A Very Special Farewell

We say goodbye to the legendary ROMEO

ON THE ROAD TO RESCUE PAGE 3
ALL ABOUT MATCH-MAKING PAGE 14
2020 WAS A TOUGH YEAR FOR THE ENTIRE WORLD AND WE ARE GRATEFUL YOU CHOSE TO SUPPORT US!

With your generosity and support, the rescues, volunteers, and staff were never in danger of going without necessary resources. Each year we close our doors to the public during January and February, reopening on March 1st, which meant in 2020 we were open for tours only a couple of weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to discontinue tours and close our gift shop to visitors. Tours and gift shop sales make up a substantial amount of our annual income, so we’ve had to tighten our belt even more to keep operations running smoothly.

Our Howling Supporters came through by donating loads of items through our Amazon wishlist, signing-up for memberships, sponsoring rescues, making direct donations, and doing so much more.

With the assistance of grants, we’ve been able to continue making necessary infrastructure improvements, like extending water lines to the furthest animal enclosures. This improvement means that our animal care crew no longer has to carry 5 gallon buckets of water uphill, in rocky terrain, several times a day!

Our rescues were flooded with enrichment donations, allowing us to provide fun and engaging events beyond our normal enrichment procedures. Most of the events were live streamed to our Facebook page and are still available if you’d like to see examples of your direct impact, and how stimulating these donations are for each of our deserving critters.

When people think of the challenges to small businesses during this pandemic they typically think of shops and restaurants, not realizing that animal shelters and sanctuaries are equally at risk of not being able to pay the bills. We realize how lucky we are to have the support of so many kind and generous animal lovers, from all over the world, and we want to execute to know that we appreciate how you’ve kept us in your hearts and minds even when you were experiencing difficulties of your own. It means the world to our rescues, volunteers, and staff. Thank you!

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When it comes to a typical day of work there aren’t many chances to “paws” and reflect on the impact of our daily work in the animal sanctuary world. Between dragging ourselves to the Community Kitchen at 5:30 in the morning for that first cup of coffee, navigating a herd of sleepy Animal Care Team Members as we all throw frozen meatloaves into the back of an ATV trailer for feeding, and responding to animal scuffles or administrative questions on a large compound, there’s not too much time to sit and think. But if luck would have it, we didn’t know it yet but pretty soon we would have 46 hours in a car to reflect on what life was like in an Animal Sanctuary such as Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary.

At the beginning of December, our Executive Director Brittany and I embarked on a 46-hour rescue mission to pick up two wolves: Mika and Stigma. Whilst I’ve driven across the country before I have to admit that it was never non-stop, and it was absolutely not with the intent of putting two canines into crates full of people in the front seat of my car. However, with the help of Brittany McDonald leading the mission, I knew that this experience would be a great opportunity to learn about the rescue side of sanctuary work.

On the day that we left, and even a few hours before leaving, Brittany sent me a photo of a wolf who was being treated by a veterinarian. The vet had just administered the needed vaccines for the pup, and was preparing the puppy for transport back to the sanctuary. We would end up with two animals, or would one be rehomed before we arrived? Could we drive 24 hours straight without stopping to give the pups a break and have them eat? The puppy that we ended up adopting was called “Stigma.”

We’d Love to Hear From You!

All of the content in this magazine is created by our staff, volunteers, and interns. We try to come up with content we think our readers would enjoy reading, but we might be missing something that would be interesting to you. Please use the email address below to suggest ideas for articles or features that might be of interest to our Howling Supporters, or to provide any comments or suggestions!

media@wildspiritwolfsanctuary.org

Special thanks to our printer, The Printer’s Press!

www.printerspressinc.com
Almost immediately after arriving, Stigma and Mika were transferred into our vehicle and after the quick fifteen-minute exchange of signatures and paperwork, we were back on the road and ready to head home. The girls were quiet, still, and covered in mud; that morning had brought rain and so the rescue van smelled like wet dog, poop, and skinky sanctuary workers (we were still wearing the same clothes that we had left in).

We drove through the night for a bit, talking to keep each other awake but also mildly chatting as we drove. We were both trying to nap when the opportunity struck. With two animals in the back, one a very hands-off, non-social girl (Mika), and the other with the potential to join the group, every single mile of the trip was nonstop and attempt to make their time in the box van as minimal as possible.

Almost immediately after arriving, Stigma and Mika were transferred into their new homes. Their new neighbors and sanctuary-mates all roared into a new enclosure first. With no lights other than the van headlights and our driving is no biggie. If anything, it was a reminder of the different, but similarly temperd, home weather systems we came from.

By the time we arrived back on Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary property, it was 8 am. The air temperature, home weather systems we came from.

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Big Pack in the Sky

**THUNDER**
Male Arctic wolf, Thunder, was born on May 3rd, 2006, and passed away December 17th, 2020.

Thunder was one of the most sponsored rescues at the sanctuary, having captured the hearts of so many visitors with his beautiful coat and shy demeanor.

He was brought to the sanctuary as a pup, along with littermates Alice, Sabine, Sugar, Storm, and Powder. Thunder and his siblings were hand-raised by volunteers and staff, meaning they needed to be bottle-fed and cleaned every two hours, which was exhausting work taken on by a committed group of people.

Thunder was well-known as a member of "Forest Pack", named for one of his companions, as their enclosure was featured along the tour path. Forest passed away in July and Thunder’s sister, Alice, currently lives alone, but we’re hoping to find her a companion, very soon.

**ARGO**
Male high-content wolfdog, Argo, was born on June 5th, 2006, and passed away November 3rd, 2020.

Argo lived with high-content wolfdog Cheyenne, whose companionship he very much enjoyed until her passing on September 15th, 2020.

One of his favorite pastimes was to sneak up behind his Caretakers and deliver a playful bite on his or her rear end. His Caretakers usually found this much less entertaining than he did!

Argo loved breakfast delivery, med-ball delivery, or delivery of anything resembling food. He did a happy run in a big loop until breakfast arrived. He also loved chasing ravens and fence fighting with his neighbors, Cinder and Riot.

**PRINCESS**
Female New Guinea singing dog, Princess, was born on November 28th, 2010, and passed away October 22nd, 2020.

Tour guests often got to see Princess with her habitat-mates, Reba and Bono. Shortly before passing, shy Princess was moved to her own habitat where staff could closely monitor her end of life care without worrying about Bono and Reba playing too rough or attempting to steal her daily medications.

Before her relocation into a new enclosure Princess loved getting new toys, but she had to find ways to keep her habitat-mates from stealing them! She also liked going for walks and rolling in anything smelly she came across.

Though very shy with new Caregivers, once she opened up this sweet girl loved attention and would happily scent roll on hair and give kisses.

**Riot**
High-content female wolfdog, Riot, was born around May, 2006, and passed away December 20th, 2020.

Riot was a sweet, silly, spunky girl who lived with her companion, Cinder. A favorite with many staff and volunteers over the years due to her personality and quirky behaviors, she will be missed very much.

Riot had a couple of companions before being introduced to Cinder, but for Cinder it was love at first sight! He seemed overwhelmed to have a friend and couldn’t stop “love biting” her head. Its enthusiasm was a bit annoying to Riot at first, but after she told him off a few times, Cinder managed to calm down a bit. The new couple got along well, but we noticed that Riot was not able to fully settle down in this new habitat. We thought it best to move them both back to Riot’s old habitat, next to the neighbors she had known for over 10 years. Cinder saw that Riot was comfortable being leashed to go for a walk, and he allowed us to teach him, too, for the first time! The two walked nicely back to their new home and enjoyed each other immensely, until Riot’s passing.

**ONI**
Female mid-content wolfdog, Oni, was born on February 16th, 2011, and passed away November 15th, 2020.

Oni came to Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary in November of 2015 when she was 4 years old. She was introduced to a number of male rescues, but never really found her match until she was introduced to mid-content wolfdog, Zeus.

Playful, energetic Oni brought out a more social and playful side of Zeus, and the two ran around together, wrestled, and socialized with their neighbors through the fence.

Shy enough that she wouldn’t allow being touched, but very curious, she would follow closely behind her Caretaker as they cleaned. Once they “saw” her, she’d play bow and run away like a rocket!
This intern program is actually a brand new concept for Wild Spirit. Prior to myself and Vic, there were only long-term volunteers who worked alongside staff. As someone who has done many internships throughout the years, I felt this would be an excellent chance to help develop a program that could become a sought-after internship opportunity for students and young adults entering the animal care field. The process has not been an easy one, as we would all soon discover that building a 6-month program from scratch, while also ramping up the entire animal care department, on top of caring for 52 animals, is no small feat. Nonetheless the team created a space that allowed us to have hands on experiences that we probably wouldn’t have been offered anywhere else. Since I didn’t go to school for animal sciences or zookeeping, I assumed my chances at being an animal care specialist were over. I never would have thought that I would be caring for so many incredible animals and learning how to socialize with them, using operant conditioning, and participate in vet care. Though don’t be fooled, it hasn’t all been fun and reindeer games.

When I arrived here we were informed that one of the parts of the internship would be preparing food for the animals, including sorting through and processing elk and deer parts that were leftover from local hunters. As a vegetarian who has a difficult time holding back tears when I need to kill a spider, I was extremely worried that I’d fail at this part of the job. Fast forward 5 months and animals that are meant to live their lives apart from humans. Some animals here have showed zero interest in me and I have learned to respect that fact, even though I want nothing more than to squish their faces and tell them how much I love them. There were a few, however, that found a place in my heart so quickly I already forgot they were wild animals. I would be lying if I said Shaina wasn’t the first to take that up space in me. The first time I was allowed to meet him and his sister lyca, I was greeted with big beautiful wolf smiles and a scent rub that nearly knocked me off my feet. I instantly felt a connection that made me feel like he was saying “dis my hooman now” and I was more than happy to take on that role. Having the opportunity to be their primary Caretaker has allowed this bond to grow further and I have been so grateful for my time spent with them.

The next animal that has made a forever paw print on my heart is Naia. Naia is a high-content wolfdog who is still very much in her puppy phase. As the youngster of the Wild Spirit pack, she had a playful demeanor and level of “naughtiness” I couldn’t help but be charmed by. Her behaviors with me went from timid playfulness to boundary pushing real fast. Since I am still learning various canine behaviors and how to properly use operant conditioning, I was pretty stumped trying to create a healthy dynamic between us. Thankfully the team came up with a training plan that would teach Naia proper boundaries and help me learn how to establish them myself. Now when we go visit sweet Naia she greets me with an invitation to give her belly rubs and then does zoomies around her enclosure (we’re still working on giving “no teeth” face kiss). As I write about my final pair of animals I’m bemoaning with a level of sadness that unfortunately comes with this work. Cinder and Riot are high-content wolfdogs who, truth be told, I didn’t feel any significant pull towards when I started working here. My first introduction day with them was such a shock to me because I suddenly had no desire to leave them and knew that I wanted them to be one of my primary enclosures to work with. Soon after, I took on the role of primary Caretaker, an opportunity that allowed me to grow closer to them each day. Our beloved Riot passed on last night with the animal care team by her side and the pack howling as she joined the Big Pack In The Sky. I can only thank her for the time that she gave me and hope that I can continue giving Cinder the love that he deserves for the remainder of my time here.

Contemplating what is going to be going to come next for me has been a challenge since my experience at Wild Spirit has been so rewarding it’s difficult to imagine there even is an “after this”. I have no doubt now that this is the path I want to take and that working in the animal care field is my true passion. After many hours of consideration I have decided to continue my learning as an apprentice at Lincoln Children’s Zoo working with their ambassador animal program. I could not be more excited to move forward in my career journey and I cannot express enough my gratitude to Wild Spirit and the team who have molded me into this new and improved version of myself. Not only will my interactions with the animals be a forever memory, but so will the laughs and the tears (seriously, so many tears) that brought us all together to form this beautiful wolf loving family.
A Very Special Farewell

Known the world over, loved and appreciated by countless fans, Romeo will be missed by so many.

In his years living at the sanctuary, Romeo was the first of our rescues that tour groups would encounter. He loved the attention almost as much as our guests loved visiting with him.

Romeo was pretty old for a fox, having turned 14 years-old in April, 2020. Most red foxes will live 2 to 5 years in the wild, and 10 to 12 years in captivity.

At around two months old, Romeo was found by the side of the road, his mother hit by a passing vehicle. He was taken in by the person who found him, but she realized it was more work than she could handle to raise him properly and surrendered him to the Department of Natural Resources. Eventually Romeo was old enough to be released into a national park, but he was too friendly to humans for his own safety. He was sent to live at a zoo, and when that zoo ran into financial difficulties, Romeo was brought to his forever home, living in a habitat built exclusively for him.

Almost every volunteer would train with low-maintenance Romeo before being allowed to work with wolves and wolfdogs, and almost every volunteer fell in love with him.

There have been many rescues who have come and gone but none have been as adored by our visitors as our quirky little, "Romes", sunning on his rock or log, eager to meet new friends.

We love and miss you, little buddy!

It may surprise you that the most popular rescue at a wolf sanctuary was a red fox, but it was so true!
In the middle of a secluded valley. But it was those experiences that led me here, to spend six months as an intern at Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary.

Despite months of anticipation, nothing could totally prepare me for what moving out to New Mexico and working at a wolf sanctuary would be like. Sure, I imagined some of the daily tasks would be similar to what I had experienced at the dog rescue I worked at prior to arriving: lots of cleaning, maintenance, and animal care. It is similar in some ways, but after just three months this experience has proven to be way more than I could have imagined it would be. Wild Spirit offers more than just a job opportunity—from enjoying the lifestyle, the family, the day-to-day strenuous, yet rewarding work… it’s everything I want from this field.

When I initially applied to Wild Spirit it was with the intention of working in a long-term volunteer position, but during my interview I was offered a position in a newly developing internship program. I easily accepted, thrilled at the chance in opportunity. And actually, making the move out here wasn’t too hard! I didn’t mind leaving home and I had spent months away before, just never this far away. Adjusting to the climate and lifestyle took me a while, especially the elevation, which made the physical work harder in the beginning. The seclusion can become lonely and the nearest town is over an hour away, but the people I work with make it bearable. Off work hours, we’re always coming up with things to do, like movie nights, painting together, and other group activities. It really helps make the sanctuary and team feel like a home and family.

The first two weeks I was here, I had a period of just learning all of the safety precautions and protocols. Learning this was hugely important if I wanted to begin interacting with the canids, and even though I’m familiar with all sorts of domestic dogs and their behaviors, I was learning new things immediately. The canids here are similar in many ways to domestic dogs, but at the same time, vastly different. Learning these differences is key in becoming a confident Caretaker. It also just had me more and more enthused to start meeting the animals.

Two of the first rescues I met were Cinder—a high-content wolfdog who showed an interest in me very early on—and his companion, high-content wolfdog, Riot. Despite my excitement at meeting these two huge wolfdogs, chuckling down the enclosure was nerve-wracking because I knew at that point that they were very different from domestic dogs, and I had to work on controlling my own anxiety, especially if I wanted them to feel comfortable coming up to me. While Riot came up and let me pet her right away, shy Cinder took a more reserved approach, coming up bare energy and rubbing his face all over my head, back, and neck—a behavior called ‘scent rolling’. I had never experienced scent rolling with the domestic dogs and it was honestly amazing to be that close to an animal who was acting on pure instincts. It’s one of my favorite memories so far and probably will be what I remember forever as my first interaction with one of these amazing animals.

The internship program itself is still heavily in development, so myself and the other interns, Shaina, are the first two that get to try everything out. I love giving feedback and ideas and I’ve always been so lucky to be appreciated. Coming up with new experiences to give future interns a range of new skills is fun, and even when something isn’t quite working out, the team loves hearing what we think and trying new things. I can’t wait for intern opportunities in the future to come out here and be able to grow with this program.

In my three years at the shelter there’s a lot I learned, but there’s even more that I didn’t. In the three months I’ve been here so far, I’ve been able to do practice blood draws, administer injectable medications, and I’ve been able to observe all sorts of new behaviors and learn how to read them. I’m working on obtaining my Fear Free Shelter certification and I have an extensive internship project I work on in my down time. On top of this, the team is still coming up with practice labs for the interns to do, and with new positions, new skills is fun, and even when something isn’t quite working out, the team loves hearing what we think and trying new things. I can’t wait for intern opportunities in the future to come out here and be able to grow with this program.
Brittany Answers Matchmaking Questions

In recent months, Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary has seen a number of changes among our rescued animals, including the addition of a new high-content wolfdog. This particular individual, Irwin, has been attached to Executive Director Brittany McDonald, immediately after his arrival in October, 2020. Irwin now lives with female high-content wolfdog, Naia.

“The way we match our animals—in captivity—specifically in a sanctuary—is much different than what occurs naturally for wolves living in the wild...”

Female high-content wolfdog, Irwin, attached to Executive Director Brittany McDonald, immediately after his arrival in October, 2020. Irwin now lives with female high-content wolfdog, Naia.

Irwin is a male high-content wolfdog, and Naia is a female high-content wolfdog. The way we match our animals in captivity—specifically in a sanctuary—is much different than what occurs naturally for wolves living in the wild. The way we match our animals in captivity—specifically in a sanctuary—is much different than what occurs naturally for wolves living in the wild.

THE WAY WE MATCH OUR ANIMALS...
and go over the game plan (which can vary depending on the animal), fire extinguishers, air horns, whistles, bowls, and hoses or buckets of water are just a few of the items that we like to have on hand in case a fight occurs. These tools provide multiple safe and hands-off options for separating animals without risk to us or them.

Thankfully, because of the extensive observations made before an introduction, True fights are extremely rare, however, it is not uncommon to see animals establish their boundaries with a higher degree of intensity during their first few introductions. For example, we will often see rigid body posturing, snarling, and even snapping from some animals, while others will demonstrate completely submissive gestures: such as tail tucking and following. Animals may even engage in small tiffs as they test one another’s boundaries and work to understand each other’s preferences to communicate. To someone with limited knowledge of wolf behaviors these displays can look quite concerning and most people might think to intervene; however, it is extremely important for us to allow the resources to engage one another in these ways in order to provide us with an authentic interpretation of their compatibility.

Once two animals are in an enclosure together we continue to observe their interactions and step in only if absolutely necessary. We allow the animals to interact and depending on their level of interest will usually separate them after about 15-20 minutes. At that point, the “visitor” is returned to his or her own enclosure until the next play-date. We repeat the introduction process several times for longer durations before finally deciding to leave them together overnight, and usually beyond this step, indefinitely.

Do pairs ever stop getting along after a period of time or do the bonds tend to be fairly stable?

Relationships between two animals are usually very stable, especially if they were well-suited to one another in the first place. However, as previously mentioned, when it comes to groups of three or more living together in captivity, it becomes much more common for tensions to arise and for dynamics to change over the course of time.

In some instances there are other factors that might threaten the success of a relationship, such as massive differences in age and energy levels, or changes to the social dynamic that occur as a result of one or both animals reaching sexual maturity. For example, even siblings who have grown up together might reach adulthood and grow to despise one another, as we have seen here with sisters Lyca and Lea.

Do you choose rescue animals based on the need to create pairs?

Not always. We do not have any single animals but have the space for a new intake, we can more readily take someone in without considering how they might work in a pairing. But any time we have a single animal, the need for companionship plays a much greater role in influencing our decision.

Are there some wolves that prefer to be alone?

Yes, though as highly social animals, this is extremely rare. I personally believe that an animal that demonstrates what might seem like a preference for solitude is more often an animal who hasn’t yet been offered a suitable match. This is when it becomes really important to understand what each individual requires in a “better half” and to search for new resources that possess these qualities.

What kind of pack behaviors do you still see even though the wolves are not living all in the same enclosure?

Communication is the biggest one that comes to mind. Despite living separately and consisting of multiple different species, all of the resources communicate with one another constantly. Every morning without fail, for example, they greet staff with barks, howls, and yips, and use similar vocalizations to let one another know when we’re beginning our feeding routines, walks, or enrichment activities. In addition, the rescues often call out to one another (in the event of an animal’s passing—a demonstration that cannot possibly be described with words, but goes to show that regardless of blood, the animals that call the sanctuary home truly are a “family”.

We also see a number cooperative behaviors often used in wolf packs, even among pairs. Arctic wolf, Teton, and his late sister, Shasta, for example, were well-known for working together to ambush unsuspecting wildlife that ventured inside their enclosure. On more than one occasion these two managed to catch ravens, squirrels, and other animals using their unique ambush strategies.

What is the most recent “matchmaking” at Wild Spirit and what were the steps? Who were the animals and how are they doing?

Actually, we recently had two successful pairings that happened on the same day! The first was a highly-anticipated match between high-content wolfdog, Nails, and Irwin, and the second involved high-content wolfdogs Dakota and Sox. Interestingly enough, each pair’s story is quite opposite one another in regards to the role that our human caretakers played in the match-making. While Irwin was chosen for Naia—a decision that resulted in a match made in heaven—Sox was the one to choose Dakota, making it very clear that she had a preference for him, even from several enclosures away.

When Irwin was first brought home he was placed into an enclosure next door to Naia, which allowed the team to assess their interactions safely. We quickly noticed that the two enjoyed spending time next to one another and would often flirt and play through their fence line. It was quite obvious that they would be a successful pairing, especially after their first play-date inside Irwin’s enclosure.

In Sox’s case, however, she was taken in with no planned pairing in mind. Prior to life at the sanctuary, Sox’s owner witnessed a massive shift in her personality around 5 years of age. The reason for this shift is unknown, but for whatever reason Sox began demonstrating endless stress and anxiety-induced behaviors. Despite her owner’s best efforts to identify and resolve the issue—even attempting multiple different pairings to provide companionship—nothing seemed to work.

We knew when we agreed to take Sox in that pairing her wouldn’t necessarily be difficult, based on the fact that she had previously lived with a number of other animals without issue, but here at Wild Spirit our goal isn’t to merely arrange safe cohabitations, but to find animals that mutually benefit one another through their relationship. In Sox’s case, we believed that the best match for her could be an animal like Arctic wolf, Flurry, who we thought might be able to bring Sox out of her shell with his outstanding confidence and love of human interaction. But with Sox being completely hands off, our options for slow introductions between these two were limited.

in the end, an introduction between Sox and Flurry never took place. Instead, on a fateful day in November, upon seeing the handsome Dakota roaming through the one-acre enclosure a short distance away, Sox began whispering at him, letting Caretakers know that she had found her “mate”. Days later the pair had their first play-date—a process that needed to be greatly modified due to Sox’s anxious behaviors—where we observed how Dakota’s presence calmed Sox and gave her the confidence she needed to feel comfortable in her new home. Fast forward to a few days later, Sox and Dakota officially moved in together, were re-homed to an even larger enclosure with brand new neighbors, and Sox is now feeling so at home that she has started approaching Caretakers at the fence line for her daily medallions, growing or brave that she is even coming up to say hello with sniffs and nose-boops!

We are all so excited for these new pairings and what they mean for all four rescues involved. With the perfect matches, we are creating lifelong bonds that will bring each animal increased health and happiness for many years to come.

In the months to follow the Wild Spirit team has several additional pairings planned and we hope you’ll stay tuned on our website and social media platforms for an insider look at all of our happy couples-to-be! A huge thank you to Stephanie for inspiring this article and allowing me the opportunity to give our supporters insight into the art of canine match-making.
More About Mika & Stigma

MIKA

Mika is incredibly shy and difficult to photograph because she paces when people are around. We’d love to have more photos of her, but we allow her to be left alone as much as possible so that she doesn’t get more anxious.

Mika recently moved in with high-content wolfdogs, Cinna and Bane.

Mika is an upper-mid-content wolfdog. She is 9 years old and her birthday is April 10th, 2012. She arrived at the sanctuary in December, 2020.

Mika was originally owned by a well-known wolfdog breeder in Indiana along with nearly 20 other animals. However, her personal issues, her owner decided to move to a different state in which wolfdog ownership is illegal. As a result, she was forced to find new homes for all of her animals. While many of her collection were hastily bought out due to their unique coloration or other desirable traits, some of the older or less social animals were unwanted.

While working at a previous wolf sanctuary in Texas, Wild Spirit’s Executive Director, Brittany McDonald, arranged for the rescue of two female wolfdogs, both of which were Mika’s offspring!

STIGMA

Stigma is a mid-content wolfdog. She is 5 years old and her birthday is January 3rd, 2016. She arrived at the sanctuary, along with Mika, in December, 2020.

She lived in an enclosure next to low-content wolfdog, Kaeli, and the two showed interest, interacting along their shared fence line. On New Year’s Day, 2021, Stigma and Kaeli had their first formal introduction in Stigma’s enclosure. Stigma was overjoyed, following Kaeli all over her enclosure. Kaeli was more interested in checking out Stigma’s enclosure and meeting her neighbors,licker and noble.

After a couple more “playdates”, it became clear that the two were a good fit and now they live together.

Stigma is affectionately known as “Bean Blossom.” This nickname was assigned by team member Brittany and Molly moments after she was loaded into the transport van, and it was repeated the entire drive home. Needless to say, it stuck.

If you haven’t already, read Molly’s article, “On the Road to Rescue”, on page 7. It’s a fun story about the trip to rescue Mika and Stigma.

Meet Sox!

Sox is a female high-content wolfdog, and she’s 4 years old. Before being taken in by Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary, Sox lived with her breeder who owned a number of other relatives, including her mother, father, and various siblings, as well as other wolfdogs. Sox spent a portion of time living with many of the animals at her original home but none of them were the right fit for her.

Upon arriving at the sanctuary, however, Sox was paired up with high-content wolfdog Dakota, a senior animal who was recently removed from a pack of three due to changes in the social dynamics. While Sox is shy and nervous, Dakota is incredibly social and confident, and we quickly saw a difference in her disposition after he moved in! While it was helpful for Sox to socialize with Dakota, the two weren’t perfectly matched, so Dakota moved out and now lives with Arctic wolf, Alice.

Sox absolutely loves whole-prey enrichment items, especially large ungulate skulls, which she has been known to obliterate within hours! While many of the rescues have a love of bones and a knack for destruction, no one is quite as adept as Sox!

As one of our most shy and nervous rescues, Sox is not a big fun of people, especially in groups. However, she gains confidence every day and we hope that one day soon she will find humans quite scary.

Sox was so named because of the white “stocking-like” markings on all four of her legs! In addition, the white tip on her tail (known as a “lob tail”) is also unique, as high-content wolfdogs almost always have black-tipped tails.

Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary’s Executive Director, Brittany McDonald, was originally contacted about Sox for placement but for advice on some unusual and concerning behaviors she had begun demonstrating, which her breeder believed might have been neurologist.

Due to the nature of what Sox was exhibiting, Brittany offered a number of suggestions, including placement with Wild Spirit where she felt confidently that Sox could be fully “rehabilitated.” Sox’s breeder agreed to the placement and days later she was in her new home.
Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary
HC 61 Box 28
Ramah, NM 87321

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Dakota is a 15 year-old male, high-content wolfdog

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