



“Grandmother Maple” (aka The Lightning Tree)

This tree was hit by lightning many years ago, yet she continues to live, thrive, and grow! An inspiring example for us during these uncertain times.

Head Animal Caretaker’s Message...Will Pryor

Reflections from the Mountain...

Spring...astronomical—yes, however I awoke this May day to snow-covered earth and trees with temperatures in the 20’s. Today is going to be spent sitting by the wood stove waiting for grandfather sun.

Being closed to the public due to covid-19 restrictions does have its benefits and allows us time to work on projects that might otherwise take a back burner. Again, this year, I went crazy planting dozens and dozens of trees—tamaracks, spruces, and pines—some three times my height! We also have a new “bridge over troubled waters” leading to the fox habitats. New posts have been delivered for fence improvements; our snag is finding experienced volunteers to assist with removing large widow-

maker trees before proceeding. If you are willing and able to assist with this, please call us!

All animals are healthy and eating well. As is typical around this time of year, road-kill deer numbers have dropped off, so beef, chicken, and fish become the primary diet of the wolves. We have had many offers of donated meats, but due to the lack of availability of freezer space, we have had to turn down these donations. Our search for a donated chest, upright, or truck box freezer continues (again, please contact us if you have something available!).

When we finally do reopen, the animals will all have to get used to strange people, sounds, and smells again—they may retreat

HOWL CHRONICLES

The Wolf Mountain Nature Center

May 2020

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(a non-profit 501(c)3 organization)

Founded in 2006 by Will Pryor

into the back woods temporarily until becoming reacquainted to the public. This behavior should be expected and is normal.

So as the frogs sing and the green earth here struggles to come alive, there is hope that all will heal, and the cycles of earth will continue. Thank you grandfather for all the gifts you bestow.

Ah ho! Walk in balance!
Will Pryor





critter capers



Nipahwi & Tashina

Tashina is 12 this year and is as loving as ever. While slowing down a bit, she continues to play (at her pace) with packmate Nipahwi, though he does easily get on her nerves. Tashina becomes so excited and happy when she sees Caretakers heading towards her enclosure and loves to be scratched until Nipahwi pushes his way in. At that point Tashina will snap at him as if to say, "I'm not yet done with my human time."



Nipahwi turns 5 this spring and still acts like an inquisitive pup. His energy is boundless as he investigates every little movement in his enclosure, the adjoining enclosure, and the outdoor space around him. Recently during a high wind storm, a pillow from a bench on our admissions cabin porch was blown into his habitat area. Well that pillow did not stand a chance of surviving with Nipahwi around—who knew a pillow could possibly have so much stuffing inside? One entire fence line was lined with bits of stuffing which also decorated the trees and both Nipahwi & Tashina!



Dyani, Kitan, Sequoyah, & Tehyah

Our main pack is a pack of EATERS! While the other wolves eat about 4-5 giant hunks of chicken, the main pack easily puts away 7 pieces each and still wants more! These guys also get road-kill venison on a regular basis to supplement their ravenous appetites.

Now that the spring peepers (frogs) are out in full force, the two ponds in this habitat are very much alive and noisy! These little amphibians keep the wolves (especially Kitan & Tehyah) very busy as the canids attempt to catch as many frogs as they can. While it is a great natural enrichment activity for the wolves, the peepers probably do not enjoy it as much. The ponds also attract passing ducks, who choose wisely to quickly move on to safer waters.

Sequoyah is still very much the alpha of the group and often needs to remind the younger wolves of his status. Son Kitan, at only one year old, already towers over his father and presumably will take over in the future as the pack's dominant wolf, yet for now hangs back observing his father and silently learning. Sister Tehyah continues to be submissive, but silly. Her antics often cause her to be chased and nipped by the others when her playfulness becomes excessive for them. Tehyah loves to follow her mom Dyani and often imitates her mother. Dyani allows this tagging along, but eventually goes off on her own for a nap.



Okwaho & Sakari



Sakari, along with siblings Tehyah & Kitan, celebrated her first birthday on May 2nd. She is a very active wolf who enjoys her central location amongst the habitats where she can watch all the activity of both fellow wolves and staff. Of course, Sakari still believes that SHE should always be the center of attention and affections; should she feel ignored, she will howl her heart out trying to let us know she is still here! When given some colored eggs at Easter, Sakari decided that Okwaho was mistaken to think that perhaps some of the spring-time treats were actually meant for him to enjoy as well! Caretakers had to sneak poor Okwaho some eggs before Sakari noticed and added them to her stash. Guess she thought there was a prize for most eggs collected!



Okwaho absolutely adores Sakari though and often chooses to be right by her side (or is it just easier to see what she is up to if she is within eyesight?); the two wolves frequently nap side by side atop their platform where they can feel the warm sunshine and oversee most of the Center.



Tala & Tamarack



Tala acts more like a young wolf than a 12-year-old! She absolutely loves her familiar humans and whimpers with excitement when she sees them walk by or even exit the front door of the Caretaker cabin! How can one possibly pass by without stopping for a quick head scratch through the fence? Tala's enthusiastic whining is so contagious that it always excites the entire Center's wolves & coyotes into a group howl.



Tamarack turned 5 this spring and maintains his title of "goofiest wolf" at the Center! Regardless of one's mood, watching Tamarack for mere moments brings a smile to anyone's face. He is so stinking lovable with his slobbery, generous kisses and "pet me" attitude. Like Sakari, Tamarack relishes interaction from Caretakers and will not hesitate to bump much larger and stronger Tala out of his way. He usually throws himself to the ground for belly rubs and will use his paws to nudge Caretakers to continue with the rubs if they stop without his permission.

Cayuga & Seneca



The 9-year-old brothers have a typical sibling relationship—best buddies one minute, then squabbling the next. Cayuga continues to dominate his more easy-going brother. Seneca is friendly and enjoys human interaction and watching staff as they go about their business.



This spring Caretakers spent several days in the boys' habitat removing dead trees and branches, sprucing up landscaping, and repairing soffits along the backside of

the gift shop/classroom which abuts the enclosure. During all the commotion of ladders, saws, lumber, hammering, and general disruption of the tranquility, Cayuga & Seneca calmly observed from the safety of a high vantage point in their habitat. Occasionally, curiosity would get the best of them and they would wander closer to sniff tools or drag away cut tree limbs. Now work has begun to expand the upper side of their habitat, thus providing them with additional habitat space.

Dancing Turtle



Dancing Turtle will be 12 years old on May 18th yet sustains a definite playful side of his personality! When the overhead hose is turned on to flush and fill his water trough, Dancing Turtle will jump into the trough, stand under the "shower head", then leap out to run around and play bow. Head Caretaker Will tried planting several dozen young trees in Turtle's enclosure only to discover the next day that the wolf had gone around either biting off the tree tops or ripping them out of the ground entirely!

Dancing Turtle has seemed to adjust to the loss in February of his pack mate and father (Nakoa). Turtle has always been a somewhat sensitive animal and Caretakers worried about how Turtle would adapt to this loss and being alone. To help alleviate his loneliness and to maintain a sense of normalcy,

staff spent more time than usual with Dancing Turtle to reassure him and to provide comfort and companionship. Caretakers also have exposed Dancing Turtle to more enrichment activities over the past few months to help keep his mind and senses focused. Due to his advanced age, it is improbable that Dancing Turtle will be relocated to another pack or have others join him, but time will tell. Overall, he is actually doing very well on his own!





Cypress & Tauriel

On April 8th, these two turned 3 years old! Their energy is still very much that of young pups as staff can attest to every time they enter the habitat! No matter which Caretakers enter or how often, Tauriel & Cypress act as if it is the first human interaction they have experienced in months. While this certainly makes our staff feel loved,



it can be a challenge to enter and not be “mauled” with slobbery wolf kisses or be tripped as the wolves throw themselves down in a supine position in front of us awaiting belly rubs. After happy greetings, Cypress and Tauriel lead Caretakers around the enclosure as if showing off the habitat to their humans for the first time.

Besides the main pack and Dancing Turtle, Cypress & Tauriel receive a fair amount of road kill deer which they drag proudly to all corners of their enclosure. Caretakers wonder if it is to hide the meal from each other or to lure in ravens for a game of chase. Either way, it makes cleanups for Caretakers a daunting task to locate and remove all leftover parts.



Arctic Foxes

Yukon and Yana will be 11 years old this June while Snowflake, Matu, & Blizzard turn 6 years old. All have been busy lately digging dens and food cache spots. Though none are expecting offspring, an internal instinct tells them that spring is the time for pups, and most will imitate those parental behaviors. Since there is either dig guard fencing or in the case of the younger foxes' enclosure, also a hidden “floor” of fencing, the foxes cannot dig too deep (or escape). This digging behavior also helps to trim their very sharp claws. In the wild, those sharp claws would be useful to hold down prey while eating or to dig through ice and snow to obtain food or create shelter.



Coyotes

Our four Eastern Coyotes are doing well. They frequently respond to wild coyotes howling & yipping on the nearby hills. Did you know that coyotes have at least eleven various sounds they make to communicate?! This is one of Mother Nature's ways to ensure the survival of the species since coyotes are fairly small and do not usually travel in packs as wolves do. No wonder when one hears coyotes in the distance, they think there are dozens of the creature! As a general rule of thumb, one coyote can sound like five!

Nakoa

May 5, 2006 – February 13, 2020



An Arctic/Alaskan wolf, Nakoa was the first male wolf to arrive at Wolf Mountain Nature Center in 2006. With the help of his mate Natani, Nakoa sired three pups in 2008: Dancing Turtle, Tala, and Tashina, all of whom still live at the Center. From the very beginning, Nakoa was always a gentle spirit and a wonderful wolf with whom to work despite his impressive size. He was a favorite with visitors and most definitely with Caretakers. Due to his easy-going demeanor (often referred to as our “gentle giant”), Nakoa was typically the first wolf new Caretakers had the privilege of having physical contact with; he seemed to understand their anxiety and uncertainty of being in an enclosure with a wolf, much less actually touching one. Nakoa would calmly approach, nuzzle a hand, and wait patiently for the resulting behind-the-ear scratches that he adored.

Nakoa taught us many lessons over the years. His tolerance, patience, and adaptability were second to none. Over the years, Nakoa lived in numerous enclosures, usually being moved due to incompatibility issues of other wolves as they reached maturity and challenged Nakoa’s seniority. Nakoa would quickly acclimate to his new home and be the happy content wolf that seemed to be his norm.

Nakoa was also known for his exuberance with enrichment programs. Whether ripping into watermelons, pumpkins, Christmas gifts, or birthday presents, Nakoa showed no fear or hesitation, only wisdom and brains! One year for a birthday celebration, Caretakers thought it might be fun to try hanging a pinata from a tree branch for a unique activity. Nakoa hung back watching while the other pack members cautiously investigated the swinging “monster” in the tree. After several minutes of allowing them to demonstrate their foolishness, Nakoa ran up, jumped into the air, snatched the entire pinata, and ran off with the pinata and its contents.
Game over!

Nakoa was indeed a very special wolf whose lessons, spirit, and memory will live on with many of us for a long time. Farewell, sweet one, may your path over the rainbow bridge be swift and filled with wonderful moments.

Have you checked out our on-line gift shop?



We recently created an on-line gift shop where you can purchase some of our t-shirts, baseball caps, and tote bags. Depending on how well it goes, we may be adding other merchandise and shirt designs. Prices shown include shipping costs.

This is another great way to show your support for the Center and for wolves, especially during the current Covid-19 lockdowns. And as always, 100% of profits go directly into animal care expenses!

Visit our secure website to purchase your favorites!
www.TheWolfMountainNatureCenter/giftshop.html



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!

- Animal Care**
- Red meats and Chicken (store bought)
 - Non-latex gloves (lg and XL)
 - Metal Rakes/Shovels
 - Metal "Pooper-scoopers"
 - Large Upright Freezer
 - Truck Box Freezer (grid-tie ready)
 - Walleye Scoop Net

- Landscaping/Maintenance**
- Picnic tables & benches
 - Treated Lumber
 - 8 ft high fixed-knot tensile fencing
 - Perennial Plants
 - Solar Lights (for pathways)
 - Wheelbarrow (heavy duty)
 - Solar-operated fountain

- Office/Classroom**
- Postage stamps
 - Printer paper (all colors)
 - Printer ink (hp 902XL/902)
 - Hand sanitizer
 - AA batteries
 - 30 or 55-gallon garbage bags

Are you crafty? Would you like to help support the Center? We would love to accept your donated *homemade* crafts to sell in our gift shop! Items must be of high quality, from a smoke free environment, and have a wolf theme. Contact us for more info: 607-627-6784

Recent hand creations donated include walking sticks, wood-burned ornaments, hand painted ornaments, felt wolves, quilts, potholders, and jewelry.



What can YOU create?



Zoey's Memorial Garden



For years we have wanted to create a memorial garden with spaces for reflection and remembrance of wolves who had made the journey over the rainbow bridge. Somehow, this project never quite materialized until now, albeit with a heart-breaking motivating force.

In mid-March, a young girl, Zoey Rae Smith, passed away unexpectedly. Zoey's wonderful spirit had a deep connection with the Wolf, and she owned pretty much anything wolf related. Ironically, she and her family had planned on visiting Wolf Mountain Nature Center again the day after she left this world. With assistance from gracious donations to the Center in memory of Zoey, the memorial garden is quickly taking shape and will soon be a quiet place of contemplation not only for Zoey's family to reflect on their little girl's spirit and love of wolves, but for all to share in the memories of lost wolves and loved ones.



**Have you ever wondered what it is like to be an Animal Caretaker at Wolf Mountain?
Are you curious as to the daily operations at a wildlife preserve?
Considering a career working with wildlife?**

Then this program is for you! Register to be a “Caretaker-for-a-Day” for a behind the scenes experience working one on one with Caretakers on various operational duties such as preparing food for the wolves, feeding & watering the animals, enclosure inspections & fox cleanups, maintenance jobs, and animal behavioral observations/documentations.

Throughout the day learn about general animal care & public safety, role of predators in the wild, human & predator interactions, the future of coexistence between species, and the rewards/challenges of managing a wildlife preserve.



Additional Info:

- Participants must be at least 16 years old, be in decent physical shape, & be able to walk over rough terrain, lift/carry 25 pounds, and bend down. A Release of Liability form will need to be signed (by a parent for those under 18).
- \$75 fee includes program, lunch, and a t-shirt
- Must be able to understand & follow directions
- Held on Thursdays May 21 - August 27 (choose one date) from 9 am to 3 pm
- Limit of two persons per Thursday
- Call Center at 607-627-6784 for availability & to register



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 at 12:30 and 2:00 pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Summer Season July 1 – August 31	Open 12 – 4 pm Various animal enrichment programs; Self or Guided Tours at 12:30 and 2:00 pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Open 11 am – 3 pm Various animal enrichment programs; Self-Guided Tours Howl Program at 11:40 am	Open 12 – 3 pm Various animal enrichment programs; Self-Guided Tours
Admission	Children 5 & under Free Folks 6 & up \$8.00	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Children 5 & under Free Folks 6 & up \$8.00	Children 5 & under Free Folks 6 & up \$8.00

2020 Special Programs

Wolf Communication Programs (Howl Night)

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!

- June 6 7pm – dark
- July 11 7pm – dark
- July 25 7pm – dark
- August 8 7pm – dark
- August 22 7pm – dark
- September 5 6pm – dark
- October 3 5pm – dark
- November 7 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.



Please Note:

Due to Covid-19 and ever-changing mandates & regulations, any or all of our planned events/activities may be abruptly cancelled or postponed. We apologize in advance if this happens, but it is out of our control. Certainly, we will abide by rules passed down and want everyone to stay as safe as possible. If you have pre-paid for an activity that is cancelled due to federal or local mandates, we will offer you one of the following options: refund, credit toward a future event, credit toward merchandise at our gift shop, or apply your money to the Center as a donation to be used for animal care expenses.

Upcoming 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.

Wolves & Watermelons

July 26 noon – 4pm

Summertime means hot days and cool treats! Our animals love watermelons as much as we do! Join us for free melons, and some ice cream from local eateries as you watch the animals gobble their melon treats!

Wolf Photography

(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 of the wolves.

- September 5 9am-11am
- October 3 9am – 11am