

# Farewell to Destiny and Kiwi

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**O**n Monday, June 7, one of Wolf Haven's most beloved wolves, Destiny, was euthanized due to severe kidney failure. It came as a great shock and sorrow to us all, especially since it happened so quickly.

Just the Thursday before, she had come up to me, as eager for her morning treat as always. When I came back to work on the following Monday, I was shocked to learn that she had become very ill during my absence. She was weak and had refused to eat during most of that time. Her urine sample results were very disheartening as they revealed that her kidneys had shut down and that toxins had built up to extremely high levels in her system. Since neither dialysis nor a transplant are options in treating kidney failure in wolves, our only other choice was to bring an end to her suffering.

Now as we all struggle to come



Destiny

to terms with this sudden loss, I concentrate on remembering all of the good things about her life, her quirks which made her so uniquely likeable. Destiny often spent the day asleep in the shade of a fir tree. The only time when she became especially active was during pup season, when she engaged in marathon bouts of den-digging and made preemptive strikes at her neighbor, Morning Star. It was quite something to see sweet, pudgy Destiny rushing the fence like a well-trained fighter ... she certainly had her pugilistic side. Until she had known you for some time and learned to trust you, she would snap at any fingers careless enough to get too close to the fence, even those offering treats! And yet, every spring her false pregnancies would reveal a tender, mothering side to her nature.

At fourteen, Destiny had become quite elderly and had taken a back seat to her mate, Moose. Until earlier this year,

she had been dominant over him. But lately he had become more demanding for the attention of his caregivers, and Destiny generally retired with the grace which was her style. As we grieve with Moose for her loss, she will always remain dominant in my memories.

**I**t was with great sadness that Wolf Haven witnessed the passing of our eldest wolf, Kiwi.

Kiwi was the first wolf whom visitors met on our tour, and she always greeted them with a stately dignity, as befitting her role of ambassador for her species. Even though she had been growing increasingly frail over the past year, she would still get up to check out any tour group which came by, at times rubbing against the fence to show her affection.

Kiwi was an exceptionally intelligent and sensitive wolf. Though small for a female, no



Kiwi photo by Pat Colton

one was able to intimidate her ... nor out-think her! All of her life she had lived with her brother and companion, Hambone, who was a perfect foil for her more serious personality. Though they were opposites by nature, the two wolves were obviously devoted to each other. It was a cruel blow to Kiwi when Hambone died of cancer last year. During his long illness she had watched over and protected him, and she never fully recovered from his death. Though obviously lonely, her advanced age precluded the possibility of a new mate.

As with many elderly wolves, Kiwi's appetite diminished, and she became extremely picky in

her choice of food. She had to be tempted to eat with an increasingly varied diet. When wolves reach this age, though, we indulge their every whim without a second thought, giving whatever will make them more comfortable and happy.

Kiwi had been struggling for months with increasingly severe arthritis. Varying medications would appear to improve her mobility for a while, only for the stiffness and poor balance to return after a spell of cold, rainy weather. Some time during the night of May 6, she must have fallen and further damaged a spine already compressed with age. Paralyzed below the neck,

the only - and the kindest - choice for us was to euthanize her. Though I wish that all elderly wolves could die peacefully in their sleep when their time has come, I truly felt the kindness of releasing Kiwi from her crippled body.

We buried her that afternoon, covered with flowers and special tokens, only ten days shy of her sixteenth birthday. Though it had been a dry day until then, the skies began to weep for her.

Kiwi remains in our memories as a remarkable wolf; if only her body had been able to match that indomitable spirit! 