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Award-winning Washington wolf sanctuary celebrates the arrival of three new animals

TENINO, WA – Wolf Haven International recently welcomed three new residents to live out the rest of their lives in a peaceful, enriching environment. Wolf Haven, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to wolf conservation, has worked under the mission “to conserve and protect wolves and their habitat” since 1982 and is the only wolf sanctuary in the world to be accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS). In 2024, the organization was also selected from over 200 GFAS-certified sanctuaries worldwide to receive the esteemed GFAS Outstanding Wildlife Sanctuary Award.

Mexican wolf M1669 (Sirius) was the first to arrive at Wolf Haven. Born in the wild in 2017 as part of New Mexico’s Prieto Pack, Sirius was captured and collared as a pup to allow the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program field team to monitor his movement. Unfortunately, when he was just one-and-a-half years old, he was found with a severe injury to his front right leg, which later required amputation. Sirius was relocated to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Seville National Wildlife Refuge after his surgery, but it soon became clear that he needed a long-term home where he could comfortably live away from human activity. He was transferred to Wolf Haven to be a companion for female Mexican wolf F1361 (Sedona), and trail camera footage quickly revealed a budding companionship between the pair. Today, they are often seen sharing meals and napping close together. “It is not uncommon for three-legged wolves to thrive,” states Pamela Maciel Cabañas, Wolf Haven’s Sanctuary Director. “Even in the wild, they are known to live long, fulfilling lives. But we are amazed by Sirius’ strength and speed, especially when chasing ravens away from his food caches!”

In the same week as Sirius’ arrival, Wolf Haven staff also carried out the organization’s first ever double rescue for five-year-old female wolfdog, Ellie, and ten-year-old male wolfdog, Penn, who both needed to find a new home at the same time. Ellie was born to a backyard breeder and purchased as a pup, but as her behavior became increasingly unmanageable, her owners decided to surrender her. A private rescue operation in Washington stepped in to prevent Ellie from being transferred to a shelter, where she could have potentially been euthanized. Results from a DNA analysis revealed that Ellie is actually 90% wolf and only 10% domestic breed dog, so the rescue immediately contacted Wolf Haven to find Ellie a permanent home with specialized care.

Penn was also purchased at a young age to be a wolfdog pet and sadly spent his entire life chained up inside a tiny space with deplorable conditions. After his owner passed away, two volunteers from Endless Pawsibilities reached out to Wolf Haven with the aim of finding Penn a new home. Upon transfer to Wolf Haven, both Penn and Ellie received necessary medical procedures at Evergreen Veterinary Hospital and were released into their new enclosures one at a time – Penn free to touch grass and move beyond three feet for the first time in his life. After a week of individual acclimation, they were allowed to meet each other and quickly became inseparable.

Penn and Ellie’s energy is contagious, and their enthusiastic chases and vocalizations often inspire play for wolves and wolfdogs in neighboring enclosures. “Their dynamics have enriched not only each other’s lives, but also those around them,” notes Animal Care Specialist Gelane Clements. Thanks to the coordinated efforts of these two rescue organizations, Evergreen Veterinary Hospital, and Wolf Haven International, Penn, Ellie, and Sirius will flourish in the sanctuary for the rest of their lives.

Wolf Haven’s annual Wolves & Wine online auction to support this work and raise funds for their rescues will run March 7-16, 2025. Visit wolfhaven.org/wolves-and-wine to learn more.