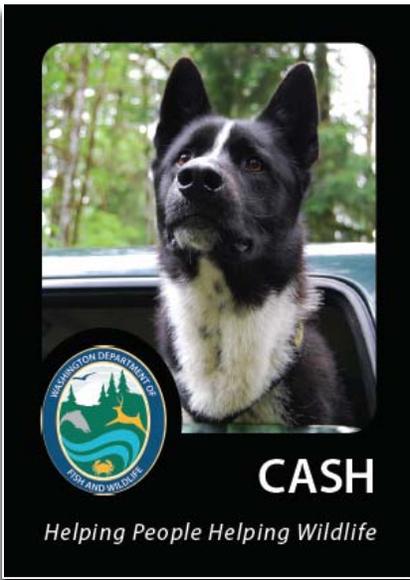




WDFW's Karelian Bear Dogs

*Helping People
Helping Wildlife*



For those of you that have followed WDFW's Karelian Bear Dog Program with my much-appreciated interest, I need to pass on some regretful news. KBD Cash has lost his battle with prostate cancer at almost 13 years of age. It was diagnosed in mid-June 2018, and because the tumor was inoperable, chemotherapy began immediately. Treatment was administered every 2 weeks, but became more aggressive over the months due the relentless nature of the cancer. He was cared for by the best oncology doctors available in the State of Washington and I am indebted to them for their efforts; it only took 1 visit before everyone at the hospital knew his name and made sure he got lots of attention. Cash remained surprisingly active through mid-August, and brave and stoic as always right to the end. Like the bear dog warrior that he was, he goes to the great spirit in the sky, swift and straight like an arrow shot into the sun. He will take his place in history and be welcomed by the other bear dogs that have left before him from the Wind River Bear Institute and the Partners in Life Program. Carrie and her WRBI team sure

gave me the absolute best bear-dog partner possible, and I will forever be grateful. Not many KBD handlers from North America keep their dog's kennel name, which is used for tracking lineages, but when he was born and Carrie delivered him she said, "Look that this one! The man in black! Johnny Cash, let's call him Cash". I knew I couldn't give up that name. And for those that know the song, he wore the black well, defending, protecting, and speaking for those that are unable to; Washington's wildlife. Cash's partnership and public service cannot be overstated, so it is befitting that he left us on this Labor Day weekend, a public holiday that celebrates the contributions of workers that have made this country what it is.

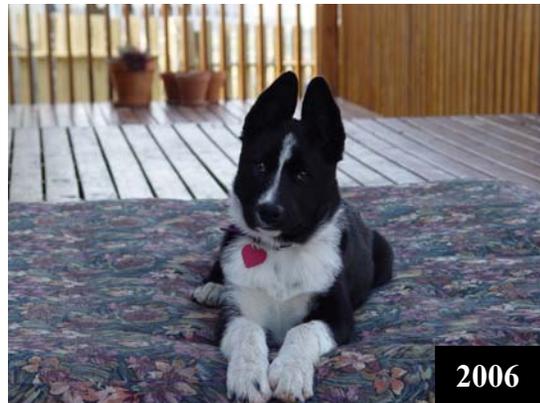
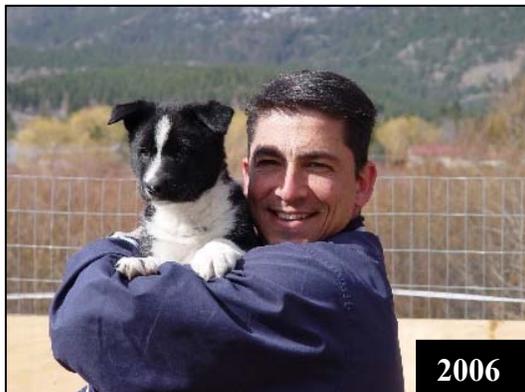
As many of you know, Cash helped start WDFW's KBD Program and is the first Washington KBD to leave us. He leaves behind an impressive service record that is hard not to mention. Outside of being my fierce protector his entire life, he captured and/or worked well over 500 bears and 150 cougars in his WDFW career. He also saved numerous bighorn sheep from vehicle collisions by pushing them away from the road and back up on to the mountain and hazed quite a few moose out of downtown Wenatchee without staff needing to fire a single immobilizing dart. He assisted enforcement officers on numerous investigations throughout the state and has traveled with me almost ½ million miles throughout Washington.

Cash worked on the 10-year Okanogan Cougar Project, starting out as a puppy and quickly becoming a lead dog, blazing the trail through 4 feet of snow and treeing study animals. He did the same for the 5-year Blue Mountains Cougar Project and helped make the 10-year Cougar DNA Project in NE WA a success. He worked on the 6-year Capitol Forest Black Bear Project as well as the 6-year East-West Black Bear Project in Snoqualmie and Lake Wenatchee. He contributed more than direct captures to these projects, even unsuccessful chases led to us good trap site locations, which then led to successfully making captures. He was instrumental in capturing the majority of the 110 orphaned bears and 65 orphaned cougars that we and countless WDFW staff have rescued over his lifetime. He never harmed 1 of these animals, even when he captured cubs on the ground, he just barked and said "over here Dad".

Another one of Cash's standout moments was when he located and cornered the bear involved in the Lake Wenatchee bear attack involving the Bellevue Councilman in 2010. In doing so, he helped bring closure to the victim & family, elevated the public perception of WDFW (a Wildlife Commissioner praised the efforts of Cash & WDFW field staff in a letter to the Editor), and quickly relieved community concern. Then there was Oysterville in 2010, when a resident was hand feeding 10 bears. All bears were captured in less than 3 days (half from traps and half by KBDs Cash & Mishka). And he released the bear burned in the Carlton Complex fire in 2013 known as Cinder that brought nation-wide attention to the agency.

When it came to education, Cash was always a crowd favorite and interacted with literally tens of thousands of Washington residents. We did countless public education events together, but the elementary school presentations were the best. Witnessing enthusiastic kids comprehending the key educational messages of carnivore coexistence because they were able to interact with Cash was inspiring & monumental. Despite showing them all the neat things we do in this vocation, and photos of bears and cougars, they would send me thank you notes that read "thanks for bringing Cash to see us, I told my mom and dad to take down the bird feeders and put away the garbage cans, so we don't attract bears, so Cash doesn't have to come chase the bears away". Brochures and kiosks certainly have a place in education, but they do not hold a candle to that 1 on 1 interaction with KBDs that allowed the message of prevention to really take hold.

I want to thank all of you that have supported Cash over the years. You mean the world to us. You were always happy to see the pups when they visited, you always stopped what you were doing to make time, and you always showed your support when it mattered. I am sure gonna miss my special bear dog, Indy will miss his big brother, and I know you all will miss him too. But please take solace in knowing Cash lived life to the fullest and absolutely took advantage of every day. He lived to work... but when we were not on the job there was never, ever, a dull moment. He made sure of that. I am attaching a few photos that capture his spirit, enjoy.





2006



2007



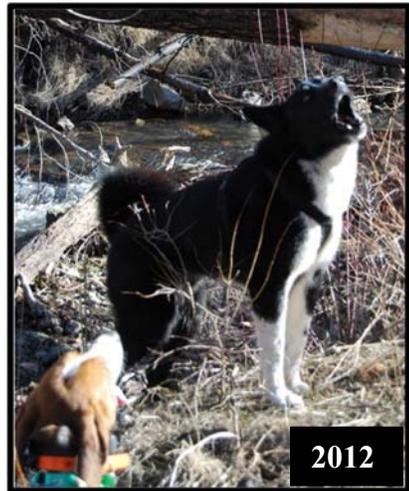
2009



2010



2011



2012



2013

