Tribute

Napanee
Capitola McWhitter, Volunteer

We all know that our wolves will pass on long before we do, but it never is easy when one actually does. Napanee, one of our longtime
residents, passed away unexpectedly on Monday June 28, 2004.
Napanee had developed an infection that did not respond to antibiot-
cics or steroids. We had sedated him and taken him to our vet for
treatment, and he passed away while under anesthesia. It’s always a
risky thing to sedate older animals, but we were forced to do it in the
hope of saving him from the infection. Unfortunately, it was just
too much for him. As many of you may know, wolves typically live
less than 9 years in the wild. So at 15 years of age, his body could
only take so much.

Napanee came to Wolf Haven in 1993, when he was four years old,
and I met him for the first time in April of 1997. He made an im-
pression on me that will last forever. I’ve always thought that he was
the most handsome wolf at Wolf Haven. Napanee was one of our
largest wolves, and one of the things we’ve always loved about him
was how he “showed” his meals. You could always tell when the
wolves had been fed just by looking at Napanee’s enormous belly.
He definitely enjoyed meat times and treats! He was also one that
loved to roll and roll around in the scent markings we give the
wolves. Even as an “elderly” wolf, he would still roll around and
roll around in his own scent. It could be Juki, molasses, ginger,
or any number of other things. What a site to see this big wolf,
rolling around with his legs straight up in the air! It just made us all
smile to know that he was really enjoying himself. Visitors always
commented on his site and wanted to know how much he weighed.
We can’t know for sure, but in his prime, we estimated that he was
over 110 pounds.

Napanee was also star of sorts. He was one of the wolves in our
public service announcements that included Bob Barker, and were aired
across the country. So not only has Napanee been an impor-
tant teacher to the visitors in our sanctuary, he’s also educated people
all across the country with his good looks – I actually called him the
“Burt Reynolds” of Wolf Haven!

Napanee was a beautiful wolf with sweet, soulful eyes. He had shared
his life here with his mate Criis the entire time, and he was a kind and
caring mate for Criis. Napanee wasn’t overly excited about humans, but
was always so good to Criis and would occasionally “play” with staff or
volunteers when he felt like it. I’ve always enjoyed seeing the reaction
of visitors to him when he would choose to approach the fence. His
big, sweet face and eyes would always endear the people to him. Each
wolf here has their own distinct personality, and Napanee’s quiet na-
ture was a wonderful example of how some wolves really are – in con-
trast to the vicious stereotypes we see and hear all too often.

Napanee is now free – as wolves should be – and we rejoice at that. But
we do grieve his absence. We also grieve for Criis who is now alone
once again. Please know that our staff are spending extra time with
her, and doing their very best to give her what she needs as she goes
through her grieving period.

Each of us in our own way are working toward the day when there are
no captive wolves – when they live and die as nature intended – until
that day, you and I will continue to care for them in the very best way
that we know how. Thank you so very much for your continued sup-
port of our wolves, and thank you for making their lives better.

It breaks my heart to know that I’ll never see him again, but I’m so very
grateful for the opportunity to have shared so many years with him.
Thank you for being a part of his life too.

In Loving Memory of Napanee,
Capitola McWhitter