FEATURED WOLF: Rosie Valkyrie

In 2013, a wildlife facility in Florida had an unexpected litter of wolf puppies. At just six days old, their enclosure flooded and the pups were separated from their mother and not reunited. Mission: Wolf was contacted and luckily we were in the position to be able to take the young pups in at only four weeks old. Two staff made the 1,800 mile drive in just five days, bottle feeding the puppies the whole way. One of the three, Kenai, found sanctuary at Colorado Wolf and Wildlife while the other two, Tiger and Rosie, found their home at Mission: Wolf.

The two youngsters were timid upon arrival but adjusted well to the new facility and mountain weather with a few spring snowstorms. They started in an acclimation enclosure called the Puppy Palace, getting used to their surroundings and learning to play in snow. Rosie would cautiously greet staff at first but warmed up quick to a few consistent caretakers. After a few months, Rosie and Tiger were introduced to the Ambassador enclosure with Magpie, Abraham, and Zeb. Through the summer they gained confidence and began greeting sanctuary visitors. While Tiger was far more outgoing as he ran up to visitors with powerful face licks, Rosie’s natural wolf instincts made her more reserved and selective. She would pick one or two on the outskirts of a crowd and lick their hand while cautiously watching everyone else.

However, if she decided she was comfortable, she would be in your lap giving an exuberant greeting.

In 35 years, one truth has emerged: the best way to preserve nature is to change human behavior. Of all the skills humans can learn to help protect our natural world, the study of Psychology can help us most. I find myself more inspired as time passes to simply allow people who arrive at the sanctuary to interact with nature, learn new skill sets, and make a difference for themselves. An unusual phenomena occurs when you allow people to set their own goals, evaluate their own achievements and overcome personal failures while they work for a purpose greater than their own needs. I have watched numerous groups combine their own varying assets of knowledge and strength and perform tasks in a manner just as precise, complete, and as high quality as a paid professional.

Mission: Wolf demonstrates how diverse people can cooperate to make a difference beneficial to all. To try and teach the world to do the same is my goal for the next 35 years.

"Today, the one outcome I am certain of is this: allow people an opportunity to be accepted and greeted by a wolf and they leave with a greater capacity to develop compassion and empathy for life."

- K. Weber
Ambassador Wolf Circle

continued from Page 1..

Rosie Adjusts to Life Without Brother Tiger

The two pups finally had the chance again to learn life as a wolf from an adult wolf. Magpie only needed to give a stern look or growl for the two yearlings to submit, while Abraham had to work a bit harder. He was a smaller male and Rosie and Tiger were almost twice his size at only one year old. But Abe would hold his own and take control if things got too out of hand for his liking. In their downtime, Rosie and Tiger enjoyed play across the hillside.

Once the two pups finally had the chance again to learn life as a wolf from an adult wolf. Magpie, the new Ambassador who had come in from a rescue, made sure that the two pups were learning from the best. Magpie, a former pack leader, was the perfect mentor for the two young wolves. With her guidance, Rosie and Tiger learned to navigate the world of wolves, from hunting to social interactions.

When things got too heated, they could be seen whimpering and submitting to the wolves in disagreement, distracting them, thereby preventing larger fights from breaking out.

When no one was looking, Rosie could be seen cuddling up to Zeab.

In the fall of 2014, the adult Ambassadors took off in the wolf bus for what would prove to be the last six-week educational tour across the East Coast. This left Rosie and Tiger alone in the enclosure. Imagine leaving two teenagers alone at home to fend for themselves for six weeks. In that time, they found even more confidence and independence without the adults. Upon the return of Magpie, Abe and Zeab, Rosie and Tiger stood their ground and did not submit anymore. This told the staff the pups were ready for their own home “away from Mom and Dad.” The two brothers moved to a different enclosure up the hill where they could romp and play across the hillside.

Wolves mourn for lost ones the same way we do. Rosie became more vocal after Tiger died. Her body weakened with the disease and other health issues. Sadly, Tiger passed in January of 2022. Wolves mourn loss similar to humans, many don’t live to see their 2nd birthday due to irresponsible owners.

Other wolves in the sanctuary were not as lucky as Tiger. They all became more hyper-aware of the world around her and would investigate every noise and movement, while Tiger was more laid-back, content to relax and observe the hustle and bustle of the refuge. His attitude helped calm Rosie’s interactions around people. Once she saw Tiger engaged, she often became more confident and willing to do the same. She was a security blanket for her. In 2016, Tiger was diagnosed with Discoid Lupus, an autoimmune disease that caused his body to attack the skin on his nose. As time passed, his body weakened with the disease and other health issues. Sadly, Tiger passed in January of 2022. Wolves mourn loss similar to humans and the loss of Rosie’s security blanket was heard throughout the sanctuary.

This last year for Rosie was hard as she learned to navigate life without her brother but she is coming out on the other side with a newfound confidence. She is still very vocal at times and makes her presence known to the rest of the refuge, and since Zeab found himself alone after a disagreement with Nashira, Zeab and Rosie could often be heard howling back and forth across the hillside. Rosie has become more playful this winter in the snow, exuberant with greetings, and rambunctious during feed.

continued from Page 1..

How we do it

Mission: Wolf operates on in-kind donations, sustaining memberships, and volunteer labor. Nearly the entire sanctuary was built using recycled materials. Each year, staff and visiting volunteers give over 30,000 hours of time to the animals of Mission: Wolf. The wolves eat a raw diet for optimum nutrition and enrichment. Daily vitamins and supplements are provided by staff. The wolves eat in large amounts twice a week, mimicking the feast and famine cycle they would experience in the wild. Many ranchers from near and far donate their deceased livestock for the wolves. We do our best to provide each wolf with companionship, connection, and play. Most animals end up with one or more partners during their time at the sanctuary along with opportunities to interact with their human caretakers.

Mission: Wolf is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational wolf sanctuary located in the remote Colorado mountains. We connect people with nature using hands-on experiential education. We operate on solar power, grow food in geodesic domes, and build with recycled materials. We value education, sustainability, and improving relationships between people, animals, and the natural world. Full-time staff give their time to the sanctuary and in turn are provided with a roof over their head, food to eat, and a multinational community to be part of. In an average year, Mission: Wolf operates on more than 30,000 hours of donated labor. Our volunteer staff live together in a 3-acre eco-village designed to be an inspiring example of sustainable living practices.

What we do

Mission: Wolf provides a home for captive wolves and horses while creating opportunities for people to grow through community service and personal interactions with animals. Through volunteer internships and educational programs, we inspire individuals to become stewards of the earth. Since 1988, the sanctuary has provided care for over 125 wolves, facilitated experiential wolf education with over 1 million people, and preserved more than 400 acres of pristine alpine habitat. Wolves don’t thrive as pets. We focus our education efforts on why they are more independent than domesticated dogs and don’t make good pets.

Wild wolves are instinctively more independent than domesticated dogs. If they make it to adulthood, most captive canines don’t learn skills to live in the wild and are forced to spend their lives in a cage. If a sanctuary is unavailable for one in need, the only choice is often to euthanize. We receive weekly requests of wolves and wolf-dogs in need of a home.

Why we do it

An estimated 2-3 million wild wolves lived throughout North America until the 19th century. Today, there are fewer than 7,000 wild wolves in the Lower 48. An estimated 250,000 wolves and 3 million wolf-dog crosses live in captivity, often traded as pets. Wild wolves are instinctively more independent than domesticated dogs and don’t make good pets. Sadly, many don’t live to see their second birthday due to irresponsible owners.

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continued on Page 3 "Ambassador Update"...
Rosie and Zeab Carry On the Legacy of Ambassadors Together

continued from Page 2...

It was May 2022 when I first met Rosie Valkyrie. Now, all wolves are beautiful but Rosie is a stunning example of a powerful and gorgeous wolf. Her beautiful white coat, striking yellow eyes, piercing stare, and strong legs have got to be one of the most amazing things I have ever seen. As for her power, I can describe a recent interaction in which I was enjoying a daily hello and she decided to howl as I was petting her. The strength I could physically feel was such an experience, I could feel my body almost vibrating from her booming vocals. Her howls continued for a brief second longer, then she looked at me and pranced off to her beautiful, open enclosure.

Volunteering and living here at Mission: Wolf for the past six months has allowed my relationship with Rosie to grow. Through that time and growth there are some great learning points she has taught me, and any one wolf could teach any one person. First is learning how to be patient. In her presence you must always be patient and not rush anything. Gaining the ability to be patient and not forcing things allows me to make better decisions in any given situation. Allowing her to make the decision to greet me and practicing patience only strengthens the safety she feels with me, which strengthens the relationship.

Second would be learning better situational awareness. When living and working with wolves on a daily basis you must become aware of all that's going on in your environment and surroundings. Learning this skill allows me to once again make better decisions and just be more in tune with the present.

These few learning points weren't something I was planning on grasping when I first came to Mission: Wolf but being here and my relationship with Rosie has really inspired growth in these areas. It's amazing to me how a wolf like Rosie can be such a good teacher. Mission: Wolf has allowed me to have this opportunity and it is one that I will continue to further this coming fall. I hope only to strengthen this relationship with her and learn so much more from her in the future.

- D. Braddock

Wolf As Teacher

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- D. Braddock
Over the past few years, Mission: Wolf has had a fair share of animals pass away and also introduced some new ones. Without much intention, the sanctuary has come to have more solo wolves than pairs.

In March of this past year, the process of rearranging animals began. Playing "wolf matchmaker" can be a big challenge. It’s an intensive process to get animals near each other and take the time to see how they interact. Like humans, the energy can be off and it doesn’t always work out as well as staff had hoped.

Here’s how it all went down:

- **Nashira** got things started by moving up to #7 after her tussle with **Zeab**
- **Artemis** moved into the back part of #6 to see if her and **Illianna** would like to coexist. They did not show much interest in each other.
- This opened #5, allowing **Obsidian** to move down from #4 and eventually into #2.
- Moving **Obsidian** from #4 meant **Rosie** could run through the Playpen and drop her down into #4 after some fun up there. While she did that, **Farrh and Apollo** moved back to their long-time home in #1. This opened #2 for **Obsidian** to settle into.
- **Rosie** hanging in #4 meant we could safely open gates to get her and **Zeab** (living in #8) on either side of a fence between both #4 and #8. After a week of living fence to fence and showing positive signs, the gates were opened and **Zeab** moved into #8 together.
- **Rosie** and **Artemis** still not seeming interested in each other.
- **Marty** and **Saurya** moved from #11 to the front part of #10. This meant **Arle** could make it safely to #11. We left him with access to the buffer zone next to #14 in hopes he might get comfortable next to **Arrow**. Once **Arle** moved down, **Marty** and **Saurya** found home in #10.
- **Arle** and **Arrow** stayed fence to fence for a few weeks and the staff shifted them around to different areas so they could each get comfortable with the new surroundings and smells. After a few weeks, the old men were allowed the chance to share the same space and content to coexist in #14.
- Since the introduction of **Arle** and **Marty** a year ago, the staff have kept a skeptical optimism on their ability to keep each other company happily and safely. Multiple spats over the year kept the staff on edge, and unfortunately a large fight this spring meant they needed to be separated. Luckily, with all of the animal movement, there was a vacant enclosure at the time so **Marty** moved to #4 and **Saurya** stayed in #10.
- Since #11 was open, we have allowed **Ydun** to have the chance to occupy both #11 and #12.

We hope to make even more moves over the next few weeks or even months. Allowing the animals to explore new enclosures and/or partnerships can be enriching for the animals, staff and visitors. It is an ever-changing and ongoing endeavor.

-M. Gaarde

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**In Memory**

**Soleil** 2005-2022

Soleil was raised in a private home until six months old when she needed to be rehomed and came to Mission: Wolf. She bonded quick with another new arrival, Orion, and the two became inseparable. They happily lived together for nine years until Orion was diagnosed with cancer and moved to the M/W vet area for a short time while Soleil stayed in their enclosure. Often times the refuge would be quiet except for the two soft howls of Soleil and Orion “talking” back and forth. Orion lived with Soleil another three years before passing away in 2017. Soleil persisted with a quiet regal demeanor. Eventually, her body began to fail, and we had to say goodbye to her in January 2023. She was one of the oldest canines to ever live at Mission: Wolf, passing away just shy of 18. She is dearly missed but we are all grateful to have known her at all.

**Merlin** 2008-2022

Merlin was born and raised at the Rocky Mountain Wildlife Foundation sanctuary where she was never approachable by humans. When the sanctuary closed, we were contacted and were able to take her in. Merlin came to Mission: Wolf at the age of 11 and was paired with an older arctic wolf, Illiamna, who had recently lost his partner. Merlin hadn’t lived with another animal since she was a pup and Illiamna helped her gain confidence and feel comfortable. So much so that the once elusive wolf could regularly be found sunbathing near the visitor path and joining in on group howls. In October 2022, Merlin began to slow and show her age. She passed quietly during the night of October 29th. It was a pleasure to watch her grow confidence in her golden years and in the end find companionship in a partner.

-M. White
Wolves of Mission: Wolf

Aria

Buku

Nashira

Rosie

Minigan

Zeab

Obsidian

Arrow

Marty

Artemis

Cephira

Farah

Apollo

Ydun

Flash

Saurya

Fenris
Merlin is a remarkable black horse who was taken from his herd in the McCullough Peaks area of Wyoming in 2005. At the time, he was just five years old and had been living free in the wild until he was rounded up by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and sent to a Colorado adoption program. Despite being taken from his natural habitat and wild family, Merlin’s fortune changed when he was adopted by compassionate individuals.

Merlin arrived at Mission Wolf in December 2011 and initially presented a challenge due to his stubborn personality and reluctance to be near people. However, his difficult behavior made him an excellent teaching horse. He became an expert at teaching humans how to mirror horse behavior to gain trust and overcome fear. Through this process, Merlin was able to receive the necessary care, such as dental work and farrier visits.

Today, Merlin is Mission Wolf’s “Mustang Mascot” for his remarkable spirit and resilience. He has thrived at Mission Wolf and is now a beloved member of the community. At 23 years old, we are putting out the intention for Merlin to reach the age of the famous wild stallion Picasso of the Sand Wash Basin herd in Colorado, who lived wild and free into his thirties.

It’s important to note that wild horses in the Western United States face many challenges, including the perception that they are nuisances that steal resources from livestock. However, wild horses like Merlin play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance. Their grazing and browsing behaviors promote the growth of diverse plant species, which in turn supports a wide range of wildlife. By controlling vegetation growth and reducing fuel loads, they also help mitigate the risk of wildfires.

To ensure the sustainability of our natural resources and the welfare and longevity of these magnificent animals, it’s crucial to appreciate and care for wild horses like Merlin. This includes protecting their habitats and humanely managing their populations through responsible herd management practices that consider the well-being of the animals, the ecosystem, and the people who live in the area.

-T.A. Brooks
Colorado finalizes plan to reintroduce gray wolves by end of 2023

from Colorado Public Radio News, Sam Brasch; 3 May, 2023

After more than two years of public meetings and revisions, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission voted unanimously on Wednesday to approve a final plan to reintroduce gray wolves. The decision keeps Colorado on track to release wolves on the Western Slope by the end of the year, meeting requirements laid out in a ballot initiative narrowly approved in 2020. Conservation groups say it marks the first time voters — in any state — have ordered the reintroduction of an endangered species.

In a statement following the vote, Gov. Jared Polis said the commission had approved a “responsible plan to implement the will of voters” improved by “thoughtful input” from thousands of Coloradans.

The attention to public input and consensus is no accident. In putting together their wolf reintroduction plan, state wildlife managers have tried to navigate the deeply polarized politics around the predator following federal reintroduction efforts in Yellowstone National Park and Idaho almost 30 years ago.

Many Colorado hunters and ranchers now worry the predators could kill their livestock and devastate game species. To address those concerns, Colorado’s plan calls for a phased approach to wolf reintroduction with generous compensation for livestock killed by the predators.

Here’s what’s in the plan, and how it’s changed

Under the plan, Colorado would release 10 to 15 wolves on state or private land each winter over the next three to five years. Wildlife officials would then ratchet down state-level protections as the animal’s population grows. The species would be downgraded from “endangered” to “threatened” once there are 50 wolves recorded in the state for four consecutive years. Wolves would be delisted once there are 150 wolves recorded for two years or 200 wolves at any point.

An early draft of the plan included a final phase in which wildlife officials could reclassify wolves as a game species, opening the door to an organized hunting program. Colorado Parks and Wildlife eliminated the stage following objections from conservation groups.

Another major revision raised the cap on compensation for livestock lost to wolves. Under the final plan, a rancher could receive seven times the market value — up to $15,000 — for lost cattle, sheep, working dogs or other domesticated animals. The same cap applies to related veterinary expenses, which means a rancher could receive a maximum of $30,000 per animal.

Ranchers have argued the additional compensation will help cover the indirect effects of reintroducing wolves, such as lower birth rates and slower weight gain. The higher payout ratios, however, are only available if a rancher takes active steps to minimize wolf conflicts.

WildEarth Guardians, a conservation group, wanted the state to go further and require coexistence techniques like quickly removing livestock carcasses.

Lindsay Larris, the group’s wildlife program director, added the plan gives wild managers too much leeway to decide when a wolf threatens people or livestock — and should be killed.

“If caution and coexistence are emphasized in those determinations, wolves stand a chance to thrive. If not, there will likely be more conflict than there needs to be.” Larris said.

The plan doesn’t say exactly where wolves will be reintroduced or where they’ll come from

The state’s finalized plan names Idaho, Montana and Wyoming as the best sources for wolves. It lists Oregon and Washington as other places with suitable wolf populations.

There’s just one big problem: It’s unclear if wildlife managers in any of those states would provide wolves to Colorado. The governor of Wyoming is opposed to the idea. A report from 9news found state wildlife officials in other western states also don’t appear to be close to approving any wolf transfers.

As for an eventual release location, the plan confirms a “donut hole” region more than 60 miles from any state border. By releasing wolves there, wildlife managers hope to reduce the odds of the predators immediately bolting into Wyoming, Utah or New Mexico.

The finalized plan also clarifies the first batch of reintroductions will occur in the zone’s northern section, which runs along the Interstate 70 corridor between Glenwood Springs and Vail. It notes more specific release locations won’t be made public to protect private landowners and future wolf populations.

State wildlife managers will conduct “targeted outreach” to notify nearby ranchers, residents and others prior to wolf releases, according to the plan.

Pending legislation could delay wolf reintroduction

While Colorado Parks and Wildlife officials remain committed to reintroducing wolves by the Dec. 31 deadline, lawmakers are considering a bill that could foil the timeline by requiring the state to win special designation from the federal government first.

Colorado has already applied for the permit, which would allow state wildlife managers to legally trap or kill wolves under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Dan Gibbs, the executive director of Colorado’s Department of Natural Resources, has told lawmakers he expects it will be approved before the December reintroduction deadline.

But rural lawmakers aren’t taking any chances. The bipartisan group of bill sponsors wants to be sure reintroduction doesn’t proceed unless the state wins the permit.

The bill is now in the final stages of consideration before it’s sent to Gov. Jared Polis.

Brasch, Sam. “Colorado has finalized a plan to reintroduce gray wolves by the end of the year.” Colorado Public Radio News, 3 May 2023

View FULL Press Release from CO Parks & Wildlife:


When Mission: Wolf started in 1988, we never dreamed we would see the day wild wolves returned to Colorado...
**1982 : Need for Sanctuary.** In the early 80s, we took in a few wolf dogs before eventually receiving a full wolf from a roadside zoo. To properly care for these animals, we became licensed with federal and state agencies but soon found more wolves and wolf dogs in need of sanctuary than we could possibly provide.

**1986-1988 : Relocate to Primitive Area. Put Land in Wolves’ Name.** With nearly a dozen captive-born wild canines, the need to create a sanctuary that gave the wolves a large space to call home and adequate distance from human neighbors was obvious. Thanks to help from Holland and Hart attorneys, we created the 501(c)3 non-profit Mission: Wolf, thus ensuring the sanctuary would outline its human caretakers.

**1989 : Reclaimed Materials Create Shelter.** Materials to build a single, sustainable home were re-allocated and soon we had a wolf visitor building, tiny cabins to shelter ourselves, and huge enclosures for the wolves.

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**Mission Impossible.** How do you keep a wolf in captivity happy while simultaneously seeking to restore wild wolves? With sanctuary secured, human interaction became source of enrichment as some wolves were excited to be the center of attention. The animals and visitors alike mutually benefited from these interactions which in turn helped break down perceptions of the “big bad wolf,” and enabled us to take this enrichment on the road. Our outreach program operated on a body of knowledge built by Jim Fowler, Carol Perkins, and Paul Watson. “I forget what I hear, I might remember what I see, but I only understand what I touch.”

**Wolf program requests abound.** During a school visit, a teacher said the students learned more in 20 minutes meeting a real wolf than she could ever convey through books, videos and stories. She asked us to return for another class the next day, and then the next day. Then, after waiting a wolf into the US Fish & Wildlife Service Offices, sharing our knowledge, and expressing our frustration towards the 15 years of political gridlock surrounding Rocky Mountain wolf reintroduction, the director came out to our vehicle and said his biologist learned more in that one interaction with a wolf than they did in two years behind binoculars. He asked for us to return the next week so his whole team could learn more. Soon requests for educational experiences with the wolves poured in, from schools to government agencies, Mr. Rogers to Hells Angels. Next thing we knew we were featured in magazines like the Smithsonian, New Yorker, and Outside and network personalities munched out from across the nation to get the wolves on live TV.

**1990s : The sanctuary everyone knew of but no one could find.** Our roads were washed out, rated, not mapped and marginally passable in a 4x4 vehicle. We invited anyone who could find us to camp and help build fences. Soon a small village formed of some very intelligent and hardworking people who called themselves volunteers while a team of educators created a highly dynamic educational program.

**Mid 1990’s : Metropolitan Expeditions. Save What is Left Now.** Our traveling program brought us to urban areas across the country and allowed adults who had never seen a dog to meet the wolves. Yet, we were amazed even those deprived from wildlife experiences valued nature and desired to protect wolves. This spurred our own land conservation efforts to save what is left now.

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**Focusing on Yellowstone.** The reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone National Park & Frank Church Wilderness Idaho become a national focus. Our work in the West with Mexican wolf recovery was sidelined as we raised awareness with visits to D.C. politicians and Ivy League colleges. The ensuing trophic cascade and body of scientific knowledge generated from the reintroduction provided a deeper understanding of the wolf’s essential role in its natural ecosystem.

**Eye to Eye makes a difference.** Through the wolf education program we saw how a wolf greeting can help people overcome fears, build confidence and re-set trauma, particularly with PTSD veterans, prison inmates, police, & people with special needs. The psychologists and treatment programs we worked with experienced more effective treatment in the presence of the wolves. We learned a face-to-face interaction, on the wolves terms, is key and baiting with food does not provoke the same response.

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**2005 : Community House opens.** Finally! A community building with year-round running water was created to shelter staff, and it became much easier to live comfortably at the sanctuary. Suddenly the wolves had the un planned burden of too many staff caretakers.

**Shop Teachers Needed!** Many new volunteers had never used a shovel much less a hammer or tape measure, as they had not had an opportunity to do so. Staff turned wolf caretakers into shop teachers overnight and had the privilege of watching hundreds grow as they learned new skills while gaining confidence and an understanding for basic life needs.

**2010 : Public Rejuvenates Program.** The traveling wolf program wore out its fifth vehicles, but attempt to retire the program resulted in a national cry of support, a rebuilt wolf bus, and five more years of nationwide travel.

**2015 : Discovered and overrun.** With the presence of the web and GPS, the world found Mission: Wolf. Cars lined the driveway and group requests for experience-based learning overwhelmed the inboxes, all while the demand to provide shelter for homeless wolves and wolf-dogs remained high. What was once in desperate need came to us in abundance and we were forced to turn away unwanted volunteers, groups, and visitors.

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**2018 : Design for the future.** To handle the growing public demands and expectations, plans began to build a studio workshop. Mother Nature had another idea however: a wildfire shut down all projects as we created evacuation plans and worked to reduce wildfire risk to the sanctuary.

**2019 : Let’s build!** Funding is secured and Jane’s Studio officially breaks ground. Additionally, staff and volunteers complete a new fire evacuation barn at the M:W Farm, re-build the aging farmhouse, and start a 1,000 acre fence to manage livestock grazing. The Ranch property acquisition adds a 78-acre expansion to the refuge.

**2020 - 2022 : Woldwide hordless slowed us all.** A reset for everyone worldwide: The time and space allowed for a re-organization of operations and staffing needs, and sanctuary returned to Mission: Wolf. The lack of visitors to aid with construction and supply chain challenges led to unexpected delays.

**July 2022 : Change of priorities.** Mother Nature strikes against 1,000-year rain event flushed the refuge and destroyed numerous wolf enclosures. Luckily all animals were safe and uninjured but a new task of rebuilding 30-year-old fences began.

**2023 : Looking Ahead.** With the near completion of Jane’s Studio, a newly named Executive Director, an expanded land conservation program, and an influx of new tools and materials the future is bright. We are gearing up for a great summer of experiential learning here at M:W, just in time to welcome the return of wolves to wild lands of Colorado!
Two Ravens Ranch Horse Barn
Plumbed, Wired, and (Almost) Ready for Education Horses

The need to handle public demands at Mission: Wolf over-powered our ability to provide unwanted horse sanctuary. After the last rescue horses passed, we replaced our tiny horse barn with a new building known as Jane’s Studio. To accommodate the need for unwanted horse shelter, we designed and are building a new horse barn at the M:W Ranch but complications from Covid have delayed our ability to complete it timely. Several companies we depended on closed or retired over the last 2 years, leaving us twiddling our thumbs trying to get simple tasks like electricity and doors completed.

Thankfully and with gratitude for a handful of builders who came to help (special shout out Graham, Steve, Team Russell, Noam and Indy) we have been able to complete the structure and are awaiting our final electric and building inspection now. It will not take long to trim the interior with wood siding, install the horse stalls, and finally bring the Two Ravens Ranch Horse Barn to life.

Jane’s Studio
Almost There...We Swear

All good things take time, right? If that is true then Jane’s Studio is going to be great. The studio itself has been complete for a couple years but the need to provide handicap access to the second floor has certainly been a hurdle. Complications from Covid led us down a 2+ year journey to get approved engineered drawings. Thanks to Roscoe Engineering we are close to completing the final hurdles to open.

Once the last handrail is welded and the ramp decked, the studio will be ready for public use (thank you to all who donated for the deck!). This will mark the start of a new way to accommodate people around the wolves, provide needed workspace for daily operations, and most excitedly offer participants an opportunity to seek shelter while they learn a variety of skills ranging from mechanics, carpentry and welding to painting, sewing, picture framing and graphic design.

We anticipate obtaining our “Certificate of Occupancy” this summer. Once the project is approved and furnished, we will announce dates for a grand opening. The studio is set to handle refuge needs for a few decades to come—we look forward to sharing our achievement with many.

Solar Energy
New PV Arrays at M:W Farm & Ranch

Trying to provide food and care for wolves and horses while working to maintain fences and vehicles has left us running on minimal solar systems for decades. For example, the Mission: Wolf Farm house, home to staff since 1999, needs a 5kw solar system but has managed to limp by for over 20 years on a fraction of that power (generally that means no lights or computer, and often dead water pumps…). Same with the Sanctuary kitchen and Ranch house.

Thanks to the great folks at Northern Arizona Solar and our local installer Jason Weeks, we have successfully upgraded both the M:W Ranch and M:W Farm houses with new arrays, and most importantly, new lithium-ion storage batteries. A battery upgrade to the Sanctuary staff house is next.
The refuge originally started with a 36.5 acre lot in 1986. As the wolves took ownership of the property in 1988, we added a second lot. With 73 acres we had room to create what is now known as the Mission: Wolf Sanctuary. Rapid local development motivated us to identify adjacent lots that provide critical habitat for an abundance of native wildlife. To assure longevity we addressed the need to secure buffer areas and created a conservation plan.

Thanks to our longtime neighbor and advisory board member, Stan Stiffler, combined with the support of fire protection specialist, George Newell, and longtime friends Linda and Paul Schutt, the wolves just gained an additional 33+ acres.

If anyone is able, two lots just north of the Ranch are for sale at $150k, as well as an additional adjacent property for sale at $75k we only became aware of the day before printing this newsletter.

With the support of many neighbors, friends and caring individuals, we have re-joined several lots to create a 400+ acre nature center—much of which is adjacent to State and National Forest land.

Open spaces provide diversity of life. Without this, we quickly run out of life sustaining vitals including fresh water and clean air. The Sanctuary at Mission: Wolf provides sanctuary for captive wolves in a remote area. The rest provides habitat and open space—both for wildlife and for people to experience nature at its finest.

### Land Conservation Program

Wolves Add to Nature Preserve in 2023, Now Totaling 400+ Acres of Protected Habitat

#### Birds Are **Humming** at M:W Sanctuary

Spring has brought a flourish of life to bird populations around the Sanctuary. From hummingbirds to eagles, we have had the privilege of capturing a few special moments along the way.

-P. Rehmus
Help Us Rebuild from the “Great Flood”

All We Need Are Volunteers!

Before the winter freeze set in, volunteers did as much as they could to temporarily repair the 27 flattened fence lines. Dozens of new steel poles, hundreds of feet of fence, and a long list of other building supplies were procured thanks to the generosity of the Mission: Wolf network of supporters and several local organizations.

Here’s the blessing in disguise: replacing fence through the wolf ravine has been on the long-term “to-do” list for a while at Mission: Wolf—Mother Nature just expedited the process! We estimate by the time all is said and done, volunteers will have replaced over 150 fence posts and 50 gates with brand new steel and wood replacements. All the new metal, fresh chainlink, and an improved design across the water should keep the animals of Mission: Wolf safe for decades into the future.

Sanctuary Caretakers & short-term volunteers plan to focus on fencing most 1st and 3rd weekends of 2023 until winter.

Visit missionwolf.org • call (719-859-2157) • or email (info@missionwolf.org) to schedule a time to volunteer.

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Blue Spring State Land Trust, Local Contractor

Rebuild M:W Driveway After Flood

The Mission: Wolf Sanctuary has secured over 1.5 miles of conserved space adjacent to the Blue Springs State Land Trust. This trust was created to benefit Colorado’s Department of Education and is managed by the State Land Board.

Mission: Wolf entered into a road lease many years ago and have worked tirelessly to improve the rough Jeep trail into a road that normal cars can navigate. We experienced one of the heaviest rains ever in July of 2022. The downpouring of rain not only flooded the wolves’ ravine but the runoff eroded over a mile and a half of the M:W driveway, nearly eliminating access in a few areas. In partnership with the State Land Board and local contractor Curtis Construction & Welding, the M:W driveway has been officially rebuilt this spring and a new drainage culvert installed. Hopefully your next visit will be a bit smoother.
Deb and Bill Gaarde first visited Mission: Wolf in 2014 to see their son. Upon realizing he wasn’t leaving any time soon, they decided to purchase a cabin in the area so they could see him and the wolves more often. Deb used her embroidery skills for many years to supply Mission: Wolf with hats, beanies and staff shirts.

Over the years, Bill and Deb have jumped in on any project at the refuge from enclosure maintenance and cutting meat to carpentry and mechanics. Recently, they have spent multiple months at a time in Colorado and turned into Mission: Wolf “shop fairies”: showing up and jumping on a project (often times before any of the staff even know they are here). Deb and Bill have been amazing help to Mission: Wolf in many ways and always with a smile on their faces.
Looking to the Future

The Wolves Get a New Executive Director

This year marks a significant change: one that will help assure Mission: Wolf lives on for years to come.

When we started Mission: Wolf, many anticipated challenges arose but—wow—it was the unanticipated ones that made me strong. I often find myself negotiating a way forward in the face of uncertainty and making split-second decisions that affected many. After decades, I am ready to hand the reins over to someone very deserving of the role: Mike Gaarde.

Mike has spent the last decade at Mission: Wolf. He has been instrumental in negotiating a way for doing business in the face of constant changes in technology and regulations. He physically built much of Jane’s Studio while affecting many. After decades, I am ready to hand the reins over to someone very deserving of the role: Mike Gaarde.

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Mission: Wolf Wish List

In-kind donations are a huge help in keeping our daily operations going. Here is a list of items we can use. Please call us if you have questions, or if you would like to ask about our current needs. Thank you for your help!

For USPS, our mailing address is: PO Box 1211, Westcliffe, CO 81252
For UPS/FedEx, our mailing address is: 80 Sheep Creek Road, Westcliffe, CO 81252

**Truck**
The ever-present need to transport meat and materials on 13 miles of dirt road means the need for a reliable truck. Staff are currently running on two older GMC trucks that have done well, but they will need to be replaced soon.

**5 KW Generator**
With the dry climate, we are preparing for fire danger with a network of sprinkler systems. We need to have a reliable generator and sprinkler pump at each of our water storage tanks.

**Electric Bike**
Building the Studio at the bottom the hill has shown the need to get up and down the hill quickly for animal and human needs. We have updated from an ATV to an electric bike (like a Sur-Ron) and have seen a great improvement in efficiency, reduction of cost, and are running off the sun.

**Wolf Care:**
- Vet supplies (needles, gauze, syringes, fluids, fluid lines)
- 5 gallon buckets
- Galvanized water tubs (sizes 10-15, 30-80, or 100-200 gallons)
- Supplements and medications: Fish oil; Flax oil; Cosequin; Vitamins A, B complex, C, and E; Devil’s Claw; Bravecto chewable flea and tick prevention (Large and XL); TriHeart Plus chewable heartworm prevention (Large); Vetericyn; General antibiotics; Rimadyl or Novox, Gabapentin
- High quality butcher knives (non-serrated)
- Fruits (watermelon, bananas, and blueberries)
- Wolf food (raw meat, no pork or salt/spices)

**Horse Care:**
- Clean grass hay and supplies (hay trailer, tarps, straps, and shed)
- Grain buckets
- Horse trailer
- 4’ tall graduated field fence (12 ½ and 14 ga.)
- T-posts and materials for new horse barn
- Round pen panels
- Horse brushes, shampoo, hoof pick

**Sustainability:**
- Potting soil or seed-starting mix
- Vegetable and native plant seeds
- Solar panels and batteries (contact us first)
- Solar-powered lights
- Reusable produce bags

**Construction:**
- Concrete block
- Flagstone and brick pavers
- Rebar, sheet metal, angle iron, etc.
- 2” diameter steel poles (10’)
- Chain link fence (9 ga., 8’ tall; 11 ga., 4’ tall)
- Fencing tools and materials (fencing pliers, hog rings, fencing staples, tie wire, etc.)
- 2” x 4” steel horse panel (16’ x 48”, 4 ga.)
- Lumber, treated or untreated (warped wood is fine)
- Hardwood flooring
- Log poles (especially lodgepole pine)

**Volunteers:**
- Sustainable toiletries (septic-safe liquid hand soap, body wash, and shampoo; deodorant; toothbrushes; toothpaste; feminine products, etc.)
- Mattresses, blankets, futons, foam pads, pillows
- Dr. Bronner’s products
- Blue Dawn dish soap
- Simple Green all-purpose cleaner
- Environmentally-friendly laundry detergent
- Cleaning supplies (sponges, scrub brushes, steel wool)
- Toilet paper
- First aid supplies (bandaids, gauze pads, tape, NSAIDs, ACE wrap, antiseptic and antibiotic etc.)
- Sleeping bags
- Headlamps
- Winter boots, hats, gloves, socks, etc.
- Trash bags (especially 13-gallon tall kitchen and 55-gallon contractor bags)

**Office:**
- Markers (dry erase or permanent)
- Scissors
- Postage stamps (old stamps work, too)
- Envelopes (#10 Mailing; 9” x 12” Manila)
- Printer ink & toner (Brother TN-336, HP 61XL)
- Printer paper

**Tools:**
- Garden hose (¾ inch) and hose repair parts (splitter, couplings, valves, etc.)
- Hand tools (shovels, rakes, pickaxes, etc.)
- Ryobi battery-powered tools (drills, saws, sanders, flashlights, etc.)
- Welding rods (all sizes)
- Air compressor
- Large flatbed trailer
- Lathe
- Pipe bender
- Duct tape

*Visit missionwolf.org/staff or email info@missionwolf.org for more information & to apply for a staff position*

Join the M:W Team

At Mission: Wolf, we operate on solar power, grow food in geodesic domes, and build with recycled materials. We value education, sustainability, and improving relationships between people, animals, and the world around us. Around 5-10 on-site staff give their time to the sanctuary and in turn are provided with a roof over their head, food to eat, and a multinational community to be part of. We live together in a 3-acre eco-village designed to be an inspiring example of sustainable living practices.

The sanctuary is in particular need of skilled, competent individuals to join our dedicated team of Sanctuary Caretakers. The wolves don’t need a lot other than food, water, and a clean space to live. Maintaining the facility & vehicles, operating the office, and educating the public are full-time jobs.

Please call us if you have questions, or if you would like to ask about our current needs. Thank you for your help!

Join the M:W Team

80 Sheep Creek Road, Westcliffe, CO 81252

PO Box 1211, Westcliffe, CO 81252

For USPS, our mailing address is: PO Box 1211, Westcliffe, CO 81252

For UPS/FedEx, our mailing address is: 80 Sheep Creek Road, Westcliffe, CO 81252
Mission: Wolf operates on generous support from Wolf Caretakers

With roughly 25 hungry canines to feed, we go through about 500 pounds of raw meat each week

Please consider becoming a member of the Mission: Wolf family today and help keep the wolves happy, healthy, and well-fed!

Your contribution goes directly toward the care of the animals as well as the education of thousands of visitors.

Wolf membership packets make GREAT GIFTS for birthdays, holidays and memorials.

We send you a tax-deductible receipt and your friend or loved one receives a wolf membership packet as a gift from you in the mail.

Visit mission-wolf-store.myshopify.com to order, or use the form below to sponsor a canine of Mission: Wolf

Take a Wolf to Dinner! Become a Caretaker at Mission: Wolf

Which wolf would you like to sponsor? (please circle) Apollo, Aria, Arrow, Artemis, Batman, Buku, Cephira, Farah, Fenris, Flash, Illiamma, Marty, Minigan, Nashira, Obsidian, Oreo, Rosie-Valkyrie, Saurya, Ydun, Zeab, Zuko

Annual Membership
☐ $25 Student/Senior
☐ $40 Individual
☐ $100 Family, Group, or School
☐ $250 Contributor
☐ $500 Patron
☐ $1,000 Feed a Pack
☐ $3,000 Feed a Wolf for a Year
☐ Sustainable Membership* at $ per month ($5 minimum)

Please send this form with cash or check to: Mission: Wolf PO Box 1211 Westcliffe, CO 81252

Visit mission-wolf-store.myshopify.com for credit card orders

*If you would like to become a Sustainable Member, visit missionwolf.org/donate-now or call/email us and we can help process your credit card.