

September 13, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of W.O.L.F. and Shelley Coldiron.

I am the founder/owner of Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center (CWWC) in Divide, Colorado. I have had my center in 3 locations in Teller County since 1991. The Center was burned out by the Hayman fire in 2002; relocated 6 miles east to Florissant, CO for 3.5 years where I was renting, and moved to our permanent location in Divide, Colorado a decade ago totaling almost 25 years. In all 3 locations we had to follow the same procedure with obtaining our Conditional Use Permit/Special Licensing (CUP). I would like to address a few things to help people understand a little clearer why wolf sanctuaries exist, why there is a need, and about our mission.

First, making the decision to either start or take over a wolf and wildlife organization is not a simple one. W.O.L.F has a track record of providing sanctuary to animals that need a second chance, exist in abusive situations, or that would otherwise be euthanized. To improve the facility, which takes not only money, but also the energy and persistence, is commendable. Shelley has great compassion to help animals in need, and she has proven that she and her Board have the ability to turn around a failing organization. The community should recognize and support her desire to update and upgrade W.O.L.F.'s facilities.

A good organization helps the community in many ways. As an example, our guests come from all over the United States (and the world) to learn about wolves and wildlife and CWWC has become a destination place to visit. This brings revenue to our county and state, but more importantly, to our small local community of Divide and neighboring Woodland Park, CO. We see countless schools and youth organizations, we take our animals to State Parks and community events and provide hands-on educational opportunities, and we organize special events and promote them outside of El Paso County. We have a paid professional staff and create work opportunities where few exist. We have a successful college internship program. In 2016 we had students spend the summer with us from Texas, Missouri, Ohio, Illinois, and Colorado Springs. We have had families, military service people, corporate service programs and others who volunteer on projects. We provide people of all ages and ability the opportunity to howl with a wolf, a priceless experience. W.O.L.F is familiar with our model and will create its own model that will benefit the wolf dogs, the local community, and the people of Larimer County.

In preparing our CUP we had to address many of the same issues facing W.O.L.F. Noise seemed to always be a priority concern. Personally, I feel that vehicles, aircraft, loud music, dogs that bark constantly, and the guns being shot off next to us continuously, are far more irritating than the sound of a wolf howl. Few people realize that wolves don't bark and they only howl a very few times during the day, sometimes only twice a day in summer. Nights are very quiet here, and we have never had a noise complaint in 25 years. Our closest neighbor is roughly 2,000' from the east edge of our enclosures, and she would confirm if asked that we are good neighbors. Noise affecting neighbors will be a non-issue at W.O.L.F.'s new property as well.

Also in our CUP we dealt with migration of deer and elk. In 25 years of experience, I can tell you with 100% confidence that ungulates have adapted well to humans (the biggest predators), dogs, housing, highways (even though they get hit, it is a matter of overpopulation). They graze and bed down on and around our center, and they seem to know that they are safer on our property than most anywhere else. Our perimeter fencing keeps wildlife out of our wolf enclosures, and our fencing footprint leaves ample room for wildlife to roam the grounds undisturbed. A simple walk about with W.O.L.F and CPW should result in an easy solution to maintain or create new wildlife corridors through W.O.L.F property.

Denying W.O.L.F. the opportunity to move to its new location would be a travesty. The current location is dangerous to the animals and staff due to fire and flood. The new location is an excellent choice in many ways, but 3 major reasons are:

1. It eliminates much of the fire/flood concerns that in turn could result in injury or even death of the animals and staff.
2. It would allow a much broader opportunity to fulfill its mission of educating the public, something that is not allowed at their current location.
3. It provides a place for the community and students taking veterinarian medicine or a related field to study and become involved.

I am putting my facility's name and support behind W.O.L.F and Shelley because I know that she will make Larimer County and the local communities proud. I know she has the experience to create a place that visitors and organizations will be proud and excited to bring their families to. CWWC, W.O.L.F. and Mission Wolf (Westcliffe, CO) have worked together for more than 20 years. We are not competitors; we are united in our common mission and supportive of each other. When we succeed the animals win. We are here to help.

I am also a member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the Gold Standard for Sanctuaries. Knowing Shelley and her staff for many years, I support their efforts and have offered assistance through the relocation process. Even though I am unable to attend the meeting, please do not hesitate to call me at 719-687-9742 or email tours@wolfeducation.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

Darlene Kobobel
Founder/Owner CWWC