# INTERNATIONAL

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER SUMMER 2010

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## The National Landscape Conservation System

This year marks the 10-year anniversary of the Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System. The agency manages some of the most ecologically sensitive and culturally significant lands and water in the federal government's estate, including conservation areas, wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers and national historic trails.

Edward M. Norton

## 8 Wolf Cougar Interactions; it's a lot Like Cats and Dogs

While not much is known about how growing wolf populations in the West impact cougars, it appears cougars are mostly at a disadvantage — particularly to packs of wolves.

Steve Grooms

## A Wolf Center is Born

Plans for the International Wolf Center began with a budget scribbled on a napkin 25 years ago.

Nancy Gibson

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## On the Cover

Photo by Daryl L. Hunter Daryl L. Hunter is a freelance photographer who lives in the Yellowstone region and loves the thrill of photographing wolves and grizzlies. See more of Daryl's work at www.greater-yellowstone.com/ theholepicture.

Daryl also publishes the Greater Yellowstone Resource Guide, www.Greater-Yellowstone.com, and leads wildlife safaris in Yellowstone, http://safaris.greater-yellowstone.com.

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Publications agreement no. 1536338

Membership in the International Wolf Center includes a subscription to *International Wolf* magazine, free admission to the Center, and discounts on programs and merchandise.

- Lone Wolf memberships are U.S. \$35
- Wolf Pack \$60 Wolf Associate \$125

• Wolf Sponsor \$500 • Alpha Wolf \$1,000.

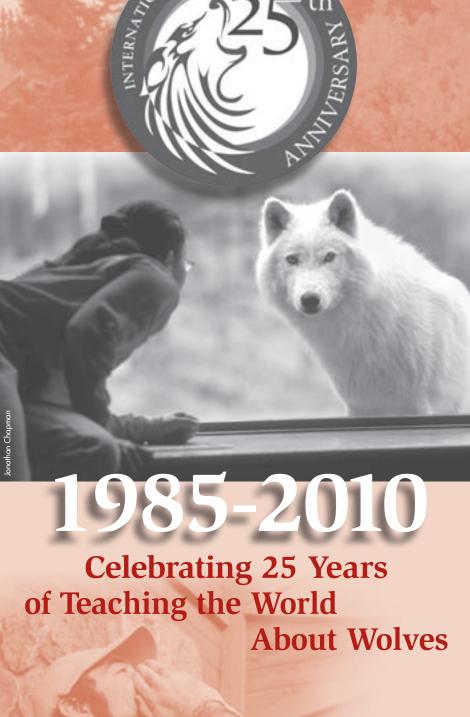
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*International Wolf* welcomes submissions of personal adventures with wolves and wolf photographs. Prior to submission of other types of manuscripts, address queries to Bruce Erickson, magazine coordinator.

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## From the Executive Director

## The Wolf Problem is a People Problem

hy is the International Wolf Center's focus on education? The Center itself is living proof it works. In the early 1980s when the Center was still a concept and in need of funding to become reality, the antiwolf lobby held a strong position in northern Minnesota. When key legislators saw and heard about our *Wolves and Humans* exhibit showing livestock depredation and educational materials addressing wolf management problems, they agreed to financially support the development of an International Wolf Center. Below is an



organizational document which clearly states why we are...

#### Advocating for Wolves through Education

As controversies arise, the International Wolf Center provides information that helps people to make their own informed decisions. We pledge to educate the public by offering the most up-todate, accurate wolf information possible.

Mary Ortiz

Education may not translate into immediate action, but it does result in reevaluation and change. As people gain knowledge and appreciation of wolves and their place as predators in the ecosystem,

people can become concerned about wolf survival and recovery. Decades of research has unveiled multitudes of facts about this species. That research, used in public education, has motivated people to help and to allow wolves to begin reclaiming small portions of their former habitat.

Wolf educators are challenged to deal with complex issues: reintroduction of the species into Yellowstone, population control in Alaska and Canada, bounties, livestock depredation and the tragedy of a pet wolf-dog hybrid's attack on a child. Each is more sensational, more conducive to emotionalism and more provocative to the media than the last.

We who want knowledge about wolves need clear, thoughtful presentation of the facts and issues involved. That is exactly what the International Wolf Center seeks to provide. The study of wolf survival continues to include the study of human tolerance. It is hard for people to tolerate or to respect what they are raised to fear. The wolf problem is a people problem. We need everyone's help to solve it.

Mary Mi

International Wolf

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#### MISSION

The International Wolf Center advances the survival of wolf populations by teaching about wolves, their relationship to wildlands and the human role in their future.

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Summer 2010 3

Vermillion Cliffs National Monument, located in northern Arizona, contains the Paria Canyon-Vermillion Cliffs Wilderness, which supports numerous wildlife species, including the reintroduced California condor. n the year 2010, Americans will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System — our National Conservation Lands.

Certainly the creation, the existence, of this magnificent and truly unique system of public lands is worth marking. Even more important will be a renewed and focused dedication by the Department of the Interior, by national conservation organizations and by local citizens and local organizations to achieving the vision and full potential of the National Conservation Lands. We have much to celebrate, and we have much to do.

What have we accomplished? What must we do for the future to ensure that these National Conservation Lands are a part of our legacy? The National Landscape Conservation System represents America's first new system of conservation lands in more than 50 years, and although these places stand equal in every way, they are in many respects hidden treasures and not nearly as well known and appreciated as our national parks, national forests and national wildlife refuges. Thus, some background and history are in order.

# National Landscape Conservation System

America's Newest National Conservation Lands

by EDWARD M. NORTON

#### America's Newest Public Lands System

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administers approximately 264 million acres of public land, more than any other federal agency. Generally, BLM manages lands under its jurisdiction — the federal public land remaining after creation of national parks, forests and wildlife refuges. Sometimes called "the lands nobody wanted," they were established for multiple use and sustained yield. Historically, BLM management has emphasized oil and gas leasing, mining, grazing and other commodity production.

Over the years, Congress has designated BLM areas for special protection and conservation management — national conservation areas, wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers and national historic trails. Presidents also have used executive orders and proclamations under the Antiquities Act to designate national monuments. Thus, over the years, BLM has acquired responsibility for managing some of the most ecologically sensitive and culturally significant lands and water in the federal government's estate. In 2000, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt created the National Landscape Conservation System by administrative designation. Babbitt's goal was to bring together under unified mission and management within the Department of the Interior and the BLM all of those lands with a special conservation designation, whether mandated by an act of Congress (a national conservation area, a wilderness area or a wild and scenic river) or by executive order — for example, a national monument. Babbitt's rationale was clear and straightforward: "If we want BLM to do good things, we should give BLM good things to do."

In 2009, recognizing the need "to conserve, protect and restore nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations," Congress gave permanent legislative



## Lasting Voices

by Cornelia Hutt

For many people, the symbol of wild nature is the wolf, an elusive and mysterious predator roaming free and unfettered in endless expanses of untamed wilderness. Such places are all but gone. And the truth is that wolves can live almost anywhere they can find food, including developed areas inhabited by humans—that is, if people will tolerate their presence.

But wolves do best where contact with humans is minimal or absent. Thus, the International Wolf Center's mission advances the survival of wolf populations by teaching about the relationship of wolves to wildlands and to the ecosystems that sustain them and their principal prey species.

With this in mind, Edward M. Norton, chair of the National Landscape Conservation Foundation's Board of Directors, wrote about the National Landscape Conservation System, another of America's best ideas, but one that many Americans know little or nothing about.

What do these lands mean for the myriad species of wildlife that thrive best in pristine habitat? What will they mean for the long-term sustainability of wild wolf populations?

As Ed Norton said recently, "The history and wild beauty of the West are America's conservation legacy and therefore deserve to be protected, restored and expanded for future generations to enjoy." And if, as Norton said, "long-term protection results from the constant presence and persistent pressure by active and engaged citizens and organizations at the local level," how then should the International Wolf Center respond to that challenge? And how can all of us as individuals be active stewards of this legacy to become lasting voices for land conservation?

Cornelia Hutt is an educator and a writer. She is an International Wolf Center board member, a member of the International Wolf Advisory Committee and chair of the Red Wolf Coalition board of directors.



Dwight Andrews

"Put down whatever you are doing and go visit these places. It might take a bit of work on your part—there won't be an entrance gate or ranger to guide you—but these are fabulous places."

> — Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior 1993 to 2001

status and a strong conservation mandate to the National Landscape Conservation System, directing the Secretary of the Interior to manage the system in a manner that "protects the values for which the components of the system were designated." What a legacy!

Today, the National Conservation Lands cover some 27 million acres of federal land in 886 units: 16 national monuments: 21 national conservation areas; 775 wilderness areas and wilderness study areas encompassing more than 21.5 million acres of wildlands; 38 wild and scenic rivers flowing more than 2,400 miles; and 6,000 miles of national scenic and historic trails. The BLM National Conservation Lands embrace mountains, deserts, forests, grasslands, wetlands, rivers and streams. The National Conservation Lands protect watersheds, wildlife habitats and migration routes, the highest known density of Native American archeological sites in the United States and countless historical sites. Moreover, these lands provide a great variety of opportunities for recreation and enjoyment.

Read aloud from a list of the individual areas that make up the National Conservation Lands, and the names of these places evoke the full richness and complexity of our natural and cultural heritage: Canyons of the Ancients in Colorado: Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah; Red Rock Canyon and Pony Express Trail in Nevada; Upper Missouri River Breaks and the Lewis and Clark Trail in Montana; Snake River Birds of Prey and Craters of the Moon in Idaho; the King Range and Lost Coast in Northern California and the California Desert in Southern California; Cascade-Siskiyou and the John Day River in Oregon; the Sonoran Desert and the Vermillion Cliffs in Arizona; El Malpais in New Mexico; and many, many more.

The BLM National Conservation Lands sustain an ecological function particularly important to wide-ranging wildlife such as wolves and their prey. Wilderness study areas in Idaho and the Steese National Conservation Area in Alaska provide habitat for existing wolf populations. National Conservation System Lands have been utilized by wolves as they seek out new ranges in the interior West. In addition, many of the prey species that wolves rely on, primarily ungulates, are found in, and migrate across, numerous units of the National Conservation Lands. If wolves are to maintain healthy populations and expand to more of their historical range in North America, the National Conservation Lands will be of even greater importance in providing connectivity with surrounding landscapes and resilience in the face of climate change.

#### Realizing the Vision— The Future of the BLM National Conservation Lands

The history of conservation in this country has shown that real and long-term protection of our natural and cultural heritage rests on two pillars. Individual places must be part of a larger system of protection such as our National Park System and now our National Landscape Conservation System. Equally fundamental, longterm protection results from the constant presence and persistent pressure by active and engaged citizens and organizations at the local level, relentlessly focusing their knowledge, time, and energy on ensuring that these places are well managed.

In the case of many of the individual units of the BLM National Conservation Lands, local organizations provided the initial grassroots support and advocacy for the Congressional or Presidential designation. Now these organizations engage in the development of conservation based on Resource Management Plans for individual units. They provide volunteers to contribute thousands of hours to support BLM by maintaining trails, clearing invasive species, monitoring resource conditions and conducting educational programs and similar activities. As it now stands, the National Landscape Conservation System encompasses only about 10 percent of the BLM lands. Many additional areas qualify in every respect for inclusion in the National Conservation Lands. Local organizations will play a critcal role in expanding the system to its full potential.

These local organizations are part of a national network of the Conservation Lands Foundation. This foundation provides program grants, training and capacity building and advocacy support to local citizen organizations working to protect units of the National Landscape Conservation System. The Foundation also works in Washington D.C., with Congress and the BLM to secure adequate funding and help shape the future of the National Conservation Lands and to build a broader awareness of the system and its vision and goals.

Like the national parks, forests and wildlife refuges, the BLM National Landscape Conservation System represents what President Theodore Roosevelt called essential democracy. "The movement for the conservation of wildlife and the large movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose, and method" Roosevelt wrote.

Roosevelt understood the value of these places to all Americans as well as the importance of a "prophylactic dose of nature" and "the strenuous life"—hiking, fishing and hunting and enjoying wildlife and wild places. He also understood that these places cannot be protected just one time for all time, but rather require vigilance, engagement, investment and action by each generation. Roosevelt did not view that obligation as a burden, but as an expression of each American's civic responsibility. That is what we really have to celebrate and commit to on the 10th anniversary of the National Landscape Conservation System. ■

Edward M. Norton is the chair of the National Conservation System *Foundation*. *He was founding president* of the Grand Canyon Trust and founding chair of The Rails-To-Trails Conservancy. For information on National Landscape Conservation System 10th Anniversary events, go to www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/ prog/blm\_spec\_areas/NLCS.html. To view two short films about the National Landscape Conservation System, go to http://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=5Jd7k1V-RbY. To view a short film about the National Landscape Conservation System narrated by actor Edward Norton, go to http://www.youtube. com/user/rscottjones. For more on the Foundation's mission, see http://www. ourconservationlegacy.org; http://www. crowdrise.com/conservationlands.

The sandstone bluffs of El Malpais National Monument border a vast (263,000-acre) wilderness known as the El Malpais Conservation Area.



Adult cougars at 120 to 200 pounds weigh substantially more than adult wolves at 85 to 100 pounds, but both have powerful jaw muscles.

he tracks told a dramatic story. When a radio-collared wolf does not move for hours, its collar emits a special signal indicating that the wolf must be dead. The collar of a young Montana wolf went into mortality mode, causing researchers to investigate. The tracks showed two wolves had been walking through fresh snow just outside Gardiner. When a cougar charged, the two wolves sprinted desperately for cover, stretched out and running so hard their paws touched earth only every eight feet or so. One wolf veered into the safety of thick timber, but the other slowed to cross a barbed-wire fence. The trampled snow

> by the fence was awash with blood, and little clumps of bloodied wolf fur drifted in the wind. The beeping collar led researchers to where the partially eaten

corpse of the wolf lay under the snow.

Relatively little is known about how wolves and cougars interact. Because wolves were extirpated from much of the West for many decades, scientists have had few opportunities to observe the species relating to each other. Now wolves are occupying former habitat in Western states where cougars have had little competition for prized prey animals in their habitat. Cougars and wolves get along with each other about as nicely as, well, cats and dogs.

It is not easy to study these matters. Both species are relatively scarce. Some television shows give the impression that dramatic encounters between large predators are common. Viewers generally miss the fine print that rolls after the credits that admit some scenes were staged with captive animals. But researchers are beginning to craft studies to document the ways resurgent wolf populations are affecting

# It's a Lot Like Cats and Dogs

### by STEVE GROOMS



the big cats in Western states and the Canadian Rockies.

Many people think questions about how species interact can be reduced to the issue of which species will beat the other in a fight. It is not nearly that simple, but that is a good starting point to consider.

Adult cougars are formidable predators. They weigh half again what an adult wolf weighs (120 to 200 pounds for a male cougar versus 85 to 120 pounds for a male wolf). Both species have sharp teeth and powerful jaw muscles. Additionally, cougars have retractable, razor-sharp claws that clutch prey or slash it to ribbons. If you want to bet on a fight between a wolf and a cougar, put money on the cougar. Except it rarely happens that way. Wolves get by in life with a little help from their friends. A pack of wolves is more trouble than the most powerful cougar can handle. Any cougar jumped by several wolves had better hope there is a stout escape tree nearby. If you bet on a fight between a cougar and a pack of wolves, put money on the wolves.

Of course, mortal combat between wolves and cougars is not common in the wild. Life for a large predator is risky enough without picking unnecessary fights with dangerous opponents. Wolves and cougars mostly avoid each other, and cougars especially avoid wolves.

The two species compete, but mostly indirectly. Lesser conflicts have

a cumulative effect that is more significant than at first might be apparent. In the end, cougars do not disrupt life for wolves much, but wolves make things so difficult for cougars that the big cats decline when forced to share habitat with wolves.

Competition is guaranteed because wolves and cougars are apex predators with almost identical diets. Apex predators sit at the extreme top end of the food chain. In the American West and Canadian Rockies, both species prey mainly on large ungulates—elk, deer, sheep, bison and moose. Any block of habitat can support only so many ungulates, and most will be too vigorous to fall to predators. Wolves and cougars living near each other are

Exceptionally agile predators, cougars prey on many of the same ungulates as wolves.

In a study conducted in Banff, cougars primarily preyed on elk until wolves arrived and began dominating that food source. Cougars compensated by shifting predation to bighorn sheep and deer, but those are smaller animals.

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obliged to share that limited base of ungulates. But wolves have an interesting way of sharing. Several studies have shown that wolves kill significantly more prey than cougars.

It also seems that wolves help themselves to the most desirable prey. In a study conducted in Banff, cougars primarily preyed on elk until wolves arrived and began dominating that food source. Cougars compensated by shifting predation to bighorn sheep and deer, but those are smaller animals. It might require more effort for cougars to acquire an equivalent amount of nutrition from smaller prey. Predators live and die by the ruthless math that balances the nutrition gained from prey against the effort needed to acquire it. When wolves return to old habitat, cougars that were flourishing in the relative absence of competitors showed signs of starvation and stress.

Predator species frequently interact at kill sites, often attempting to steal each other's kills. Some grizzlies routinely usurp the carcasses of wolf kills after the wolves have done all the work of chasing and killing. Unlike grizzlies, cougars aren't sufficiently



That directly blights their fertility. Cougars stressed by being forced into small home ranges can turn on each other, fighting until one combatant dies. The death of mature animals is not a problem if those losses are balanced by reproduction. When wolves dominate an area, cougars sometimes cannot replenish their losses with cougar kittens.

When scientists study whole ecosystems in detail, they are

intimidating to drive several wolves off a carcass, although a bold cougar could usurp a carcass guarded by a wolf or two. When researchers add up all the losses and gains, it is clear that wolves filch more carcasses from cougars than cougars take from wolves.

The most negative impact of wolves on cougars might be the way wolves limit the ability of the big cats to move about. Large predators need a great deal of quality habitat if they are to hunt successfully. The return of wolves forces a significant reduction in the size of cougar home ranges. A cougar living near wolves will try to confine its movements to areas not used by wolves. Even then a cougar must exercise great care as it travels. When wolves draw close, cougars often drift out to the extreme far edge of their home range.

If the local landscape contains enough variety, cougars can reduce the threat of contacting wolves by shifting to steeper terrain. Cougars are exceptionally agile predators. They sneak close to prey and launch short, swift charges, using their muscular tails as a counterbalance to help them negotiate tight turns. Rough, rocky habitat is somewhat better suited to cougars and their short ambush hunting style than it is to wolves. Steeper habitat thus offers some safety to cougars and reduces the degree to which they must compete directly with wolves for food. And yet that is not an ideal arrangement for cougars, or cougars would make those same habitat and prey choices when wolves are not present.

Wolves enjoy other advantages over cougars as well. Wolves hunt larger territories and have more options for changing their hunting habits if there are radical changes in their home ranges such as the collapse of a prey population or an environmental change like a wildfire. A male cougar's territory might average about 150 square miles, with females ranging over territory only one-third that large. But a typical wolf pack in cougar country roams across 200-500 square miles. Wolves lead flexible, opportunistic lives. Perhaps living in family groups also helps make them more resourceful and resilient than cougars.

Wolves occasionally kill cougars, but a more insidious impact is the way wolves restrict cougar reproduction. Cougars living near wolves are often stressed and hungry or even starving. impressed with the countless large and small ways that species in an ecosystem benefit from each other. Mice, eagles, bobcats and even beetles fit into a complex web of interactions. Each critter follows its own agenda, living and reproducing and dying, all the while contributing to the overall dynamics of the larger community.

The case of cougars and wolves isn't quite that benign. While they evolved together and have strategies for coexisting, they are two competing species that pretty much want the same thing — the same habitat and the same prey. Resurgent wolf populations are dominating habitat and prey in ways that hurt cougars. Despite their deadly weapons and incredible athleticism, cougars cannot match the advantages of wolves, particularly the advantage wolves have of living in packs. The ease with which wolves out-compete cougars is one clue as to why wolves were the top predator in virtually all habitats until humans came along.

Steve Grooms has been writing about wolves and wolf management since 1976. He is the author of the book Return of the Wolf, and he serves on the International Wolf advisory committee.

## A Wolf Center is Born

by Nancy Gibson, co-founder and board member of the International Wolf Center

The napkin uncurled and L exposed the budget for the International Wolf Center. We were sitting on a deck in northern Minnesota amid the calls of woodpeckers in a landscape ideal for wolves, but it was that scruffy napkin scribbled with numbers that was stunning. It meant a major undertaking. Like tenacious wolves, we would have to organize all our offenses, convincing impassioned humans, politicians, educators, donors and the media to join the effort. Thus the Center's journey began.

The 1984 Wolves and Humans exhibit by the Science Museum of Minnesota broke attendance records and inspired the groundwork for the Center. The exhibit's overwhelming success continued at several prominent venues across the nation. The awardwinning display would need a home when it returned in 1991. The public was ripe for the truth about wolves, and the animal needed some myth busting.

Where and how dominated the first meeting. Ely, Minnesota, seemed like the best location since it was the focus of wolf research since the 1930s, but other communities competed for the Center. Ely eventually won not once but twice, but it cost our organization some key board members who formed a coalition to stop it. Nonetheless, the Center caught the attention of Governor Rudy Perpich, who pledged some

initial funds for the Center to be built in Ely. That grant stirred a trial of wolf weekends for participants who wanted to track wild wolves, howl in their habitat, visit wolf kills and take aerial safaris to actually see live wolves. Those experiences merged into a single setting, with plans for a museum, nature center and a captive wolf exhibit The International Wolf Center was on course.

The political campaign for \$3.8 million from Minnesota bonding money got underway in 1986. It failed. In 1988, a renewed attempt was met with a crash course in lobbying. We brought a hand-raised wolf to the Capitol and furnished photos of the wolf and legislators for their local papers and answered countless biological questions. We were adored by some legislators and battled by others not unlike the public's ambiguity toward wolves. We won House

approval, but failed in the Senate. A small sum was allocated for site planning and committee business, which allowed us to hire our first staff person. A temporary wolf exhibit at the Voyageur Visitor Center in Ely opened in the summer of 1989 to promote more awareness. The response was overwhelming.

It was then back to the Minnesota Legislature in 1990 for another grueling attempt for a slimmeddown request of \$1.7 million. A powerful northern senator who had frequently announced that "the only good wolf is a dead wolf" decided to support the Center because Ely needed the tourism trade

The weeklong bonding committee meeting coincided with the Center's first international wolf symposium. In one of the lighter moments of lobbying, global wolf experts gathered in the gallery overlooking lawmakers. As per tradition, dignitaries are recognized at the Legislature. The legislators let loose with a long, memorable howl. At 3 a.m. our funding failed in the bonding committee. One possibility remained. The powerful senator was awakened and summoned to the Capitol. He walked through the room and emerged with \$1 million for the Center. It was not enough. Astonished by the response, he walked through the room again, saying, "\$1.2 million, take it or leave it." We took it.

The party was short-lived. Governor Arne Carlson withheld our funding due to the U.S. Forest Service reneging on the land and building donation it had



promised. A short course in real estate and a new donor accomplished the necessary land exchange in record time. The governor sent a congratulatory letter announcing the bonding money was released for construction. Bids got underway for a 17,000-square-foot building, architects were chosen, and with much fanfare, we broke ground in 1992.

Volunteer board members morphed into part-time consultants for everything from artwork to the colors of the bathroom. Fundraising intensified to fill the gaps in the Center's needs. The doors opened in spring 1993 with a host of dignitaries present, from the governor and key legislators to wolf experts. Even Little Red Riding Hood came in carrying a black wolf pup. In all, the Center was a \$3-million tribute to teaching the world about wolves. The Wolves and Humans exhibit was home. The

public had a sound source of wolf information with a theater, library and four ambassador wolf pups.

We have many people to thank for getting the Center underway, but no one has done as much as Dave Mech, the world's foremost wolf expert. His efforts, however, went far beyond biology. He testified, lobbied, raised funds, wrote books and drove countless miles between Ely and the Twin Cities. At the same time, he encouraged my participation in his wolf work, which motivated those long hours at the Capitol.

Environmental giants like former director of the Audubon Center of the North Woods Mike Link and polar explorer Paul Schurke, as well as the late photographer Les Blacklock, forest expert Miron Heinselman, and retired wolf biologist Milt Stenlund were early and steadfast supporters. Paul Anderson, Nancy jo Tubbs, and Teri Williams have put in two decades of consistent dedication. Mary Ortiz was our first full-time employee and directed our business from her basement during the day while she taught dance at night. Walter Medwid very ably directed the Center from 1993 through 2007, and Mary Ortiz is now the Center's executive director.

We have been a cohesive pack, defending our mission of public education about wolves. Since the wolf population recovered, our efforts changed. The Center added our commitment to wildlands in 2004. Preserving wildlands is a much more

compelling argument for future wolf populations but a difficult sell to those inspired by the fate of individual wolves. Also the concept of saving suitable wolf habitat is hard to grasp because it is more complex than the idea of saving an animal. It will always be a struggle to protect wild prey and critical habitat as long as the human population continues to grow and development strategies are poorly thought out. In the long run, educating the public about the wolf can be an excellent tool for habitat preservation, thus promoting our total mission.



Construction on the 17,000-square-foot International Wolf Center began in 1992.



Co-founder of the International Wolf Center, Nancy Gibson as Little Red Riding Hood poses with a mild-mannered wolf pup and Governor Arne Carlson at the grand opening of the International Wolf Center's new home in 1993.



### 1989–2010: 21 Years of Ambassador Wolves Teaching the World about Wolves

by Lori Schmidt, wolf curator, International Wolf Center

The International Wolf L Center was founded in 1985, on the belief that coexistence with wolves is possible when people are presented with the facts about wolves. The Center's mission is to support the survival of wolves around the world by teaching about wolves, their relationship to wildlands and the human role in their future. The Center's captive ambassador wolves located in Ely, Minnesota, since 1989 have played a prominent role in accomplishing this mission.

The history of the Center's ambassador

wolves starts with a litter of four pups born at the Oxbow Nature Center in Rochester, Minnesota. These pups came to the Center in spring 1989 and served as educational ambassadors for the 1989, 1990 and 1991 summer exhibits. The litter included two males, Jedadiah and Ballazar, and two females, Raissa and Bausha. At this time, the Center's exhibit was only seasonal, which meant wolves were only on display from May through September. During fall and winter, the wolves spent their time in a large

wooded enclosure at the home of the curator, where educational lectures about the wolves continued for Center adventure programs.

Ballazar later became a member of the captive pack in Stanley, Idaho, named the Sawtooth pack, filmed for Jim Dutcher's ABC production The Wolf: Return of a Legend. In 1993, the Center completed construction of a new year-round facility, and a 1.25-acre wolf enclosure. With the new enclosure, a new Exhibit Pack was formed. The members of this pack were born on April 28, 1993, at Bear Country USA, a drive-through wildlife park in Rapid City, South Dakota. The new pack included females MacKenzie, an all black wolf, Kiana and Lakota, both gravish brown, and the lone male, Lucas, also grayish brown. Their behavioral dynamics taught many

visitors about the complexity of wolf behavior and the aging process as they developed from pups to adults, to eventually become the first retired wolves at our facility in 2002.

To add new life to the Exhibit Pack, the Center developed a management strategy to raise wolf pups at another facility and then integrate them into the adult pack. The first litter integrated into the pack included Shadow and Malik, arctic wolf pups born May 8, 2000, in a captive facility in southern Minnesota. The introduction of Shadow and Malik to the existing pack was very successful, and the management strategy was modified to accommodate wolf pups on a four-year rotation.

In 2004, the Center made arrangements with the Minnesota Wildlife Connection in Sandstone, Minnesota, for a litter of pups. On May 5, 2004, Grizzer and Maya were born, and on May 12, 2004, an additional pup named Nyssa was born. All three were integrated into the Exhibit Pack with Shadow and Malik.

As the 2004 litter reached maturity around the age of two, the Exhibit Pack con-

Clockwise from top: 2000 litter–Shadow and Malik, both arctic wolves, eventually grew a white pelage, but at birth, all wolf pups have dark fur.

2004 litter–Grizzer and Maya were true littermates. Nyssa, black pelage, was born a week later.

2008 litter–Aidan and Denali, representatives of the Yellowstone subspecies, were expected to grow larger than the other wolves.

1993 litter–MacKenzie, the only black pup in this litter, was dominant as a pup.



1989 litter-not many photographs exist to document the pup days of the first pack of ambassador wolves, but this rare photo shows Jedadiah resting in pine boughs.

tinued to flourish and the Center prepared to integrate the next set of pups. The Wildlife Science Center in Forest Lake, Minnesota, was participating in a reproductive study and agreed to provide two pups representing wolves from the Northwest. On April 27, 2008, Aidan and Denali were born, and joined the ambassador wolves at the Center, creating an unprecedented pack, with three regions and three age structures represented.

The focus of the Center's captive wolf program is to increase public understanding of wolves in the wild. Our ambassador wolves provide a glimpse into the complex world of wolves and wolf behavior. In turn, this helps visitors to the Center better appreciate and understand this controversial predator.

To follow the progress of the pack, log onto www.wolf. org, for weekly wolf logs, a monthly podcast and YouTube videos. A DVD Highlights of the Ambassador Wolves, which portrays the behavioral dynamics observed over the last 21 years, is also available from the Wolf Den Store.



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# Wolves of the World

## Mexican Wolves to be Reintroduced in Mexico

by Jess Edberg, information services director for the International Wolf Center

Just when the U.S. Mexican wolf population is at its lowest in seven years, Mexico has announced a plan to reintroduce five Mexican wolves into northeastern Sonora, within 100 miles of the Arizona border.

Last year marked a seven-year low for the endangered Mexican wolf population in Arizona and New Mexico. A 2009 wolf census revealed a 20 percent drop, from 2008 estimates of 52 known wolves in the wild to just 42. The number of wolves not associated with radio-collared wolf packs is unknown.

Last year marked a sevenyear low for the endangered Mexican wolf population reintroduced into Arizona and New Mexico. Even though changes in lethal control were implemented in late 2009, effectively eliminating the "three strikes" rule (three livestock depredations lead to removal), the population has diminished. Illegal killing (poaching) by humans and an unusually low pup-survival rate are believed to be the two main causes of the decline.

ARIZONA

ONORA

Mexico

Mexico City

United States

NEW MEXICO

> The United States and Mexico have long been working together to recover the Mexican wolf population on both sides of the border. However, the United States had a jump start in the reintroduction when it began releasing wolves in 1998. A recent decision by Mexican President Felipe Calderon to make the Mexican wolf one of five priority species prompted Mexican wildlife officials to move their effort ahead.

> The planned reintroduction in Sonora, a state in northwestern Mexico, has already started controversy.

> Biologically, potential exists for the wolves released in Mexico to migrate north and connect to the U.S. population, thus increasing genetic diversity without U.S. efforts. The

## The Eastern High Arctic: Wolves in Greenland

Mexican-released wolves will also add to the total subspecies' population on the ground.

Sociologically, concerns have been raised about how to manage any immigrant wolves from Mexico into Arizona and potentially New Mexico.

Legally, any Mexican wolves immigrating to the United States will receive full, federal protection until they reach the area known as the Blue Range Recovery Area, which classifies Mexican wolves as "nonessential, experimental." This designation allows federal officials to consider lethal control for wolves that depredate. In either area, any wolf posing an immediate threat to human safety may be lethally controlled.

The most anticipated challenge will occur if Mexican wolf immigrants begin attacking livestock in areas where the wolves receive full protection. Livestock producers and managers alike are weighing the options available and planning ahead.

The exact date of the planned release in Mexico had not been announced at the time of publication.

This and other timely articles appear on the International Wolf Center's Web site. Go to www.wolf.org and click on news and events. by Cornelia Hutt

"My initial impression of Greenland was that its name was a cruel misnomer because I saw only a three-colored landscape: white, black and blue with white overwhelmingly predominant... As my airplane from Copenhagen approached Greenland's east coast, the first thing visible after the dark blue ocean was a vast area of brilliant white stretching out of sight, the world's largest ice cap."

— Jared Diamond, Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed

A t one time listed as a subspecies (Canis lupus orion), separate from the wolves of Canada's high Arctic (Canis lupus arctos), the wolves of Greenland are now thought to possess no distinct subspecies characteristics. In fact, the concept that Greenland's wolves originally emigrated from neighboring Ellesmere Island is now generally accepted. Some researchers speculate that for centu• Thule Greenland Nuuk

ries, wolves have crossed the Robeson Channel from Ellesmere to follow the musk-ox migrations eastward and southeastward through Greenland. Along this corridor, wolf numbers have probably fluctuated, no doubt in response to prey availability, variations in climatic conditions and the amount and duration of snowfall.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, habitat loss, human persecution and prey destruction severely reduced the range of the wolf in the Northern

Wolves are reclaiming their historical range in Greenland, raising hopes for permanent repopulation.

Vancy Gibson

Hemisphere. Greenland was no exception. Not uncommon in both northern and eastern Greenland in the first part of the 1900s, wolves were exterminated by hunters and trappers in eastern Greenland during the 1920s. Because of the absence of human occupation in northern Greenland between the 1920s and the late 1940s, no reliable data are available about wolf numbers. Occasional tracks and sightings were reported, but those may have represented transient dispersers from adjacent Ellesmere Island.

After World War II, little attention was paid to the status of Greenland's wolves. But frequent sightings (including packs) by military personnel, arctic expeditions and by researcher Ulf Marquard-Petersen in the late 1970s indicated that wolves were reclaiming their historical range, raising hopes for permanent repopulation of Greenland.

Marquard-Petersen's study (1978-1998) was the first to assess the abundance, density and population trends of Greenland's wolves. As one might expect, abundance and density were low, 55 or fewer wolves in the study area. Wolf numbers likely reflected low prey availability, naturally higher in more southerly latitudes where there is more food and conditions, in general, are less harsh.

Additionally, Marquard-Petersen observed that musk-oxen, the primary prey of high Arctic wolves, were not evenly distributed but were widely scattered across the vast, forbidding landscape. From 1991 to 1995, Marquard-Petersen analyzed scats to determine the major food of arctic wolves in northern and eastern Greenland. Lemmings were second to musk-oxen, followed by arctic hares. The discovery of rope, paper and paint chips in a few scat samples suggested occasional scavenging at garbage dumps.

Predictably, wolf packs in the study area were small. Packs with more than four wolves were rare; most consisted of pairs. Lone wolves were noted frequently, especially in early and late winter when prey was scarce.

In the high Arctic, the vast landscapes, harsh weather conditions and the winter darkness make studying wolves a daunting task. But in the summer of 2009, researchers Dave Mech and Dean Cluff placed a collar tracked by satellite on "Brutus," the breeding male of a pack that often denned near Eureka Weather Station on Ellesmere Island. Location data for Brutus were sent to the researchers' computers and posted regularly on a blog (see internationalwolfcenter.blogspot.com). Sad news came in late April 2010. Brutus appears to have been fatally gored by a musk-ox, not an uncommon occurrence in encounters between predator and prey. Brutus may have been the first high Arctic wolf to wear a GPS/ARGOS collar, but he won't be the last. Look for more about this exciting research in the next issue!

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Musk-oxen are the primary prey of Greenland's wolves, but the musk-oxen are scattered across the country's vast forbidding landscapes.

## **Controversy Continues over Sweden's Wolf Hunt**

by Cornelia Hutt

#### "Since they came back we have to live with them, but we have to keep their numbers down."

 — Michael Schneider of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, from "Sweden culls its resurgent wolves"

A fter banning wolf hunting in the mid-1960s, Sweden's parliament recently decided the country's population of approximately 237 wolves was 27 too many. A decree was issued allowing hunters, beginning January 2, 2010, to reduce the number of wolves to 210. Some 10,000 permit applicants showed up to take part in the highly regulated hunt, which ended January 6, 2010, more than a month sooner than expected. Twenty-eight wolves were reported to have been harvested in four days.

A major reason given for culling the wolves was to make way for the importation of wolves from outside Scandinavia to add new genetic diversity to the population.

Hunters expressed enthusiasm over the government's decision to allow the cull to take place. However, the wolf may show up at the door of the Swedish parliament. The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) claimed the wolf hunt violated European Union (EU) legislation on habitats and species because the Swedish wolf population has not reached a healthy and sustainable level. Because Sweden is an EU member nation, the SSNC planned to issue a formal complaint to the EU Commission.

For a series of articles about the hunt (January 2010) and other pertinent news items, go to news and events at www.wolf.org.



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## What Good is a Wolf?

by Cornelia Hutt with Amir Mahdi Ebrahimi

"In some parts of the world, people have had the luxury to think about protecting wildlife species and endangered species; however, in many places on our planet, the environment and the wildlife may not be the immediate priorities for the local people and the national government."

— Alistair J. Bath, an expert in the field of human dimensions in wolf management, from *Wolf Print* magazine, Spring 2010, a publication of the UK Wolf Conservation Trust

In northwestern Iranian villages like Hachesoo and Shahre-kord, where water is drawn from common wells and shepherds tend flocks of sheep, predators are a real and present threat to people dependent on domestic livestock. Yet verified reports keep surfacing about villagers rescuing wolves from almost certain drowning and then setting the animals free.

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★ Tehran

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A U D I R A B I A

IRAQ

Do these sound like happilyever-after fables? Perhaps, except the news comes from Amir Mahdi Ebrahimi, a scientist and respected member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Canid Specialist Group. *International Wolf* published two of Ebrahimi's heartwarming reports in the fall 2008 issue.

The latest rescue occurred on December 30, 2009, near the town of Shahindej (see map). A wolf somehow fell into an irrigation canal more than four meters (14 feet) deep. After summoning local fire station officials for assistance, the villagers used ropes to haul the struggling animal out of the water. Safe on land, the wolf leaped away when the ropes were removed and bolted for freedom, bedraggled but otherwise unharmed.

Since sharing his stories with Center members in 2008, Ebrahimi has learned of similar incidents, but he is careful to verify they are true before notifying colleagues. He speculates,

however, that the unconfirmed reports are valid.

What motivates pastoral people to intervene in the plight of wild predators when domestic sheep, goats and cows are life-sustaining and often irreplaceable commodities? Perhaps the answer is simpler than it seems. Human regard for all life exists everywhere just as indifference and cruelty do. True life stories about humans extending compassion to wild animals reaffirm our connection to the natural world and encourage us to invest energy in protecting wildlife and wild places and to take seriously the need to discover ways for humans to coexist with predators. That requires knowledge and understanding.

"There are many gaps in knowledge about wolves in Iran," Ebrahimi says. He estimates Iran may have as few as 1,000 wolves and perhaps as many as 6,000. However, he confirms that "any estimate isn't scientific until we do a census." Additionally, Ebrahimi thinks three subspecies inhabit his vast country. "Because wolves are highly mobile carnivores, it is expected that a subspecies will be seen in the range of others," adds Ebrahimi.

Thus, the subspecies identity of the wolf in the canal will remain a mystery. But it doesn't matter. What does matter is that villagers saw some good in a wolf.

To read the article "A Tale of Two Wolves" on the Web site, go to http://www.wolf.org/ wolves/news/iwmag/2008/fall/ wowfall2008.pdf.

An estimated 1,000 to 6,000 wolves, and some think as many as three wolf subspecies, might live in Iran.

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### Reality Check: Western Wolves and Parasites

In the western United States, a controversy is brewing about parasites in wolves, and the possibility of human infection. *International Wolf* interviewed Dr. David Mech to shed some light on the issue.

## *International Wolf:* What is this controversy about?

Mech: A letter was recently sent by a Montana legislator to the Montana Environmental Quality Council citing a potential challenge to environmental and human health because Montana wolves are carriers of hydatid tapeworm (*Echinococcus granulosus*).

## *International Wolf:* Why is this controversy brewing now?

Mech: The hydatid tapeworm was recently documented in the restored wolves of the western United States. This was no surprise because the worm has long infected coyotes and dogs throughout the Northern Hemisphere. Similarly, the cysts resulting from this worm's eggs have forever infected the lungs of moose, deer, elk and other ungulates, including domestic animals. However, the hydatid-worm issue has recently become a handy weapon against the wolf. In reality, it's a tempest in a teapot.

## *International Wolf:* Only a tempest in a teapot?

Mech: Humans at greatest risk of getting the worm are wolf biologists because we handle so many live wolves, carcasses and scats. Nevertheless, no biologist who has been tested, even after having handled thousands of wolves, coyotes and scats, has ever had the parasite.

## International Wolf: Are parasites a great problem in wolf populations?

Mech: Wolves, like most other mammals, carry an array of internal

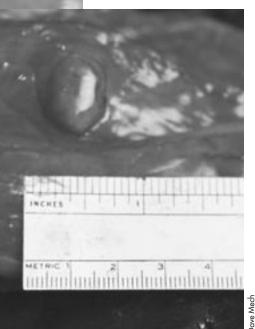
parasites. Among them is the tiny hydatid tapeworm whose eggs are released into the environment through the wolf's anus via scats or otherwise. Hoofed mammals ingest the eggs and grow cysts, usually in their lungs. If a wolf, dog or coyote eats the lungs, larvae in the cyst develop into adult tapeworms in the canid.

# *International Wolf:* Even though there's evidence to the contrary, is it possible that this might become a problem for humans?

Mech: The tapeworm eggs would only very rarely hatch in a human who ingested them, although there are a few such records, most in the far north where natives' dogs eat many infected caribou lungs and then pass millions of eggs into the local environment. (See *International Wolf*, Spring, 2008).

#### *International Wolf:* Where does the hydatid tapeworm live, for instance, with no evidence of human infection?

Mech: The worm has long been documented in Minnesota and in Isle Royale National Park. Thousands of



ten

Hydatid tapeworm cysts in a moose lung often reach golf-ball size, and a moose might harbor more than 50.

people hike, canoe and camp there yearly without any record of infection. I hiked 1,600 miles on Isle Royale during four summers and ate its berries and drank unfiltered water from its lakes, streams and puddles. Perhaps that was reckless, but that was 50 years ago. Still I never contracted the worm.

#### International Wolf: So you believe the current controversy is merely an attempt to make the wolf look like the bad guy?

Mech: Sorry to say, but yes.

onal Encounter half - back followed by

## Caught in the middle of the wolf debate

by Guest Columnist Curt Jacobs

Reprinted with permission from The Oregonian, October 5, 2009

on, heavy sound si

into the air . None of the other



y family's ranch has been caught in the middle of the Longoing debate concerning what to do about gray wolves that have been attacking livestock in eastern Oregon. Four of the five documented the Jacobs Ranch — which my family has operated for three generations in the Keating Valley.

I've read the commentaries, so I know that opinions are polarized on this very emotional issue. Everyone seems to agree there is a problem, but I haven't read much about a solution. We need to solve this dilemma because, according to our neighbors in Idaho and Montana, more wolves are coming.

Since Easter, I've lost at least 26 sheep and a pet goat (a neighbor lost a calf). I say "at least" because I can't prove that the other half-dozen sheep that disappeared were killed by wolves. The carcasses of the first ones were strewn about my yard; the other six were probably carried away. Since the first incident, I've been working closely with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to try every non-lethal measure to protect my herds. I installed

a deep.

fladry, which is a type of flagged fencing that's supposed to deter wolves. When one of the wolves was captured, ODFW put a radio collar on it so its whereabouts could be monitored. We tried a radio-activated guard box that made a loud noise when the wolves got close. I moved my livestock closer to my house, double-penned them and used my guard dogs. ODFW even got in their helicopters and airplanes several times and hazed the wolves with cracker shells to drive them out of the valley.

Except for a lot of sleepless nights, nothing has changed. I have evi-

dence that the wolves have come up right behind my house, and my guard dogs are so intimidated that they won't even bark when they're there.



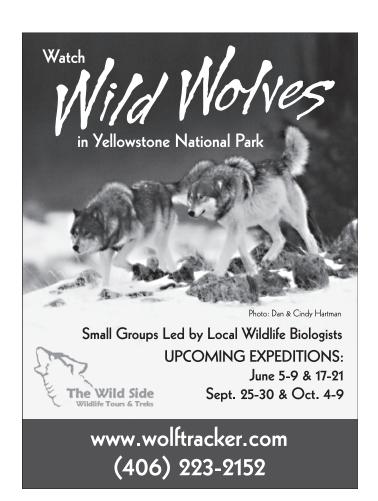
My mom and dad, my brother and his wife, and me and my wife live on 640 acres surrounded by private property. And from time to time there are four grandchildren running around. I'm very concerned about the safety of my family, my pets and my livestock — not to mention my livelihood, which has taken a significant hit.

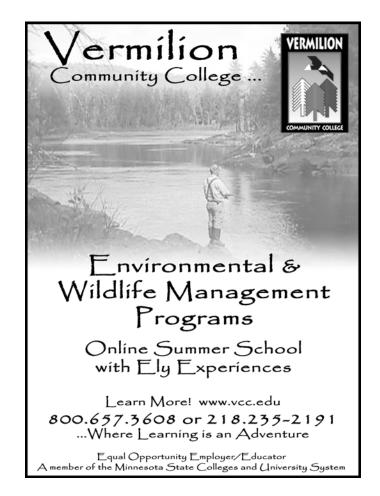
I liken this situation to a kid who has his lunch pail wrestled away from him every day — and he can't do anything to fight back. Under Oregon's current wolf management policy, I can't shoot one without a permit, even when the animal is in the act of attacking my livestock. If I do, I can get fined and go to jail for a year. At the least, I join with Oregon Cattleman's Association in asking the legislature to change the language in the policy so a wolf can be taken when seen attacking, biting, molesting, chasing or harassing livestock, herding and guarding animals, working and sporting dogs, and family pets.

I'm trying the best I can to make a living and continue my family tradition of ranching in this beautiful state. And like many Oregonians, I'm a businessman who relies on our laws and legislators to protect our livelihood so we can provide for our families. This is an issue that won't go away — in fact, it will get worse — if we don't collectively find a solution. ■

Curt Jacobs lives in the Keating Valley.







A Look Beyond

## Lookin' for Wolves in All the Right Places

by Amaroq Weiss

While the Pacific Northwest provide the next suitable habitat for wolves? Bordering prime wolf territory in the Northern Rockies and Canada, it's likely. In recent years, wolves have been confirmed in Washington and Oregon, with DNA testing linking them to the Idaho population or, in some cases, to wolves from British Columbia or Alberta.

In Washington, verified individual wolf sightings were reported over the last few decades, and adult and pup howling was documented in areas in and around North Cascades National Park. In October 2006, a female wolf and her pups captured in Montana for livestock depredations were relocated to northern Idaho, and from there, she migrated into eastern Washington. Though soon departing over the international border, her visit to Washington demonstrated that other Idaho wolves could make the journey. In July 2008, a pair of adult wolves and, shortly afterward, their six pups, were confirmed as Washington's first known resident wolf pack since the 1930s. The Lookout Pack was found in the Methow Valley in western Okanagan County, in north-central Washington in the Cascade Mountains. In July 2009, a second pack, the Diamond Pack, was confirmed in Pend Oreille County in northeastern Washington.

In eastern Oregon, between 1999 and 2008, seven confirmed individual wolves were sighted. These included one captured and transported back to Idaho in 1999; two found dead (one

The number of confirmed wolf packs has been gradually increasing in the Pacific Northwest.

struck by a car, the other illegally shot) in 2000; a fourth animal found illegally shot in May 2007; a fifth radio-collared animal from Idaho discovered in January 2008; and a pair of yearling wolves that spring. (Later implicated in livestock depredations, this pair was lethally controlled after repeated non-lethal efforts failed to stop conflicts.) In July 2008, the radiocollared female identified in January made headlines when howling surveys revealed she was now traveling with a mate and young pups. The continued existence of this first Oregon wolf pack, the Imnaha Pack, was confirmed in November 2009, when the breeding female and male and eight packmates, including pups of the year, were captured on videotape in Wallowa County. Scat and track evidence indicates the existence of a second pack there,

comprised of four wolves, the Wenaha Pack. Within the past year, reports of wolf sightings and tracks in other areas suggest wolves are moving farther west, with credible reports of tracks noted in December 2009 in the southern Ochoco Mountains and near Wikiup Reservoir in the Cascades.

All evidence points to an increased presence and expansion of wolf territories in the Pacific Northwest. With the Cascade Mountains providing a "footpath" from Washington through Oregon into California, wolves could even soon make forays into the Golden State. Wolves on the West Coast? Indeed. ■

Amaroq Weiss is an independent consultant, biologist and retired attorney. Formerly a western regional director for Defenders of Wildlife, she is a board member for the California Wolf Center and has been involved in wolf conservation since 1997.