

Wolf Haven International
Strategic Plan
2010 - 2014

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Vision

Grow Wolf Haven International into a world class wildlife education and wolf-care facility.

Where We Are Now

Wolf Haven International (Wolf Haven) has been working to rebuild its community image since late 2005. When the present Executive Director (ED) took over Wolf Haven was in “survival mode”. This was largely the result of an unfortunate series of events in late 2004 and early 2005 that had resulted in negative publicity. After three years of continuous effort, we believe our image has not only been restored but has been substantially enhanced. Wolf Haven has both held and supported numerous community events; and has become a prominent fixture in the South Sound. Wolf Haven must continue this emphasis.

From 2007 to 2009 Wolf Haven offered educational classes to an average of over 4,000 students per year. We have also reached out to the retirement community and provided classes to senior citizens. Our educational curricula have been developed for various age groups. The spring months are filled with field trips that provide not only a classroom experience but also tours to view the animals we teach about.

Wolf Haven has reached out to the South Sound tourist industry. Our personnel are active members of the local Lacey, Tumwater, Olympia Visitor and Convention Bureau. We are one of the larger destination venues in Thurston County. Wolf Haven has accommodated steadily increasing visitation rates with an average of over 20,000 visitors between 2006 and 2009. Wolf Haven continues its outreach to local communities with increased advertising in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. Our hosted events are well attended. The 3rd Annual July Wildlife Festival was held with increased numbers of vendors and participants. Our August Howl-Ins are always well attended, with many selling out. Howl-ins in 2009 were well attended despite the downturn in the economy.

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In recent years Wolf Haven has also improved its staffing in several critical areas. The Board granted the new ED the authority to identify and hire the staff necessary to provide quality education and scientific credibility to the organization and high quality experiences to all who visit. In 2010 Wolf Haven's Board will assess staffing levels to assure critical tasks are accomplished.

At the same time Wolf Haven has maintained a strong commitment to a highly qualified and dedicated animal care staff. The Wolf Haven facility is a sanctuary, not a zoo. We treat our resident wolves and other animals with a high degree of care and respect. After all, some of these animals were bred to be domestic pets – a niche in which they do not fit. Before coming to Wolf Haven most of them have had traumatic experiences with humans.

Wolf Haven's efforts to restore its image within the community have largely succeeded, although there are still those who have questions about some past incidents. We understand the need to continue improving our community image and to deal expeditiously with problematic issues as they arise. It is now time to move on and complete a strategic plan that incorporates what we have started and guides our future growth. We must have this plan in place for our donors, contributors and the public. Wolf Haven has reached a time when it is ready to increase its efforts.

Core Competencies

Staff

Wolf Haven presently has the staff to address most of the goals and objectives that will be set forth in this strategic plan. Wolf Haven has assembled very skilled staff committed to its priorities of Education, Conservation and Sanctuary. Typically, nonprofit organization staffs turn over with high frequency. Present staff has been largely in place for two years or more. This capable staff has learned and defined their roles at Wolf Haven and can articulate what needs to be accomplished.

Animals

Wolf Haven has been in existence for 27 years. During that period Wolf Haven has developed and maintained an uncompromising ethic of providing first rate animal care. The animal care staff is seasoned and well trained. Wolf Haven has access to one of the best wildlife (e.g. wolf) veterinarians in

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the country. He has been with the organization for over 20 and has committed significant time to becoming educated about wolves in particular and large carnivores in general.

Management

Wolf Haven is fortunate to have a successful management team. However, there is more team definition and training that needs to occur, in order to fulfill the goals and objectives of this strategic plan.

Facilities

Wolf Haven is in the enviable position of being debt free. Wolf Haven owns the entire facility it occupies, including the real estate, the buildings and other structures, the animal enclosures, and the equipment. This is a highly unusual situation for most nonprofits. We are in a position of being able to improve on what we have, rather than having to build-up from scratch. The facilities focus should be on improving what we have for the future, rather than just maintaining the *status quo*.

Immediate Steps

Wolf Haven is poised to begin implementing a strategic plan as soon as it is completed and agreed to by staff and Board. The current structure and makeup of the staff and volunteers provides capability far above accomplishing the tasks that are now on our plate. The Board, staff and volunteers need to be further challenged to set targets for future growth and development.

Wolf Haven can fill a much needed niche in education. Few, if any, elementary and high school students are exposed to wildlife education under current curricula. It is only in institutions of higher education that one can select a major of study that might be wildlife related. How can one choose to be involved in wildlife issues if one is not exposed in some manner to their intrinsic value?

With proper guidance and facilities, Wolf Haven can offer a significantly expanded range of wildlife exposure and education. Our staff is already working with students of all ages in wolf and large carnivore education. We have the ability to expand the educational opportunities to include summer education camps and work projects in the Wolf Haven prairie and / or

wetlands studying plants and animals. Also, Wolf Haven could offer opportunities in wildlife care for high school senior projects. Wolf Haven is limited by its facilities, not by its mission or vision.

In addition to on-site education, the internet and telecommunication equipment can offer new education and grant opportunities. Reaching beyond traditional education methods provides exposure to potential supporters through meaningful experiences and personal connection.

Critical Endorsement

It is critical that the Board and staff fully support and commit to the goals and strategies of this plan. It is also critical that members, adopters, donors and volunteers support the strategic direction of the organization.

Wolf Haven has long been categorized as a “mom and pop” organization – A small not-for-profit organization that fulfills an excellent but limited mission of rescuing captive born wolves. There is definitely a need for such rescue, as evidenced by the frequency of calls that Wolf Haven receives seeking assistance in placing animals.

The Mission of Wolf Haven International is to “Conserve and protect wolves and their habitat.” Wolf Haven accomplishes its Mission through the business of Animal Care, Rehabilitation, and Public Education. This Mission guides us to “Work for Wolf and Wildlife Conservation and Education...” which we have been doing “...since 1982.” Within this context and through this Strategic Plan Wolf Haven will be able to move forward and expand. Further, it remains critical that Wolf Haven never abandon the original mission of providing sanctuary for wolves. This will always be the pivotal issue around which Wolf Haven revolves, about which Wolf Haven staff are passionate, and for which Wolf Haven donors contribute.

The requirement to grow must be endorsed as stated above. This endorsement will require that future board members, volunteers and staff stay focused on the goals and objectives outlined here. For too many years, Wolf Haven has moved forward only in stops and starts. Wolf Haven must commit itself in perpetuity to professionalism, scientific integrity, sound and humane animal husbandry techniques, and transparency in dealing with

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supporters. All staff, volunteers and board members will be integral in continuing to fulfill the goals and objectives of this plan and in providing the energy to achieve it.

Strategic Goals

For 2010 to 2014 Wolf Haven commits to the following strategic goals:

- Developing and implementing programs that further the educational, wolf care and advocacy aims of Wolf Haven.
- Developing effective procedures and structures for relationships with external stake holders.
- Improving facilities and the technological infrastructure to support the vision of wildlife education and wolf care.
- Strengthening financial stewardship to support decision making and open reporting to all stake holders.

Specific Goals

Education, Wolf Care and Advocacy

- Expand and enhance animal enclosures.

Animal enclosures need to be expanded and enhanced. Wolf Haven has a limited space in which to expand, but there is sufficient space to add one large and two smaller enclosures. The demand for captive born wolf rescue has not diminished over the years, in fact in some ways it has expanded. On average, we receive one call per day regarding the rescue of a wolf or wolf-dog hybrid that the owner can no longer care for. This demand is not expected to diminish.

- Seek additional funding for wolf research.

Wolf Haven should seek support for wolf research through a grant or co-funding arrangements with other environmentally like-minded agencies, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Federal Government.

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- Develop new and expanded educational experiences in animal husbandry.

Animal care staff should develop an internship program for those students who desire experience in the animal husbandry field.

- Organize a coalition of wolf conservation and education organizations.

Wolf Haven should work toward developing a coalition of wolf organizations in an effort to support wolf conservation and education.

- Evaluate the public tours.

Staff should consider rearrangement of the tour route and assess any changes that would enhance the experience of Wolf Haven for the public.

- Develop and implement expanded educational modules centered on ecosystem health and welfare.

Wolf Haven conducts off-site education classes, with hands-on experiences of touching skulls and pelts and playing games to help teach the roles of predators in the ecosystem. Our repertoire of classes is limited primarily to wolves; however we want to expand educational modules to include those centered on ecosystem health and welfare.

- Continue prairie restoration program on Wolf Haven property.

Wolf Haven has begun an aggressive prairie restoration program on the 55 acres of Mima Mound prairie on our site. Ninety-seven percent of this habitat type has been destroyed. We are attempting to use prairie restoration tools to bring back natives species and plan to use the area as an outdoor classroom in the future. Wolf Haven has partnered with local entities to improve this habitat and to develop education modules related to its ecosystem properties.

- Continue to develop and implement internet based educational opportunities.

Wolf Haven has been exploring an opportunity to put our educational opportunities online in an interactive forum. We are working with Critters, Inc. to develop the classroom activities that will be interactive with school children in off-site classrooms. The students will be able to interact with the Wolf Haven teacher through the keyboard. This system will also include a virtual tour through the sanctuary that will precede classroom sessions. The goal is to reach more schools and more students with wildlife education.

Procedures and Structures for Relationships With External Constituents

- To establish and maintain the highest levels of financial transparency and integrity.

To date Wolf Haven has been struggling to create and maintain the necessary financial control systems to provide financial transparency. It has had difficulty in getting its financial records into a form which will support and sustain a financial audit. We need to produce an annual report for stakeholders, contributors, funding agencies, donors, the Internal Revenue Service and other federal and state regulators summarizing our financial conditions in a clear, concise and easily understood format.

In order to responsibly operate the organization, financial reports must be timely and accurate. It is imperative that Wolf Haven define and implement financial policies and procedures that will ensure financial integrity. Only through meaningful, timely and accurate reporting systems can we make intelligent budget, strategic and financial development decisions.

- To set and articulate financial development targets.

Wolf Haven must develop the basis for a “Capital Campaign” that can be initiated within the next one to three years. The Capital Campaign must define and articulate easily understood and supportable

objectives. The campaign will identify the purposes the funds will support among the following program areas: establishing an endowment(s) to support education, animal care, and animal recovery; or facilities projects. Identifying sponsors and cultivating supporters must become a priority, transforming them into long-term contributors assuring Wolf Haven will continue to meet its capital requirements.

- Identify new expanded categories of membership.

Develop new membership options that will bring members to Wolf Haven. Continue to develop relationships with members as they become part of the Wolf Haven family.

- Improve, enhance and expand communications with donors

Wolf Haven does a great job of formally communicating with its members through its magazine *Wolf Tracks*. However, knowledge of its donors is key to better serving their needs, while at the same time Wolf Haven addresses its own needs. Additionally, exemplary customer service is imperative to attract and retain donors and contributors. A database management and maintenance plan must be developed and implemented to ensure data accuracy and validity, produce meaningful reports and reduce redundancy.

- Continue to build the volunteer base.

Delineate tasks that can be accomplished by volunteers based on experience with volunteers and in coordination with department heads.

Continue building the volunteer base by matching volunteers with tasks that can be challenging to the volunteer and productive for Wolf Haven.

Utilize training sessions for developing skills of volunteers in several important areas:

- becoming a tour guide;
- ensuring that accurate information is provided to those touring the sanctuary;

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- becoming a volunteer teacher helping to deliver on-site and off-site classroom materials;
- developing public speaking skills in order to present general Wolf Haven briefings to civic groups and others;
- developing skills in “making the ask,” i.e., how to develop a relationship with donors and facilitate asking for support for Wolf Haven.

Develop volunteer recognition programs, including calculation and reporting on total time and value of volunteer contributions.

- Explore and cultivate relationships with other volunteer dependent organizations.

Identify volunteer organizations with which Wolf Haven can affiliate. This is especially important within the geographic area of Wolf Haven, i.e., Tenino, Thurston County. Develop relationships with other community nonprofits in an effort to partner.

- Develop and produce an Annual Report of Volunteer Activity.

Develop a year-end report for the Board of Directors identifying contributions by volunteers.

Improved Facilities and Technological Infrastructure

- Continue developing and expanding the water delivery system.

The sanctuary water supply system was replaced in 2009. Installation of the pressurization feature could not be completed. Also, Wolf Haven has limited on-site restroom facilities. Currently, portable toilets are provided for the public’s use. This offers limited sanitary conditions and needs to be replaced with a modern restroom facility and septic system. Expanding and enhancing the capability of the water system to provide sufficient pressure to service the animal facility and installing adequate public restroom facilities are a priority.

- Continue to enhance and improve security.

A secure site for all facilities, the wolves, and the public must be provided. Wolf Haven will begin to experience human encroachment from development of new housing, businesses and/or the planned quarry site adjacent to our site. While an elevated level of trespass has been experienced in recent years, the fact that there are two employees now living on-site with alarm dogs has limited any severe incidents. A perimeter fence is planned for the entire 80 acres. Addressing this requirement, Wolf Haven has received a donation from the Department of Agriculture of over 5,000 linear feet of fencing material. Installation of this initial increment of fencing has already begun, but completion of this effort remains a high priority.

- Develop new designs for wolf enclosures.

Wolf Haven should develop preliminary designs for new enclosure areas within the sanctuary. These should include possible re-siting of some existing enclosures and the potential development of new enclosures within the sanctuary area. Additionally, development of a large enclosure for the front entrance should be considered. This enclosure should be large enough for a pack-size display of wolves. (The challenge will be to find a pack that can exist to fill it.) This enclosure would be available for viewing by the public awaiting tours or other events.

- Provide and replace enclosure deck pens as necessary.

Animal care staff must continue to provide and replace deck pens and shelters in each enclosure.

- Develop and implement a comprehensive video technology plan for remote observation of all animal enclosures.

Wolf Haven should develop a plan for securing and placing mobile cameras in each of the enclosures. This will facilitate observation of both on-tour and off-tour animals. These cameras will also be able to be streamed to the internet, allowing staff and members access to the sanctuary through a password protected secure website.

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- Plan, design, fund and build a new Visitors' Center including educational classrooms and a gift shop.

Public access to Wolf Haven is limited by weather considerations. The gift shop and admissions office cannot be safely operated during or after heavy snow falls. Education facilities are limited at Wolf Haven. While we are able to move 4,000 school children through our education classes, classroom space is limited. Only 25 to 30 students can be accommodated in the present classroom. Sometimes classes must be broken into three groups to allow larger classes access to the classroom facilities. This does not allow efficient operation and limits the number of students that can be accommodated. A new visitor center, gift shop and educational classrooms need to be planned, designed, funded and built. Such a building should have expanded classroom capacity, a new gift shop, meeting rooms, and should provide entry to the sanctuary.

- Expand online marketing and sales opportunities.

Wolf Haven needs to expand efforts to create and support an online gift shop. Any new efforts to increase online sales will have to be accompanied by an easy to use system that manages and tracks ordering, inventory, sales (including support of online sales), budgeting and revenue accounting.

Strengthening Financial Stewardship

- Develop and implement a long-term fundraising plan to align with the strategic plan.

While Wolf Haven operates on a sound financial base without long-term debt and limited cash reserves, before now there has never been a long term goal or commitment to providing for a sound financial future. The purpose of this goal is to establish those objectives and create a financial plan.

- Develop an unrestricted endowment and capital reserves comparable to the annual operating expenses of the organization for a one year period.

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The Wolf Haven should seek to establish an unrestricted endowment and capital reserves sufficient to continue operations in the face of any unforeseen financial disaster.

- Anticipate future human resource requirements.

The Board and ED need to develop a succession plan. Succession planning will allow Wolf Haven to more smoothly transition to future leadership. Wolf Haven should also continue support for staff education and training; and should develop a culture that assures working conditions that support performance expectations.