



The WolfWood Wayfarer

Spring 2017

WolfWood Refuge

PO Box 312

Ignacio CO 81137

970-946-9606

www.wolfwoodrefuge.org

contact wolfwoodnewsletter@gmail.com to get color e-mail newsletter

contact Paula at wolfwood1995@hotmail.com

Welcome to our twenty-fourth newsletter!

WINDOWS

I want to touch him. If I glance out my window, I can see him watching me. He is aware of me. He knows my routine. He is Ghost, and he has emphatically chosen to live his life with me in his line of sight.

Ghost lived his whole life in chains. He came to me drugged, half starved, labeled a trouble maker, headed for an early death. I run a refuge for wolves and wolf/dogs, and in the time-honored tradition of all do-gooders who know what is best, I had been busily preparing for his arrival. He was given a large piece of fenced land, a beautiful house, well behaved neighbors, all the food he could eat and a great view. Ghost was not impressed. In fact, Ghost went crazy. He threw himself against the fence. He climbed; he fell; he dug; he chewed; he clawed; he bled. I cried. Ghost had his own ideas about what was best.

Unapproachable and unleashable, Ghost had to be trapped in a crate. For his own safety I moved him to the 12x12, roofed and concrete floored pen behind the house. Ghost was in wolfy time-out. It became quickly obvious this was just fine by him. Like an abused child who prefers the confines of detention to going back home, Ghost settled into his small spot and claimed it for his own. He raised his leg to mark his tight boundaries. He slept on top of his crate. He stashed his bones under a pile of sawdust and growled loudly at anyone within 10 feet of his bars. Having not learned the lesson of leaving well enough alone, I decided his crate was not big enough for him, and replaced it with a larger, more comfortable dog house. Ghost tore the new house apart, demolishing it into little pieces in one afternoon. Ghost got his crate back. He promptly lay down on top of it, paws dangling almost to the ground.

In the months that followed his confinement, Ghost and I began the dance that starts out all new relationships, torn between love and fear. Ghost was a contrast in emotion and attitude, represented by his one ear standing straight up and the other one folded down. His soft brown eyes belied his snapping teeth. His wagging tail did not warn of his sudden need to dart away. His snow white fur certainly did not make him the "fairest of them all." For my part, the cooing of my voice hid my trepidation, the calmness in my movements masked my constant tension in his presence. We were not exactly deceiving each other; we were just unsure, wary and hopeful. I watched him, he watched me.

At first I did not go in alone with Ghost. Armed with a shovel, I always took someone with me to do the feeding and cleaning. I would stand with my body between Ghost and anybody else, keeping track of him, circling around the pen, always facing him while the business of caretaking went on quickly behind me. We would then back out of the gate, shovels shielding us in the front, a small troop in retreat. Even so, Ghost managed a feint maneuver and nipped my husband on the butt. It was not an attack, it was not play. We had been given notice. And still Ghost watched me as I drank my morning coffee. I watched him as he gained fifteen pounds of muscle.

Eventually, as in all long-term affairs, something had to change. I decided to go into Ghost's sanctuary alone, except for my shovel. Ghost and I did the circle dance unchaperoned. At some point his bark of warning became one of greeting. I laid down my shield. He did a play bow, I gave him a toy. I turned my back on him to pour his food, my butt remained unbruised. Now when I was outside he tossed his toy in the air; he jumped; he ran; he wagged; he whined; he smiled. I cried. Ghost wasn't just watching me anymore. He was looking for me.

Deciding he had adjusted fairly well, I yet again considered moving him somewhere else on our forty acres. He was ready for a bigger place, maybe a new girlfriend. Surely he would like to be closer to his own kind, rest under a tree instead of concrete, and lay on a rock instead of a crate. I looked out my window. Ghost cocked his head, listening to my voice as I talked on the phone. He moved from one side of his pen to another as I went from the kitchen to the living room. He looked at me and threw his food bowl. He took his toy with him to lounge on top of his crate. Ghost looked content. Still, a change would be good for him. Either through intuition or observation, Ghost learned of my plans and was having none of it. He resolutely hid in his crate, refusing to come out when I was around. Ghost was not happy. He informed me in his own bad boy way that he had made his own decision on behalf of his wellbeing.

In the past month or so, Ghost has taken our relationship to a whole new level. Possibly motivated by his old collar being so tight it was rubbing his neck raw, Ghost let me touch him. I removed the offending collar. I would be unduly flattered except for his history of self-interest. Still, my heart beats more quickly when I rub his head or he leans against me, asking for contact. We both take great pleasure in our new-found physical affection. There will be no more collars for Ghost.

We get a lot of visitors at the refuge. Sometimes Ghost interacts with them, sometimes not. Often fellow would be do-gooders make derogatory comments on his living quarters. "How can he be in such a small pen?" "Why doesn't he have a bigger house?" "Why isn't he up the hill with everybody else, in an enclosure with a view?" "What kind of animal refuge are you running anyway?" I tell them Ghost lives where he does because he chooses to be there. I tell them he likes to look in the window. I tell them Ghost feels at home. Most don't understand. Ghost cares less about this than I do. He cares that he knows where I am, and if he does, he now allows other people to pet him and clean his pen. Ghost is learning about love. I am learning to be less afraid of how I am looked at by others. It is how I view myself, what I see in Ghost's eyes that matters.

I never wanted fencing behind the house. Never- the- less, we built Ghost a new, large enclosure right where he can see in all the windows. He got his crate, his bones and his toy moved in. He let me know this new arrangement was acceptable to him. We will continue to watch each other, looking for clues and signs in our behavior, aware. I look out at Ghost, safely dozing in the morning sun. He lifts his head to look at me. He knows I am coming outside. I want to touch him-- because he has touched me.



Ghost on his crate



A happy life



Ghost and me

Ghost came to me in 2006. He left me in April. This is the first story I ever wrote about the wolves. He inspired me to be a better writer and a better person. I miss him outside my window.

MEET OUR WOLVES

In each of our newsletters we feature some of our wolves



TIKKA

Tikka is one of our older animals. She came from the Farmington Animal Shelter in 2007, where she was on death row. Tikka was very shy when she first arrived, and very vocal. She would bark at everyone. After a decade with WolfWood as her home, she has calmed down and will let her favorite volunteers pet her and love her. She no longer barks all the time and will even quietly watch a tour group. She is still a loner and believes in the adage “fences make good neighbors.” Tikka is one of our many success stories in emotional rehabilitation.

VOLUNTEERS

WolfWood has an 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.

Joel walking Gracie



Jill and Kody loving Ben



WolfWood has the most wonderful group of volunteers of any organization, and we are truly blessed to have each and every one of them. I want to especially say how grateful I am to have Joel and Ben as part of the WolfWood family. This winter was rough for me, between surgery and a lot of time spent in CA with family issues. Both of these guys stepped up and literally took care of the refuge for 6 weeks. One of them is here everyday and both are crucial to keeping the animals safe, healthy and happy. Thank you both so much for all your caring and hard work to keep things running and for allowing me the security to know all is well.

KIDS AND CANINES

We are proud to announce that WolfWood's outreach program is bigger than ever. After rescuing animals in need, education of young people and the public in general is our main priority, and we are definitely accomplishing that goal. We will see over 60 different organizations this year. All of these programs are provided free of charge and everyone is welcome. The ambassador wolves and volunteers are getting ready for our busy time of year. We believe we are making a difference by dispelling myth and misinformation about these special animals.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Northwest Elementary School, Pagosa Springs Middle School, Purgatory Ski Resort, Pine River Library, Fort Lewis College, SUCAP youth programs, Rubicon Team, Cub Scouts, Mayor's Youth Council, and Children's House.

The number and diversity of the people whose lives the wolves touch is ever growing. Thanks to the support of our donors and volunteers, and the patience and love of the animals, we continue to educate and enlighten, connecting people and animals at WolfWood.



Outside at Pagosa Middle School



The Rubicon Team donates a work day



Inside at the Pine River Library



Purgatory Ski Resort

EVENT SCHEDULE

June 24th: Wolf Brewery Pagosa Springs
June 30th: Mancos Library
July 15th & 16th: Hermit Park Estes
August 5th: Five Branches Vallecito Lake
August 12th: Lake City
September 23rd: Annual Art Auction

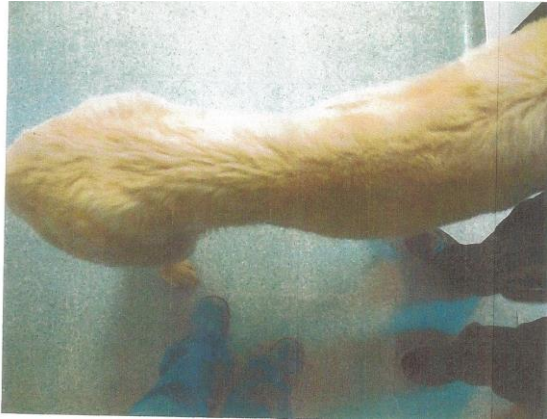
Please check our website for exact times and locations of events including scheduled educational talk times. Also check for our public tour dates through Oct.

www.wolfwoodrefuge.org

THEN AND NOW



NIKKI



FINN



GRACIE

We get so caught up in the day-to-day work and hardships at the refuge, sometimes we forget what a difference WolfWood makes in the lives of hurt and abused animals. Your support helped make these transformations possible.

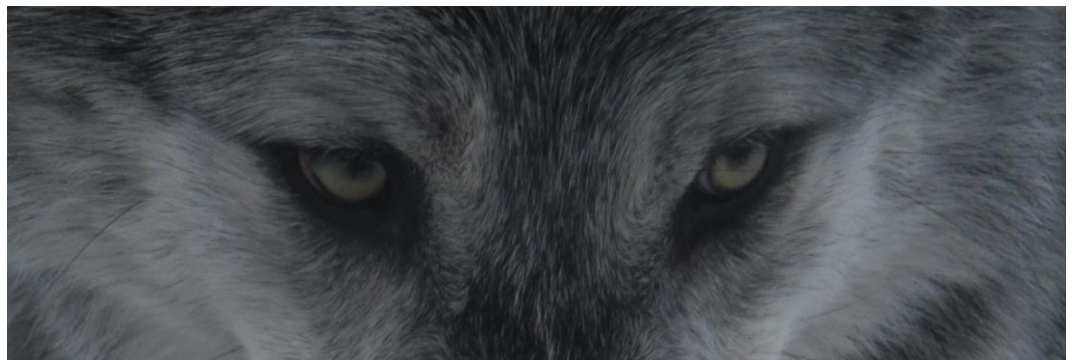


WILE E.

WOLVES IN WINTER



WolfWood is looking for volunteers to help take care of these amazing animals. If you are interested contact us. wolfwood1995@hotmail.com



IN LOVING MEMORY



Rukai and his best friend Ghost



Pan



Echo gets the best of her brother, Pan



Pan and Lennette

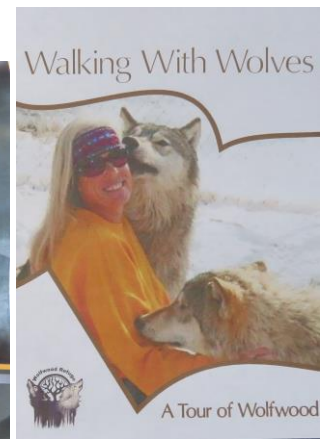
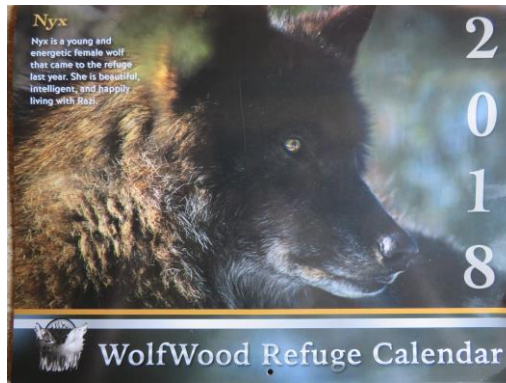
WolfWood lost two of our special animals this winter. Both were favorites of volunteers.

GHOST: Ghost will be missed by his best friend Rukai and all of the volunteers. Everyone wanted to spend time with “the boys.” Ghost died of old age at 16. See the front page for his story.

PAN: While Ghost’s death was expected, Pan’s was not. Pan was nine when he passed away from a turned stomach. Our vet said it was just a very unfortunate event and we could have done nothing to prevent it from happening. Still, it affected us all deeply. Pan gave the best wolf rubs and spent many years greeting visitors on his favorite rock.

Pan and his sister Echo arrived at the refuge in 2009. They came from Larimer County CO, where they were scheduled to be euthanized on the very day we called. Pan and Echo were the first wolf/dogs to be released to a facility from that county. They were active, friendly and loving animals. Storm arrived later that year and he was accepted into the small pack. The three of them had a fun and rambunctious life. We are glad Echo and Storm have each other, although the absence of Pan is still felt daily.

“Wolf..... teach me to know



Ava giving Paula her birthday donation Our 2018 calendar and the DVD of WolfWood are now available for purchase!

THANKS

This year has presented us with new challenges, but as always, the wolves are surrounded by caring, loving and hardworking people. We want to give a special thanks to Kim for starting Gracie's GO FUND ME page and everyone who donated to help Grace. We also want to thank the children, who instead of receiving birthday gifts, asked for money to be given to WolfWood. You give us hope for the future. Darla put together a beautiful 2018 calendar. And in great news, Jim Sevin has made our dream of a DVD about WolfWood a reality! So many of you have requested a look into our world and this DVD gives you both beautiful images of the wolves and takes you on a tour of the refuge. You can purchase both the calendar and the DVD to help support the animals. We are so grateful for all of you who make it possible to continue to save lives and make our educational programs available to everyone. You keep us safe and allow us to do good work. **YOU ARE ALL WOLF ANGELS!**