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WE’RE MAKING
BIG CHANGES
CLOSED THROUGH JULY

We’ve been very busy making several major changes and improvements to the sanctuary since having to close to the public due to the pandemic.

Habitat improvements and overhauls, to improve the quality of life for many of our rescues, have been a top priority. One of our larger projects, getting water supply lines up to the habitats furthest back on our property, has been in the works for years and is finally complete. This saves a lot of time and energy for our staff and interns, since they no longer need to run a couple hundred feet of water hose, or carry 5 gallon buckets of water up rocky hills!

In March the team decided that while we’re eager to have visitors again, we’d like to finish more of the projects we started, and give them all of the time and attention we can.

Please accept our apologies! We know many of you are anxious to get out here and spend some time with our rescues, however, in order to finish our big improvements, we will remain closed at least through July, 2021.

We appreciate your patience and understanding during this time.

Thank you for your continued support of WSS.

—Meredith Miller, Executive Director
**NOT JUST WOLVES**

by Victoria Uliano

People often tell us that wolves are their favorite animal in the canid family, and who could blame them? These strong, loyal animals are fascinating and downright cool. So, it comes as no surprise that the wolves and wolfdogs at Wild Spirit—which make up more than half of our rescue population—are the driving force behind the majority of our donations and weekly fundraising efforts. Everyone loves learning about the species and seeing them first-hand: more than this, they enjoy getting to share their unique experience with friends and family. Who doesn’t want to go home and say, “I saw wolves today!”? But for guests at Wild Spirit, it’s not just wolves and wolfdogs that you’ll see. In addition, we are a home to red foxes, coyotes, New Guinea singing dogs, Australian dingoes, and a few domestic dogs as well. To learn more about these other wonderful canids, this is a great place to start.

Wolves and wolfdogs are by far the most sought after animals our guests come to see, and because of this, our other species often get overlooked in favor of their more popular cousins. Three of our most under-rated canines are the members of our NOLA pack, made up of three domestic dogs: Asteria, Rothen, and June. These three sisters came to Wild Spirit along with their sister Guidle and brother Saint (both of whom have since passed away), mislabeled as wolf-dogs. In fact, they are simply norma breed mixes. Currently 13 years old, the NOLA sisters have been here since 2009, when they were rescued from a small shelter in Louisiana. Unfortunately, because the NOLA siblings were mislabeled as wolf-dogs and lived in the shelter for a number of years without proper human interaction and socialization, they became quite fearful of people and did not do well as pets. In fact, each time one of the dogs was adopted out into a human home, they were quickly returned to the shelter. Therefore, despite being popular dogs, once taken in by Wild Spirit, staff realized that the NOLAS would be best suited to remain together at the sanctuary instead of adopted out to human homes, and for the last 12 years we have provided them with the best possible care: a large enclosure, fun enrichment, and lots of love and socialization.

Today, these sweet old ladies win the hearts of everyone they meet. June, the shyest, prefers to stay back when her sisters run up to greet new people and receive pets. Occasionally, when feeling exceptionally playful, she likes to jump into a play box, and will respond with some excited running if her Keeper returns the gesture. She also loves to carry around her favorite duck toy or other stuffed animal, and will often carry any other toys to hide them from her sisters. Katrina, who is more confident than June, loves when Animal Caretakers come to feed and visit. Once a bit of trust has been developed between her and her humans, she’s even known to run in front of staff members’ boots as a way to ask for attention. Asteria is similar to Katrina with her confidence and curiosity, coming up for attention and treats. She loves when it snows and gets hearts of energy running around her enclosure, planning howling at her sister, and jumping about like crazy! While the three NOLA sisters are usually pretty social and approachable, not all of our animals are. In fact, some of our most intelligent and animals aren’t the wolves, like you’d expect, but the coyotes, of which Wild Spirit currently has four.

A close cousin of the wolf, coyotes are much smaller, being only one to two feet tall and roughly thirty pounds on average. Along with their smaller frame, their fur tend to be much thinner and their ears more pointed than a wolf. They also have long legs and very distinctive barks, better described as “yipping.” Coyotes also have the unique ability to “thrive” their voices, making even a small group sound like a huge pack. Like wolves, coyotes make for life and form bonded pairs, though they mature much more quickly than wolves and because of this, their pups leave the pack early on to find mates of their own. Unlike their wolf cousins (who can have packs made up of multiple generations), coyote packs tend to be much smaller, usually only made up of the parents and the pups for a short period of time. Coyotes are also much more environmentally adaptable than wolves, living in forests, plains, the desert, and now and days, even the suburbs. These guys are known as western coyotes, and looks and behavior are, people living outside the cities have either heard or seen them at night. Their diets have a much wider range than canids, as they are omnivores, and will eat berries, vegetables, grass, and small rodents and game.

Despite the fact that all of our coyotes have lived with humans since they were pups, they are still wild animals. As a result, they are some of our most difficult rescues, preferring to stay at the back of their enclosures when people come to visit, and skirting along the fence line when our Animal Caretakers come to feed. Our most social is Yuni, who some of us lovingly refer to as our resident princess due to the unusually fluffy fur on her nose and snip. She loves to eat popsicles and is very talkative. “Boooding” and yipping as her Keepers walk by. Our most confident coyote, Mairne, is the only one who likes to hang out at the front of her enclosure, laying with her paws crossed and taking in the day-to-day scenery. Her companion, Maire, is much shyer and prefers to keep to herself, often seen relaxing in the back half of his enclosure soaking up the sunlight.
(Continued from page 5)

Next door, Lyla Rose is one of our most anti-social coyote rescues, and while she used to have relationships with people in the past, in recent years she has decided to keep to herself. Lyla Rose is our only coyote who has a unique "blonde prairie" coat, making her stand out from the others. Her companions, Jasa, is much darker and chubbier than Lyla. Though they've been together since they were pups, Lyla seems to pull Jasa around a bit to remind him where his place lies. Occasionally, when I see Jasa at Keepers' meetings, I am reminded of Lyla's pointy features in his face, but still, she's a bit more relaxed and friendly than Lyla. Unfortunately, coyotes are very misunderstood animals, often regarded as pests or vermin and hunted indiscriminately. Each year, thousands of coyote pups are den robbed to be used as bait for hunting dogs, or to be skinned for their pelts. This is true for many of our coyotes, and for our next featured species as well. Traditionally, Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary has been known as a place where these incredible animals have been given a new start and forever home that will always provide them with exceptional care and safety.

Like coyotes, red foxes are a species native to much of the United States, where they are hunted, trapped, or even purposefully bred for fur, or to be sold into the exotic pet trade. Many of our Wild Spirit supporters are familiar with our site red fox, Rumi. Rumi was born in the wild and taken in as a kit after being found at the side of the road as a baby. Rumi was a very special animal who lived a long and happy life at Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary, and he held a place in many people's hearts. While he likely only would live for a fraction of five to ten years in the wild, Rumi lived much longer than the average red fox, pacing away at the ripe old age of 14 years old, making him among the oldest foxes by far.

A little less well-known are our two young foxes, River and Rumi. These silvery foxes are red foxes just like Rumi, and are approximately two years old. Foxes are categorized as canids, but they actually vary more in common with felines. They have long whiskers, semi-retractable claws, and slit pupils. They rely on stealth hunting and are most active at night. They have a rich social structure, making them excellent candidates for a pet or as a companion for those seeking a pet fox. These are not common pets due to their elusive nature, and must be carefully monitored to ensure their safety.

Our three dibongs absolutely love raccoon foraging on new smells and they are comfortable with Glaciers and especially with the smell of food, and will try to smell inside their keeper's mouth if they catch a whisker of it. All three dibongs live in the same enclosure, and are often seen exploring the area together, especially near the sanctuary's administrative offices.

Dibongs are a very friendly and approachable species, but they are also home to four of their distant cousins, New Guinean singing dogs (frequently known as "dibongs"). New Guinean singing dogs are a very interesting species. Native to the highlands of New Guinea and thought to be extinct until the early 2000's, there are very few of them left in the wild. In fact, it was recently determined that there may be only a single pack left in the wild. In captivity, their numbers are still slim, with an estimated 200-300 living as pets or in zoos in 2000 and sanctuaries. Wild Spirit is currently home to four dibongs: Bora, Reba, Bowie, and Foxy.

These little canines resemble dibongs in many ways, but are much smaller and have vastly different personalities. They don't grow much taller than a foot, and usually don't weigh more than thirty pounds. Their coats are very similar to Siberian and Canso dogs, ranging from tan to brown to red with darker or lighter muzzles. Singers have a full repertoire of vocalizations along with their unique "singing". They white, yip, bark, howl, growl, howl, and much more! The difference between the singer's howl and our canid's howl is their ability to hold a howl for longer than the other, and engage in group howls that start and finish abruptly. Often, singers will even start howling together for nonspecific reasons. But one of the biggest things that make them stand out from other canines are their personalities.

In 2010, Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary recorded two New Guinea singing dogs from a private reserve and hunting situation. Of the original five, four still remain. We also recorded two additional New Guinea singing dogs from Mexico sometime later. Sadly, both of those reserves recently passed away due to health complications or age. Of the remaining singers, Bora and Reba share one enclosure, and Bowie and Foxy share the other, so they have plenty of space to run around, play, and climb on their structures, which is a favorite activity of theirs, even in their older age.

Bowie is Definitely a favorite of the staff, a very social and lovable boy who loves to nap and receive treats. He is the head boy and on his back when he is looking for attention, and will make the keepers of the dibongs very happy. One of his favorite quirks is when he sniffs for his medication in the morning. He'll lick the gate and dance back and forth. He's often found lying in a bed he's dragged out with his back legs out, and is loved by everyone who is ever around him. Bora, on the other hand, is much more reserved of the four singers, and doesn't enjoy human interactions. She prefers to stay far away from the Keepers, but on occasion will come up to catch some snacks at a distance.

Bobby is another fan favorite. At the most social (and dramatic) of all the singers, he loves to climb and receive pets, and especially enjoys trying to sneak inside her mouth if they bloom down on the ground for her. Bobby, her companion, is our only resident kit. He lost his right front leg to Valley Fever a few years ago, but has adapted like a trouper! He loves to go on walks around the sanctuary and to receive attention from Keepers, just like Reba. Sometimes he'll even become a little jealous of each other and jowl for attention. They both enjoy sunbathing on warm days.

None of the singers like the winter months, but we always keep their enclosures houses are warm and cozy in the winter. We also have more energy and enjoy playing with enrichment treats, clothing, and running around our entire compound. These animals are unique and very good fun, despite the research on them being slim and their wild counterparts being relatively unknown.

As you can see, wolves and wild dogs are far too interesting canids in the wild world, or here at the sanctuary. In fact, each of the unique species mentioned in this article can have an incredibly nice life to play in the wild, and we hope that through coming more about them, our supporters will find themselves falling in love with them just as much as we have here at the sanctuary. As an open wild-lover myself, I can see why they remain a fan favorite, but after learning with so many other canids, I have found my passion broadcasting and hope you will too!
It’s never easy when one of our rescues passes away, but the passing of both Dakota and Kota hit especially hard. Dakota was a sweet, curious, and photogenic high-content wolfdog, always willing to meet new people. When we used to do encounter and photo tours, guests were often treated to a visit with Dakota, because of his easy going personality and natural curiosity. It’s no surprise that most who have had the opportunity to meet him will not forget the experience.

One of the most wonderful pairings we’ve had at the sanctuary was that of Kota and his female companion, Agana. The two were inseparable, and could often be seen relaxing together in the sun or shade of their shared habitat. Kota was one of our largest wolfdogs, weighing over a hundred pounds. Like Dakota, he was also very handsome and photogenic, even having been featured in a National Geographic documentary.
What comes to mind when you hear the job title "Animal Caretaker"? For most people, providing match-making services probably isn’t even on the list, but here at Wild Spirit, promoting healthy relationships between suitable animals is actually a large and incredibly important part of what we do! In fact, the majority of our rescue needs are in pairs rather than packs, so that is generally the safest and healthiest dynamic in captivity. As such, we are constantly playing match-maker, especially when an animal finds itself in need of a companion, which could occur for a number of reasons. Most of the time, match-making occurs when an animal has passed away and left their companion behind, but sometimes a once healthy relationship reaches a point at which one or both animals are no longer thriving (can relate).

No matter the situation, the staff at Wild Spirit understands the importance of companionship, especially to highly social animals like wolves and wolf-dogs; and do what we can to facilitate happy, healthy relationships. Over the last several months our team has paired up six new couples and would love to update you on all their progress!

KENAI & SIGMA

These two young rescues are beautiful black phasos so they make a gorgeous couple! During his first few months at Wild Spirit, Kenai had been living with one of our older females, a 24-year-old high-content wolfdog named Savannah, and while they coexisted peacefully, they didn’t seem to have any particular attachment to one another. But when the lovely Sigma arrived, we placed her in the enclosure next door to Kenai so we could observe their interactions through the fence. Their first few introductions were uneventful and the team actually wondered if maybe these two weren’t going to be all that we were hoping for in a match. We soon realized, however, that with Savannah next door during introductions, Kenai was extremely apprehensive about socializing with another female knowing his current companion was watching just a few yards away. With this in mind, we moved Savannah to a temporary enclosure (closer to her new potential partner), and Kenai became much more excited about visiting Sigma. It wasn’t long before he began prancing around her enclosures, spending the majority of his time licking up dirt and urinating on each and every tree to mark what would one day be “his” territory.

After a few more play-dates, Kenai and Sigma finally began living together full-time. Almost instantaneously, Sigma began approaching the fence line when people walked by, started eating meals from Caretaker’s hands, and had an overall calmer disposition about her with the more confident Kenai by her side. These days, the two are often seen lying together right up against the fence line of their neighbors, Luna and Flicker, who love to interact with the new pair. Kenai now has a younger companion who can keep up with him, and Sigma is becoming more confident everyday.

NAJA & INIM

Naja and Inim are one of the couples our team was most excited about introducing to each other. Naja is a 2-year-old high-content wolf-dog who needed a young companion, and Inim is a 4-year-old wolfdog who needed rescue in October. Naja had previously lived with one of our Arctic wolves, a 24-year-old sister known as Flurry, but unfortunately, Naja and Flurry were not a perfect match. Naja really needed a younger partner who would engage in play with her, but Flurry had officially hit his retirement years and couldn’t keep up.

Once Inim arrived, he shared a fence line with Naja for a period of time until he was settled in, and then the introductions began. In the beginning, Inim was a little apprehensive around Naja despite her submissive body language and curiousity, but it didn’t take long for them to start playing together and chasing each other around the enclosure. A few successful play-dates later, they officially moved in with each other.

The two settled in together almost immediately and thoroughly enjoy being on the four path where they can see who comes and pose and steal attention from anyone who walks by. Some of their favorite past-times include wresting matches, painting, and partaking in discus through the fence with their neighbors. Inim’s favorite game is stealing all the attention from his keepers, and Naja loves to mess up behind him and nap at his heels. Recently, they’ve started napping next to each other and running the fence lines with their neighbors. Occasionally Inim will have to remind Naja that he’s in charge, and she likes to be very dramatic and yell at him in return. Their only hindrance currently is that Inim is very possessive of his food, so while Naja eats in the full enclosure, Inim is temporarily let into the shift-pen (a smaller sub-enclosure within their habitat) to eat his meals in privacy.

(Continued on page 12)
CINDER & TETON
One of our newest arrivals this year was between two high-content wolflings, Cinder and Teton. Cinder came to the sanctuary a few years ago after running loose in the wild for an unknown length of time. As a result, she was extremely timid and weary to approach people. Soon after her rescue, however, Cinder was placed with Rift, a low- and medium-spectrum wolf, a “pocket wolf” at the Keepers liked to call her, due to her unusually small size. Rift was a highly socialized animal that absolutely adored human interaction, and it was because of her that Cinder soon became more comfortable around humans. Unfortunately, Rift joined the Big Pack in the sky in December, 2020, and Cinder quickly began to regress, showing little interest for most human interaction without his beloved companion by his side. Seeing the impact that Rift’s loss had on Cinder, staff knew that finding him another companion was essential for his well-being, so we received news of a young high-content female named Tayha who needed placement, and we seized the opportunity.

At the time of his rescue, Tayha was less than 2 years old and living in a privately owned pen in California. Though she was well loved and shared a unique bond with her owner, circumstances arose that required her to find a new home. After speaking with our owner, we learned that Tayha was social and seemed to enjoy interacting with humans. She immediately reminded us of Rift in that way, and we hoped that she might be able to help Cinder come out of his shell once again. So, we set off to California to bring Tayha home, where she was placed into an enclosure across from Cinder’s and given a few weeks to decompress.

Unfortunately, we soon realized that despite being social with her previous owner, she was not very comfortable around her new human caretakers, and our hopes of seeing Cinder revert back to his more social self were cut in half.

When the day finally came to introduce the new pair, Tayha was allowed into Cinder’s enclosure where the two quickly greeted one another, but showed little interest. In fact, Tayha seemed more interested in Okie, one of her next-door neighbors, who was equally interested in her. Still, because we saw no signs of conflict between the two, and because both animals seemed much more calm and comfortable with one another by their sides, we decided to keep them together and see how their relationship might develop in time.

Cinder and Tayha have been residing together for months now, and while we haven’t seen much play or obvious connection between them as yet, both of their anxieties have lessened significantly since being introduced. While Tayha used to be too afraid to come up and take her food, she now runs right up to the fence line, patiently waiting to be fed. She is also much more confident any time people are around and can often be seen taking strolls around the enclosure, napping next to Cinder or playing with her neighbors. Thankfully, despite the fact that Tayha remains uninterested in socializing, Cinder has gone back to loving intensely on some of his Keepers just as he did when Rift was with him! We are still waiting to see if a stronger relationship forms between this pair, but for now they are making slow but steady progress.

FLURRY & ALICE
Ever since removing Nia from Flurry’s enclosure in order to pair her up with Ivan, we’ve been looking for a suitable companion for our handsome, senior, but have had some trouble finding the perfect match. Knowing Flurry, who is a highly relatable animal, we realized he would need a low-key female companion, and we hoped we could find one who would also benefit from his calm temperament. As such, Flurry was tried with mid-content wolfing, Mini, who was rescued from Indiana at the end of 2020. While Mini was extremely interested in Flurry, he showed little interest in her and as such, the two were considered unsuccessful after just two introductions. A short while later, Flurry was introduced to young high-content wolfing, S, an extremely social animal who we thought might benefit from Flurry’s confidence around humans. Unfortunately, their introductions were also unsuccessful, with neither animal really seeking the other out for engagement.

Meanwhile, Arctic wolf Alice, following the loss of her lifelong companion and brother, was paired up with high-content wolfing, Dakota. The pair was a match made in heaven, as Dakota brought out a social and confident side of Alice rarely seen before. Sadly, Alice soon lost Dakota as well, regressing immediately. As such, we knew that finding her a new companion was critical, and Flurry became an obvious choice.

Interestingly, Alice and Flurry are actually siblings from separate litters, but they hadn’t met each other before. In staff was beyond surprised when, during their first introduction, the two greeted each other like old friends! Upon coming face to face, Alice was wagging her tail immediately, and S, on the other hand, was extremely excited to meet her. In fact, the two were so interested in each other, they actually formed a bond within the first hour of meeting. Flurry and Alice remain the best of friends, and we couldn’t be happier to see them together.

Today, Alice and Flurry have only been together for a couple of weeks, but they both seem happy with their new arrangement and get along well. The two can often be found napping together, or strolling the fence line to interact with their neighbors. It’s still early for the new couple and things can always change, but it looks like there’s another successful long-term pairing!
In January of 2022, Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary received an intake request for three wolfhounds that were living as private pets in Ohio. Unlike many of the rescues at Wild Spirit, the Ohio Pack were well loved and cared for by their owners, who had actually rescued the animals themselves approximately 4 years prior. Unfortunately, after years of marriage the couple decided to separate, leaving the future of the pack uncertain.

In January of 2022, Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary received an intake request for three wolfhounds that were living as private pets in Ohio. Unlike many of the rescues at Wild Spirit, the Ohio Pack were well loved and cared for by their owners, who had actually rescued the animals themselves approximately 4 years prior. Unfortunately, after years of marriage the couple decided to separate, leaving the future of the pack uncertain.

Things became further complicated when the animal’s primary owner relocated to Colorado, leaving them in the care of his ex-wolf. While the animals still had a safe and secure home, as well as the company of another one, the person left to care for them wasn’t nearly as comfortable with wolfhounds as her ex-husband had been. As such, she requested that he find them a new home as soon as possible so they could continue to receive the specialized care that they needed.

Launching into our rescue van on a lead. In addition, all three animals would require vet care prior to traveling, adding yet another layer of complexity to the situation.

After days of planning and preparation, a vet appointment was scheduled and Wild Spirit staff loaded up our rescue van and hit the road for Ohio. Upon arrival, we were greeted by the animals’ owners who were incredible in assisting us in the safe and successful capture of Jax and Alex. Daisy, being the sweet and gentle giant that she is, was loaded up and loaded into the rescue van without complaint, where he was able to provide the pigs with calm and comfort during the two hour drive to the vet clinic.

At the vet office, all three animals were sedated and provided with a thorough physical examination, comprehensive bloodwork, and x-rays, and even nail trims! A huge thank you to the staff at Lebanon Small Animal Clinic in Ohio for their amazing work on our three new rescues!

Following the long drive home, all three members of the Ohio Pack quickly began to settle into their new enclosures, which is one of the biggest and most naturalistic that we have, and they have been greatly enjoying getting to know all of their new neighbors!

Sadly, a few days after their arrival, we received word that the Ohio Pack’s vet really came back with some less than ideal news. Specifically, we learned that all three animals were positive for Hypothyroidism, a condition that slows the metabolism and can be treated, but not cured, and it requires twice daily medications for the rest of their lives. Thankfully, giving the pack their meds has been a breeze since all three animals are extremely food motivated and greatly enjoy getting their twice daily “treats”.

In addition, we learned that Alex was also positive for heartworms. A parasitic infection that is potentially fatal to not only the infected animal, but also highly transmissible to other animals in the area. As such, Alex was unilaterally scheduled for treatment in order to protect her and all the other animals in our care. Unfortunately, proper heartworm treatment is tricky, especially for a hands-off and uncialimated animal. The treatment itself involves an 11 day injection to kill the worms, but that part is fairly easy.

The real challenge comes with the animal’s after-care, as it requires them to spend at least 30 days on “carrot rest”, meaning absolutely no physical activity outside of the basic functions involved in eating, drinking and pooping breaks. This is because at the adult worms die a few days after the injection, their bodies start to decompose. As they break up, they are carried to the lungs, where they release in the small blood vessels and are eventually re-absorbed by the body. This re-absorption can take several weeks to months, but if an animal becomes too active during this process, the heartworm fragments can cause lethal complications.

Thankfully, Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary is equipped with a fully functional Guttenberg Building which has made Alex’s treatment and care rest possible by providing her with a small, safe, and extremely private space where she can rest for the full duration of her treatment. The building has both an indoor and outdoor feature as well, so she has the ability to spend time in either section without ever exiting herself.

Unfortunately, not only does heartworm treatment usually take several months to complete, it can also be quite costly. But when the team at Wild Spirit says “the animals come first”, we mean it, and in order to ensure that Alex has a long and happy life here, there is no question that she will receive all of the specialized care that she needs.

If you’re interested in learning more about the Ohio Pack, stay tuned on our website and social media accounts for future updates about the whole team, ranging in size from our newest recruits, a few wolves looking for their perfect forever home, to how the wolves are feeling overall and what their day-to-day looks like. In addition, you can come to see the three Black Wolf sister pups that are currently in our care. For more information about the Ohio Pack, please visit our website at wildspiritwolfsanctuary.org.