

TRIBUTES

Daniel Curry, Animal Care Specialist

Kiowa (1998 -2005)

On May 3, 1988 Wolf Haven International had an unexpected gift... a litter of 4 pups consisting of one brother and three sisters: Little John, Cris, Morning Star and Kiowa. Though unexpected, they were welcomed with open arms and dubbed the "Oops Litter."

Little John and Kiowa formed an instant bond with each other that could not be broken. They would play frantically with each other, slamming into one another and playing tag; rolling in new found scents that their keepers would plant in their enclosure; or just jumping in unison impatiently awaiting their morning snacks. You couldn't ask for two better companions. Yet on June 8, 2004 Little John passed away and Kiowa mourned her brother's death until July of 2004 when a young male named Peyote was brought into her life. Kiowa immediately formed a new unbreakable bond with Peyote. He seemed to bring Kiowa a great deal of comfort and enthusiasm, as she again found her youth with him. In turn, he seemed to find a mate that he could love and protect. The two would play tag – a game Kiowa carried over from her life with Little John. Peyote took to this game very quickly, as Kiowa would casually walk by and quickly nudge him and then run to another part of their enclosure awaiting a good chase. Peyote would then romp after her and this boisterous play would continue throughout the day.

Toward the end of her days, Kiowa's health began to gradually fade but her spirit stayed strong. She would have small seizures periodically, as her muscles

weakened and her energy started to wane. Instead of frolicking throughout her enclosure with Peyote, she would now be seen basking in the steady streams of sunlight. With the sun caressing her body she would look at you with her stunning sea green eyes... a look that would warm you to the soul but at the same time break your heart.

On the night of July 24, 2005 Kiowa's body was afflicted with one final seizure that brought her body to the ground. Her strong spirit and will to live forced Kiowa back to her feet to try and fight this condition, yet even though Kiowa was one of the strongest wolves in our sanctuary, she could not fight off advanced renal failure. The next morning, the attending Veterinarian came out to Kiowa's enclosure and after looking at her only for a moment, he concurred with animal care staff's decision to end Kiowa's suffering. As Kiowa looked up through those sea green eyes, she saw her devoted mate, Peyote, and the people who loved and cared for her throughout her long beautiful life.

Kiowa will live on in the hearts of all her knew her. The memory of her will never fade, and to all who read this obituary I hope that it lets you glimpse the beauty of Kiowa and all wolves that walk this planet with us. You will always be remembered and loved, dear friend Kiowa, and I am honored to have known you.



Kiowa: May 3, 1998 -July 25, 2005.

Stormy: April 18, 1995 -June 24, 2005.

Photos by Julie Lawrence.



Stormy (1998 -2005)

We have lost a great friend here at Wolf Haven International. Stormy came to us from private ownership on January 30, 1999 with his two brothers: Cherokee and Sequoia. There are so many ways to describe Stormy. He was very large in stature, standing at my waist, which put him at about three and-a-half feet tall at the shoulder. His body was dark gray in coloration, his hair very long and course. He reminded me of a very old and wise wolf, yet he still had a sense of boyhood play about him. He would bound up to the

fence huffing and grunting, and then stop and wait for his morning treats to be express-delivered directly to his mouth.

Stormy's pack consisted of brothers Cherokee and Sequoia, as well as Miwok, an unrelated female from our Idaho pack. Sadly, Sequoia passed away in August of 2003 and Stormy soon stepped in as the leader of this group of rebel-rousers. He led them with great gentleness and strength. With each noble stride of his beautiful long dark gray legs you could tell he was in his prime, and ready for his turn to lead. He would hide in the shade of the tall surrounding trees and just watch his pack mates roam around the enclosure. Stormy was also very comfortable around the people on tour. He was known to enjoy rolling on his freshly scented enrichment ball while a tour would stand there enjoying his playful antics. Stormy, from what I could tell loved his life for all it was worth. This past summer though, Stormy's health took a turn^h for the worse.

For most of his life he had a growth on his right lower eyelid, but usually these growths are benign, and as long as they do not cause the animal discomfort it is not necessary to remove them. However, last May the growth began to increase in mass, causing irritation and weeping. Under the

advice of our Veterinarian, we decided to surgically remove the growth. While surgery went off without a hitch, we were concerned about Stormy's weight. It is our practice that whenever we have an animal in hand, we do a physical exam, including blood work. He had always been one of the larger, more robust animals, but to our dismay, results revealed an extremely high red blood cell count, indicative of leukemia. The Vet's prognosis was bleak... Stormy was given four months to live.

That same day, oblivious to his dire condition, Stormy returned to his pack mates. And while this news brought all of us who knew him an overwhelming feeling of grief, Stormy was still his goofy boyish self, just happy to be at home with his buddies. It seemed as if leukemia could not bring Stormy down, perhaps giving rise to a false sense of hope to his caretakers. He remained his playful self up until his last couple of days. During the end he was very lethargic, and while he remained ever stoic, we knew that he was suffering and this was something we were obliged to put an end to. On August 24, as Stormy took his last breath he just seemed to slip away. I will always remember Stormy as the gentle leader, with his dark golden eyes staring at you echoing back life. You will be missed by all who knew you Stormy, my friend.



>> RED WOLF PUPS AND SSP UPDATE (continued from page 7)

long time companion, Scarlet, and showed no interest in Belle for the first two months, but he had a change of heart as soon as Belle came into heat. Sixty-three days after mating, Belle whelped 2 pups. It was a really exciting time for Wolf Haven, as it was the first time in our history that we've had red wolf pups. Our joy was short lived though, as two days after giving birth, we had to pull the puppies and send them to Tacoma to be hand raised. It turned out that Belle was a bit overzealous in cleaning her puppies, and as a result they developed lick granulomas and subsequent secondary staph infections. Life is incredibly fragile in those first critical days, and rather than risk losing the pups, pulling them was the only viable option. Lupin (f) and Camas (m) are now almost 20 weeks old, and are thriving at the Red Wolf facility.

November will bring more changes for Rhett when Belle returns to the main propagation site in Tacoma. In her place we'll receive Sassy, a 5 year-old female who is considered to be a good genetic match for Rhett. Invariably, he will probably treat her with indifference at first, but they are both proven breeders, so again, we are optimistic.

In early December we will also be welcoming a pair of siblings from the Roger Williams Zoo in Providence, Rhode Island. At the time of arrival the wolves will be just turning 7 months and it is our hope that they will delight in their new home, just as much as we will delight in having them. Because they are so young, they will remain housed together for at least the next year, beyond that, we will have to wait and see what the program has in store for them as 2006 progresses.

It is difficult to sometimes not allow ourselves to become emotionally attached to these animals. I struggle at times to reconcile splitting up pairs that have bonded, or pulling pups away from their parents, but always it comes down to being able to look at the bigger picture. The sacrifices these wolves have to make are critical not only to their species, but to all wildlife and the ecosystem. They may not understand that they have such a significant purpose, but I hope that in some way they know how special they are. Because of their contribution their future generations will thrive... and our future generations will be eternally grateful.

