



Living with Wolves

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS

Dear friends,

This past summer, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game proposed extending the legal time for a trapper to check wolf snares from **72 hours to eight days**. Designed to encourage more killing of wolves, this proposed rule could leave an animal to suffer for more than twice as long.

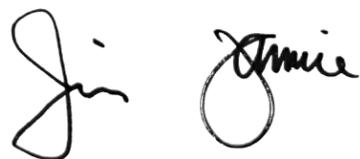
In Alaska and most areas across the northern Rocky Mountain states, where the vast majority of the wolves live in the West, wolf-hunting season spans an extraordinarily long 6-12 months of the year. Arguably worse, the extremely antiquated and inhumane practice of trapping and snaring wolves is also permitted across much of the same regions. Trapping wolves is not only cruel to the trapped wolf, but is also **devastating to the pack members left behind**. We learned a lot about the trauma and devastation trapping and snaring causes for wolves and wolf families from the late wolf biologist Dr. Gordon Haber, while filming in and around Denali National Park and Preserve in Alaska.

It was a leg-hold trap just outside the northeastern boundary of Denali that ensnared one of Gordon's study animals, an alpha female, just before mating season. As Gordon watched, legally prohibited from helping her, the female suffered in a trap for two weeks before the trapper finally shot her. During the entire ordeal, her mate and offspring remained nearby, perhaps even by her side. It's quite possible they brought food to her, desperate to help, but ultimately they were unable to keep her alive. When at last she was shot, her family fled the area.

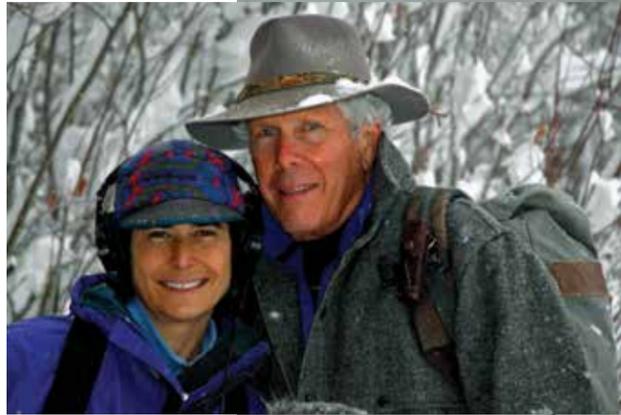
The loyalty the alpha male displayed would have taught us enough, but his behavior over the next few weeks proved even more heartbreaking. When he left the trap site, he crossed back into the park and returned to the den where their pups had been born. There, the male dug through the snow and cleaned out the den, removing the leaves and loose soil, and readying it **for a new litter of pups that he would never father**. The following day, he traveled fourteen miles back to the spot where his mate had been trapped, searching frantically for her.

With you standing with us, Living with Wolves will always fight for wolves, as you expect us to, carefully monitoring decision-makers and working every day to protect wolves, creating a safer world for them. We're always aware that, without you, the hard work that's needed would not be possible.

Thank you!



Jim and Jamie Dutcher,
Founders, Living with Wolves



We are deeply grateful to the late Michael D. Levine for his generous legacy gift to Living with Wolves through his estate. In Michael's career with the U.S. Forest Service, he served as a radio engineer and technician, and shared our deep love for wolves and the mountains. Gifts like Michael's are essential in continuing to build the Living with Wolves Endowment, which was first created by Jean and John Greene. Please contact us for more information on how you can help to make a difference for wolves and secure their future.

Cover: Some wolf pups are playful and submissive, some are nervous and shy, but Kamots, the alpha of the Sawtooth Pack, was bold and curious from the start.



WOLF NEWS – 2018



Leg-hold traps don't kill outright; they simply hold the wolf in place to starve and suffer. If the wolf's lucky, the trapper will show up within a few days to finish the job.

Pressured by landowners and the **North Carolina** Wildlife Resources Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), responsible for protecting species from extinction, proposed an exception to the Endangered Species Act. Their proposal would allow landowners to shoot the last remaining critically endangered population of 35 wild red wolves if seen on private land. The new proposal reduces the area where they are protected by 90%, giving them safe refuge only in the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, which can support just dozen or so red wolves.

In a victory for gray wolves, a federal district court found that the FWS guidelines of the Mexican wolf recovery plan "failed to further the conservation of the Mexican wolf" by setting too low a population cap and overly restricting the range where wolves are allowed to exist. The FWS must now develop a more robust plan for the 114 remaining Mexican wolves in **New Mexico** and **Arizona**.

Isolated by the waters of Lake Superior, the population of wolves on Isle Royale, **Michigan** had declined to just two wolves on an island strained by a booming moose population. The National Park Service began a reintroduction program with four wolves successfully relocated to the island.

In **Montana** and **Wyoming**, the famous Northern Yellowstone elk herd reached the decade's highest population, a continuing increase over four consecutive years, and up 42% in 2017 from the previous year. Wyoming's small population of 347 wolves declined by 16% after a legal decision reopened its first wolf hunt in four years. On the heels of this dramatic decline, Wyoming's Department of Game and Fish lengthened 2018's wolf-hunting season. Additionally, the number of wolves that can be killed in the "trophy" zone was increased by 32%. Wyoming policy, designed to decrease

its wolf numbers, is particularly hostile. In 85% of the state, wolves are considered vermin and can be killed year-round without a license in a variety of manners.

In 2017, a spring-loaded M-44 cyanide trap, set by a Wildlife Services agent for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, killed a family dog and injured the boy playing with the dog just beyond his backyard on public land near Pocatello, **Idaho**. In August 2018, the federal government, responsible for setting these predator control traps for wolves and other predators across the West, issued a statement claiming that the family's negligence led to the dog's death and the boy's injuries, from which he still suffers 16 months later. The family reports they were never notified that a federal agent set "cyanide bombs" behind their backyard.

Poaching and lethal removal of wolves over conflicts with livestock stemmed the previously strong growth trends of recovering wolf populations in **Oregon** and **Washington**, where the entire two-state population is fewer than 250 wolves. In Washington, a change in rules last year allows the state to take quicker action to kill wolves that attack livestock. Under pressure from legislators and the livestock industry, Oregon killed more wolves in 2017 than in 2016, even though livestock attacks dropped more than 30% in 2017.

In **Washington D.C.**, political decisions loom that stand to drastically impact wolves, and more broadly, the Endangered Species Act (ESA), one of the nation's most effective environmental laws. In 2018, an onslaught of 45 bills were introduced that would seriously weaken the ESA. Most die. But five quietly passed the House Committee on Natural Resources in early October. Committee Chair, Utah Republican Rob Bishop said, "I would be happy to invalidate the Endangered Species Act." Perhaps even more dangerous are the midnight riders

legislators attach to unrelated must-pass appropriations bills. The 115th Congress is employing this strategy to delist wolves, the same way legislators of the 112th Congress removed wolves from the ESA protections in 2011.

In **Michigan's** Upper Peninsula, 2017 records show that wolves killed just six of the 50,000 head of cattle in the region. Wolf-livestock conflicts in the UP are down, despite a ban on wolf hunting since a 2014 federal court ruling.

According to transmissions from her GPS collar, a two-year-old female was the first to visit the Lake Tahoe area since wolves have begun to return to **California**. In Plumas County, the state's only currently known wolf pack, the Lassen pack, produced its second litter of pups.

In **Oregon**, the first wolf known to return to California since they were exterminated in the early 20th Century, the famous and aging OR-7, fathered pups for the fifth year in a row, after he finally settled down in Southern Oregon.

Iceland: Three wolves were spotted, the first in nearly 30 years. Once common, it was thought farmers had driven wolves to extinction. **Sweden** has banned the hunting of wolves for the upcoming winter, as the population of 305 wolves fell perilously close to the court-mandated 300-wolf minimum. Absent since 1940, wolves continue to recover in **France** with strong support from the French people. But the return of wolves, is bringing challenges for some sheep farmers. When a lone female wolf was detected in North Rhine-Westphalia, **Germany**, the region was declared a "wolf area," a designation that allows farmers to proactively apply for livestock protection assistance.

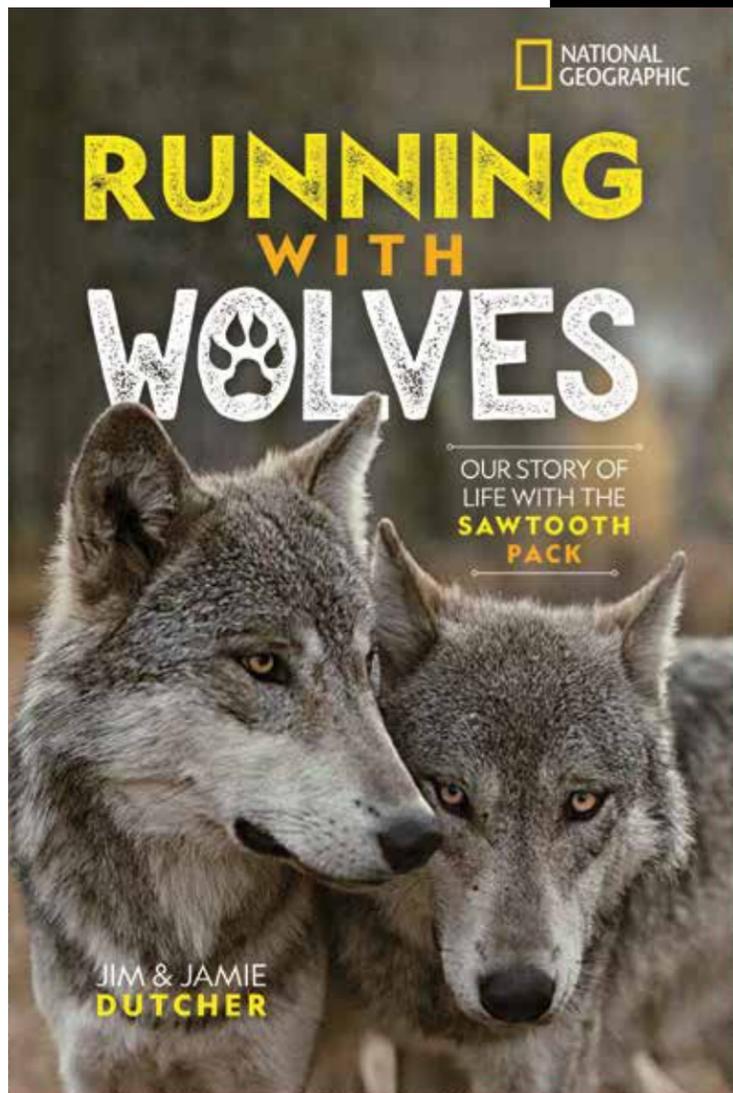
OUR NEW BOOK FOR MIDDLE-SCHOOL READERS

We are thrilled to announce the release of our newest book, *Running with Wolves*, in January 2019. Aimed at engaging a younger audience, this book is full of exciting stories and adventures Jim and Jamie Dutcher had while living with the Sawtooth Pack.

The book offers many insights into the lives of wolves, detailing a wolf's devotion to its family, the roles that each wolf fills in a pack and the Dutchers' special relationship with the wolves while camping in the mountains of Idaho.

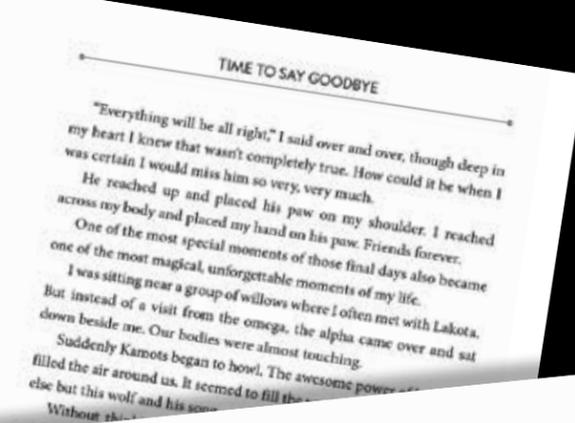
"What we witnessed with these wolves," said Jim and Jamie, "was that their behavior mirrored our own. They were so concerned with family, so curious, so playful and so compassionate, in many ways so very much like us."

Running with Wolves is the fifth book the Dutchers have published with the National Geographic Society. *The Wisdom of Wolves*, released last March, was chosen as one of 50 "Must-Read" books representing each state in the nation. The editors of InsideHook selected the Dutchers' book as the definitive book representing the state of Idaho.

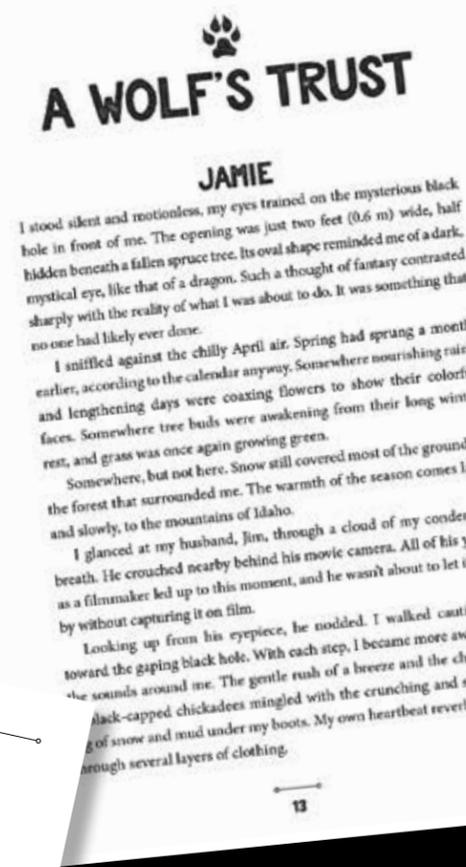


JAMIE

July was the last full month that we would have with the Sawtooth Pack, and we decided to make the most of it. We left our filming equipment behind and just spent every minute we could with the wolves. We wanted to memorize their every move, expression, and sound so that our experiences with them would be forever in our minds. Every day, I spent some time with Lakota. I told him how sad I was to leave him but that I would visit often. I told him that two of his friends from wolf camp—part of our crew—would be with him at his new home.



"Everything will be all right," I said over and over, though deep in my heart I knew that wasn't completely true. How could it be when I was certain I would miss him so very, very much. He reached up and placed his paw on my shoulder. I reached across my body and placed my hand on his paw. Friends forever. One of the most special moments of those final days also became one of the most magical, unforgettable moments of my life. I was sitting near a group of willows where I often met with Lakota. But instead of a visit from the omega, the alpha came over and sat down beside me. Our bodies were almost touching. Suddenly Kamots began to howl. The awesome power of the howl filled the air around us. It seemed to fill the void that had been left behind but this wolf and his son.



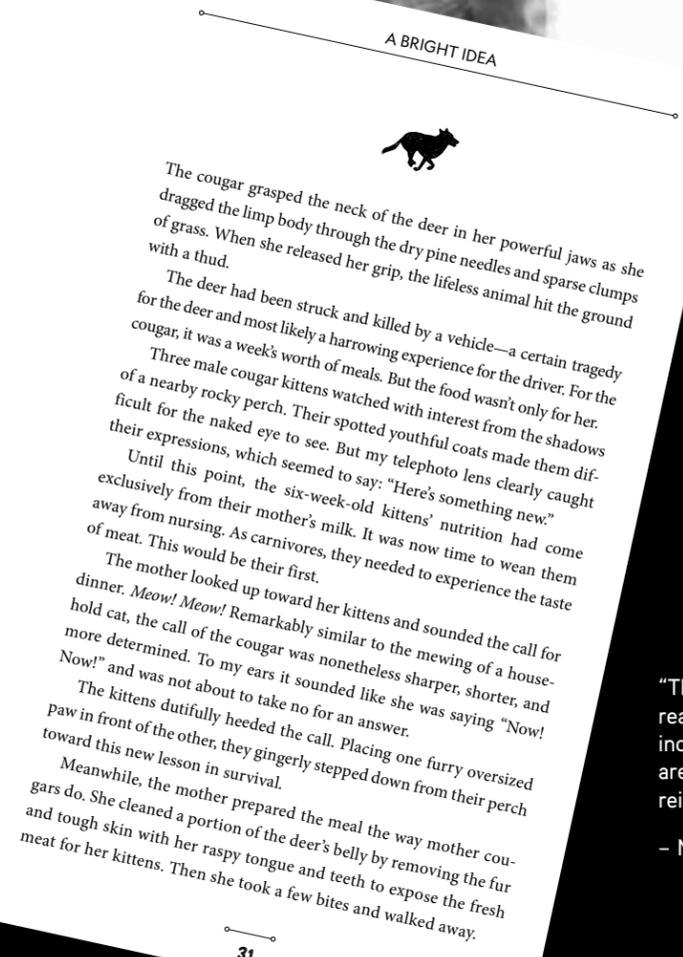
JAMIE

I stood silent and motionless, my eyes trained on the mysterious black hole in front of me. The opening was just two feet (0.6 m) wide, half hidden beneath a fallen spruce tree. Its oval shape reminded me of a dark, mystical eye, like that of a dragon. Such a thought of fantasy contrasted sharply with the reality of what I was about to do. It was something that no one had likely ever done. I sniffed against the chilly April air. Spring had sprung a month earlier, according to the calendar anyway. Somewhere nourishing rains and lengthening days were coaxing flowers to show their colorful faces. Somewhere tree buds were awakening from their long winter rest, and grass was once again growing green. Somewhere, but not here. Snow still covered most of the ground in the forest that surrounded me. The warmth of the season comes late and slowly, to the mountains of Idaho. I glanced at my husband, Jim, through a cloud of my condensed breath. He crouched nearby behind his movie camera. All of his years as a filmmaker led up to this moment, and he wasn't about to let it slip by without capturing it on film. Looking up from his eyepiece, he nodded. I walked cautiously toward the gaping black hole. With each step, I became more aware of the sounds around me. The gentle rush of a breeze and the chirping of black-capped chickadees mingled with the crunching and squeaking of snow and mud under my boots. My own heartbeat reverberated through several layers of clothing.



JIM

Long before the thought of living with wolves ever entered my mind, and even before I met Jamie, I honed my skills as a wildlife filmmaker. My first films were undersea adventures. I focused on the colorful fish that live among the reefs off the shores of my native Florida. As beautiful and fascinating as I found the ocean, I was drawn to the forested mountains of the West. My teenage experiences as a wrangler fed my desire to film some of the animals that live there—like beavers. These creatures are usually either underwater or in their lodges, making them tough to spot in the wild. So instead, for my movie, I built a beaver lodge inside a log cabin. I was able to film—from the other side of a large window—the comings and goings of a beaver family and show the world these quirky animals' daily activities. I even filmed the birth of beaver kits. The subject of my next film was a larger and decisively more dangerous animal. It was also much more elusive, almost to the point of being ghostly.



A BRIGHT IDEA

The cougar grasped the neck of the deer in her powerful jaws as she dragged the limp body through the dry pine needles and sparse clumps of grass. When she released her grip, the lifeless animal hit the ground with a thud. The deer had been struck and killed by a vehicle—a certain tragedy for the deer and most likely a harrowing experience for the driver. For the cougar, it was a week's worth of meals. But the food wasn't only for her. Three male cougar kittens watched with interest from the shadows of a nearby rocky perch. Their spotted youthful coats made them difficult for the naked eye to see. But my telephoto lens clearly caught their expressions, which seemed to say: "Here's something new." Until this point, the six-week-old kittens' nutrition had come exclusively from their mother's milk. It was now time to wean them away from nursing. As carnivores, they needed to experience the taste of meat. This would be their first. The mother looked up toward her kittens and sounded the call for dinner. *Meow! Meow!* Remarkably similar to the mewling of a household cat, the call of the cougar was nonetheless sharper, shorter, and more determined. To my ears it sounded like she was saying "Now! Now!" and was not about to take no for an answer. The kittens dutifully heeded the call. Placing one furry oversized paw in front of the other, they gingerly stepped down from their perch toward this new lesson in survival. Meanwhile, the mother prepared the meal the way mother cougars do. She cleaned a portion of the deer's belly by removing the fur and tough skin with her raspy tongue and teeth to expose the fresh meat for her kittens. Then she took a few bites and walked away.

"This one-of-a-kind memoir provides readers with an exclusive look at these incredible and complex animals that are a successful symbol of wildlife reintroduction."
— National Geographic editor, Kate Hale

OUR WOLF PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITS

Our online interactive exhibit, *The Hidden Life of Wolves*, allows the viewer to explore fascinating wolf behavior and the similarities we share with this social animal.



This year, we have focused on our partnership with the Rocky Mountain Wolf Project in Colorado to support wolf reintroduction in that state. Our photographic exhibit completed eight months at Aspen's airport, and is currently displayed (right) at the Southern Ute Museum and Cultural Center of the Southern Ute tribe in Ignacio. The exhibit then moves to the Museum of Boulder, and the InfoZone News Museum in Pueblo. An earlier version of this exhibit first appeared in the Russell Senate Office Building's rotunda in Washington, D.C., and then was displayed for six months in Chicago's esteemed Field Museum, before arriving at the Detroit Zoo, where it has been engaging visitors for four years.



Can't visit our exhibit in person? Living with Wolves is pleased to present (left) our online interactive exhibit, *The Hidden Life of Wolves*. Interpretive illustrations and hundreds of our Sawtooth Pack images take you on an exceptional learning adventure. Groundbreaking, and entertaining to explore, it will lead you to discover hundreds of fascinating facts about wolves, the

ecosystems they live in, and their contributions to the wild world. Join the adventure by discovering our new online experience at livingwithwolves.org. Through our photographic exhibits, we're creating a better understanding of wolves, paving the way for future recovery efforts.

OUR WOLF RESEARCH IN THE NATIONAL PARKS



Trail cameras, triggered by motion sensors, are an increasingly common and minimally intrusive tool used by scientists to capture animal behavior and movements 24/7. By night, infrared technology allows for the camera to unobtrusively capture activity without the use of a flash. Trail cameras deployed by the Denali research team are used to document the activity and behavior of the research subjects and identify individual wolves and interactions within the pack.



Left to right:
 Dr. Doug Smith, Senior Wildlife Biologist, Yellowstone National Park,
 Kira Cassidy, Wolf Biologist, Yellowstone National Park and
 Bridget Borg, Wolf Biologist, Denali National Park and Preserve



Living with Wolves is supporting gray wolf research in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, Denali National Park and Preserve and the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

Led by Senior Wildlife Biologist for Yellowstone National Park Dr. Doug Smith, the research seeks to uncover the consequences of human-caused mortality on the stability of wolf family groups, known as packs. The leading human-caused mortality in

Yellowstone and Grand Teton is by rifle, a result of state-sanctioned wolf hunting seasons. In the Alaska study areas, it is by state-sanctioned public trapping seasons and government predator control programs, where wolves are often shot from helicopters in hopes of increasing big game and trophy hunting opportunities for hunters of moose and caribou.

The wolves studied for this research spend the vast majority of their lives within the protective

boundaries of the parks where they cannot be legally hunted and trapped. But brief forays outside the parks expose them to hunting and trapping, resulting in hundreds of park wolves being killed over the past several decades.

The study's principal investigator and world-renowned wolf biologist, Dr. Smith, and collaborating researchers in the other parks, are evaluating the consequences of these deaths and looking for answers to critical questions. Are wolf hunting seasons

outside of these large protected areas affecting wolves that live most their lives within the parks? When a wolf is killed, what happens to the pack's social dynamics, behavior and reproduction? Does the pack stay together, or does it fall apart? Does it matter which wolf in a pack is killed?

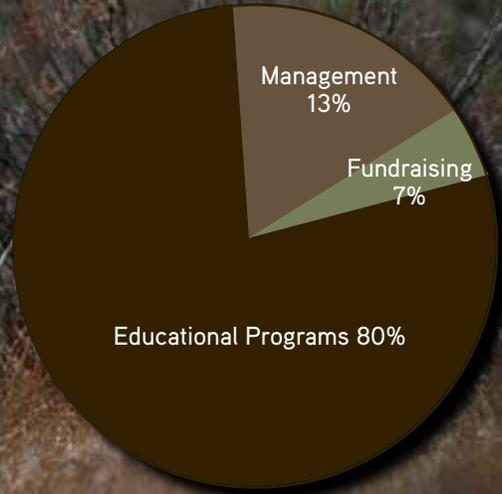
Preliminary results of the research indicate the death of even just one adult wolf can cause great instability within a pack and can lead to major changes for their families such as a lack of reproduction or the

disintegration of the pack itself. As we continue to collect more data, a more complete picture should emerge.

The goals of Dr. Smith and his team of scientists are to make this important research available to help guide and inform policy decisions, and to create a foundation of knowledge about the importance of wolves as individuals living within a family.



HOW YOUR CONTRIBUTION WORKS FOR WOLVES



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OUR MISSION: Living with Wolves is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to engaging the public worldwide in education, outreach and research to promote truth and understanding about wolves, while encouraging coexistence and inspiring people to take action to protect them.

LIVING WITH WOLVES

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