

Wolf Mountain



The wolves featured in this short film live in a shelter and have never known life in the wild. But you would never know that by looking into their eyes or listening to their howls, which express a connection to a deep, abiding and mysterious place that has no link with captivity.

Discussing the Film:

The following questions are intended to be used post-film screening to spark discussion and activities related to both the content and storytelling elements of this particular film.

1. What were some of the most interesting scenes you remember from *Wolf Mountain*?
2. Do you think Tanya is an interesting subject in the film? What makes her story worth watching for you?
3. The North American gray wolf was hunted to near extinction in the early 20th century, but was reintroduced to many areas throughout the United States and is experiencing healthy numbers. What do you think were the main reasons for wolves being killed off in such large numbers?
4. Tanya Littlewolf talks in the film about how her life is dedicated to taking care of the wolves in the sanctuary. If you could spend your time with one group of wild animals for the rest of your life, what would it be and why?

5. Native American tribes hold the wolf in high regard, identifying with the animals and their ability to survive and take care of their pack. Why do you think modern Americans are fascinated with wolves? Who in your life most embodies the spirit of the wolf, as you see it?

Extensions:

1. To rewatch *Wolf Mountain*, go to <http://vimeo.com/42261942> or go to the Wolf Mountain Sanctuary website.
2. Get involved with Tanya Littlewolf's organization, The Wolf Mountain Sanctuary, by going online to: <http://www.wolfmountain.com/>. If you live in the northern California or Nevada, consider taking a class trip to the sanctuary to visit the wolves or have Tanya come to the school and speak.
3. Check out the webpage of Defenders of Wildlife on wolves, and report on the most interesting facts on them: <http://www.defenders.org/gray-wolf/basic-facts>.
4. There are wolf sanctuaries in many states. Google "wolf sanctuary" to see if your state has one and go for a visit!

Filmmaker Conversation:
Brendan Nahmias (Director) of *Wolf Mountain*.

Where did you get the idea or inspiration for the film?

BN: We were looking to tell a story about a species that was always close to becoming endangered because of the way we view them. We found Tanya online and then went to meet her. We had seen a lot of interesting and unique environmental films of late and wanted to try our hand at making one. Also, we didn't want to tell a story that you hear every day.

Was there some piece of the story that you wish had made it into the final cut and didn't? Did you face any challenges?

BN: The only thing that didn't make it into the film was introducing the rest of the Wolf Mountain staff. We cut them because of time. At a certain point after talking to Tanya, we realized we didn't want to dilute her message. Everything we wanted for the film is pretty much in there, although we also really wanted to film the wolves running around and not just in their enclosures. We quickly realized that wasn't possible, so a lot of the film is just about interacting with the wolves.

Tell me about what it was like to work with wolves?

BN: Early in the film, you see close-up shots with the eyes. Sam (co-director) was about a foot away from the wolves' faces with the cameras and it was pretty tense. They are powerful, spiritual creatures — Tanya says you can "look into their eyes and see your soul" and it's 100% true. These animals clearly knew and understood things at a higher level.

Do you think the film is successful? What do you hope your audience will take from it?

BN: I would hope so. If we can generate some funds for Tanya and the Wolf Mountain Sanctuary, helping them to move to a new location, that would be a great goal. The point is to get the message out there. People have definitely seen the film, both online and at the festivals. Mountainfilm was an amazing experience! We had two screenings, early in the morning, and they were both sold out. It's great to go to a festival where people care intensely about the subject matter and also love to talk about how the film was made.

What piece of advice would you give to a student who wants to get into filmmaking?

BN: I currently work at NBC in the Page Program and everyone in the company is really accessible. The best advice I've gotten is, "just go shoot it." You can get a Canon Rebel T3i and a zoom lens for around \$1000, and a lot of the pros shoot on that. Filmmaking has never been cheaper or easier than it is today. I also found that people really want to help you, especially if you work in documentary film.