



# THE WOLFWOOD Wayfarer

July 2010

**WolfWood Refuge**

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## **WELCOME TO OUR TENTH NEWSLETTER!**

**Family:** *"A group of people united by certain convictions."* In the few minutes I had at Hermit Park to stop and pause, I looked around at the 17 people who were there from WolfWood. I watched Coleman, our youngest volunteer, tell someone all about Willow. I thought of LaVonne, our oldest volunteer, staying at the refuge, taking off work to take care of all the other wolves so we could leave. Justin and Ashley went to help her water and feed and were on call. Adam, one of our first volunteers, flew in from Florida to visit us and the wolves. He put in hard work on his "vacation." Part of our Estes branch came. Don and Jeanette stayed with us and were there for anything and everything we needed. Last year we went to Chris and Rebecca's wedding and this year we met their baby girl for the first time. Kari rushed in with our calendars, a labor of love on her part. Ben, an intern from a few years ago, came to reconnect and help everyday. Keith and Tanya worked like mad to get the trailer and travel pens built before we left and were the "go to" couple, taking care of the wolves, equipment and me. Lynne dropped everything in her busy life to come and run the booths, educate the public and hold down the center. Colleen had summer school, but the wolves took priority, and she was there to hold leashes or build pens. Tom had just left the refuge, but put his job search on hold to lend his very capable hands. Brian and Melinda brought their truck and trailer, not to mention their abundant strength and energy. Joel, as always, was quietly being all things at all times. Parents and friends of volunteers came, with dog beds, food, good wishes and offers to help. Two dogs came with the volunteers, Dakota a little 14 year old Maltese, and Ember, an exuberant, large 1 year old lab.

I watched this very different group shift and revolve around each other. Everyone spent time with everyone else. There was game playing, horseback riding and hiking, but mostly there was hard work, laughter and a whole lot of love and respect. None of us are perfect; we all had our bad moments. But the thing about family is: there is always someone there to carry your load, to know who you really are, to forgive and forget, to pick you up, and to have your back. No one can do it alone. We survive by being a pack, by working and playing together. I fed. Craig fretted. They spoke up, spoke out, and spoke for. In short, they represented. It was crazy and it was beautiful. We are a diverse group, in age, interests, political and religious belief, even music choice. But we are united by our conviction that the animals at WolfWood are the most valued members of our family. We are here to protect and provide for them. After we finished seeing hundreds of people and doing two presentations we loaded the animals, tore down pens and merchandise, hooked up the trailer, moved to our cabin, unhooked the trailer, put the pens back up, fed the wolves, fixed dinner in the dark, lit the campfire and finally sat around in a circle. I heard someone say, "This is what it's all about." My eyes and my heart welled up. I couldn't be prouder or agree more.

## ***Volunteers***

**WolfWood currently has a small, but extremely dedicated group of volunteers. Our volunteers are the heart of this organization and help take care of and save lives every day. Neither rain, nor sleet, nor snow, nor even MUD keeps them from their duties.**



*Ashley gets a kiss from Tessha*



*Rebecca and Makayla*



*Colleen, Ranger and Tom*

## **NEW VOLUNTEERS**

**Ashley Sockpick:** Ashley came to WolfWood at the end of winter, the muddiest time of the year. She is from Nome, AK. She enjoys the other volunteers and loves the wolves. They love her too, as you can see. Even though working up here can be challenging, she is committed to being one of our regulars.

## **Other News**

Chris and Rebecca Moss had a beautiful baby girl. Makayla Moss and at 4 ½ months old she attended her first WolfWood event at Hermit Park! We start them off young. Tom has graduated and left the Durango area. He will still come to some of our big events but we miss seeing him every week. He will always be part of the pack. Joel gets to remain here at WolfWood as a VISTA volunteer for another year. Hurray!

We are working with fewer volunteers for feeding days than ever. If anyone out there would like to volunteer or knows someone who does, we would love to have you. It is hard but rewarding work, involving both wolf poop and wolf kisses! Contact us at [wolfwood1995@hotmail.com](mailto:wolfwood1995@hotmail.com) if you are interested.

We finally have fantastic calendars for 2011. They have great pictures of some of your favorites here at WolfWood. We will bring them to our events, but if you can't make it to one, we can mail a calendar to you. They are \$20, with all the proceeds going for the wolves. To order one email me at [wolfwood1995@hotmail.com](mailto:wolfwood1995@hotmail.com), or send a check to PO box 312, Ignacio Co 81137.

We are going to try to get the newsletter in a format we can e-mail. We think we can do this with color pictures. If you would like to receive the newsletter in electronic form instead of in the regular mail, please contact us at [wolfwoodnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:wolfwoodnewsletter@gmail.com).

We want to say a special thank you to the Sky Ute Casino. We were part of their charitable give away. Craig accepted a check and then climbed into the money booth and grabbed the cash for WolfWood! It was a great event and a lot of fun. Thanks to all who made it possible.





*Ft. Lewis Girls Volleyball Team*



*Craig and Sky Ute Casino representative*



*Tanya, Trinity and fans at Hermit Park*



*School Program*



*Akayla and Joel ready to go home*



*Coleman and Ranger*



*Father's Day at Hermit Park*



*Ra and Tala at their first big public event*

*School Program*



## ***Meet our Wolves***

Each news letter we will feature some of our wolves.



### **CASSIDY AND BRONTE**

If you have ever been to one of our events, or visited us here at the refuge, you have met Bronte and Cassidy. They have been premier ambassador animals for years. They have literally been petted and photographed by thousands of people. I am featuring them this newsletter in case you haven't met them because Cassidy has been retired from public events and Bronte may soon have to give up the limelight, too. Theirs is an important story, and I tell it not to make you sad, but so you know what kind of work you help us do here at WolfWood.

Cassidy came out of a meth house in CA. She and five other animals weren't just chained; they were all chained to each other and fed only unopened cans of beans. Officers went in, guns drawn, shut down the drug house and confiscated the animals. An organization in the area raised money from local citizens to help get the pack to us. We had to bolt cut their chains off. Cassidy could not even lift her head, her neck muscles had atrophied and she was completely emaciated. Our first job was to physically rehabilitate the pack. This took months, but soon they were all living happily in their large enclosure, able to move freely for the first time. After a few years the alpha male, Cassidy's brother, died of bone cancer contracted where he had been repeatedly kicked. The pack fell apart and had to be separated. Cassidy lived next to two former pack members but was by herself until Bronte came. Cassidy is now suffering seizures due to the toxic fumes and abuse. She has been on medication for almost 2 years and someone must be here everyday at 9am and 9pm to give Cassidy her pills. This is why she has been retired. Though all of this Cassidy has grown to love her human family and trust again.

Bronte is Cassidy's handsome prince. He is a large wolf/dog that was running loose in Pueblo Co. The shelter brought him to us instead of killing him. He is a gentle giant who loves kids. He takes good care of Cassidy. He is happy and livin' large at WolfWood. Bronte has recently developed kidney problems. He had to be on IV's three times a day for months to support his kidneys. He also is on a special diet and I cook for him! This may be his last year as an ambassador if it is too tiring for him. These two animals are very special to anyone involved with WolfWood. We will continue to give them all the care they need so for the rest of their lives they will be comfortable and happy together.



## KIDS AND CANINES

As you know, next to saving the lives of animals, our educational programs are our number one priority. We believe that exposing the public to these special animals and bringing understanding about wolves will make a positive difference. It is extremely rewarding to hear a child who started off the tour saying "I'm afraid they will eat me" change to "This was the best field trip ever!" Tours happen weekly and we already have programs booked for 2011. Our visitor center is becoming a pressing need to accommodate this important work. We have the modular house ready to bring down and the land is cleared to put it in. We just need funds for the foundation to make this dream a reality. Here are some of the programs WolfWood has done in the last three months:

**SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES:** When we visit schools, we usually take 6 to 8 animals with us. We do an hour long educational talk and show the wolves on stage. Occasionally there is time for petting if the program is for a smaller audience. Sometimes we do two assemblies and see an entire school in one afternoon! We are often asked back because the kids love the presentations. This year we went to *Mesa Elementary, Children's House, Riverview Elementary and Grace B. Wilson.*

**TOURS AND FIELD TRIPS:** Schools and different organizations come to the refuge for service projects or days with the wolves. This is an opportunity for a first hand look at rescue work, gets participants outside in nature and teaches a lot about wolves and wolf/dogs. We have seen *The Ft. Lewis Girls Volleyball Team, Summit Program, Bayfield Family Center, and Farmington Home Schools.*

**COMMUNITY EVENTS:** We also get involved with community groups. We went to see the *Ignacio Boys and Girls Club* as part of their mentoring program. *The Girl Scouts* came for their annual weekend camp. This year we had almost 170 people! The girls earned their service badges and had a weekend of classes and wolf interaction. For the second time we went to *Hermit Park* in Estes. This year was more successful then ever. We did four presentations and talked with hundreds of people. An elk even came by to investigate the wolves! This is a wonderful example of a great partnership and we appreciate all the time and effort the staff and rangers put into this event.

I am so proud of the work we do with youth. The wolves do not belong, to us, they are in our care and we never charge anyone for the learning and growing experience of interacting with them. I hope you, as our friends and supporters, realize what a difference you are making in the lives of animals and humans alike.

*Notes from kids and teachers*



Dear Paula,  
We cant thank you  
enough for sharing  
your beautiful  
wolves with us  
today and teaching  
our children about  
the animals and  
your conservation  
efforts! This is  
definitely my favorite  
field trip that I ♡

## Girl Scout Weekend



*Going on a nature scavenger hunt with Lynne*



*Building fences with Colleen*



*Visiting wolves with LaVonne*



*Learning Raku with Tanya and Kasey*



*Taking a break from wood chipping*



*Talking to the crowd*



## Schedule

**July 10<sup>th</sup>:** We will be visiting Lake City for the first time. We will do an educational talk and spend the day in the city park with the wolves. We hope to meet a lot of new people.

**Aug. 7<sup>th</sup>:** We will be at Five Branches Campground (884-2582) This is a great time for locals to come out and meet the ambassador wolves, talk to us, bid at our silent auction and have a great lunch put on by the staff. All proceeds go to WolfWood, so come on out for a day at the lake.

**Aug. 14<sup>th</sup>:** We will once again be in Salida for a meet and greet day in the park. There will be lots of petting and information on wolves and WolfWood.

**Oct 2nd & 3rd:** We will be in Estes Park at the Elk Fest for our biggest fund raiser. We can't wait to see our great supporters up north and present our educational talks and wolves.

## Thanks

It was a really hard winter here at WolfWood. We had more snow then ever. It was difficult for equipment and people. The wolves faired well, except those we lost. Even this was not unexpected as they were some of our oldest animals and it was their time. Through it all we had your support, and for that we are truly grateful. As always, Tom and Barbara Dunn kept us going. Our secret benefactor provided the funds for necessary provisions for the wolves. Foxfire Farms gave us tons of organic lamb (the wolves ate better then we did) and other processors provided meat. I want to say thank you to all our volunteers who pulled together for Girl Scout weekend, especially Kasey, who brought her kiln and Diana, Chris who made all the raku items and Keith and Tanya who brought and ran the wood chipper. They also put time and money into our old trailer and kept the trucks running. They built Ra and Tala's travel pen, an engineering marvel. Thanks to Kari for her superb work on the calendar. We have received nothing but compliments on it.

A special thanks to our vets at Mountain Mobile Vet and Bayfield Animal Hospital. We have many older animals needing constant medical attention and several animals underwent surgery this winter. Without the excellent care these dedicated professionals provide, the wolves would not have the quality of life that they do. They save so many lives. We are grateful. **You are all wolf angels!**



*"After this procedure, nobody will be commenting on what a big nose you have."*



*Willow is living the good life thanks to Wolfwood supporters*

## NEW ARRIVALS



**Rowen:** Rowen is Akayla's and Trinity's brother. His owner died and Rowen ended up at the same shelter as they did. We got the call and how could we refuse? He is a big boy and very, very shy. It is obvious he has been mistreated also. We hope whoever is breeding these beautiful animals and selling them to terrible people will stop! He is under two years old. Rowen is waiting in our holding pen until we can build him an escape proof enclosure. Ours are all full and he will definitely get one. He is very athletic. In the meantime we are trying to teach him that not all people want to hurt him and he is safe now at WolfWood.

## *IN LOVING MEMORY*

**LUNA:** Luna was a beautiful arctic wolf. She was 14 years old and died of old age. She had been at the refuge since 2001 and hers was the first pen you came to when you visited. Her brother died a few years ago and she has been living with Topaz ever since. She had a strong spirit and has joined her brother in final freedom.

**MAC:** Mac came to us from Pagosa Springs late in his life. He was only here for 2 years and was already sick with cancer when he arrived. His owners didn't want him after their other dog died because he cried too much. Mac lived here with his new best friend Cinder, and loved all the new people in his life. He underwent an operation for his cancer, but in the end we lost him to it. Mac was 12.

**LOKI:** Loki was a low percentage wolf/dog that arrived at WolfWood in 2005. His owners got divorced and moved on and could not take him and his two pack mates. All three lived here together. Loki was 15 and also died of old age. Anubis and Isis, his friends, are older animals too, and they miss him very much. Topaz has moved in with them and they are all getting along well.

**DODI:** Dodi was a low percentage wolf/dog that came to us from the Farmington shelter. She was very shy and never warmed up to people, although she loved Noche, her male pen mate. Dodi was 12 when she passed and we are not sure what she died of. All of our animals are special to us and their canine family, and we mourn every one of them. They all died within about 6 weeks of each other. It was a tough time for all of us.





*Dodi*



*Loki*



*Luna*



*Mac*

### **NEEDS**

I was asked to provide some examples of specific needs that were important now, instead of a general list. Here are some things we are struggling with at this time:

**GRAVEL:** Even though Tom Dunn has provided a lot of gravel, we need a ton (literally) more. It is so hard to get around in the mud and all our roads and work areas desperately need more gravel. We could also really use a wood chipper to provide woodchips for the pens to help deal with the mud.

**VET BILLS:** One of our premier ambassador animals, Bronte, is struggling with kidney failure. Many of you have met this amazing animal and we are doing all we can to get him better. His bills alone are over \$1500. This on top of Akayla's expenses, and the regular care of all our animals, has put the bill over \$3000. The vets let us make payments, but we are having a hard time catching up.

**FENCING:** Keith and Tanya are set up to manufacture panels for us as soon as we have the funds. Much of our fencing is old and has been repaired and patched as much as possible and needs to be replaced.

**VISITOR CENTER:** This will be a huge project. We are so blessed to have a building donated for this purpose. We still have to build a foundation so it can be brought down and put in. This would help to educate all our visitors.

**A NEW TRAILER:** Our trailer we use to transport the animals to events is 12 years old and our only trailer. We have to take off the traveling cages every time we get food or need to haul supplies. This is very hard. Keith will build us a new trailer from the ground up which would really save on wear and tear, both on our equipment and on our backs!

*“Wolf..... Teach Me to Know”*