month ago when a tarp covering a fire wood pile a distance from her habitat came loose and flapped in the wind like a scary monster. She woofed and hid until staff identified the problem and corrected it. Great job alerting the pack to the danger Tashina!



Dyani & Sequoyah

Dyani & Sequoyah have the most exciting news to share! The two are our only mating pair and exhibited some very amorous behaviors together during the past several months! Lots of nuzzling, face rubbing, parallel walking,



submissiveness from Dyani (Dyani NEVER submits to anyone!), shared grooming, and breeding activities between the two. So, it was no surprise to Caretakers when they noticed Dyani's abdomen filling out and her appetite increasing. She excavated numerous den sites in preparation for the arrival of her pups with her chosen birth site in a den smack dab in the middle of her nine plus acre habitat. As the roughly 63-day gestation period came to its end, Dyani began to rub and pull the fur off her abdomen to expose her teats thus making it easier for her pups to locate her colostrum rich milk. At that point, only Dyani's "favorite" Caretakers were permitted to work with her and Dyani clearly enjoyed her routine belly massages, often cutting off staff from leaving if she felt she was entitled to a longer session. Staff also noticed Dyani spending more time

standing in her pond—perhaps the buoyancy of the water relieved some of the abdominal weight.

Meanwhile, Sequoyah did his job with diligence and determination, protecting Dyani from any perceived possible threats—he often placed himself between staff and Dyani just in case we tried to pull any funny business with her. Once Dyani went into labor, Sequoyah patiently kept his position at a vantage point that allowed him to watch both the denning site and much of the perimeter of the enclosure. Of course, the arrival of food caused him to relocate temporarily. He ate and even shared some of his food with Dyani back at the den then quickly retreated back to his post.



Okwaho

Sweet Okwaho has a new habitat at the center! While he has always been the omega of the pack, Dyani's torment of him became dangerous during breeding season. For his own safety, and Dyani's piece of mind, Okwaho was temporarily located to the partitioned front section of the Wolf Woods area until his new, permanent home could be completed. While living in his own space up front, Okwaho could still see his brother and Dyani, but without the fear of being chased and bit. Gradually, Okwaho's confidence grew, his tail position went from tucked and protective to relaxed to even at times held high and assertive! He adored physical interaction time from Caretakers and would enthusiastically greet staff, licking their face, play bowing, and running in play. His new home was ready two months later and during the first week of May, Okwaho was moved. The first couple days were a transition as he was very busy investigating all the new smells, marking all the new (to him) trees and shrubs, patrolling territory boundaries, and checking out the new (again, to him) neighbors. During pack howls, Okwaho's ears perked up as he listened for Sequoyah's voice, then Okwaho joined right in. Many times, he initiated the howl and seemed pleased that familiar sounds chimed in with his. It is anticipated that one of Dyani's pups will become a companion for Okwaho sometime in August.



Tala & Tamarack

Tala & Tamarack are still probably the top visitor favorites with their wonderful personalities. Tala, who turned eleven this spring, has lots of energy and jumps up to greet Caretakers whenever she thinks there is a chance for an ear scratch, visit, or a treat. Her whimpering, whining vocalizations done in excitement often cause the entire center's wolf pack to begin a lengthy howl. Tamarack at four years old, is a black fur ball of



boundless energy and keeps Tala young (or at least on her toes). He loves Caretaker visits and loves his belly rubs even more! Frequently the two are playing together with one chasing the other then reversing who chases who. It is humorous to watch big Arctic wolf Tala try to crouch and hide behind a tree or fallen log while Tamarack pretends to search and stalk her.

For their birthday celebration this year, Caretakers decided to try something new with Tamarack & Tala. In the past with other animals, we had created a piñata full of goodies for them to open. However, while we anticipated watching as the wolves tried to latch onto this swinging object and then figuring out how to open it, a single wolf walked right up to it, yanked it from the tree on the first try, easily opened it, and ate the contents, all in about two minutes—show over. Not much problem solving required for the wolves and not much entertainment for the visitors. Since time had passed, our Caretakers have become more clever, and it was a different pack, we again decided to give the two “entertainers” a chance to show off their piñata skills. This time Caretakers used a four-foot-long box about a foot wide wrapped in birthday paper, filled with beef hearts, chicken, and cheese puffs (cause hey, wolves appreciate junk food too!), and tied with strong rope from a tree branch. The wolves could easily reach the box, but its size made it impossible to grab, and the way in which it was hung caused the box to continually swing and twist. Being the elder, wiser animal, Tala persisted “attacking” the piñata until she successfully tore a hole in the bottom spilling out the contents. Tamarack simply raced around terrified of the intimidating creature—at least until he saw and tasted the food!

Cayuga & Seneca



The black phase British Colombian wolf brother team of Cayuga & Seneca continue to act like true siblings. Hanging side by side one minute then squabbling the next, the two are inseparable. The biggest news for these two is the acquisition of a new habitat! Visitors have noticed that these particular wolves are more people shy than other wolves like Tala & Tamarack. Cayuga & Seneca do well with small groups of visitors, but during larger events such as fundraisers or



during an exceptionally large school group tour, these wolves became agitated and pacing behaviors increase. Due to the setup and arrangement of their enclosure, visitors could watch the brothers from three sides which further added to the stress Seneca & Cayuga felt. When Natani passed away last December, it was decided that as soon as winter snows melted and weather permitted, Natani's old space would be renovated and upgraded to accommodate Cayuga & Seneca. Finally, at the beginning of May, their new home was ready, and the two wolves literally followed Caretakers right in to the new space! After much investigating and scent marking, the boys have settled into their new home. While this habitat provides Seneca & Cayuga with the privacy these two crave, they still maintain neighborly relations with Tala & Tamarack and visitors can easily watch and observe them from our gift shop windows.

Nakoa and Dancing Turtle



This father and son duo are large powerful, yet sweet spirits who continue to impress folks with their size and demeanor. Once fighting each other for the right of dominance and pack leader status in a pack of five, the two have aged nicely (Nakoa is 13 and Dancing Turtle 11 years old) and are very compatible with one another. As these older animals have been at the center and experienced many enrichment activities over the years, Caretakers need to be more creative in developing new and different objectives to alleviate boredom in the animals. Dancing Turtle & Nakoa love to receive and open their gifts on special occasions, but simply opening a single box seemed too mundane for these

majestic creatures. So, to honor their "majesties," Caretakers felt obliged to bestow upon Nakoa & Dancing Turtle not one, not two, but eight wrapped gift boxes filled with meat for their birthday celebration! To further add to the festivities, all eight boxes, two cakes, and even a party hat acting as a turret were all attached to a single plank of wood and arranged in the format of a castle and ceremoniously carried in to the "royalty." Of course, their adoring fans crooned the Happy Birthday song as the parade of servants marched in with the gifts! Check out our Facebook page for photos and a video clips of the momentous occasion!



Cypress & Tauriel

The two “jumping beans” of Wolf Mountain, Cypress & Tauriel, are beautiful creatures! At two years old, they have boundless energy and enthusiasm. Cypress has grown into a very handsome boy who enjoys chasing his sister relentlessly. Tauriel jumps straight up when excited, making jump guards a mandatory requirement for her enclosure. The two spend lots of their day atop of their raised platform where they can watch over almost the entire center and its surrounding hills and valleys. This winter, they also spent lots of time visiting with a wild coyote who came for frequent visits at the wooded rear area of the habitat. Multiple deer and fox prints were also noted along the fence line. These two are quite the social animals! Perhaps the most favorite time for Cypress & Tauriel is when Caretakers (especially those who have not been to visit for a period or those who are learning the ropes of being a Caretaker) come into the enclosure for interaction. Tauriel springboards herself up, often colliding with an unprepared Caretaker’s face in an exuberant greeting. Cypress, on the other hand, likes to greet by tugging on a sleeve, then immediately throwing himself to the ground belly up as if to say, “sorry I chewed your shirt, but I am so adorable—don’t you think I deserve a belly rub?” Both mischievous, these siblings are still so easy to love!



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Introducing....wolf puppies!



On May 2, 2019, Wolf Mountain Nature Center welcomed five black phase wolf puppies thanks to parents Sequoyah & Dyani!

By the time the pups were only a week and a half old they weighed three pounds each! All appear to be very healthy, strong, active, and vocal. Currently under 24-hour supervision by Caretakers, the pups are off limits to general visitors until such time the puppies are older, more confident in this new world, and have had necessary immunizations. Staff will continue to take lots of photos and videos to be shared on our website, Facebook, & Instagram. Stay tuned for updates!



Arctic Foxes

Warmer temperatures and longer hours of daylight are triggering the foxes' fur to begin shedding and changing over to its summer grays. Our cute fuzzy "marshmallows" have become funny looking four-legged critters with hanging clumps of fur sticking out in strange configurations. Unlike the wolves, the foxes do not tolerate caretakers stroking their fur so we must wait for nature to remove the fur herself. Until then, our foxes continue to have "bad hair days"! Once shed, the fur is gathered to be used in necklaces and ornaments and for educational purposes.



Coyotes

Our four Eastern Coyotes continue to do well. Sitka, Kaliska, and Denahi seem to appreciate the regrowth of leaves and shrubs to provide them a more secure habitat from which they can observe and satiate their curiosity, especially since strange noises and machines are lurking nearby during construction of the adjacent coyote expansion habitat. Due to a generous matching grant received from the R. C. Smith Foundation, the center will be almost doubling the size of our coyote spaces! Kenai is currently slated to move into this new area with the anticipation of adding a female companion to his habitat.

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)
- Non-latex gloves (lg)
- 5-gallon buckets w/ handles and lids
- Paper Towels
- Metal Rakes/Shovels
- Clean Blankets
- Simple Green Spray Cleaner

Landscaping/Maintenance

- Concrete mix
- Picnic tables & benches
- Fence Posts
- Used or new fence
- Lumber
- Use of bobcat with auger
- Small equipment repair
- Cattle Panels
- Firewood (for campfire/woodstoves)

Office/Classroom

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

Volunteer Spotlight: Courtney Thompson

Courtney began volunteering at the center in 2014 after participating in one of our wolf photography sessions. Initially responsible for being a cashier in the gift shop, she has evolved into an integral member of the animal care staff and focuses on wolf care as her main duty. Courtney has helped raised two litters of wolf pups and is beginning her third round of “puppy parenting” with Dyani’s newest litter. She often drives to the center after a full day of work at her other job just to help out wherever needed. She has assisted on Veterinary check days, traveled to Indiana to help bring home new wolf pups, spent many overnights during camping programs, and has managed to get her entire family involved with wolf Mountain!

Courtney is a social worker at a nearby facility, cares for her family, and has wolf memorabilia all over her house!



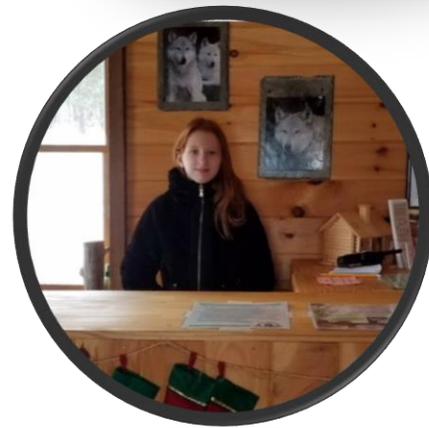
Volunteer Spotlight: Kamren Meyer



Kamren began as a junior volunteer in 2016, working with his mom Courtney. He started out doing various maintenance projects like painting, shoveling, or hauling gravel. He assists with feeding, station duties, and has begun learning the fox program. He also plays the role of our Grinch and a friendly wolf!

An 11th grader, he recently secured his driver’s permit! Kamren loves artwork & drawing and is hoping to attend college for graphic design where he can further develop his skills.

Volunteer Spotlight: Skyler Thompson



Skyler joined our team as a junior volunteer in 2016 with her brother and mom Courtney. Her main task was to welcome visitors to the center and collect admissions. She also helps with overnight camp programs, occasionally assists with animal feeding, and aids staff in landscaping tasks such as brush removal, raking, and snow shoveling. She has also run an arts & crafts table for young visitors.

Skyler is in 6th grade and enjoys chorus and playing the saxophone. Her spare time is spent figure skating.



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

2019 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!

May 18 6:30pm – dark
June 15 7pm – dark
July 13 7pm – dark
July 27 7pm – dark
August 10 7pm – dark
August 24 7pm – dark
September 14 5pm – dark
October 26 4pm – dark
November 9 3pm – dark
December 14 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)



Camping with the Wolves (requires pre-registration; \$75 fee; ages 12 and up only)

Camp under the stars with the wolves nearby! Includes tours, howl program, dinner, breakfast, guided hike, evening campfire program at the tipis, and the option to assist caretakers with animal feeding. Visit website for more details.

July 13-14 (full)
July 27-28
August 10-11

New this year: Spend a night in a Tepee! (requires pre-registration; \$500 fee; ages 12 and up only)

Our brand new traditional Lakota tepee will be available for Saturday night rental during the months of July and August. Cost is \$500 and includes up to four people. Fee includes tepee rental and all activities listed in above camping programs.

Photography

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.

September 14 8am-10am
October 26 8am – 10am

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 Gray wolf, Eastern coyote, & Arctic fox exhibits.

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

Wolves & Watermelons July 28 12 – 4 pm

Includes tours, animal enrichment programs with watermelons which can be filled by visitors, free melon for visitors too!

Honoring the Spirit of the Wolf October 13 11 am – 4 pm

Includes tours, sled dog demonstrations, zoo exhibits, children's tent, Native American tipi program, DEC exhibit, animal enrichment programs with pumpkins, food vendors, and more!

Winter with the Wolves December 8 11 am – 3 pm

A celebration of the winter solstice and holidays. Tours, sled dog demonstrations, Grinch, and the presentation to the animals of their own holiday gifts and treats!

