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The International Wolf Center advances the survival of wolf populations by teaching about wolves, their relationship to wildlands and the human role in their future.

Educational services and informational resources are available at:

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Milestones Matter

Milestones matter. Without them we lose perspective and the relevance of the milestone to our day-to-day work. Marking 20 years of red wolf recovery in the wilds of North Carolina is surely a conservation milestone that deserves reflection. Perhaps foremost we should take the moment to celebrate the decision to save a species from extinction. Can there be any higher calling than saving from oblivion a fellow passenger on spaceship earth? The Red Wolf Recovery Program also paved the way through its practices and personnel to further wolf recovery in other parts of the country, nowhere more so than in Yellowstone National Park. These successes, in turn, have given other species recovery programs around the globe reason to be optimistic that their work can be accomplished too.

A hearty howl of congratulations to all the people behind the program and especially to the Red Wolf Coalition, which marks its own milestone of 10 years of advocacy and educational work.

On a personal level I recently crossed a milestone of my own. In September, I marked 14 years of service as executive director of the International Wolf Center. It has been a great ride, full of wonderful wolf experiences. None was better than standing on the tarmac in 1995, watching a small plane with its cargo of wolves bank against the backdrop of the snow-capped Canadian Rockies, heading south for Idaho and Yellowstone, where a great experiment would return wolves to America's Northern Rockies. Equally satisfying has been the opportunity to meet dedicated people from all over the globe who play a part in the complex world of wolves—whether Dr. Djuro Huber from Croatia, who had to deal with unexploded mines while conducting his research, or Tungalagtuya Khuukhendu of Mongolia, whose magnificent native dress brightened the meeting rooms at one of our international wolf conferences.

I start a new adventure this fall as I leave the International Wolf Center and head to Vermont to assume the position of executive director of Northwoods Stewardship Center, an organization focused on land stewardship, environmental education, conservation science and outdoor recreation. The mountains, farms, fields and forests of the region and the challenges of a new job beckon me east. Leaving the Center is no small decision. Never have I worked for an organization with so many dedicated, hard-working staff and volunteers. Together we have created a powerful synergy, bringing intention, creativity and success to efforts on behalf of wolf survival.

Wolves matter too. They represent so perfectly the elegant mechanisms that evolve within natural systems. Prey populations are healthy because of predator pressure. Healthy prey populations keep predators keen.

Because humans play such a dominant role in the world today, it's easy to dismiss the remarkable complexities of natural systems and the vast time frames in which those systems developed. Wolves matter in and of themselves, but because they and other predators play such a pivotal role within natural systems, they matter even more.

They say that anyone who plants a tree is an optimist. The same holds true for those who work to keep wolves on the landscape.

Thanks for your optimism and for your support of the International Wolf Center.

Happy howling to you all! ■