

In Remembrance of Joshua

Shawndra Mitchell, Volunteer

Wednesday July 25, 2001, marked the passing of one of our most beloved wolves. After living an incredible 17 years, Joshua was euthanized. His quality of life had deteriorated so severely and so quickly, it was the only humane option for him.

It still amazes me how much one life can affect us, and how deeply we can grieve upon their passing. Joshua is in a much kinder place, yet we mourn his loss and feel emptiness.

Let his life have meaning beyond the memories and sadness. May his legacy be that captivity of wild animals no longer exists. May we learn to accept life as it is meant to be and allow the wild animals to be just that.

Even though Joshua's life began with pain and unhappiness at the hands of human ignorance, he was truly a gentle spirit. His manner, his eyes, his very being, were of kindness, gentleness, and dignity. His passing leaves an empty spot in our hearts, as every staff member, volunteer and visitor that knew him loved and respected him. Joshua did love the attention he received from us. In his younger days when he was on the tour route, as long as I would stand there and talk to him, he would listen, rub against the fence, and even give me a few small howls. One of Joshua's favorite things was to listen to one of our volunteers, Annette, play her flute for him. He would lie close to the fence and listen for as long as she would play.

While I love all of the wolves here, Joshua has touched my heart in a way



that few other wolves have. Maybe it was his pain that I felt compassion for, or maybe it was his tender heart that captivated me. Whatever the reason, I am forever grateful to have known him, learned from him, and shared something very unique with him. It is so special when an animal's soul touches ours and we are receptive to it; in the

process, our own souls are enriched.


In the last few weeks of his life, I was fortunate enough to see him many times while on tour (even though he was off tour, you could sometimes catch a glimpse of him). I would always stop, and point him out to the tour group - it was an honor to be in his presence. Everyone associated with Wolf Haven can be proud of the life Joshua had here. Even though he chose to be a lone wolf, he was loved and very well cared for.

Joshua leaves behind many good memories. He is now in a better place where there are no fences, no pain, only love and happiness. For that, I am

grateful - he finally has the freedom he deserves.

*Do not stand at my grave and weep.
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glint on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you wake in the morning hush,
I am the swift, uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circling flight.
I am the soft starlight at night.
Do not stand at my grave and weep.
I am not there. I do not sleep.*

- Hopi Indian Prayer

The next time you experience something of exceptional beauty, or something that takes your breath away, maybe it's Joshua sending you his love and his thanks. You never know! 

Top: Joshua in 1998, photo by Julie Palmquist. Below: Joshua in 1994, photo by Pat Colton.