

2022 Annual Report



International Wolf Center



**Grant Spickelmier,
Executive Director**

It is well accepted at the International Wolf Center that the two most stressful and time-intensive things we do in our work are integrating new pups into our pack and hosting the International Wolf Symposium. This is why we work hard to never schedule them to take place in the same calendar year. Except when they do.

In May 2022, our newest ambassador wolves Blackstone and Caz were successfully introduced to Rieka, Axel and Grayson thanks to the thousands of hours of staff and volunteer time spent helping the “pirates” adjust to their new surroundings. A few months later, we then hosted nearly 450 wildlife managers, biologists, students and wolf enthusiasts from around the world for an incredible four days of learning and sharing in Minneapolis as part of the seventh International Wolf Symposium.

These two incredible achievements were just the highlights of a year full of accomplishments including the announcement of the first two winners of the Dr. L. David Mech fellowship program, offering free virtual wolf programs to over 10,000 students and reaching hundreds of thousands more with our educational YouTube videos, Instagram posts, webcams and webinars. Check out the rest of this report for full details.

At the end of 2022—our team was almost universally exhausted, but also proud of what we had done, not for ourselves, but for wolves. We do this work, not because we like 12–14-hour workdays, but out of a shared love for the sound of a howl on a crisp autumn night, the shiver up our spine we get when we glimpse a wolf in the wild (or when Axel stares directly at us through the exhibit glass). We do this out of appreciation for the important role wolves play in

wild ecosystems and a curiosity to discover more. We do this out of concern for the many ways wolves continue to be misunderstood and misrepresented and a desire to chart a path towards greater understanding. Thank you to everyone who contributed to these efforts in 2022. You all deserve a medal...and a nap!





Judy Hunter
Chair, Board of Directors

Just as in operations, governance changes have occurred over the last year. Board leadership has changed which leads to some new ways of work. I am pleased to say I think our board is growing in terms of skills, interests, and diversity.

Our biggest board supported event for 2022 was the International Wolf Symposium, held in the Twin Cities. There were over 450 participants from 20 countries and 40 states in attendance. The group was comprised of educators, biologist, managers, directors of organizations, students and people who love wolves, all interested in the research and future of wolves around the world. In addition, we had over 35 volunteers who worked very hard to make it a success. It was highlighted by keynote speakers, plenary sessions,

concurrent sessions on a multitude of subjects, a mentoring session for students, a bus trip to the Center, and of course lots of networking and fun.

Other accomplishments by the board:

- We learned we can successfully hold hybrid meetings.
- We added and trained new board members.
- We had a successful budget year.
- We hired a consulting firm to lead us in our next Strategic Plan.
- We accepted a succession plan for a new curator position.
- We had training to help move us forward in our DEI work.
- We awarded two Dr. Dave L. Mech fellowships.
- We celebrated a “two” pup year.
- We changed the name of our

award to Voices for Wolves and awarded 4 for the year.

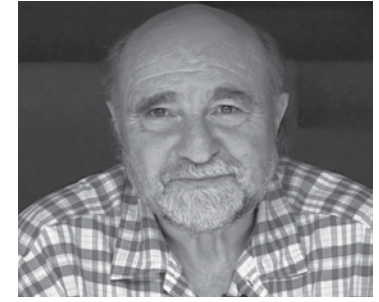
- We revised our by-laws and articles of incorporation.
- We renewed our educational partnership with Voyageurs Wolf Project.

I am very proud to lead the board of an organization that has a strong mission and a strong team of staff and volunteers. They all believe in the mission and work very hard to make sure we live by our mission in all that we do.





EDUCATION



The International Wolf Symposium

The 2022 International Wolf Symposium brought together nearly 450 biologists, researchers and wolf enthusiasts from across the world to learn the latest science about wolves. The event, organized by the International Wolf Center, was held Oct. 13-16 in Minneapolis.

Numerous highlights marked the event, including (but not limited to) these:

- Dr. Yadvendradev Jhala's address during the banquet. He shared news about carnivore recovery in India and the unique ways in which restoring carnivores to the landscape is benefiting local communities through tourism.
- The co-keynote address by Dr. L. David Mech and Dr. Luigi Boitani. Their long friendship was on display in old photos and stories they shared. Boitani said he's often asked what wolves eat in Italy. He answers, "Spaghetti!" (He said wolves have survived on garbage in Italy, so it's likely they do actually eat spaghetti.)



The International Wolf Center announced the first winners of the Dr. L. David Mech Fellowships.

They were Lily Heinzl and Cameron Ho.

Both students received a \$6,000 stipend and up to \$4,000 in support for field research expenses. The International Wolf Center, which Mech founded in 1985, funds the fellowships.

Heinzl was a senior at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa. Ho graduated from the University of Washington in June 2021.



EDUCATION



4,638 MEMBERS
from 31 countries
and all 50 states,
DC and military



1,955,364
WOLF.ORG pageviews



1,642 participants
Wolf Care and Biologist WEBINARS
from 41 states and 13 countries

10,416
WOLFLINK PROGRAM
participants including K-12 grade
students and lifelong learners
from 22 states and Canada



100 Volunteers
completed 8,003 hours

476 OUTREACH VISITS
Virtual and in-person
Schools and libraries
MN, IA, WI



37,561
VISITORS to the Center

1,280 GROUP VISITS
from 11 states
CO, CT, FL, IL, KY, MN,
NC, ND, TX, VA, WI

133
LEARNING ADVENTURES
participants



2,258
WHAT'S FOR DINNER?
participants

188,768 SOCIAL MEDIA
total followers





WOLF CARE

Thanks to generous donors we reached many other milestones in 2022:

- Completed the Boltz Byway medical pen—In honor of Boltz, who was reluctant to come to the front of the Exhibit during his challenging diagnosis of Degenerative Myopathy.
- Upgraded surveillance cameras to monitor pack activity 24-7.
- Finalized outdoor public viewing of pups with upgraded fences and protective panels.
- Improved enclosure habitat and winter access with a new ATV and plow.
- Implemented Working for Wolves enrichment programs to stimulate pack activity.
- Developed the curator transition plan to ensure adequate training and social bonding for the next generation of wolves.

So often people portray wolves for their predatory behavior and don't appreciate the intricate pack life and social organization that keeps them together as a social unit. It is the curator's job to maintain a socially cohesive unit of wolves at the International Wolf Center, and we do recognize that to do this, new life must be added to the exhibit.

On May 10th, 2022, wolf care team members Abby Keller and Awen Briem met our newest Exhibit Pack members, nicknamed Blackbeard, and Captain Kid, affectionally known as the "Pirates". Many people asked about our decision to have back-to-back pup years as the Center typically had been adding pups on a 4-year rotation. With Rieka being a single pup in 2021, she missed a lot of social interactions that would typically play out between littermates. She needed the strong bonding that a pup season can bring and the 2022 pup introduction was a significant investment in not just Rieka's behavioral development, but also in our pack's future. The "Pirates" brought that bonding opportunity and Rieka took on a new role as protector, often guarding the pups from Axel. The pup naming contest selected Blackstone and Caz as their permanent names and the rest as they say is history. If you want to see that history, check out our YouTube channel for video updates.



The Loss of a Center Icon—Grizzer

5/5/2004 – 1/27/2022

Grizzer, our oldest ambassador wolf at the International Wolf Center, in Ely, Minnesota, was euthanized at approximately 7:40 a.m. on January 27, 2022, within the confines of the Center’s wolf care facility. He was surrounded by the wolf care team that cared for him throughout his entire life and remained calm despite being held inside the building on a cold winter night. Grizzer, the 17½-year-old gray wolf was born on May 5, 2004. He was bottle-fed as a young neonate pup at the Center with his littermate Maya, and their cousin, Nyssa. He added a lot to pack dynamics, deferring to his pack leaders, Shadow and Maya. He worked hard to maintain his second-ranking position initially over Malik and later over Denali. After Shadow’s retirement, the pack couldn’t seem to settle on a leader, creating some strife between Grizzer and Denali. He retired earlier than most of our wolves, transferring into retirement prior to his 7th birthday on March 1, 2011. Ironically, Grizzer would welcome many members of the Exhibit Pack into retirement as social companions, including Denali in 2020.

Grizzer’s decline was short-lived; On January 25, Grizzer was active, taking his morning nutritional supplements and eating well. By 11 a.m. on January 26, the wolf care team was working with the veterinarian consultant to assess his condition, gather



blood samples and make him as comfortable as possible. While evidence supports the likelihood of this being a heart condition, the finding of possible carcinomas in his lungs may have played a factor and a metastatic carcinoma could not be ruled out.

Grizzer will always be remembered for his “Grizzer 500”. This behavior included play bows followed by an invitation to chase him, inviting both the wolves and humans that shared his life to join him.

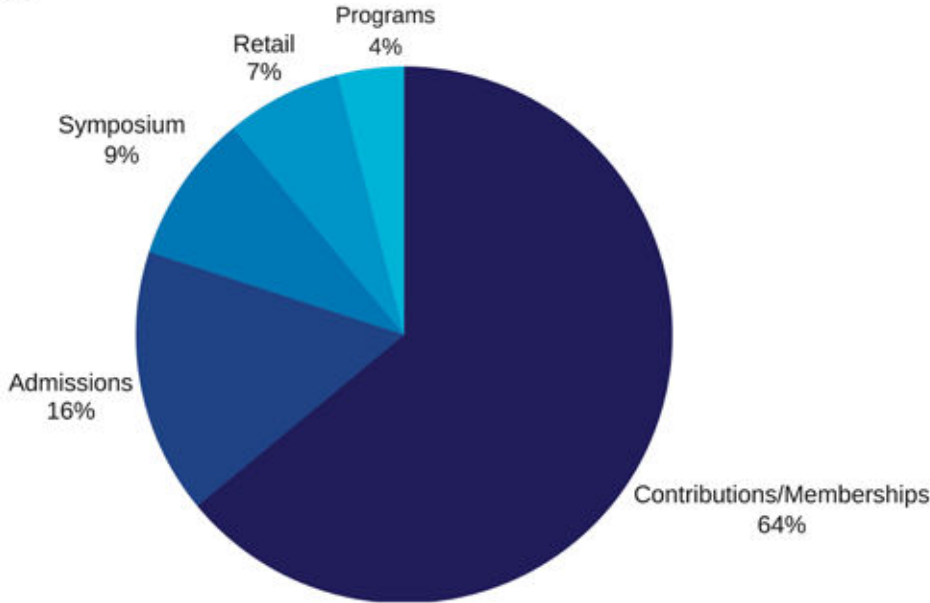




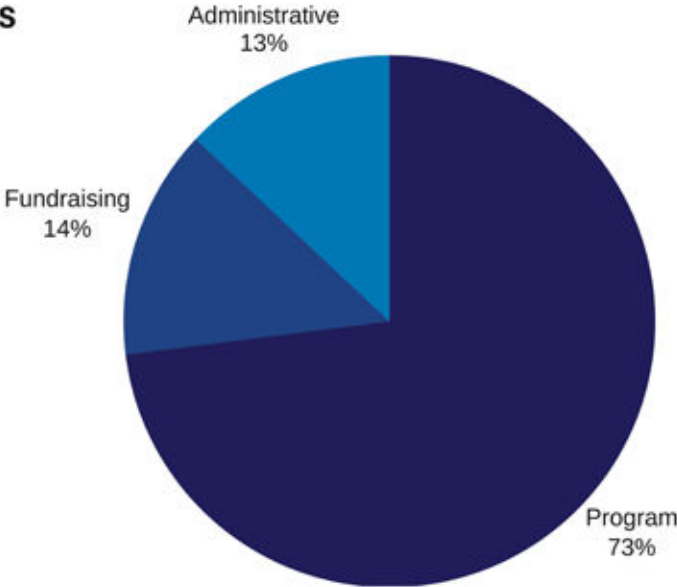
2022 Financials

2022 was a strong year financially for the International Wolf Center thanks to incredibly generous support from our members. With income of \$2,280,727 and expenses of \$2,209,244 we ended the year with net ordinary income of \$71,483. These resources allowed us to add full time positions in both our Education and Wolf Care departments. The International Wolf Center was pleased to once again receive a four star rating from Charity Navigator in 2022—as an indicator of our organization’s effective use of donor resources to accomplish our wolf education mission.

REVENUE



EXPENSES





Teaching the World about Wolves

1396 Highway 169
Ely, MN 55731
218-365-HOWL • wolf.org

