

COLORADO WOLF & WILDLIFE CENTER

MARCH 2023 • CONSERVATION • EDUCATION • PRESERVATION



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Follow us on Instagram: @cowolfcenter to see pictures of our beautiful animals, stories of what we are doing around the center, and ways you can help wild wolf populations.. Keep your eye on our story for fun videos of the day to day lives of our wolves and keepers.



Follow us on Twitter: @Wolves_at_CWWC to see photos of our animals, read fun facts, and hear about events happening at CWWC.



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We hope to give you something to look forward to every day!

A Letter Regarding Wolf Management Plan Feedback

Hi and thank you for taking into consideration this feedback on the wolf management plan.

Please use the authority you have been entrusted with responsibly.

When you're gone and only your legacy remains, don't have your family look at what you did versus what you could have done. Be the ones who made the often difficult decisions to stand up for THE RIGHT THINGS. No longer accept arcane policies that destroy precious nature and NATIVE species because it was wrongly accepted for far too many years. Be the ones who leave an undeniably POSITIVE future for every living being.

As far as the wolf management plan is concerned, please take into consideration that wolves were on the land in question THOUSANDS of years prior to European settlement.

Wolves COEXISTED; the environment was healthy and in tact. Our ancestors came, felt threatened by these large carnivores that they didn't understand and thought they had the right to extirpate an entire species. The arrogance, the inhumanity, the cruelty, the ignorance is astonishing.

There is NO place in this century for the tolerance of this destructive and unnecessary behaviour. There is a PLETHORA of accurate studies of wolves from every country where they exist and we know their nature and their role.

Every scientific study on the planet is in agreement: wolves are vital to a healthy ecosystem and increased biodiversity.

We do NOT need to manage wolves. It is a FACT that wolves naturally limit their own populations; it's referred to as CARRYING CAPACITY.

Easy examples of this can be seen today in Minnesota where the population hovers in and around 2,700 and Yellowstone at 100 etc.

In captivity wolves live up to 15 years and in the wild less than 6 years; they will die from disease, starvation, and from injuries sustained trying to take down prey and fending off other rival wolves.

They will not increase in numbers if there is not sufficient prey. To reiterate, we do not need to intervene and "manage" wolves.

Please BAN trophy hunting/ trapping of wolves FOREVER. It is 2023 and it's utterly embarrassing and unacceptable that it's tolerated. There's enough violence and destruction in this world; we do not need to condone and encourage unnecessary killing of any kind.

Psychologists know that deriving joy from killing an innocent being who feels pain, hunger, sense of loyalty to its family like a human does is NOT healthy human behaviour. It's highly unlikely that the trophy hunters could tell you many scientific FACTS about the animals you're allowing them to kill for "fun". Those hunters can get their jollies somewhere else; they have zero right to use their UNETHICAL means to kill our dogs' ancestors. It should not even be a debate. We are a civilized nation.

NO TROPHY hunting and NO TRAPPING ever. 100 countries around the world have banned trapping, but arguably the most advanced country in the world tolerates and has a "season" to torture animals?

Wolves are hunting to feed their families and keeping ungulate populations HEALTHY so ETHICAL hunters have years and years of non disease ridden animals to kill and eat. Look at the data on the reduced rates of chronic wasting disease where wolves are present; they are our allies in stopping the disease from running rampant. They detect when an animal is sick years before humans can.

Reimbursing a hunter for a hunting dog getting killed? Wolves gave us the domestic dogs we know and love, yet we're using them to kill their own ancestors?This is not only illogical, but also extremely cruel. Wolves gave us the bomb sniffing, cancer smelling, seeing guide dogs that we use to better our lives and, in return, we have a season where it's okay to slaughter them? It never was okay and it will never be okay.

As far as livestock producers and potential conflicts with wolves, they have a responsibility to protect the animals who could be preyed upon.

It should be mandatory to show that NON LETHAL measures have been implemented: fladry, high fences and guard dogs can be used. It's proven everywhere where wolves are present that non lethal measures are more effective and LONG TERM than lethal measures.

People in every walk of life need to be responsible for their own actions or, lack there of, that impact their livelihood.

Thank you for using this information to reduce the unnecessary negative, and to increase the positive aspects of the wolf management plan. Now let's work together to educate so we can co exist in relative harmony.

Sincerely,
Deborah Crouse



In Memory of **Katie Geist**

We are deeply saddened to lose a dear and wonderful friend and staff member of our Center. When Katie came to work she always had a smile and always had kind words to say. She is best remembered for the love of her dog Masha, her grandsons and gardening. She helped to make the gardens on site beautiful and painted rocks with their scientific name so visitors could learn about the plants, grasses and flowers that are on the trails throughout the Center. She loved all of the animals at the Center and lived to enjoy many generations.

She will be missed. This summer there are plans to create a garden at Sacred Ground. It will be appropriately named; Katie's Garden.

Your star shines over us Katie.

With love,
Darlene



"I had the privilege of knowing Katie for over 40 years. When I think of Katie, I think of how, when she loved something, she loved it deeply and fiercely. She loved gardening and watching things bloom! She loved her family and friends, both 2 legged and 4 legged and she would do what she could to keep both safe and happy. I am proud that she called me her friend!!!" - Barb Burton



"Katie was a dear friend who will be greatly missed. She was passionate about so many things in life. She cherished her family and her two dogs, and had a great love for nature, wolves gardening, art, hiking, and jigsaw puzzles. Katie was a great listener and a true, loyal friend. She was the "big sister" I never had. Her calm, loving presence would put anyone at ease. I will miss her beautiful smile, our long talks, and the sound of her laughter. Until we meet again, my friend. I love you!"- Beth Elselder



In Memory of **Mia**
2010 - March 4, 2023



I would like to celebrate the beautiful life of Mia. Mia came to us from Cheyenne Mountain Zoo almost 13 years ago. She was paired up with Wiley who was another rescue out of West Virginia. Wiley and Mia became best friends and partners. Mia was the stealthy one and always first to alert all of the residents that it was morning or there was something that she was unsure about with her buffing bark and coyote yipping. She was much shyer than Wiley and did not care to be petted or take treats from your hand. She was so beautiful with a face that you could tell was a female. Very independent, smart, witty, and full of grace with every movement.

I have a special place in my heart for coyotes and will miss her very much. Wiley still looks for her and I try and take extra time with him. Wiley is famous for ringing a 30 pound bell every morning for 14 years so far for treats. Yesterday was the first time since her death that we rang his bell again.

Animals DO HAVE feelings and they do remember.

Run free, Mia and catch many mice.

Love your mama,
Darlene



W.O.L.F. Sanctuary

Rescue | Sanctuary | Education



Howling for Mother Earth *Gala 2023*

Save the date for our annual gala! This coming year's gala will be held on Earth Day, April 22, 2023 and in honor of the day, our gala will be themed Howling for Mother Earth. Come join us in celebrating and championing this one and only planet we live on and the species that share it with us.

tinyurl.com/wolfgala

Wolf restoration in Colorado shows how humans are rethinking their relationships with wild animals

Christopher J. Preston | The Conversation | February 28, 2023

From sports to pop culture, there are few themes more appealing than a good comeback. They happen in nature, too. Even with the Earth losing species at a historic rate, some animals have defied the trend toward extinction and started refilling their old ecological niches.

I’m a philosopher based in Montana and specialize in environmental ethics. For my new book, “Tenacious Beasts: Wildlife Recoveries That Change How We Think About Animals,” I spent three years looking at wildlife comebacks across North America and Europe and considering the lessons they offer. In every case, whether the returnee is a bison, humpback whale, beaver, salmon, sea otter or wolf, the recovery has created an opportunity for humans to profoundly rethink how we live with these animals.

One place to see the rethink in action is Colorado, where voters approved a ballot measure in 2020 mandating the reintroduction of gray wolves west of the Continental Divide. Colorado’s Parks and Wildlife Agency has released a draft plan that calls for moving 30 to 50 gray wolves from other Rocky Mountain states into northwest Colorado over five years, starting in 2024.

Aldo Leopold, the famed conservationist and professor of game management at the University of Wisconsin, believed that moral beliefs evolve over time to become more inclusive of the natural world. And what’s happening in Colorado suggests Leopold was right. Human attitudes toward wolves have clearly evolved

since the mid-1940s, when bounties, mass poisoning and trapping eradicated wolves from the state.

Recovering animals encounter a world that is markedly different from the one in which they declined, especially in terms of how people think about wildlife. Here are several reasons I see why societal attitudes toward wolves have changed.

The importance of keystone species

The idea that certain influential species, which ecologists call keystone species, can significantly alter the ecosystems around them first appeared in scientific literature in 1974. Bison, sea otters, beavers, elephants and wolves all exert this power. One way in which wolves wield influence is by preying on coyotes, which produces ripple effects across the system. Fewer coyotes means more rodents, which in turn means better hunting success for birds of prey.

Wolves also cause nervous behaviors among their prey. Some scientists believe that newly returned predators create a “landscape of fear” among prey species – a term that isn’t positive or negative, just descriptive. This idea has shifted thinking about predators. For example, elk avoid some areas when wolves are around, resulting in ecological changes that cascade down from the top. Vegetation can recover, which in turn may benefit other species.

Insights into pack dynamics

Animal behavioral science research has provided pointers

for better wolf management. Studies show that wolf packs are less likely to prey on livestock if their social structure remains intact. This means that ranchers and wildlife managers should take care not to remove the pack’s breeding pair when problems occur. Doing so can fragment the pack and send dispersing wolves into new territories.

Wildlife agencies also have access to years of data from close observation of wolf behavior in places like Yellowstone National Park, where wolves were reintroduced starting in 1995. This research offers insights into the wolf’s intelligence and social complexity. All of this information helps to show how people can live successfully alongside them.

Predators provide economic value

Research has also demonstrated that wolves provide economic benefits to states and communities. Wisconsin researchers discovered that changes in deer behavior due to the presence of wolves have saved millions of dollars in avoided deer collisions with cars. These savings far exceed what it costs the state to manage wolves.

Wolf recovery has been shown to be a net economic benefit in areas of the U.S. West where they have returned. The dollars they attract from wolf-watchers, photographers and foreign visitors have provided a valuable new income stream in many communities.

Predators do kill livestock, but improved tracking has helped to put these losses in perspective. Montana Board

of Livestock numbers show that wolves, grizzly bears and mountain lions caused the loss of 131 cattle and 137 sheep in the state in 2022. This is from a total of 2,200,000 cattle and 190,000 sheep. Of the 131 cattle, 36 were confirmed to be taken by wolves – 0.0016% of the statewide herd.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, dogs, foxes and coyotes in Montana all killed more sheep and lambs than wolves did in 2020. Even eagles were three times more deadly to sheep and lambs than wolves were.

Actual costs to ranchers are certainly higher than these numbers suggest. The presence of wolves causes livestock to lose weight because the animals feed more nervously when wolves are around. Ranchers also lose sleep as they worry about wolves attacking their livestock and guard dogs. And clearly, low statewide kills are small comfort to a rancher who loses a dozen or more animals in one year. Margins are always tight in the livestock business.

What’s more, predators’ economic impacts don’t end with ranching. In Colorado, for example, elk numbers are likely to decline after wolves are reintroduced. This may affect state wildlife agency budgets that rely on license fees from elk hunters. It may also affect hunting outfitters’ incomes.

In my view, voters who supported bringing wolves back to Colorado should remain deeply aware of the full distribution of costs and support proactive compensation schemes for losses. They should be mindful that support for wolf reintroduction varies drastically between urban and rural communities and should insist that effective mechanisms are in place ahead of time to ensure fair sharing of the economic burdens that wolves generate.

A new ethical playing field

Despite these complexities, the idea of the “big bad wolf” clearly no longer dominates Americans’ thinking. And the wolf is not alone. Social acceptance of many other wildlife species is also increasing. For example, a 2023 study found that between 80% and 90% of Montanans believed grizzly bears – which are recovering and expanding their presence there – have a right to exist.

Aldo Leopold famously claimed to have experienced an epiphany when he shot a wolf in New Mexico in the 1920s and saw “a fierce green fire” dying in her eyes. In reality, his attitude took several more decades to change. Humans may have an ingrained evolutionary disposition to fear carnivorous predators like wolves, but the change ended up being real for Leopold, and it lasted.

Leopold, who died in 1948, did not live to see many wildlife species recover, but I believe he would have regarded what’s happening now as an opportunity for Americans’ moral growth. Because Leopold knew that ethics, like animals, are always evolving.



Photo: A gray wolf in Yellowstone National Park. NPS/Jim Peaco



Republicans Want to Remove Endangered Species Protections for the Gray Wolf and Grizzly Bear

After we worked so hard to try to save them

Prem Thakker | The News Republic | March 23, 2023

Not to be outdone by their push to target the lives of human beings, Republicans want to remove endangered species protections for the gray wolf and the grizzly bear too.

During a House hearing Thursday, Representative Lauren Boebert discussed her bill to remove protections for the gray wolf, claiming the animal is “fully recovered.” In reality, last year, a district court judge ruled that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or FWS, acted improperly when it delisted the gray wolf from the endangered species list under Trump.

Boebert moved on to argue that the Endangered Species Act has been “weaponized by extremist environmentalists to obstruct commonsense, multiple-use activities that they disagree with.” Meanwhile, her push to remove protections for the gray wolf has been applauded by organizations including the National Rifle Association and hunting advocacy groups.

Boebert also decided the hearing was the right time to show images of human fetuses, asking colleagues whether they would “put babies on the endangered species list.” Boebert’s analogy was numerically fraught, regardless of one’s personal views on abortion: There are over 330 million people in the country.

For states that have maneuvered around protections, hunters have gone ahead and razed away at the still recovering species. In 2021, Idaho and Montana passed laws to bypass restrictions on wolf hunting; as of February 2022, at least over 500 wolves had been killed since the laws passed, out of a total population of around 2,600. The alarming uptick has also interrupted research into how wolves help shape ecosystems.

Meanwhile, Republican Representative Matt Rosendale has been lobbying the FWS to delist the grizzly bear from the endangered species list too—something the FWS is now doing. Similar to the gray wolf, the grizzly bear has only recently begun to spring back, and certainly not to the same extent as before human-caused overhunting and habitat loss. Grizzly bears are currently classified as “threatened” with extinction.

“Representative Boebert and Representative Rosendale are demonstrating how out of touch House Republicans

have become by pushing these cruel, extreme anti-wolf and anti-grizzly bear bills that the vast majority of Americans oppose,” said Stephanie Kurose, a senior policy specialist at the Center for Biological Diversity. “Representative Boebert continues to thumb her nose at Colorado voters, who’ve made it clear they want wolves to return to their state. Meanwhile Representative Rosendale was seen posing with neo-Nazis. They shouldn’t be taken seriously on any subject, let alone the future of two of America’s most iconic wildlife species.”

Rosendale has also introduced a bill to undermine wildlife protections in national forests by enabling the Agriculture and Interior Departments not to revisit land management plans when new information is made available, for example when a species or habitat is designated endangered, or if climate change-induced conditions introduce cause for concern.

“Days after the U.N. climate report’s stark warning about the disastrous path humanity is on, Republicans can’t even muster the slightest effort to conceal their pro-clear cutting agenda,” said Randi Spivak, public lands director at the Center for Biological Diversity. “Instead of these nonserious bills, they should be focused on protecting our remaining mature and old-growth forests, which are one of our most underutilized tools in pulling carbon dioxide out of the air.”



Representatives Matt Rosendale and Lauren Boebert
Al Drago/Bloomberg/Getty Images

Opinion: “The Hot Tub Mountain Lion” was curious and confused not sinister and stalking

A mountain lion encounter in Chaffee County county hot tub is an unsual human-lion conflict
Julie Marshall | The Denver Post | March 24, 2023



A young male mountain lion seeks safety 30 feet above the ground in the trees. (Michael Macor/San Francisco Chronicle via AP file photo)

First there was “Cocaine Bear,” and now we have Hot Tub Mountain Lion.

A Colorado mountain lion made national headlines after surprising a vacationing couple Saturday night as they soaked in a hot springs pool in Chaffee County, as reported in The Denver Post and news outlets across the nation.

Some of the stories, including the Washington Post, cast the mountain lion as a sinister “intruder.” He was a dark figure who “snuck up” and “attacked” the humans. It’s not that dissimilar to the awful movie about a savage bear going around killing people.

But was he, and did he? Or she? The mountain lion I mean, not the imaginary stoned bear.

It happened at about 8 p.m., as cougars actively hunt deer and elk from dusk to dawn, in a quiet subdivision west of Nathrop —a tree-lined canyon beneath 14,000-foot Collegiate Peaks. There were plenty of deer and a creek where the lion had been, all of which flips the aged script that the predator was out of place, stalking humans. It’s much more likely this cat was curious and stuck out a paw to see what the heck it was.

It’s what Colorado Parks and Wildlife believes happened. “We think it’s likely the mountain lion saw the man’s head move ..but didn’t recognize the people in the hot tub,” reports area manager Sean Shepherd in a press release.

Yes, the cat didn’t recognize it was just Bob and Cathy. I joke, but our state agency had it right, while the media largely failed to take seriously how words have consequences for wildlife rarely seen and largely misunderstood. Public attitudes can make the difference between life and death.

This is what new research published March 20 in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences suggests. How we perceive mountain lions (and what we do) may be the greatest threat to their existence.

It’s important for us to ask then, was this really an attack? The woman was unscathed, and the man refused any treatment for scratches on his head. If this were a tiger or a leopard, “Bob and Cathy” most likely would have been soggy toast. But mountain lions are not aggressive cats by nature, any lion ecologist worth his or her salt will tell you. And unlike tigers and African lions, they do not roar, but purr.

Mountain lions are big cats with big personalities. I’ve heard some fascinating stories from large carnivore researchers, including how one mountain lion refused to get caught by pushing a cage set with bait right over the hill — more than once. He stopped sport-hunting cougars once he realized how unique each individual was. West of Boulder lives a resident mountain lion who is somewhat of a ghost, but well known to the neighborhood and caught on camera, and if anything happened to him it would be a truly sad day for many of us.

It’s a strange disparity between how we treat known individuals yet assign nefarious motives to others who are just trying to survive.

A more thoughtful narrative backed by science says mountain lions choose to avoid us. The hot tub lion scooted off as soon as humans yelled at him, which is typical. We know this from researchers who played talk radio to cougars in the wild and found that was enough to send them off running, even leaving behind uneaten deer and elk. Mountain lions are apparently bipartisan, as both conservative and liberal pundits yielded the same result, according to this study published in Proceedings of the Royal Society B, a research journal, a few years ago.

Along with behavior research is the accumulating knowledge that healthy cougars on the landscape

equal healthy ecosystems, which is kind of important given the new report that the world is in trouble by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. We should fear the death of biodiversity and the destruction of our natural world, much more than a mountain lion, and we should celebrate knowing mountain lions exist and do what we can to protect them.

The risk to humans from mountain lions is incredibly low and are much more likely to be killed by bee sting, a traffic accident or struck by lightning than by a mountain lion. We take responsibility for our lives every day after we choose to get a driver’s license, get out of the pool during a thunderstorm or carry an EpiPen on a hike. We can be smart about mountain lions safely and naturally

living among us too.

The story this week was definitely unusual, but we should take it for what it is, an interesting tale of one curious cat. No one was killed or seriously injured, which is also typical for mountain lion encounters, often wrongly labeled as conflicts.

We need to stop the self-indulgent labeling of predators as the villains out to get us because that is simply not true. Mountain lions are vital, sentient beings who deserve our respect just as they are in our natural world. The hot tub mountain lion as intruder and attacker is just as false a narrative as a cocaine-fueled bear’s bloody murdering spree.



I want to share this beautiful piece of art that a former intern Mike Menriquez had made and presented to me today. Words cannot tell you how special this is for so many reasons.

Thank you Mike and know that the entire wolf pack misses you here and you will always be a part of this family.

With gratitude and many thanks,
Darlene

15TH ANNUAL Wild WHISKERS
 DINNER • COMEDY SHOW • LIVE MUSIC
SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023
 FROM 5-8PM (CHECK-IN STARTS AT 4:30PM)
 AT THE **SHINING MOUNTAIN GOLF COURSE**
 100 Shining Mountain Ln, Woodland Park
 OUR GUEST SPEAKER / COMEDIAN:
DR. FITZGERALD - DVM
 "EMERGENCY VETS" ON ANIMAL PLANET!
 CATERING BY:
 MOUNTAINARA | SWISS CHALET
 LIVE MUSIC BY: BOBBY GULLEY
SILENT AUCTION • RAFFLE • "LICKER" POOL • SWEEPSTAKES
 ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT OUR FURRY FRIENDS AT TCRAS
TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW! \$75/EA OR 2 FOR \$140
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(Top)
Our Beautiful Wolves
 Photos by
 Kelly Murphy

(Right)
Darlene & Ringo
 Photo by
 Alfredo Gomez



PAW-DAY

with the wolves

APRIL 16TH | 9-11AM

Join us as we
pass out presents
to all the wolves

Meet & Greet
with Raven

\$40 ADULTS
\$20 KIDS (6-11)



Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center

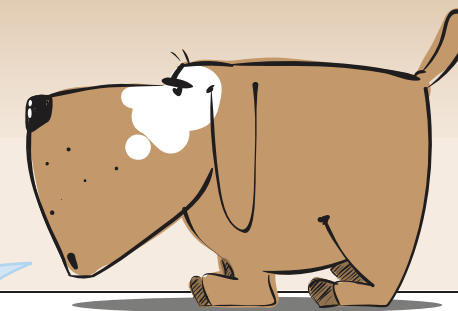
Adoption corner

TCRAS

Teller County Regional Animal Shelter
tcrascolorado.org · 719.686.7707

SLVAWS

San Luis Valley Animal Welfare Society
slvaws.org · 719.587.woof (9663)



[NOTE - Our shelter is still open for adoptions, but we are asking that you call ahead and make an appointment before coming in to the shelter - 719-686-7707.]

HELIOS »

Hello! My name is Helios! I've been through quite a lot in my young life but I'm living for all the love I get here at the shelter! As much as I love my friends here I most want a home of my own. I would prefer a home without other feline friends so I can be king of the castle. I always greet you with a chirp and lots of head butts.

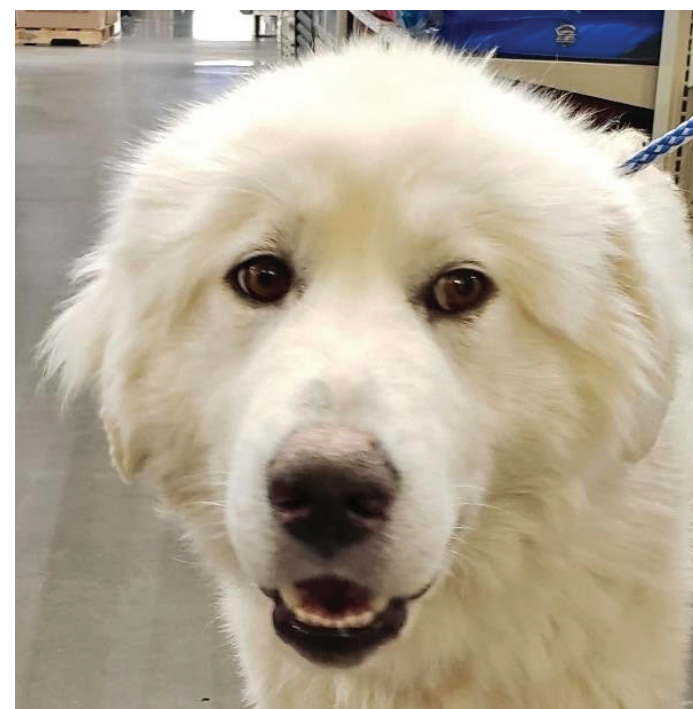


« MILKYWAY

Hi. My name is Milkyway cause I am such a sweet boy. Bonus! Not only am I a sweet boy, but am told I am really good looking, too. I am looking for a home and family to be a part of. I do have heartworm so I have a few months that I need to be low and quiet for easy healing.



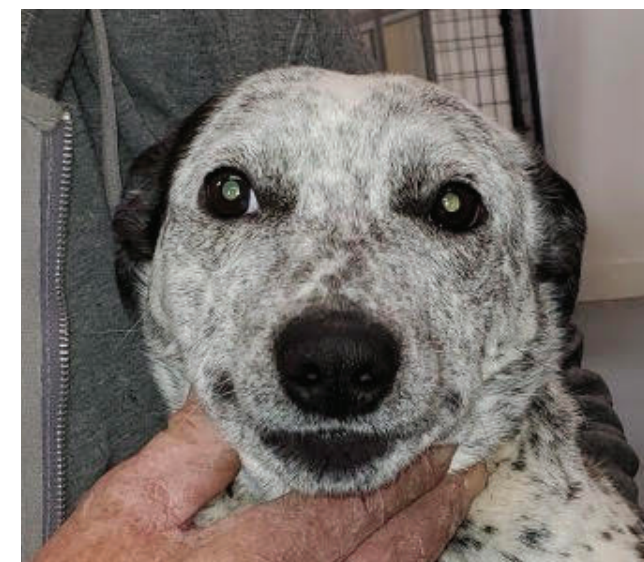
SNOW



Great Pyrenees mix, about 60 lbs. Very affectionate. She came in very thin with her friend Bailey. Some neighbors rescued and named them. They thought the owners died. They play together all day in one of our dog parks; however, Snow does not want to share her food, perhaps because they were starving. Spayed, all vacc's, chipped.

**SLVAWS
ADOPTION FAIR**
Every Saturday at Petsmart
7680 N. Academy Blvd.
11:00am - 3:00pm

BLIZZARD



Blizzard does have ears! She was found in a blizzard. At only 20 lbs, this 1 year old sweetie could be your next lap dog. Affectionate, loves attention. Current on all vaccinations, rabies, bordetella, routine dewormings, chipped, spayed.