



Celebrating 10 Years as a Non-Profit



Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center

It All Started With A Vision...

West Yellowstone, Montana has always been a popular tourist destination, especially if you wanted to observe bears. Old-timers will tell of evenings spent at the local dumps observing grizzlies rummaging through the garbage from thousands of tourists. After the dumps inside Yellowstone National Park and the surrounding communities were closed abruptly in 1972, many bears struggled to quickly adapt, and consequently were relocated or destroyed in the interest of public safety.

Enter Lewis S. Robinson. Mr. Robinson saw an opportunity. First, to develop an area of Town that would celebrate the iconic bears – basically giving tourists what they expected to see, and second to help save the bears that were being destroyed at an alarming rate.

Battling through the expected controversy of building a captive animal facility so close to Yellowstone National Park, Mr. Robinson opened his Grizzly Discovery Center in the summer



On of the Center's first pamphlets



Lewis Robinson proudly tours President Jimmy Carter

of 1993. The Nonprofit International Grizzly Fund was also founded by Mr. Robinson at the same time, and received a percentage of admission fees generated by the Center to help fund projects in the wild in support of bears.

In 1995, Mr. Robinson's company, Firehole Land Corporation became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ogden Entertainment Services – a large world-wide company in the entertainment industry. In July of 1999 economic factors forced Ogden to condense operations and sell all North American assets west of the Mississippi. The Center was faced with two options; be purchased and operated as another for-profit business, or be shut down completely.

HISTORIC TIMELINE

1993

The Grizzly Discovery Center opens its doors to the public exhibiting three captive-born Kodiak Brown Bears.

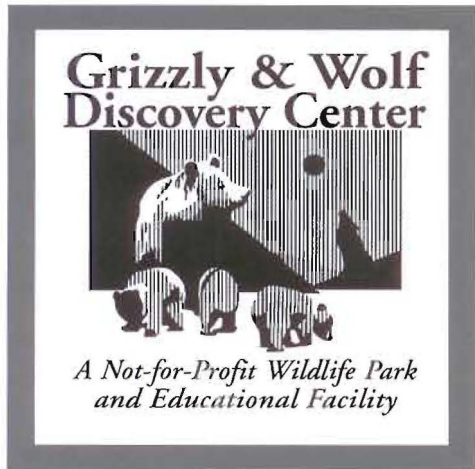


1995

The wolf habitat debuts with a pack of ten young animals forming the Gallatin Pack.

Stepping Up...

Faced with the possible closure of the facility and a lack of a suitable prospective buyer, Director Gale Ford proposed "why don't we just buy it". After the long process of forming a new Not-for-Profit organization, and finding a way to finance the package by using their homes as collateral, Director Gale Ford, Controller Nancy Heideman and Curator John Heine presented a \$1.7 million offer to Ogden for the facility and the surrounding 14 acre site. The three founders along with Center Staff, friends and supporters went to work attempting to raise a suitable down payment on the loan. Finally, with numerous donations, prepaid admission tickets and additional financial guarantees, the newly named Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center opened its doors as a not-for-profit on October 29, 1999.



Those who were skeptical of the Center could now see how a nonprofit educational facility could be beneficial. The GWDC moved forward by working closely with federal, state and private organizations to enhance its mission. To this day, the Center collaborates with the Park Service to cosponsor special events and interpretive talks. Center Staff helped develop the Bear-Resistant

Container Testing Protocol with the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) and Living with Wildlife Foundation. The GWDC has gained special recognition and notoriety among professional educators, wildlife managers, researchers, captive animal specialists and most importantly, with our visitors.

The GWDC continues to evaluate its programs and exhibits. At the last accreditation hearing of the prestigious Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), we were told that "no one does bears and wolves better than the GWDC" - only 10% of the roughly 2,000 captive animal facilities in North America can meet the stringent requirements of AZA. The USDA, USFWS, USFS, USDI, MTFW&P and the Town of West Yellowstone continue to give the Center high praise for the animal and education programs as well as the general upkeep and fiscal stability of the facility.



But most of all, it has been the 1.2 million visitors and supporters since turning nonprofit that have made it possible to bring the lives of bears and wolves to a world-wide audience.

HISTORIC TIMELINE

1999

Ogden notifies management that the Center will close if no buyer can be found.



1999

Three managers of the Center form a Not-for-profit organization and buy the GDC and six adjoining acres for \$1.7 million.

Bears, Wolves and More...

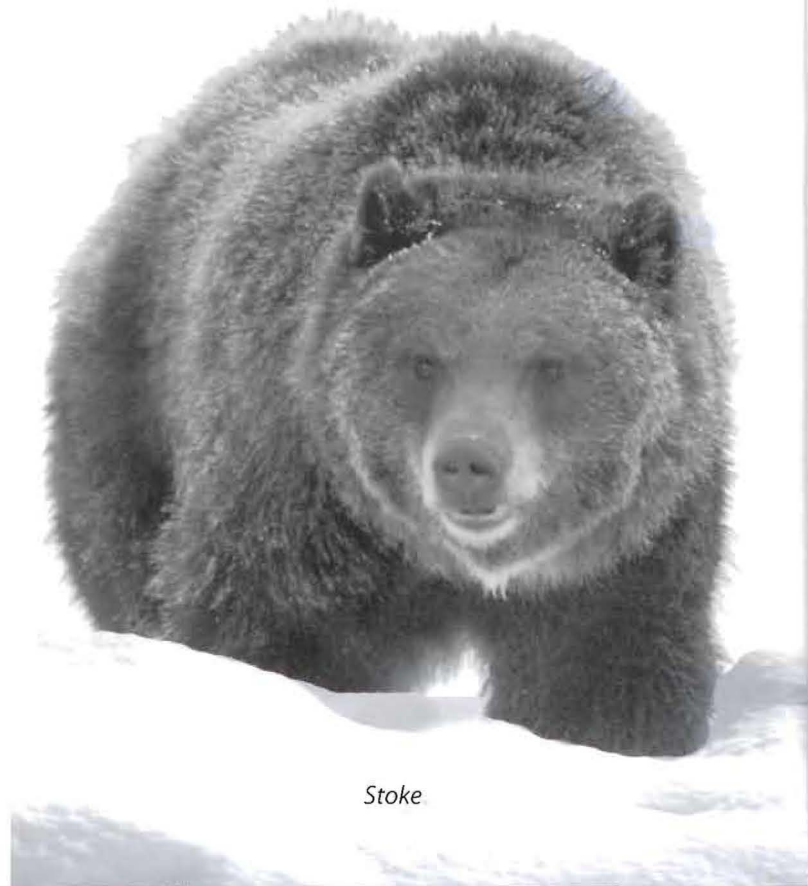
When the Center first opened its doors in 1993, there was only one animal habitat that displayed three captive-born Kodiak brown bears; Toby, Max and Lewie. A lot has changed. Looking back, a total of 16 bears, 18 wolves, 9 birds-of-prey and one Karelian Bear Dog have called the Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center home.



The bears have always been the main attraction of the facility. In the early years, the only animals available to the Center were captive-born. Then orphaned or problem bears from Canada and Alaska (Fred, Kenai, Revel & Stoke, Sam & Illie, and Kobuk & Nakina) were allowed to find refuge with us. After turning non-profit, bears listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in the lower 48 states were finally able to be placed at the GWDC (Kelty, Sow 101 with cubs Bridger & Colter, and Spirit).

In 1996, the Center opened the wolf habitat with a large captive-born pack of ten animals. Over the years, as the pack matured, the challenges of managing this dynamic, social species forced the staff to rethink the number of wolves displayed. In time, two females (Katimik and Selway) were separated and transferred to another facility in Colorado. With the opening of the new River Valley Wolf Habitat in 2008, the Center currently manages two separate wolf packs, each containing four animals each. The last of the original ten, Hayden and Lakuna (now 15-years-old) still survive in an off-exhibit habitat.

As the Education Department expanded, so did the diversity of programming. Live non-releaseable raptors were a great fit for outreach and theater programs. Long overdue bird-of-prey exhibits will allow our visitors to observe these magnificent birds beginning in the spring of 2011.



Stoke

HISTORIC TIMELINE

2001

The renamed Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center is accredited by the American Zoo & Aquarium Association (AZA).



2002

The GWDC saves its first Montana grizzlies – Spirit, Sow 101 and her two male cubs. The future gift shop and restaurant buildings are purchased from Xanterra.

Where are they now?

Many bears and wolves have moved on. The following is a list of our beloved residents who taught us so much over the years.

BEARS

- Toby is doing great at the Buffalo Zoological Gardens in Buffalo New York.
- Max & Lewie were transferred to Ocala, Florida in 1997.
- Fred passed away at Buffalo Zoological Gardens earlier this year.
- Kenai was euthanized in 1996 after never fully recovering from a spinal injury sustained in the wilds of Alaska.
- Kelty, from Yellowstone National Park, was held briefly by the GWDC before being transferred to the Wildlife Waystation in California.
- Bridger & Colter were transferred to Washington State University's Bear Research Center in Pullman, Washington in 2004.
- Stoke was euthanized earlier this year after an inoperable cyst was discovered along his spinal cord causing extreme paralysis.



Bridger and Colter

WOLVES

- Lamar, Granite, Aztec, Luna, Alyeska, and Naya – all from the Center's original Gallatin Pack have passed away here at the GWDC.
- Gallatin Pack females Selway and Katimik were transferred to Mission Wolf in 2004.



RAPTORS

- American Kestrel "Twitter", Screech Owl "Blink" and Swainson's Hawk "Logan" have all passed with age.



Naya

HISTORIC TIMELINE



2003

"BEARS: Imagination & Reality" is purchased from the Science Museum of Minnesota and is installed in the remodeled admissions building.



Observe, Understand and Appreciate...



The bears do the teaching during our "Safety in Bear Country" displays - visitors observe grizzlies obtaining improperly secured food items

These three simple words from our mission statement are brought to life through the educational efforts of the staff. Since turning non-profit, the GWDC has made a financial and philosophical commitment to bring the most captivating programs to its visitors. With increased staffing, live bears, wolves, birds-of-prey, a Karelian Bear Dog, an ongoing partnership with the National Park Service and a cooperative spirit of creativity among staff members, the GWDC has developed the most memorable experiences available anywhere.

HISTORIC TIMELINE

2004

The Center's master plan is developed. New bird holding building is constructed to accommodate the popular bird-of-prey programs. Karelian Bear Dog "Jewel" is added to the GWDC family.

Our donated Education Truck allows us to travel to schools and clubs throughout the Yellowstone area



Summer children's programming is always a popular highlight of any child's visit

The action-packed "Bear Pepper Spray" program is an important interactive display



Jewel is a retired member of the Wind River Bear Institute's "Bear Shepherding Team," and has worked throughout North America in an effort to minimize bear-human conflicts





The GWDC and the National Park Service cosponsor many events including the Winter Speaker Series, Spring and Fall Photo Festivals and International Migratory Bird Day



A messy campsite was placed in the bear habitat during the filming of a PSA produced by the US Forest Service



The "Keeper Kids" program continues to be our most popular activities



GWDC Naturalists are always present in the habitat area to give visitors insights into the lives of bears and wolves



Yellowstone National Park Interpretive Naturalist give captivating talks in the Center's theater all year



The "Bird-of Prey" presentation bring live raptors to an intimate theater setting



Special groups are invited to help with projects, including preparing bins for bear-resistant container testing

HISTORIC TIMELINE

2005

The new wolf habitat and naturalist cabin is conceptualized and design begins. Much-needed off-exhibit wolf holding pens are added.



2006

AZA reaccredits the Center. A perimeter fence is erected around the undeveloped six acres. Two wolf pups (McKinley & Leopold) arrive to begin the first of two new wolf packs.

New Exhibits...



"BEARS: Imagination and Reality" has been a wonderful addition

One of the first priorities of the newly formed nonprofit was to enhance the overall appeal of the Center through the addition of new exhibits while enhancing the existing displays. New graphics in the habitat areas were completed early on. Then, the GWDC made a major acquisition by purchasing "BEARS: Imagination & Reality" from the Science Museum of Minnesota. After considerable demolition and remodeling, the new interpretive displays opened to rave reviews in the spring of 2004. The Center then turned its attention to the wolf displays. The River Valley Wolf Habitat and Dumke Family Naturalist Cabin have taken visitors on wolf viewing and interpretive journeys that is unparalleled unless you travel to the Lamar Valley of Yellowstone with a spotting scope. New exhibits in the works include the Bald Eagle Aviary/Bird-of-prey habitats – scheduled to open in the summer of 2011, and the River Otter/Riparian Habitat – still in the design phase.



The Dumke Family Naturalist Cabin

We are still looking forward to the River/Otter Riparian Habitat

Artificial rockwork craftsmen were brought in to create the river and bank of the River Valley Wolf Habitat



The inside of the Cabin encourages visitors to stay and learn about wolves



HISTORIC TIMELINE



2007

Major parking lot and entrance work is completed. Four additional wolf pups are added to form the River Valley Pack.



Looking for Answers...



Researchers have utilized special monitoring equipment to record wolf howls, bear communication and to check for heat loss

Over the past ten years we have been honored to host numerous researchers from across the country. Research is an important component of the Center's mission as we strive to help both wild and captive populations of bears and wolves.

By far, the Bear-Resistant Product Testing Program continues to be our most frequent contribution. Literally hundreds of containers have been evaluated by the Center's bears during the development of suitable products to be used in areas of North America occupied by wild populations of bears.

Additionally, during the years since Yellowstone Park's wolf reintroduction, many researchers have utilized the GWDC captive pack as a means to collect baseline data. Also, the bears happily participated in a study of the benefits of scavenging off of wolf kills by measuring how quickly the GWDC bears could consume large quantities of moose meat.

Current efforts taking place at the Center include US Geological Survey researchers utilizing Center wolves in an infrared mange detection study, and an effort by the Wind River Bear Institute to detect low-frequency communication in bears.

Furthermore, members of the Centers' Staff have presented numerous papers about animal care and interpretive techniques to colleagues throughout the world.

The Bear-Resistant Container Testing Program continues to put bins of every shape and size through a rigorous 60-minutes of "bear-contact-time"



HISTORIC TIMELINE



2008

The Dumke Naturalist Cabin and River Valley Wolf Habitat open to rave reviews.



Support and Popularity...



The GWDC was recognized in Child Magazine's first Readers Choice Awards

The GWDC has seen some amazing gains in popularity related to numbers and positive exposure over the past ten years. Attendance alone has seen a 10% rise, resulting in a wonderful ability to recycle the extra funds back into the facility. Everything from memberships, animal adoptions, grants and donations have increased since turning nonprofit. With the added funds, visitors have experienced new improved exhibits, more programs & presentations, and updated visitor amenities - to date, close to \$3 million has been spent on capital improvements.

Also, with the new focus and legitimacy of a nonprofit, came popular media attention. The GWDC was finally treated as a resource for correct information about bears and wolves; also, everyone wanted footage of the bears testing containers. As a result, every major TV network has visited the facility to produce stories about bear-human conflicts, wolf reintroduction and what to see and do while traveling to Yellowstone. Private filmmakers continually want footage of Center animals in natural habitats for their documentaries on bears and wolves. On any given week, you can see one of these shows repeated on the Discovery Channel, Animal Planet or National Geographic. Most recently, the kids PBS show "FETCH" aired with an episode that featured kids attempting to design a bear-proof picnic basket.



PBS KIDS GO! crew film "FETCH! With Ruff Ruffman" in the bear habitat



HISTORIC TIMELINE

2009

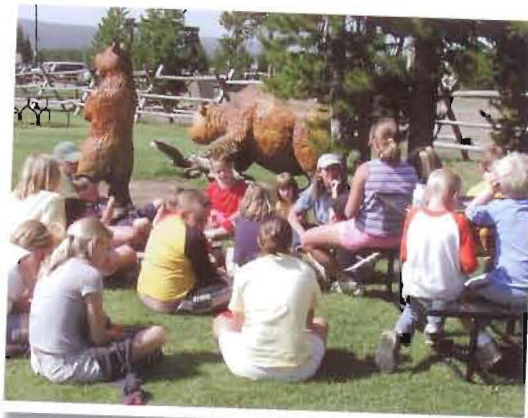
The Gallatin Wolf Pack is retired and taken off-exhibit. The newly formed High Country Pack of four animals takes their place. Design for a Bald Eagle Aviary and raptor exhibits is completed.



Committed to Community...

The GWDC Board feels a deep responsibility within the surrounding communities as a resource of knowledge, manpower and service. Policies have been set in place to offer free visitation to individuals and groups that cannot afford admission. Also, staff has been asked to lend their expertise to community projects such as the West Yellowstone Birding Brochure, the Hebgen Lake Recreation Map, and to organize West Yellowstone's Christmas Bird Count to name a few.

As an organization, the GWDC offers off-site presentations to local groups free of charge. Additionally, the education staff travels to the West Yellowstone School to help with the Helping Hand's after school program. In the summer, it's West Yellowstone's Summer Recreation Program that benefits.



West Yellowstone Summer Recreation Program participants are entertained and taught by GWDC staff each summer



A sampling of the Center's printed outreach efforts to benefit the community

All GWDC employees are encouraged to participate in some kind of public service to the community and are compensated by the facility for up to four hours a week. Currently, we are proud to be volunteers for:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Town of West Yellowstone Recreation Department
- West Yellowstone Snowmobile Events
- West Yellowstone and Island Park Emergency Medical Technician
- Make-a-Wish Foundation
- Eagle Mount Bozeman
- Island Park Search and Rescue
- West Yellowstone and Island Park Fire Departments
- West Yellowstone School Basketball Coach
- Grizzly Park Architectural Committee
- Yellowstone Basin Bank Advisory Board
- West Yellowstone Hockey Association
- Rocky Mountain Hospice
- Montana Special Olympics

HISTORIC TIMELINE



2010

Construction on the Bald Eagle Aviary begins. Design is initiated on a River Otter/Riparian Habitat complex of indoor exhibits.



Care to Help Us Through the Next Ten Years?

Planning the work of the next ten years wouldn't be possible without your continued support. We hope that you come by to see all the improvements and additions beginning with the spring 2011 opening of the Bald Eagle Aviary and Bird-or-prey exhibits.



Development of the River Otter/Riparian Habitat will continue through 2012. Actual construction will begin after a successful capital campaign. Future plans also include a new bear habitat depending on funding.

Every penny helps the Center take care of the daily needs of the facility and its animals. Please consider a membership, animal adoption, Montana GWD license plate or a continued donation to keep our important work flourishing through the next decade. Remember, all donations are tax-deductible. Visit us online at www.grizzlydiscoveryctr.org for forms and more detail on the many ways you can help.

To keep up-to-date on all the happenings at the Center, follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Also remember to check out the new wolf and bear webcams!

Thank you for being part of our family.

Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center

Not-for-Profit AZA Accredited

(406)646-7001 (800)257-2570 Fax: (406)646-7004
201 S. Canyon, P.O. Box 996 West Yellowstone, MT 59758
info@grizzlydiscoveryctr.com | www.grizzlydiscoveryctr.org

Return service requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO.1
ZIP CODE 59758

Lewis and Linda Robinson
4 Malibu Lane
Rockport, TX 78382-3724