



## Tracking the Pack

### Caring for the Center's Wolf Pack

by Lori Schmidt, Wolf Curator

Many visitors inquire about the daily care that the International Wolf Center's wolves, MacKenzie, Lucas, Lakota, Malik and Shadow, receive. Their care is defined in the Center's Wolf Curator Manual, which includes detailed protocols for staffing, training, safety, wolf handling and facility maintenance. This protocol abides by federal regulations set forth in the Animal Welfare Act administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). USDA veterinarians make spot inspections of our facility and review the Center's Veterinary Care Plan and the wolves' medical records and physical condition. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources requires a permit to display captive wolves, monitors the exhibit for safe and humane confinement, and reviews protocols for emergencies such as natural disasters.

As previous articles have discussed, the wolves at the Center are socialized to humans. To maintain this socialization and monitor the wolves' health, a minimum of two handlers visit the wolves in their enclosure four to five times per week.

During the visits, handlers inspect each wolf for physical problems, such as bites or scrapes, and external parasites, such as ticks. Handlers also watch for behavioral issues and record their observations in the wolf log, which are later summarized and posted on our Web site at [www.wolf.org](http://www.wolf.org).

We currently have eight people involved in the wolf care program. New wolf handlers must spend at least three months making visits outside of the enclosure so the wolves get to know them. After the wolves are familiar with the new handler, the wolf curator and another wolf handler escort the person into

the enclosure. If the wolves do not show signs of aggression toward that person, an additional three-month probationary period of visits inside the enclosure begins. To continue participating in the wolf care program after the probationary period, the handler must receive a rabies pre-exposure vaccination series and a tetanus booster.

If you would like to keep track of the wolves' daily care, go to the Web site at [www.wolf.org](http://www.wolf.org) and click on the Pack Page. ■

### Captive Wolf Management Course

Would you like to learn more about managing a captive wolf exhibit? If so, join the International Wolf Center for a one-week session:

- Assist the wolf curator in daily maintenance routines
- Review the protocols required to manage a socialized wolf exhibit
- Conduct behavioral observations of captive wolves
- Assist with this year's "Visiting Species" program, comparing wolves and dogs

Sessions throughout July and August. Fee of \$450 per person.

For more information or for a program application, contact:

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Lucas is the alpha male of the ambassador pack.

D. M. Dupros