



Sunset on Wolf Mountain

photography by Dean Barney

HOWL CHRONICLES

The Wolf Mountain Nature Center

August 2020

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TheWolfMountainNatureCenter.org

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

Head Animal Caretaker's Message...Will Pryor

Reflections from the Mountain...

Today is perfect for writing this log as we are finally getting a soaking rain during this hot, dry summer. Having the Center open again, and visitors coming to see and learn about the animals has been wonderful. Covid concerns has kept attendance numbers down compared to previous years, but improvements to enclosures and animal habitats have continued to move forward.

As I look out over the wolf enclosures and surrounding areas it amazes me how green it is here. We are blessed to live in a place where trees and green plants just seed themselves. There are hundreds of new maples, spruce, pine, aspen, and oaks all adding life and a promise for tomorrow.

Many of our animals are getting old. Our Arctic foxes are well beyond their captive life expectancy and we will be looking for pure Arctic fox kits possibly as soon as next year. We also have several older wolves; many on medications for arthritis and age-related ailments. I have been very pleased with CBD products and how well they work improving the quality of life for our animals.

With August and September ahead, plans are still on summer projects and activities, but I am also aware of the long, cold, wet and snowy winter on its way.

I continue to be especially grateful to all my volunteers and interns for their dedication and willingness to jump into any task required to keep the Center running smoothly.

A special thanks to Jason Lautrup, our volunteer groundskeeper, for creating and maintaining a beautiful place for both man and beast to spend their time.

Ah ho!

Will Pryor, Founder



critter capers



Folks often ask if our animals ever get the opportunity to hunt and exhibit natural ‘food- securing’ behaviors or if Caretakers ever supply the animals with live meat. Since most enclosures have naturally occurring fruit bearing trees and shrubs such as apple trees and blackberry bushes, the animals can forage all they wish. Caretakers have enjoyed watching yearling wolves observe and then mimic adult behavior in carefully wrapping their tongues between the thorns of blackberry branches and gently removing the juicy treat. One day, one of our Caretakers noticed what she thought was blood on Okwaho’s foreleg and went to investigate. Slightly embarrassed, she divulged her discovery to the Head Animal caretaker—the “blood” on the white fur was in fact berry juice!

Small game, rodents, turtles, and frogs frequently find themselves staring into the face of a ravenous wolf, coyote, or fox. Arctic fox Snowflake enjoys stalking and capturing frogs who wander unfortunately into her water tub. Her tiny ears stand up listening for any water movement while sharp vision focuses on ripples in the water. A splash is heard, and staff see Snowflake staring at us with two little frog legs wriggling from her tightly closed jaws.

Cypress and Tauriel had the honor of capturing and decimating a rogue weasel who had been ripping through boxes to get at wolf food. Sadly, for the weasel, it wandered into a wolf enclosure and met an early demise. The main family pack of Kitan, Tehyah, Sequoyah, and Dyani have on numerous occasions caught snacks such as frogs, snakes, moles, and turtles. Recently, they almost had a new food added to their menu—a cat! While open to the public, one of our volunteers noticed a small cat in a tree only a few feet from the Wolf Woods enclosures. Striking a balance between coaxing the cat down and not raising the suspicion of the nearby wolves, staff were able to lure the feline from her perch in the branches only to have her run into another tree located even closer to the wolves!



The decision was made to walk away in the hopes the

cat would simply leave when it was ready (or hungry!), yet as dark approached many hours later that daredevil cat was still in that tree, even higher up! Sunrise yielded the observation of a stubborn cat still in the tree, so a very long extension ladder was brought in to remove the cat. Just as our Head Animal Caretaker precariously reached the top of the ladder, that doggone feline jumped out of the tree and ran off, almost acting annoyed that its sleep had been disturbed! Of course, the nearby watching and waiting wolves losing out on their meal were as perturbed as staff who had thought they were saving a stranded, helpless cat!

Camp with the Wolves



One of our most popular summer activities is camping overnight with the wolves and this season proved that to be true as all camp programs were sold out! Campers have the option of renting one of our tipis or bringing their own tent while spending time with wolves nearby. Participants assist Caretakers with animal feeding chores, receive a tour, participate in a howl, enjoy dinner & breakfast provided by the Center, and listen to stories around the campfire while nibbling on s'mores.

Reservations for the 2021 season will be available in November via our website—but do not wait—these fill quickly, and space is limited!



Summertime means college internships! Despite some responsibility modifications due to covid-19 restrictions, this season we had the privilege of hosting two interns.



Tiffany showing off her species relationship project.



Tiffany Nary, currently enrolled at SUNY Jefferson as a Zoo Technology major, also possesses a degree in Veterinary Science achieved at SUNY Delhi. Combined with her experience working as a student zookeeper at two different zoos in New York State, Tiffany was an easy choice to have join us to further her knowledge about wolves and foxes and continue to develop her keeper skills and public education about animals. She loves to learn new information and takes lots of notes. Tiffany enjoys sharing her knowledge and enjoys striking up conversations with visitors.

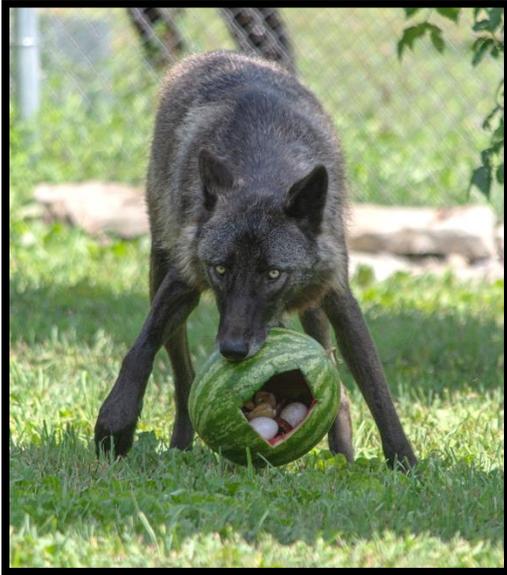
Both girls had the opportunity to assist our veterinarian with some wolf triage.

Maria has developed some serious muscle hauling 40-60 pound boxes of wolf food!

Maria DeNardo has completed her Wildlife degree and is wrapping up her Animal Science degree with a focus on canid behavior at SUNY Cobleskill. Maria is a bundle of positive energy and is always enjoying every task thrown at her. She often is found at our fox exhibits and has developed and carried out several original fox enrichment activities. Although she is a petite young lady, Maria puts her heart into everything and keeps right up with the others, never complaining. Her plan is to continue volunteering at the Center once her internship has ended!



Wolves & Watermelons



July 26th was a flurry of activity as we held our annual Wolves & Watermelons animal enrichment activity. Modified slightly as a result of covid-19 mandates, visitors were still able to assist with filling melons with snacks such as eggs, cheese, fish, and pepperoni. Of course, the real entertainment began when Caretakers delivered the watermelons to the critters. Some wolves dug right in while others proudly pranced around first showing off their precious "catch." Even the fox and coyotes received summertime refreshments!



Farewell to Yana...In early August, Yana, one of our pure Arctic Foxes, crossed the rainbow bridge. Born in 2009, Yana was rescued from a fur farm in the Midwest. She and her companion Yukon were the first two Arctic foxes at Wolf Mountain Nature Center. At over eleven years old, Yana had lived a long, peaceful life with Yukon though she wasn't afraid to give him a piece of her mind every now and then. Known for being the problem solver, Yana would very quickly figure out how to open boxes filled with treats. She absolutely loved her special treats of mice right up until her passing due to old age.



A new program held this season was our "Caretaker-for-a-Day" where participants engaged in 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.



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 restrictions. 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 Freezers
 (must be "garage 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

A special shout out and thank you to the Shipley family from Maryland who donated over 35 years' worth of wolf collectables to our gift shop! They decided it was time to let go of hundreds of mostly never-been-used figurines, stuffed animals, framed pictures, tables, plates, and loads more wolf items. After researching various wolf preserves, they chose Wolf Mountain Nature Center as the recipients of their collection; all of which was generously donated so we could use it to raise funds for the Center and its animals! These gems are going quick and have already generated several thousand dollars to help with animal care expenses such as food, veterinary care, and habitat improvements!



Shen & Will, our expert fence installers, reviewing plans for fence installation on very uneven ground.



Volunteers Peg, Kamren, Will, Mike, & Shen putting up new fencing.



Maria & Dean leveling off and installing poles for a new overhead wolf walk.



We continue to monitor Covid-19 and required safety mandates and protocols at Wolf Mountain Nature Center. Face coverings are mandatory while inside the admissions building or gift shop, both the animal viewing loop and the nature trails in the forest are one-way, social distancing reminder signs are posted, sanitizer is available, and bathrooms are cleaned more frequently. We are doing our best to keep visitors and staff safe.

During the months that we were closed to the public, staff were afforded more time to spend on animal care, improvements, expansions, landscaping, and training of new volunteers. Some of our completed and in-progress accomplishments are shown on this and the next page. Many of these projects continued to happen thanks to incredible volunteering and generous donations from the public—thank you to all who gave!



Jason, our chief groundskeeper, loading up tree branches to be hauled away.



The crew from Heritage Logging volunteered hours of free tree removal service to make our fence lines safer!



Summer intern Maria fills holes with Tamarack supervising.



Cayuga and Seneca will soon have an extended habitat!



Construction of a new wolf observation platform has begun!



Thanks to Rebecca, a solar/wind power installer from Ithaca, our welcome cabin will soon have power!



Local Amish builders have completed our new shed for storing freezers full of wolf meat!



Dean & Shen building a new perimeter fence gate.



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	Open 12 – 3 pm Various animal enrichment programs; Self-Guided Tours
Admission	Free Children 5 & under 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!

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.

Admission is \$8.00 per person
(5 and under are free)



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.

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