

# A gentle giant departs

From a letter to Moose's adopters,  
by Shawndra Michell, Volunteer

**I**t is with a very heavy heart that I inform you that Moose has passed away. As you may know, Moose was quite old, and recently had been experiencing some health challenges. Moose was euthanized on May 6th, 2003, at the age of 16 years.

Here at Wolf Haven, we try everything we can to help our wolves recover from illnesses or injuries, but sometimes there's just nothing more that we can do. That was the case with Moose, and it was definitely his time to pass on. When they are beyond our help, we do the kindest thing, which is to let them go.



Moose photo by Julie Palmquist

I've known Moose for almost 7 years since I began volunteering here. He and I made a connection almost immediately. He and I used to howl back and forth to one another (whenever he felt like it), and it was during those times that the rest of the world would cease to exist for me. All that mattered was this beautiful, happy wolf in front of me. It was an amazing gift for him to give to me. The Sunday before he passed on, he tried to howl to me. It came out weak and throaty, but of course I answered. I knew it was our good-bye. He listened to my response, looked at me, then turned and slowly walked away. I knew it would be the last time we would see each other. It broke my heart, but it is a precious gift from him that I will never forget.

Moose was an incredibly special wolf to so many of us. He had a way about him that just drew you to him. Whether it was his eyes, his "smile", his attitude, his playfulness, his height, his devotion to his mate Destiny, or something else entirely, Moose would get your attention, and inevitably gain your love and respect. I've never gone out with a tour group that wasn't captivated by him.

The passing of Moose brings an incredible amount of sadness, but we must try and remember him for the love, happiness and joy that he gave to all of us. He was one of the most powerful teachers we've had here at Wolf Haven, and he helped dispel many myths, including "the big, bad wolf." It was impossible to look into his eyes and see a beast or a monster. We are honored to have shared our lives with him, and to have learned from him.

With Moose in my heart always,  
Shawndra Michell, Volunteer



Playing favorites can be a dangerous game, but there are, nonetheless, certain souls in this world who appear to have lived a few more lives than the rest; perhaps they've seen things in this lifetime or another - *known* things that we have only dared to contemplate in our dreams. It is in the eyes of those wise old souls - whether human or animal - where we find the most remarkable solace and can not help but fall in love.

There was *something* about Moose, as evidenced by the following words from the hearts of just a few of the people who "knew" Moose, including two of his more than 400 adopted "parents." This gentle giant has departed but will never be forgotten...

Julie Palmquist,  
Communications Manager

Dear Shawndra,

Thank you for your beautiful letter announcing Moose's departure. Your letter was so heartfelt and eloquent!

My husband & I fell in love with Moose on our first trip to Wolfhaven about 4 yrs ago. It brought us to tears when he howled in the middle of the day, and the volunteer told us about Moose's recent loss of his mate, Destiny. He definitely was a special animal, and I am sure he taught so many so much that is impossible to adequately express in words. He really touched my soul. I cried again when I read your letter, for I could feel how much you miss him. As with any well loved animals, I feel the last kind gesture we, as humans, can extend to them is ending their suffering... Now he is howling with Destiny in Wolf Heaven, after stopping briefly in Wolf Haven. Weren't we fortunate to have been so touched by this wonderful creature?

- Katie Wayno 

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permitted allotment and unsuccessful attempts were made to haze them from the area. The male was captured in a leghold trap on May 21 and returned to Sevilla National Wildlife refuge. Female wolf 592 could not be captured, and after many attempts was finally shot and killed.

Michael Robinson of the Center for Biological Diversity blames 592's attacks on cattle on her exposure to cattle carcasses left in the Apache National Forest and the Gila National Forest... Robinson maintains that "Almost all the Mexican wolves that have attacked livestock are known to have first scavenged on the carcasses of stock. The Paquet report advises that carcasses of cattle and horses that die of other causes on the forests be removed or destroyed before wolves scavenge on them and become habituated to stock."

In March 2003, the Cerro pack's alpha male was found dead from gunshot wounds in Arizona. In June, the Bluestem pack subadult male m756 was found dead in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. He had recently been showing dispersal movements


from the pack. The cause of death has not been released.

The latest reports from the field indicate that there are now 19 radiocollared wolves in the wild, down from 27 in 2001. A number of packs have been exhibiting denning behavior, including the Cienega pack, raised at Wolf Haven and released in March of 2000. The pack has fared extremely well on its own in the wild, with the wolves keeping their distance from human activity and hunting native prey.

The Francisco pack, another pack not welcomed on the San Carlos Reservation had been held at the Ladder Ranch facility as all pack members were captured and reunited in captivity. The 6-year old alpha pair are from the group of original wolves released in Arizona in 1998. Although the pack has stayed away from humans and livestock, they made the mistake of straying on to the San Carlos Reservation. The Francisco pack was released on June 25 in New Mexico's Gila Wilderness. The pack's (alpha pair, 4 yearling pups and this year's pups) release more than doubles New

Mexico's wild wolf population. They quickly chewed their way out of the soft-release mesh pen.

In mid-June the Red Rock pack consisting of 4 wolves (alpha pair and 2 yearlings) were released in Arizona's Apache National Forest. This pack had never been released before and represents a great genetic diversity. They are descendants from Ghost Ranch, McBride and Aragon lineages. Another pack was scheduled to be released on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation in Arizona at the end of June.

The White Mountain Apache Tribe, members of the Mexican Gray Wolf Recovery Team welcomed their first released pack on June 23. The 1.6 million acre reservation is already home to the Bonito Creek pack, a naturally formed pack consisting of a pair of wild-bonded wolves. The White Mountain Apache tribe's goal is 6 packs on the reservation and more importantly "to return the wolf to its traditional range on the reservation." 

## Moose

(continued from page 11.)

Dear Wolf Haven,

I just received the letter about Moose's passing. I can't begin to tell you how this hurts. I loved him as though he were my own even though I never "met" him. I have cried a bucket of tears over this but know he is at rest and his spirit lives on.

I thank you for all the care and love you gave him. I know he had a good life there. I intend to leave the remainder of my adoption time in his memory. When I renew for next year I will let your organization pick a wolf that seems to have "Moose-like" qualities. Nothing can ever replace Moose in my heart. But I can care for another in a different way.

Thank you again for all the good your organization does to help dispel the myth of the "big, bad wolf." I only wish I lived closer so that I could volunteer there.

With love always for Moose,  
**Rosalie Conti**



## Moose – A Special Friend, by Tammy Rogers, Volunteer

Now that you have left this world, sadness has filled the hearts of many.

Some of us have known you longer than others, but all have felt the same about you. You have touched many lives and filled many hearts with joy.

I know that we have to carry on for the sake of all the wolves, but I must say it is very difficult to say goodbye.

It was your time to go, I know, but I feel that you have not really left us. You will always be the sunshine on a cloudy day and the brightest star on the clearest night. You will always be here with us.

Because of the long and happy life you have lived, you have helped us understand why we do what we do for all wolves here and everywhere.

Just as we have loved you, Moose, we will love the others just the same.

You will be in our thoughts and FOREVER in our hearts. You will never be forgotten.

Moose, my special friend,  
I love you and will miss you.  
**Tammy Rogers, Volunteer**



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