

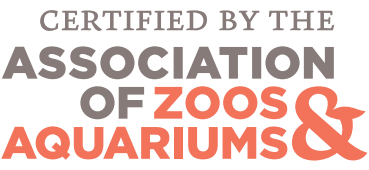


# COLORADO WOLF & WILDLIFE CENTER

APRIL 2025 • CONSERVATION • EDUCATION • PRESERVATION







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# Wolf Family REUNITED...

**The Wild Animal Sanctuary | April 2025**

There are few things in life that will ever prepare you for walking onto a fur farm. On January 23rd, 2025, the TWAS team flew to Ohio to help the Humane Society of The United States (HSUS) relocate animals left behind at a now defunct fur farm.



Upon our arrival the scene was grim. Despite the agonizing subzero temperatures, the smell of death somehow still lingered, seemingly as if it had comfortably resided at the address for quite some time. A constant reminder to everyone who stepped foot on the property, that death had been an unavoidable part of the daily routine.

Wherever our eyes landed there were piles of garbage, defunct sewing machines, broken toilets and more. Among the debris were various types of live traps and leg hold traps, which made every inch of the property unsafe.

Our rescue team arrived early in the morning, shortly after daylight. The HSUS team was already on the

ground and had started a fire in a discarded oil drum to heat up water, which they needed to thaw hundreds of frozen water dishes. We began to scan the property looking for two Wolf hybrids that we had committed to rescue, as well as their five-week-old puppies.

We walked through the first building only to find a series of stalls with Wild Boars crammed inside. Our presence made them perk up and immediately peer over their doors. Their earthy ancient eyes stared directly into ours as they begged for food and attention.

This was that point on every rescue, where we must still ourselves for a moment, a reminder to keep our anger and sadness at bay and focus on the job at hand. We simply needed to get the animals out.

As we pushed forward into the belly of this inhumane beast of a building, we discovered wire cages full of excrement piled so high that we couldn't see what kind of animal stood behind it. In many cases, little gold eyes peered at us from the shadows of small boxes crammed in the back.



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It quickly became obvious that humans represented nothing more than suffering and despair. With the hope of awakening a tiny shred of trust, we whisper soft coos to them, hoping to bring some amount of love and compassion into this forsaken place.

Coyotes and Foxes paced back and forth. Some clearly injured from the leg hold trap that robbed them of their freedom.

We passed the cages, one by one, looking in at each animal, sometimes they lay lifeless in the cage having succumbed to the cold and starvation. We press on.

We made our way towards the back of the property, passed the Foxes, Coyotes and the massive piles of animal skins stacked on top of each other, meat hooks swinging from the rafters nearby. There, we find a sweet pair of Wolves shifting back and forth inside a tiny wire cage.

They winced as they stood on the freezing wire floor that occupied all six sides of their restrictive enclosure. They whimpered with a combination of excitement and anxiety.

We wish we could say something to let them know it's going to be ok, your new home in Colorado awaits you.

Within a short time, the county dog warden and the Rescue Director of HSUS arrived and helped load the Wolves, along with their three puppies, into our vehicle. Yes, there were three wolf puppies that belonged to these two adults, which had been removed from their cage two weeks earlier.

In the early stages of this rescue, which had begun weeks prior to our arrival, three tiny puppies were discovered huddling together inside the same tiny cage. With no den box or other protection, the tiny pups were nearly trampled to death by the footsteps of the heavy adults.

This is a sad but normal sight for many fur farm operations, as they pack their animals inside tiny cages in order to save space. The very young only survive if the farm operator plans to use them as additional breeders – or if they plan to sell them to other farms.

Otherwise, in most cases, they disappear one by one due to the harsh environment and the mother's inability to feed them. In this case, the two female puppies and one male pup had been removed by the rescuers who were first to arrive on site.

Thankfully, they came just a matter of days before a wave



Yet, as luck would have it, they had been taken to a local humane society for safekeeping. Although they were malnourished and weak when they arrived, they were getting better with each day that passed.

of sub-zero temperatures flooded the state. Surely, with such intense cold, and no protection from physical harm, these three little darlings would never have survived.

Our ultimate hope was to be able to reunite this family once all five were safe, secure and situated within our sanctuary back in Colorado. Of course, there was no guarantee the parents would reclaim their young, especially since they had likely never raised any previous



Puppies secured in their travel crate, prepared for transport to Colorado.

litters they may have had.

As soon as the last kennel was locked and loaded, we hit the road for a 20+ hr. drive from Ohio to Colorado. Upon arrival, all five Wolves were placed within the sanctuary's veterinary clinic where they could be treated for parasites and monitored for signs that might lean toward a positive reintroduction.

Situated inside two separate enclosures that were adjacent to each other, the pups and parents were able to become safely reacquainted through a common fence. It was quite darling to see how the father Wolf seemed to be smitten with the pups.

As one day led to another and the puppies continued to gain strength, both the father and mother seemed to be anxiously awaiting the day when the door that separated them would open. In return, the pups also seemed to be more and more fascinated with their parents' focused attention.

Having completed their medical treatments, it became clear the puppies would be able to safely rejoin their parents. When the dividing door was finally lifted, it was the father who ventured forth to greet the pups.

With a barrage of sniffing happening on all fronts, the excitement continued to build until at one point, the father Wolf laid down and gleefully allowed the puppies to attack his snow-white body from all angles. As each puppy playfully tugged at his fur, the male Wolf gently mouthed one pup after another with his own affectionate manner of play.

Their life as a family-based Wolf pack was being rekindled right before our eyes, as both the father and mother began to spend every waking moment caring for their young.

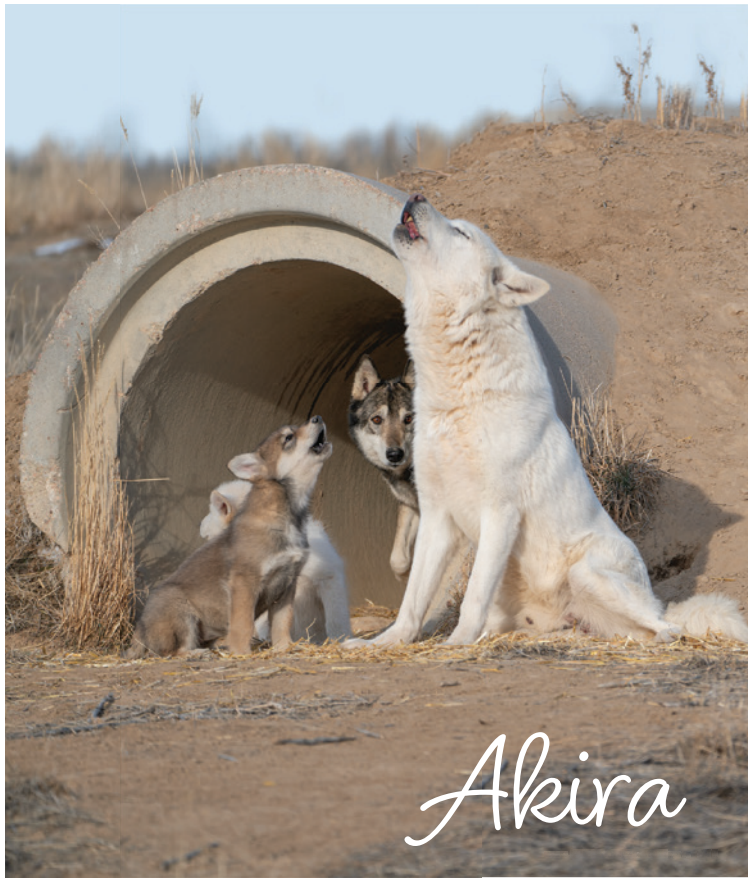
Having an outdoor area attached to our clinic helped both the parents and offspring acclimate to our Colorado weather, as well as enabled them to romp and play in a much larger area.

In one final move to secure a perfect home for them within our sanctuary, the five were relocated to one of our large natural habitats. Complete with underground dens and a large pond, the family was excited to begin a totally new chapter in their lives.

Having never felt real grass or dirt under their feet, both the adult and adolescent Wolves were now able to run and play in uncharted territory. Even though Colorado's springtime weather has yet to arrive, their

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Akira

joyful romping and endless play make every day seem as if it was a warm spring day!

The pups continue to grow at an astonishing rate, which

is a wonderful thing to witness, given their previous home in Ohio would never have offered them the same opportunity to thrive. The same goes for mom and dad, as their lives would surely have been cut short had they remained there much longer.

Of course, words do not do justice to the tragedy that had existed in Ohio. Every ounce of it was an act of cruelty. Yet, to most people's surprise, this facility was operating completely within the law.

Ohio is home to some of the weakest animal cruelty laws in the country, allowing facilities like this fur farm to operate with impunity. Not only was it permissible to engage in many of the inhumane practices that were witnessed there, but it was also legal for the owner to trap local wildlife for the purpose of feeding his insatiable demand for animal exploitation.

Despite public outcry, efforts to pass stronger protections for fur farm animals have struggled to gain traction. The fight for meaningful change remains an uphill battle, hindered by bureaucratic resistance and industry wide lobbying.

The US is currently blanketed by an odd patchwork of laws and regulations relating to animal welfare, with each state creating their own set of laws with varying degrees of enforceability. As long as many states continue to allow fur farms to operate in a similar manner, the work of



Akira

Hida



Farah

Kiba

Kylo

animal rescue organizations will never end.

At times, it can feel like we are swimming against an unrelenting tide, knowing that countless other farms, roadside zoos, and other exploitive businesses like this continue to operate across the country. Yet, despite this struggle, there is a profound solace to be found in our work.

We can see it in the eyes of every animal that has experienced only pain and suffering and finally encounters kindness for the first time. Rescuing them from despair and bringing them to a sanctuary where they are surrounded by unconditional love - that is the balm that soothes the burn.

For Wolves Akira, Hida, Kylo, Kiba and Farah, their world has changed forever now that they are safe living here with us. It is a privilege to bear witness to their resilience and to be a part of their journey moving from darkness to light.

And for those animals who never made it out of The Grand River Fur Exchange, we carry their memory with us, vowing to fight for a world where no animal is left behind!







by Pat Craig | Editorial | The Wild Animal Sanctuary

"No matter what major event takes place in our small circle of influence... or even the world at large... we seem to continually struggle to overcome immense obstacles!

I realize many of [The Wild Sanctuary's] supporters face their own challenges, but at times, it can seem as if we are the only ones facing incredible adversity. Whether it be incredibly complex rescues such as the Puerto Rico Zoo rescue... or other Sanctuary related projects, such as finding, purchasing and creating the world's largest freeranging Mustang Refuge... we always have our hands full!

Yet, beyond our normal mission driven challenges of helping save lives and creating amazing sanctuary spaces for our rescued animals to live in, we find ourselves facing more and more internal issues. By this, I mean we have been facing incredible challenges in the realm of hiring highly qualified and motivated employees.

Of course, our dedicated volunteers continue to be amazing individuals, but we have so much work to be done on a daily basis, that we will never be able to operate entirely on volunteer help. For us, it has always required a mix of volunteers and staff in order to succeed at what we do.

Ever since COVID changed nearly everyone's lives, we have been experiencing a whole new world as an employer. Statistics have proven there is a large

segment of the younger male population here in the United States that never rejoined the workforce... and we are also finding that many young women have followed suit.

How these large segments of the workforce are surviving out there is a mystery, but it seems an incredible number of people (of all ages) have found ways to survive in a post-COVID world without needing to be employed at what most of us might consider to be a regular job. It is baffling to say the least.

However, in addition to these mysterious portions of the missing workforce, we are also seeing a major shift in younger generations with their outlook on employment. It seems the vast majority have turned the life cycle of work/retirement upside down.

Instead of working for many years to accumulate wealth and meaningful accomplishments - and then retiring to enjoy the finer years of life... they are convinced they should be able to travel and engage in all sorts of fun and exciting outdoor activities immediately upon graduating from school.

Instead of being comfortable with a 5-day work week, and then enjoying a typical two days off (as well as added vacations), there is now an expectation to work far fewer hours in a day and less days per week. Additionally, there is a major expectation to completely sever the work/personal life balance that many of us

find ourselves juggling on a daily basis in order to do our jobs well.

Of course, there are many positions at millions of companies where there is a clear boundary between clocking in and clocking out – such as factory work and a whole host of other jobs where people might never need to fluctuate their workloads or give attention to special projects.

Yet, for a very large segment of the population that may have salaried positions at companies who require their employees' time to fluctuate with the workload, or a special need relating to a project driven deadline, it's nearly impossible to operate on a cut and dried schedule.

Take the The Wild Animal Sanctuary for example, many of you realize a large number of employees here take care of the animals and can understand how there are endless times when they need to finish feeding, watering or caring for the animals – as well as face all sorts of weather driven complications.

Rescues are another area where some of our staff will need to travel and spend hours, days, or weeks on the road at locations where suffering animals are in desperate need.

Of course, we do have office staff and retail positions that are not on the front lines of animal care or rescues, but in many cases, they are the key to fulfilling the Sanctuary's need to operate efficiently and meet its financial obligations. As such, there is simply no way for our volunteers or staff to have a mindset that "it's just a job".

As such, we state how we would like to help cover their financial obligations by paying them... but to always keep their mindset as if they are volunteering and should never consider it to be just a job and nothing else. This approach originally helped us succeed for many years, but more recently we have found that it rarely helps.

Many people will apply and get hired, stating they are coming here to help the animals.

Additionally, most will say they really want to work at an organization where they will be "making a difference in this world". This is, of course, music to our ears since the vast majority of our staff really do make an impact in this world within the realm of saving lives, educating others, and also changing attitudes.

However, with approximately 100 employees, and even more volunteers, we now struggle to see this mindset remain within a significant portion of them. For those that

have true hearts and can always take solace in knowing whatever they do here truly does help the animals in one way or another... they will remain here for years, and in some cases, for decades.

Then we have the numerous people who go through the hiring process, but only come for one or two days, then disappear without ever saying they are leaving. And finally, we have a number of staff that get hired and remain for a period of time but also quit when they realize they actually have to work.

Sadly, a significant number of them will then spend hours, days and weeks attacking our non-profit organization with vengeance.

The most depressing part of all this relates to the ones who stay and are truly incredible people. They unwaveringly give their all to the animals on a daily basis... so it's sad to see they have to deal with this new unhealthy stream of disgruntled people.

They spend so much of their time training new hires (if they show up) and then have to repeat the process over and over as ungentle people filter through the system.

It's a crazy situation now, but if we go back just 5 or 6 years, this kind of behavior was only a tiny fraction of what it is today. Again, between COVID and the new era of work mentality, nothing is what it used to be.

In the beginning of all this, I used to think it was something unique to us, but over the past three years it has become an epidemic for nearly every business out there. Today, every business owner or institution I speak with now repeats the same thing back to me.

Even our Board of Directors have seen these changes in the professional fields they operate in. This includes higher education where students are just entering college, and more specifically, special fields such as veterinary medicine.

Student dedication and passion seem to be lost now, as so many end up graduating – but go into practice with a similar approach. It becomes mind-boggling when I think of the amount of money and years that go into attaining a degree, only to possibly fail when the time comes to dig in and actually work to succeed.

I know this all sounds very depressing, and it is. However, I promise there is a light at the end of this tunnel... Yet, before we get there, I do need to pass on another challenge that recently arrived at our doorstep. Unfortunately, this serious challenge is one that I would

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not want to wish on anyone else.

For those who have followed the Wild Horse Refuge that we recently created in northwest Colorado, near the town of Craig, we have had a major event take place.

This setback has to do with the shop that came with the property and was adjacent to the ranch's main house. A new employee who was supposed to be in charge of the overall ranch operations at that location made a grave mistake.

When the recent sub-zero weather came through Colorado and many other states in the west, it caused numerous vehicles that we own to have issues with their diesel fuel "jelling". This term refers to a situation where the diesel fuel will thicken as it gets extremely cold, which then causes issues with it being able to flow within the fuel system or function properly during the combustion process.

This is a very common issue during the worst part of winter when the temperatures dip well below zero. Typically, most operations will have already placed additives in their diesel fuel that will prohibit this jelling effect.

Yet, in situations where certain equipment is not used on a daily basis, there are times when "summer" fuel remains in a vehicle's fuel tank as winter rolls around. When this occurs, it can be too late to introduce winterized fuel – which of course - can leave the vehicle inoperative until such time that the temperatures return to a more normal state.

This was the case with a farm tractor we had at the Horse Refuge. In fact, this happened to a number of pieces of equipment that we had at our other two locations as well.

Again, this temporary crippling situation only happens to equipment that may not have had winterized fuel within its fuel tank prior to the extreme temperature dip, so it is not uncommon. The only problem that arises is if you need to use that piece of equipment during the sub-zero temperatures.

In this case, we had another piece of equipment at the Refuge that did have the winterized fuel in it, so it remained functional, and the employee was able to feed the horses and do other chores with it. Yet rather than wait for warmer temps, which were due to arrive in a few days, the employee chose to fester on getting the tractor to start.

There is a way to thaw out the equipment by placing a heater under it and waiting for the vehicle's overall fuel system to thaw. Yet, it is definitely important to choose the right process, placement and heater that will be employed.

By choosing the proper distance and heater output, this is usually a very safe situation. However, just like any heater that might be added inside your home, it can be very dangerous if not applied in a safe manner.

Well, the new employee decided he would place a high output propane heater directly under the tractor's fuel tank – which also happened to be plastic! Don't ask me why, as there is no plausible reason for doing this.



So, within minutes of him doing this and subsequently walking out of the shop to go do chores, the fuel tank began to melt and pour fuel directly in front of the AC-powered propane heater. This created a gigantic torch so-to-speak, which then began to not only burn the tractor to the ground but also create enough heat to catch other vehicles on fire.

The shop was insulated and very well built, so it helped keep the intense heat inside until the roll up doors finally blew outward and off their tracks. Yet even though that helped to alleviate some of the intense smoke and heat, the fuel tanks of other vehicles parked inside the shop also began to rupture and spur the fire onward.

One by one, vehicle after vehicle, the shop and all of its contents burned until there was nothing left but skeletons of vehicle frames and the sagging, twisted outer shell of the shop. All of the tools and equipment inside perished, as did the tons of supplies that were needed for everything from repairing the solar water wells, to the saddles, bridles, halters, fencing materials and myriads of

other important items.

Since it was wintertime, we of course had nearly all of our equipment and supplies inside the shop so they would not be buried in snow. Only the Skidsteer and a few of our trucks and other vehicles were outside when the fire started.

When my phone rang here in Keenesburg and the staff member on the other end of the line began to say the words "the shop is on fire" I immediately knew what had happened.

After 45 years of dealing with sub-zero complications... and knowing the employee had been obsessed with trying to thaw out the tractor... it was a "no brainer" as they say.

Just days earlier when my staff first called to say the tractor was not starting, the first thing I asked was if our other piece of equipment was working, and they had answered yes. I said that everything was fine then, since they could use the Skidsteer to feed the horses and accomplish whatever else needed done. There simply



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was no reason for them to be worried about getting the tractor started.

They agreed but apparently could not wait just a few days for the tractor to start working again. Instead, the employee who started the fire kept trying to get the tractor thawed out.

Unfortunately, this is what happens when someone else has no skin in the game. By that, I mean when a person has little concern for the Sanctuary getting hurt through their own neglect, there is little that can be done.

I learned a long time ago there isn't enough of me to go around to accomplish every task, or babysit each person whose heart may or may not be in the right place. It's simple math, if we cannot find enough truly caring people, the battle will be lost.

Depressing – right? I know, but that is why I am being completely honest with you right now, since this is a challenge that we will have to meet head-on and find a way to overcome.

Thankfully, in the big picture, what we accomplish

for the animals is more than incredible. We are truly setting the bar incredibly high so the rest of the world will hopefully care about a positive future for these majestic creatures! This is a fact, and we can all rejoice in what we have been able to accomplish – regardless of any setbacks! So, whenever many of life's worst things happen to us, I always come back to these truths. With your support, we have accomplished some of the most incredible rescues imaginable, and we will continue to save many more lives as we go forward.

What we need to do now is to find a way to attract the right people that do care, as I know there are many others out there who do have their hearts in the right place. The challenge will be to see through the smoke (no pun intended) and find a path to the increasingly rare individuals who do want to make a difference.

People like you who love animals and know they are becoming increasingly disadvantaged. People like you who are willing to sacrifice some of your own comfort, just so animals who are suffering might find a little comfort of their own.

Your help in supporting this organization is priceless and the one thing that has empowered us to stand above so many others. With nearly 1,000 rescued animals living lives filled with love, freedom and happiness, we are truly making a difference in this world.

I realize not everyone can be here working with us day-in and day-out, but your generous support is what helps us succeed. Your compassion for others breathes life into our organization, and that is something that I never forget.

Although I am beat up, spit out and aching more and more every year, the one thing that keeps the fire burning bright within my soul, is your love. Your dedication toward helping animals not only gives me hope, it also stands as proof that our world is not done for.

I see how much you care - just as most of our volunteers and staff do as well. Although we are struggling through some hard times, we remain forever grateful for your love and support!

With your help, and the help of thousands of other sincere human beings, we will continue to right the wrongs of the world and give peace and comfort to the animals we love so much! It is possible to rebuild, and it is possible to get through the seemingly impossible times that we are facing – especially when we continue to band together!

I am not just one person, and neither are you. We make a difference by working together as a team! Please know that we will continue to do everything in our power to care for the animals we have already saved... and that we will also continue to surmount every challenge that comes our way.

Thank you so much, as I am humbled by your generosity and commitment to helping in any way possible - I remain forever in your debt!

Sincerely,

Pat Craig

Executive Director of the Wildlife Sanctuary





# Rancher Compensation Should Require Proof

Darlene Kobobel | Op-Ed | April 4, 2025

Wolf restoration in Colorado is on a path to success. Unfortunately, unexpectedly large financial claims for livestock losses have led some who oppose wolf restoration to argue about whether the public still wants to see wolves return. A bi-partisan team conducted a survey of Colorado voters in January and the results show that Coloradans still favor moving forward to restore wolves, in fact the support has grown to a 10-point majority. The survey also shows that there is confidence in the experts at Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to manage the restoration. However, the recent livestock compensation claims for more than \$330,000 approved by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission are not only enough to use nearly all allocated funding, but they are also unprecedented in the history of wolf restoration in the US—leading many to question the claims and to wonder why Colorado’s compensation program is so expensive.

One reason is that the bulk of the compensation was for what are termed “indirect losses,” mostly reduced weight gain by calves and reduced pregnancy rates in cows, for which ranchers only need to provide minimal information. Colorado’s compensation program is the only one in the western US that pays for indirect losses, and if such payments continue, CPW needs to require a higher standard of proof. This is especially relevant as the General Assembly is looking for significant reductions to the state budget and threatening to cut CPW’s wolf management allocation.

Indirect losses from wolves have been demonstrated in Montana, but only where wolves were actively killing livestock, not where wolves were merely present. It’s difficult to attribute livestock losses to any one cause, as many factors (weather, forage quality, disturbance by other predators or humans, and livestock management) can impact livestock performance. To illustrate, in 2010, domestic dogs accounted for the deaths of 21,800 cattle and calves nationally — representing 9.9% of all predator-related livestock losses. Unfortunately, CPW’s regulations

allowing compensation for indirect losses do not have a rigorous process for determining the contributions of multiple potential causes. In other words, it was not proven that wolves caused these indirect losses. The compensation was apparently approved based on a limited set of facts: wolves had attacked cattle in these herds, and weight gains and pregnancy rates were lower than in the previous 3 years. Importantly, the area was impacted by drought during the summer and fall, according to federal drought monitoring agencies. It’s unclear if or how that fact was considered in determining the level of impact by wolves. The possible impacts of other factors also do not appear to have been evaluated so their potential contribution is unknown; wolves could have caused all of the declines, or none of them, as could forage conditions or weather. We’ll never know. We do know that the impact of wolf presence was assumed, not proven.

I was a member of CPW’s Stakeholder Advisory Group, which consisted of 17 Coloradans, including ranchers, outfitters, hunters, and wolf conservationists. The group discussed compensation, and while the consensus supported the idea of compensation for indirect losses, it was with the expectation that such losses would be proven to be caused by wolves. CPW’s current regulations did not incorporate that requirement, and one result is the huge claims that were approved.

Because most predators including wolves are also scavengers, their mere presence is not evidence that they killed an animal. Stress due to wolf presence can affect livestock performance, but attributing these effects solely to wolves, without concrete evidence, is neither fair nor scientifically sound.

Many domestic livestock have lost their natural defenses, such as horns, and have been bred to be docile and easy to handle. Cattle often graze alongside deer and elk—natural prey for wolves—and have not been conditioned to avoid predators. Expecting wolves to instinctively distinguish between wild prey and livestock, without proactive efforts to

mitigate conflicts, is unrealistic. Producers who graze livestock on public lands should be required to use non-lethal deterrents and properly dispose of carcasses to prevent attracting predators.

CPW has recognized that there needs to be a clearer process and expectations for livestock owners to make claims, and they are working with experts to clarify information needs. That will also be an opportunity to ensure that all the factors influencing livestock

performance are considered in damage claims.

If Colorado taxpayers are to foot the bill for ranchers’ indirect losses, they deserve the same level of rigor as in individual depredation investigations. The presence and actions of wolves needs to be compared to the possible effects of weather, forage condition, presence of other predators, human disturbance, etc. That would be fairer to Colorado’s taxpayers, wolves, and the ranchers themselves.



**Darlene Kobobel**

*Darlene is the Founder and President of the Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center*





# Feds plan to remove all wild horses from 2.1M acres of Wyoming’s ‘checkerboard’ starting in July

*Complete removal of nonnative equines from the Great Divide Basin, Salt Wells Creek and the northwest portion of the Adobe Town herd management areas still faces a public review process and legal appeal.*

Mike Koshmrl | WyoFile | April 1, 2025



A group of wild horses investigate a human intruder in southwest Wyoming's Little Mountain area in spring 2023. (Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile)

The Bureau of Land Management’s contentious plans to remove all free-roaming horses from vast reaches of southwest Wyoming’s “checkerboard” region could begin as soon as this summer, although a legal appeal to stop roundups remains in limbo.

On Monday, the federal agency released a 47-page environmental assessment outlining plans to gather and permanently remove several thousand wild horses from 2,105 square miles — an area nearly the size of Delaware — managed by BLM’s Rock Springs and Rawlins field offices. Horses would come off an additional 1,124 square miles of private land within the checkerboard. A public review period is underway with comments due by April 30. If the BLM greenlights the round-ups, they could begin within the next three months and continue for a couple of years, possibly longer.

First to go would be the estimated 1,125 free-roaming horses in the Salt Wells Creek herd and 736 animals in the northwestern portion of Adobe Town, according

to BLM Rock Springs Field Office Manager Kimberlee Foster. Then in 2026, horse-removal crews would move on to eliminating an estimated 894 horses in the Great Divide Basin herd.

“Additional gathers may be needed in future years to remove all wild horses to get to the zero-population goal, as some may be missed during the scheduled gathers,” Foster told WyoFile in response to emailed questions.

Free-roaming horses, a nonnative species that faces scant predation, increase in population by about 20% annually. Reproduction, combined with missed animals during surveys, make estimating precise herd numbers difficult. The expectation is that 3,371 wild horses would be removed, but the ultimate number could range from 2,500 up to 5,000, according to the BLM.

The push to rid southwest Wyoming’s checkerboard region of free-roaming horses traces back 15 years. The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act directs the BLM to “to remove stray wild horses from private

lands as soon as practicable upon receipt of a written request,” the environmental assessment states. In 2010, the cattle and sheep-centric Rock Springs Grazing Association, which owns and leases about 1.1 million acres of private land in the checkerboard, revoked consent to allow horses to roam on its property.

There’s been a legal battle ever since. Lawsuits from both the Rock Springs Grazing Association and wild horse advocacy groups have targeted the BLM’s planned actions, but U.S. District Court of Wyoming Judge Kelly Rankin, a Biden appointee, ruled in the federal government’s favor in both lawsuits last August.

Soon thereafter, a coalition of pro-horse petitioners — the American Wild Horse Campaign, Animal Welfare Institute, Western Watersheds Project, Carol Walker, Kimerlee Curyl and Chad Hanson — appealed.

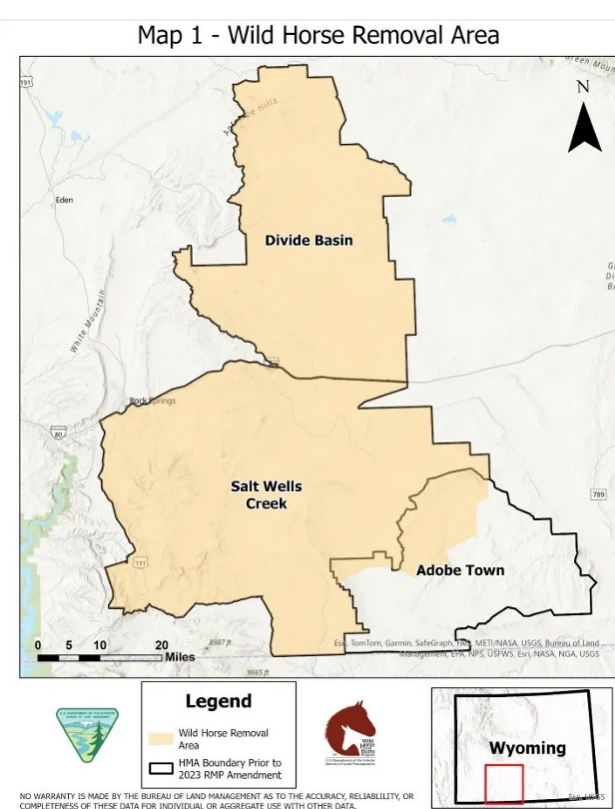
“This is just the latest lawsuit in a 12 or more year battle to save these horses,” American Wild Horse Executive Director Suzanne Roy told WyoFile. “We’ve litigated four or five times about this issue.”

Attorneys for the federal government and horse advocacy groups exchanged arguments before the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in March. A decision is pending, but horse advocates are optimistic about their chances.

“We have prevailed in the 10th Circuit previously on this issue,” Roy said.

The BLM, she contended, has never before fully eliminated a herd of free-roaming horses without having demonstrated there are ecological reasons for doing so.

“This would be the first time in the 54-year history of the Wild Horse and Burros Act that the BLM eliminated a herd management area and eradicated entire wild horse herds — two of them — when the agency itself concedes that the area has sufficient habitat for the horses,” Roy said. “It has implications for wild horse protection across the West, because if private landowners that have land adjacent to or within herd management areas are allowed



Over the course of 2025 and 2026, the Bureau of Land Management is planning to fully remove roaming horses from herd management areas illustrated in this map. (BLM)

to dictate the presence of wild horses on the public land, that’s a very dangerous precedent. So we are anxiously awaiting the court’s ruling.”

Meanwhile, the BLM is staging resources necessary to move forward with its plans. The Adobe Town/Salt Wells Creek herd roundup is the largest on the BLM’s tentative wild horse and burro gather schedule for 2025. It’s scheduled to take place from July 15 through Sept. 15. In regions of the Adobe Town herd area where horses are being allowed to persist, there are related plans to remove 2,179 free-roaming horses — numbers that exceed the “appropriate management level.”

It’s unclear how or if the Trump administration’s slashing of the federal government workforce will impact the horse gather operations. Asked by WyoFile if the BLM-Wyoming’s horse and burro program is fully staffed right now, Foster, the field office manager, wrote “BLM is prepared to conduct the planned gathers with current staffing.”



Black Hawk, Colorado resident Bill Carter documents a wild horse roundup in the Bureau of Land Management’s White Mountain Horse Management Area in August 2024. (Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile)



# A second gray wolf brought to Colorado from Canada has died in Wyoming, CPW confirms

*The first Colorado wolf that traveled into Wyoming and died was killed by Wildlife Services following depredations in the area. It's not yet clear how this second wolf died.*

Stephanie Butzer | Denver7 | April 15, 2025



On Saturday, Colorado Parks and Wildlife completed capture and release work for the second gray wolf reintroduction season in support of Colorado's Gray Wolf Restoration. Photo: Colorado Parks and Wildlife

DENVER — For the second time this year, a gray wolf that was translocated to Colorado from Canada as part of the second round of reintroductions has died in Wyoming.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) sent a brief press release about the second death around 6:45 p.m. Friday, saying they had learned about the male wolf's death in Wyoming on April 9. The wolf was part of the 15 animals — which included seven males — that had been captured in British Columbia earlier this year and brought to Colorado.

CPW coordinated with Wyoming Game and Fish to obtain the wolf's GPS collar. Wyoming state law prevents other details from being shared, CPW said.

When the first translocated wolf died in Wyoming on March 16, a CPW spokesperson told Denver7 that the animals' collars can be refurbished for future use. CPW told us that the body of that wolf — also a male — was returned to Colorado "because it was a wolf released by CPW during our 2025 reintroduction effort. CPW staff will examine the animal for research and educational purposes." CPW did not confirm if that is the case for this second wolf as well when Denver7 reached out.

Because this mortality happened outside Colorado, CPW did not have any other comment on the development.

The first wolf was shot and killed by USDA Wildlife Services

after five sheep were killed at a property. The USDA told Denver7 that they did not have anything to do with the second wolf's death. When we reached out to Wyoming Game and Fish, they said Tuesday they only release aggregate numbers of legally killed wolves.

Denver7 is working to confirm if this means the wolf died of natural causes, illegal means, by accident, or something else. Wolves can be killed without limit in 85% of Wyoming outside of the Yellowstone area, the Associated Press reported.

As of Friday evening, the number of known wolves in Colorado is as follows:

- 7 wolves surviving from the original 10 that were released in December 2023
- Five wolf pups born in the spring of 2024
- 13 wolves surviving from the 15 that were released in January 2025 (one was shot and killed by Wildlife Services in Wyoming earlier this month, and this report is about the second death in Wyoming)
- Two wolves that moved south from Wyoming several years ago (both collared)
- One uncollared wolf that was last known to be in northwest Moffat County in mid-February
- Possible, but unconfirmed, wolf in the Browns Park area



Gray wolves run across snow-covered terrain during capture operations in British Columbia, Canada, in January 2025. Photo: Colorado Parks and Wildlife



# Colorado Wolf In Wyoming Killed By U.S. Wildlife Staff

Suspected of Killing Sheep — He Didn't Need to Die

Elise Schmelzer



Photo: Colorado Parks and Wildlife

A federal agency killed one of Colorado's newest collared wolves after the apex predator wandered into Wyoming and was suspected of killing sheep, government officials confirmed Thursday.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services shot and killed the wolf Saturday after connecting it to a report of livestock depredations on private land in north-central Wyoming, USDA spokeswoman Tanya Espinosa said in an email Thursday.

Five sheep had been killed, and investigators found evidence of a wolf presence, including wolf tracks and bite marks on carcasses consistent.

Wildlife Services workers did not know the wolf was one of Colorado's collared animals until after they killed it, Espinosa said.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife on Sunday received a mortality alert from the collar of one of the wolves relocated in January from Canada to Colorado, the

agency said in a news release. The killing of the male wolf, collar identification 2505-BC, reduced the number of collared wolves under CPW management to 27.

Gray wolves are protected under the federal Endangered Species Act in Colorado but lost those protections if they wander into other states where they are not federally protected, including much of Wyoming.

Wolf advocates condemned the killing and said it undermined the restoration of the native species to Colorado.

"This senseless killing was avoidable," said Rob Edward, president of the Rocky Mountain Wolf Project. "Wyoming ranchers and federal agencies have the tools and knowledge to prevent livestock losses without resorting to lethal measures in most cases. Their refusal to implement these practices is reckless

and undermines the hard-fought efforts to restore wolves in Colorado.

"We cannot allow the progress made in Colorado to be undone by Wyoming's failure to act responsibly," he said.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Dept. has jurisdiction over the gray wolf population outside of the boundaries of the two national parks in the state and Wind River Indian Reservation.

In the northwest corner of the state, the species is managed as a trophy game species, and killing of the animals is controlled by hunting regulations. In the vast majority of the state, however, gray wolves are classified as predators and can be killed year-round without a license.

USDA's Wildlife Services works with farmers and ranchers to abate damage caused by wildlife, such as beavers flooding fields and predators killing livestock. The service can relocate or kill wolves killing livestock, according to its website. In 2023, the service killed 305 gray wolves and relocated 64 more across 7 states in

the rocky Mountain and Great Lakes regions, according to agency data.

CPW inked agreements with 3 states that allow the agency to capture wolves that wander from Colorado into Utah, Arizona and New Mexico and return them to the Centennial State. The agreements were intended to keep Colorado's gray wolves from mixing with those states' Mexican gray wolves, which are a subspecies that is managed separately under the Endangered Species Act.

Colorado does not have such an agreement with Wyoming. It's not surprising that a wolf made its way to Wyoming and was killed because unregulated wolf killing is the norm across much of the state, said Kaitie Schneider, Colorado representative for Defenders of Wildlife.

Colorado could be an example for Wyoming and other Western states of how wolves and people can coexist by using non-lethal conflict mitigation tactics, she said. "Lethal control should not be the first line of defense," she said.

## Viewpoint: Montana legislators vote in favor of killing puppies

Lizzy Pennock | Missoula Current | April 11, 2025

In its strongest bid yet to lose management authority for wolves—and to never regain management authority for grizzlies—the Montana Senate voted to pass House Bill (HB) 258 on March 31st.

The bill will return to the House for a second vote with the Senate's amendments, but is ultimately expected to pass the House again and land on the Governor's desk. Passage of HB 258 means that all but two Republican legislators voted yes on killing wolf puppies and their nursing mothers as well as pregnant wolves.

HB 258 would extend the wolf hunting season by three months, ending at the same time as spring black bear hunting season on June 15th instead of its current end date of March 15th. If the Governor signs

HB 258 into law, Montana's wolf killing season will be nine months long, but more significantly, it will extend into wolves' reproductive season.

This means that hunters could legally kill puppies, as we have seen in Idaho after the state adopted a similar hunting season. And even if someone does not intend to kill puppies, puppies will be orphaned when their mothers are killed, or they may die inside of their mother's womb days before they would otherwise take their first breath.

Even Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) testified against this bill. The agency cited concerns with how hunting during the reproductive season will impact iPOM, the model used to estimate the wolf population. iPOM has already faced significant

*continued on next page...*





Colorado Parks and Wildlife officials release 1 of 5 gray wolves onto public land in Grand County, Dec. 18, 2023. This wolf is known as 2302-OR. (Courtesy of Colorado Parks and Wildlife)

controversy, as multiple independent scientists have explained that the model overestimates the wolf population (see also here), and explained that the model is not good for estimating animal abundance on the landscape.

FWP explained that hunting during the reproductive season will throw the (already questionable) estimate into disarray. We could wipe out the wolf population before we even know what happened.

This is where we can expect the federal government to step in. Whatever comfort Montana's anti-wolf politicians get from knowing that the current administration is unlikely to relist wolves, that comfort could quickly vanish.

The federal government warned in its decision to delist Montana wolves in 2011 that wolves could be relisted at any time if a change in state law or management objectives would significantly increase the threat to the wolf population.

HB 258 will, without a doubt, significantly increase the threat to the wolf population. First, it mandates a hunting season that will undermine FWP's population estimate. FWP cannot reliably say it is managing a

population that, by its own admission, it cannot even estimate. Second, killing wolf puppies and nursing or pregnant mothers is cruel and unconscionable.

And HB 258 and bills like it do not just impact wolf management—how the state manages wolves is a telling glimpse into how it will manage grizzlies. In fact, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pointed to the state's anti-wolf laws when it recently denied Governor Gianforte's 2021 petition to delist grizzly bears and transfer their management to the state.

This shows that wolf killing laws like HB 258 that passed in previous sessions were so deplorable that they helped keep grizzly bears under the protection of the federal government, and could easily land wolves back there as well.

If the Governor wishes to gain management authority for grizzly bears, and keep management authority for wolves, the clear choice here is to veto HB 258.

*Lizzy Pennock is the Montana-based carnivore coexistence attorney for WildEarth Guardians, a non-profit conservation group committed to protecting and restoring the wildlife, wild places, wild rivers, and health of the American West.*

## Wandering Wolf “Ella” Found Deceased in New Mexico



**A Mexican gray wolf named Ella was found dead at the end of March in New Mexico.**

The cause of her death is under investigation by The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Ella had just made headlines by traveling north of the arbitrary boundary of Interstate 40.

**Illegal mortality is the leading cause of death for Mexican gray wolves.** With only 162 Mexican gray wolves remaining in the wild in New Mexico, and anti-wolf sentiment rising, like the recent "state of emergency" declaration by the Catron County Board of Commissioners, our efforts to protect this recovering population are more crucial than ever.

## 2nd Deadliest Wolf-hunting Season on Record in Montana

**A staggering 297 wolves were killed this season, making it the second deadliest hunting season on record in Montana since wolves were delisted.**

You might expect this to be a sobering wake-up call for wolf management in the state, but the anti-wolf bills advancing through the legislature say otherwise.

**One bill, HB 259, would allow wolf hunters to use infrared vision and thermal imagery to find and kill wolves at night on private lands. Another bill, HB258, seeks to extend the wolf hunting season into June, with one legislator supporting the idea by comparing hunting during the wolves' reproductive season to eradicating weeds from a garden.**



*Story and photos, courtesy of Wild Earth guardians.*

**WildEarth Guardians protects and restores the wildlife, wild places, wild rivers, and health of the American West.**



# MOTHER'S DAY

## *With the Wolves*

Sunday,  
May 11th  
9-11am

Wolf Tour,  
A Flower for Moms  
and Snacks



Adults \$40 (12+)

Kids \$20 (6-11)

PREPAY EVENT

RESERVATIONS

719.687.9742

Colorado Wolf  
and Wildlife Center

[wolfeducation.org](http://wolfeducation.org)





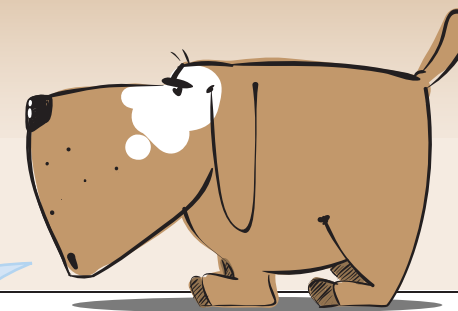
# Adoption corner

## 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. ]**

### REBA »

Hello! My name is Reba, and I'm currently enjoying life in a foster home. I love to be with my people, follow you around, and talk to you! I love to be loved on. A home where I have a lap to nap on and a sunny spot to lay in would be the best thing ever. I have lived with other cats and small dogs before. Will you be my new family?



### « ALITA

My name is Alita. I'm a new arrival to Colorado and am starting to settle in. I have shown my playful side with my friends here at TCRAS. I love playing with other doggy friends, I start bouncing and having a wonderful time! That doesn't mean that I don't enjoy the company of people though! I am super laid back, snuggly, and the epitome of a couch potato when it's just me and my people.



### VELCRO PUP, CUDDLE BUG THOMPSON »

Dog friendly. Crate trained. House trained. Walks well on leash. Loves to ride in cars. Indifferent with cats. Loves PB Kongs, chew bones. A little shy when meeting new people. Rescued from a kill shelter.



### « WHISTLES

Whistles is a sweet & timid "low rider" who takes life at her own pace. With her big, soulful eyes and little wagging tail, she seems a little shy at first but has a heart full of love just waiting to be discovered. She does well with other dogs and children. She is a bit of an observer preferring to watch the world around her before joining in.



**SLVAWS**  
Please check our website, [www.slvaws.org](http://www.slvaws.org) for our next adoption fair in Colorado Springs, every Saturday 10am-3pm.