Gray Wolves Return to Park

After an absence of nearly 60 years, the gray wolf has made its return to Yellowstone Park. On Thursday, January 12, 1995, a horse-trailer hauling metal crates containing eight Canadian gray wolves came through the stone arch of Yellowstone's north entrance, greeted by school children, government officials and other onlookers.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Fish and Wildlife Director, Mollie Beattie, were among those on hand for the wolves' arrival. They traveled with the wolves into the park's backcountry to one-acre pens where they will be held for 6-8 weeks before their release into the park. At a press conference held on January 12 at the Mammoth Rec Hall, Secretary Babbitt termed the arrival of wolves into Yellowstone an "extraordinary moment" in the history of the park, and the United States generally. Return of the wolves, Babbitt said, will help restore the Yellowstone ecosystem to its natural state and marks a victory for the Endangered Species Act.

Unfortunately, the wolves were forced to remain in their 2 ft x 3 ft x 4 ft shipping crates due to legal motions filed with the U.S. Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver by the Farm Bureau Federation. This "temporary administrative stay" prevented the release of the wolves in Yellowstone and central Idaho. The Department of the Interior filed an emergency request for reconsideration early January 12 urging the court to lift the stay, or alter it so that the wolves could be released into their holding pens.

On January 13, the legal wrangling ended and the crates were opened, allowing the first gray wolf to take steps outside his traveling container. Since this time, all wolves have been seen out of their crates and are eating elk and bison carcasses provided for them by park personnel. On January 19, the park received word that a second group of wolves had been captured in Canada and were on their way to the park. Six gray wolves arrived late last night and were placed in the acclimation pens in the Lamar Valley. The newest shipment of wolves joins the eight wolves already in the pen sites at Crystal Bench and Rose Creek. Reportedly, the wolves are adjusting very well and continue to explore their new surroundings.
Poem for Curt
by Jim Stermitz

I've known Curt all my life,
or at least since we were small,
and looking at us now you'll agree,
it's longer than just last fall.

We went to school at Gardiner,
we each tried to be a clown.
I think he drove the get-a-way car,
When I tore the goal posts down.

-It looked like so much fun to him,
He said I'll have a ball.
So the next day in study hall,
He walked right through the wall.

We both went on to college,
to Bozeman at M.S.C.
We celebrated there our birthdays,
They're within a few days, you see.

We enjoyed the celebrations so much,
We invented a few birthdays more,
and if he hadn't transferred then to
Billings, by now we'd be two hundred and four.

He worked as a surveyor,
On the highway for the State,
While holding up a rod one day,
He took with him some real estate.

He made a career at Yellowstone,
balancing up their books,
and they're still in the black today,
Because of his cautious looks.

He transferred once to Rushmore,
He liked the somber faces,
But the Indians held him hostage there,
while they went through their paces.

So now he says "I'm calling it quits;
my career has been rewarding; but
now it's time to enjoy what's left, Of
the good times I've been hoarding."

So maybe you can pull the plug,
From the Feds up on the hill,
But you can't walk away from the
friends you've made, and I'm sure you
never will.

The "Don't Name the Wolves" Contest
by Mary Taber

Through the dedication and hard work of many and after successfully overcoming the legal challenges, the wolves are back in Yellowstone. The significance to this event varies as much as the individuals involved, and I have heard this variation of opinion expressed in several discussions on what we should name the wolves. I would like to respectfully express another point of view on the naming of wildlife.

So much of this project has already focused on how we as humans will benefit from the reintroduction; we will have the opportunity to experience an intact ecosystem, to listen to a wolf's howl, to increase the flow of tourist dollars to the local economies. Assigning nicknames to wild animals enforces our tendency to reduce the value of wildlife to merely how much they mean to us; rather than affirming the intrinsic value of wildlife and wild places. For example an interview concerning wildlife poaching in Yellowstone, a correspondent from ABC's Day One suggested to me that the illegal killing of the Elk Park bull elk (affectionately known as "Charger") was somehow more tragic than Don Lewis' backcountry elk slaughter because "Charger was loved by the public and had a 'Playful' personality" [his words, my emphasis]. Assigning nicknames to our wildlife reduces them to the status of pets, who need to be fed and cared for and who are expected to behave. There is an incongruity between posting large warning signs which read, "Wildlife are dangerous-Do Not Approach," and then publicly referring to an adult female grizzly bear as "Daisy", and a large bull elk as "Fred."

We could sponsor a contest in which the local school children could think up names for each of the wolves; it would make for a warm, fuzzy, evening news feature, and it might even gain us a couple of lifelong advocates. But we risk the possibility of a "favorite" wolf having to be destroyed or meeting some other distasteful demise. And then there is the unfortunate example of the young male grizzly we named, "O.J.", in honor of the nimble footwork he displayed at a capture operation when he was a cub...more importantly, we would just be encouraging the next generation to continue anthropomorphizing our wildlife. As Mona mentioned, numbers are impersonal-but so are wolves and so is wilderness. In fact, by the strictest definition, everything is impersonal except people. If we humans were as omniscient as we like to think, we could properly name the wolves in their own language, but it is difficult to transmit a scent over the radio and messy to splash a urine sample on an official report when referring to a specific animal.

So-what do we call the wolves? The Nine-Mile pack as described in Rick Bass' book had no monikers other than one called "the Marion Wolf," describing the geographic region she frequented for a time. And if wolves are capable of any form of self-concept, they probably think of themselves in terms of their social standing and their territory: "I am the beta female of the Hellroaring Pack." That describes her role and her place, and it's all the self-knowledge a wolf requires. The Yellowstone wolves might be described in terms of which pen they presently occupy, only to acquire different labels when they eventually settle into their territories upon release. In some traditional American Indian cultures, a child was given one name at birth, then renamed upon reaching adulthood as one of the rites of passage.

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For Sale:
1985 Yamaha Enticer snowmobile. Excellent condition, 6,800 miles. $750. Call 242-2511.

For Sale:

Wanted:
Cross-country skis and/or boots for a 5-year old. Size 13 shoe. Call Steve at 344-2110 or 344-7433 after 5 p.m.

Volunteers Needed:
Because of recent transfers and moves, the Mammoth Library is in need of volunteers for librarians and board members. If you are interested there will be a meeting on January 30, at 7:30 p.m. at the Mammoth Community Library or call 344-7711.

For Sale:
Large Cowichan sweater jacket. Worn only once. Brown and white with an eagle design. Asking $80 or best offer. Call 848-7513, leave message.

Nordic Track "Achiever". Like new, $550 (paid $769 new). Call 344-2013 days or 344-7475 evenings.

Help Wanted:
Volunteers needed to help organize the Park to Paradise Triathlon. It's a great way to get to know your neighbors, do something positive for your community, and get a free t-shirt!! Call David Thoma by January 31 at 344-7758.

For Sale:

Lost:
Hand-painted aqua and magenta pierced earring, shaped like an arrowhead. Contact Judy at 2031.

To Giveaway:
Sanyo integrated receiver, needs factory repair. Call Mary at 344-2152 (w).

Community Events

* Clinic Open House
The Mammoth Clinic and Yellowstone Park Medical Services will be hosting an Open House today from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. to welcome Dr. Mike Kimbro to our communities. Please join us at the clinic for refreshments and to meet Dr. Kimbro and his wife Karen.

* Vet Visit
Veterinarian, Dr. Jim Murray, will be at the Gardiner Exxon on Friday, January 27 from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. No appointment necessary. Housecalls available upon request. Next Visit: February 10.

* Cross-Country Ski Clinic
Free instruction for beginners, improvers and perfectionists of all ages will be offered on Saturday morning, January 28, 1995, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Instructors will be Nancy Loren, Ellen Petrick-Underwood, and Norm Bishop. The location will be the Mammoth Upper Terrace Drive area. Any questions? Call Ellen at 344-7319 or 344-2253, or Nancy at 848-7589.

* Creative Memories Seminar
Frustrated with your photo storage? Creative Memories is proud to offer a photo album educational seminar and workshop on Friday, February 10 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The seminar will be at the Canteen "Room A". There will be a special "Introductory Seminar" from 12 noon to 12:30 p.m. In 30 minutes you will learn the importance of organizing and preserving your photos in a safe scrapbook style album and receive creative tips, such as cropping and photo-journaling. For further information contact Stacey Love at 242-7339.

* "History of Winter in Yellowstone" Seminar
Lee Whittlesey, NPS Historian, will present a talk on the history of winter in the park at the TWRS Conference Room in Mammoth at 7 p.m. on January 23. Additional talks will be presented at later dates, "History of Transportation in Yellowstone" on February 8 and "Death in Yellowstone on February 13."
These wolves will emerge from their holding pens facing a monumental transition—ecologically, historically and politically. Granted, "The Mist Creek Wolf Who Was The Alpha Male At Crystal Bench" is a bit unwieldy and has too many characters to fit neatly in a database field, but it reflects and honors the experiences of such an animal. Consider what we lost when we took the Nez Perce Indian name meaning "Thunder Rolling To A Higher Level" and anglicized it to "Chief Joseph" for our convenience.

Director Kennedy in a recent speech defined wilderness as "that which lies beyond our anxious self-assertion." We have finally brought the wolves back to the Yellowstone wilderness—can we have the patience and the humility to let them find their own names?

Vocational Women’s Support & Training  
Western Wyoming Community College  
PO Box 428  
Rock Springs, WY 82901

Greetings!

The Vocational Women’s Support & Training program at Western Wyoming Community College is a Carl Perkins’ funded grant specifically designed to recruit women into studying for nontraditional careers and provide support services for those students that will allow them to remain in college. Women must be one of the following: a single parent, a displaced homemaker, or a nontraditional student.

The Dept. of Labor defines a nontraditional occupation as one in which women make up less than 25% of the total workforce in that particular occupation. A nontraditional student might be the older student who has been out of school for some time, may be working, and is responsible for supporting a family.

As part of our grant, we are hosting a nontraditional career conference for women at Western Wyoming Community College in Rock Springs in March. It will provide an opportunity for women from around the state to meet, to examine issues specific to the woman working in a nontraditional career, and to develop personal networks. We are asking any agencies, businesses, and organizations with newsletters to please enclose the following announcement in their newsletters:

Women working in nontraditional occupations (where women make up less than 25% of the total workforce in that particular occupation) are invited to attend the second annual nontraditional career conference at Western Wyoming Community College in Rock Springs on March 25, 1994. Speakers, workshops, panel discussions, and lunch will provide a full day’s activities. It will also give women a chance to develop personal networks. Women interested in attending are asked to please call Denise Clark or Tiffany Sauer at 307-382-1828 and leave a message, or write to: Vocational Women’s Support & Training, PO Box 428, Rock Springs, WY 82901.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this announcement.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Sauer
Coordinator