

Tribute



Sequoia

Sequoia 1995 -2003

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It was a long and eventful year here at Wolf Haven, filled with many joys for both visitors and residents, but unfortunately, it was not without some hardships and sorrows. The month of August was particularly difficult, and brought much sadness to our sanctuary with the loss of our gentle friend, Sequoia.

Sequoia arrived at Wolf Haven in January of 1999 with his littermates Stormy and Cherokee, and we were hopeful that we would give him and his brothers a long and happy life, as is our intent with all those who find refuge within our gates. The three boys had great fun together, playing "King of the Hill" on their big logs and wrestling with each other. Sequoia was generally the most submissive of the group, but there were seldom any serious scuffles. Shy but curious, Sequoia would initially stay back away from tour groups, but after a few minutes, he would often approach to sniff the air cautiously before retreating again. When no tour groups were present, though, he was friendly, sweet and playful. For years, everything went very well, and none of us could have imagined that Sequoia's life would be cut unexpectedly short at the age of only eight. Wild wolves generally live to only 5-9 years old due to the difficult and often hazardous lives they lead, but here at Wolf Haven, we have had wolves reach 16 and even 19 years of age; thus, Sequoia's premature passing was a surprise to all of us.

Cancer is both insidious and indiscriminate, and as has been our experience, an animal need not show clinical symptoms in order for the disease to progress to advanced stages. Further, wolves will usually try to conceal any signs of weakness or illness, in order to avoid appearing vulnerable. In Sequoia's case, we had no idea that he was sick until he started to crash in the last few days before he died. Two weeks prior to his demise, his appetite waned, and he began to lose weight. Animal care staff consulted with our veterinarian throughout the time Sequoia was showing signs of distress, but even if the cancer had been detected immediately after his appetite decreased, it would have been beyond the point of treatment.



Sequoia's grave

Sequoia became increasingly listless and spent much of his time sleeping, but it was an uncharacteristically hot, dry month, so lethargy was not uncommon in many of our wolves. Further, he had recently been separated from his brothers and their other pack mate, Miwok (an unrelated female from our Idaho pack,) due to escalating aggression problems. Miwok had taken a strong dislike to Sequoia, and her threats became increasingly serious, perhaps because she knew he was sick. She inflicted several surface wounds, but nothing to cause great concern. As time passed, however, she began to escalate her harassment, so we thought it prudent to intervene on Sequoia's behalf. Sequoia was separated into an adjoining enclosure, and it was our hope to pair him with a female that we were in the process of acquiring. Sadly, there wasn't time for that, as Sequoia passed away peacefully during the afternoon of August 25th.

All of us here at Wolf Haven miss our friend Sequoia, and we are truly sorry to have to pass this sad news along to you. As with the other wolves under our care who have passed away, he is buried in our cemetery among the Mima mounds in our prairie. Tibetan prayer flags, placed by a Wolf Haven volunteer, fly over his grave, and various mementos from staff and volunteers who attended his memorial service sit atop and around it. It is a beautiful, peaceful setting with eagles, hawks and ravens flying overhead. After his death, we sent a letter to his adoptive parents to inform them of the loss before publishing it here in *WOLF TRACKS*.

We hope that it will be a long while before we must write another tribute such as this... it is always difficult to lose one of our much-loved wolves, and we know you share in our sorrow. There are many more wolves who need our help, however, and we hope that you will continue to walk that path with us.

Thank you again for your support of Wolf Haven International - we could not carry out our work without your help.

