

Golden Meadows Wolf Trip- June 16-18, 2004  
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6/16/04

- Used five head of stock to travel to Golden Meadow via Goat Creek Trail.
- 3:30 pm half mile west of Golden Meadow on main trail GH and CR saw white wolf with black saddle cross trail 25 meter in front of them.
- Evening- in rout back from Golden-Papoose saddle saw moderately fresh tracks and scat.

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- Split into two group: JA and AP, and GH and CR. JA/AP went south of meadow from camp. 200 m south of meadow observed a dirty white wolf, which spooked and ran up slope to the east. Behavior was curious. They proceeded to investigate a spruce patch nearby and found no sign of digging. A bed was found in small lodgepole area 30 m from a creek, and hair collected. Hiked .5 mile SE above stream looking and listening, saw no wolf sign and hiked back to meadow.
- GH/CR went south of camp on main trail to area of previous day's wolf sighting. Hiked up ridge to the Cut-Across trail. Saw progressively fresh scat as we hiked NW,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of way up saw very fresh scat and vomit. Hiked down spring in draw until we met back with Goat Creek Trail- no sign at all. Followed creek to the confluence of the creek that runs through Golden Meadow, and walked along it to the SW edge of the meadow.
- 12:10 pm- all four heard howling, three wolves involved. First two wolves sounded to the SW of GH/CR, the third returned call from east of GH/CR.
- 7:00 pm- GH, JA, AP, CR in meadow feeding five head of stock. Scraggly, dirty white wolf with very large bushy tail trotted through meadow from the west side. Noticed stock, ran to south end of meadow. It was not the same wolf that JA and AP observed earlier.

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- 4:20- 6:20 AM- awoke to howling- two at the same time with one returning call. First very dispersed to the west of camp, then very near camp to the north. Most active howling was to the east of camp later that morning. Jim counted eight separate howling episodes coming from SW (2), due W (1) with horse or rasping voice, due E (2), and NE (1). The raspy voice wolf sounded identical to the Omega JA saw with a group of seven last winger.
- 9:00 AM- pulled out of camp for Taylor Ranch.
- 1:00 PM- arrived at Taylor.

Other Notes:

6/17- 1 elk bedded one mile east of Golden Meadow.

6/18- 1 cow moose ran down into meadow as if being chased.

## **Verifying the Golden (Papoose) Wolf Pack July 2004**

**Abstract:** Our goal for this trip was to document wolf pups. We left Taylor Ranch on July 15 and returned on July 19. We first found a past rendezvous site below Golden Meadow which had beds, chewed sticks (pup toy), and adult elk leg bones and hair. On day four of our trip, two wolf pups were found in a meadow in the head of Cougar Creek! This site was near the rendezvous site Isaac Babcock had identified three weeks earlier.

Continually throughout this trip we checked for signals, using radio telemetry, for the radio collared wolves 050 and 390. The best signal ever received from Golden 1 (collared wolf: 050) was by Coyote Springs in a westerly direction (upper Cabin Creek or upper Ginger Creek). We followed the signal of Golden 2 (collared wolf: 390) from the saddle north of Horse Mountain then down Spring Creek, but never located the wolf. On the ride out on day five, we thought we located Golden 2 on a forested draw up Vinegar Hill facing Cabin Creek.

### **Daily Summary:**

**July 15:** Holly, Cinnamon, and Anna headed to Black Butte with stock via Cabin Creek. Checked signal continuously throughout journey. Golden 1 (050): weak bounce off of lower Vinegar Hill outcrops at mouth of Spring Creek, occasional bounce in same direction (west) on trail up Cow and Calf Creek, no signal received on ridgeline North of Horse Mountain. Jim's aerial location early this morning was head of Spring Creek; we were never in that drainage today. Golden 2 (390) never received a signal. Jim got unusual sounding 3-4 beat signal at head of Browns Basin. We camped at trail junction at head of Cliff Creek. No wolf sign until right around camp. Found 6 scats.

**July 16:** Rode to Papoose Peak area looking for signals; no wolf tracks, scats, telemetry signals. After lunch we rode then hiked to Golden Meadows. Found old scats on lower end of cut-off trail and Golden Meadow trail, but no wolf tracks. From 3:30-5:00 p.m. we started at Golden camp where Jim, Greg, Cinnamon, and Anna camped on previous trip. We surveyed west side of meadow and just east of trail, looking for live spruce near water and open areas. Anna found two bear beds 100m apart, one with scat, the other near torn ant log; the hair was very light and tan with orange. We continued surveying south west and found wolf sign in 1<sup>st</sup> draw north of cut-off trail: small meadow 100m below (east) of Golden trail: We found 4+ beds in meadow grass (UTM 0672885E 5004473N) with elk leg bones and hair. The humerus bone had no marrow fat contents, but bone only. One shrub was chewed on by wolf (possibly a pup) 0.5M from ground in a bed. Wolf hair was found in two other beds also (UTM 0672992E 5004480N). No wolf tracks found on trail around Whiskey Springs. At 7:45 we arrived back at camp after feeding mules at Whiskey Springs.

**July 17:** We tried to follow collared wolves using the telemetry. We rode to a saddle nearby Horse Mountain then started walking down Spring Creek. The ridgeline to Horse Mountain is burned and has deadfall. Trail going down Spring Creek is a forested area, forest stops where two forks meet. The rest of the drainage is open and burned. Good signal on Golden 2 at top of ridge, signal pointing down Creek. Never increased signal strength as we walked down. Hiked to lowest fork of Spring Creek, lost signal in burned, open meadow. On hillside above and North of meadow got a weak signal from Gold 1 pointing up towards Brown's Basin. On hike back up, North fork of Spring Creek, on

trail picked up signal again. Pointing up towards saddle next to Horse Mountain and pointing in opposite direction towards Cow Creek. Same signal strength. Sat down and howled several times, no audible howling back, but Anna and Cinnamon thought they might have heard a very faint howl from the direction of Black Butte. Once on top of ridgeline in saddle picked up signal from Gold 2, same signal strength as what we got that morning. Arrived back at camp around 7:00pm.

July 18: Anna and Cinnamon took the day off and rode to Papoose lake. They picked up a signal on Golden 1 toward mid-drainage Cabin Creek/ Cow Creek. Holly checked the signals from camp ridge, weak Golden 1 to north, possibly a bounce. At 11:00 Holly hiked to Isaacs rendezvous site (south east of Whiskey springs) to search for beds/ excavations. She howled once at each drainage head, no response. At west fork of Cougar Creek a bull moose trotted 40 yards past her down into Cougar Creek. At 1:00 Holly glassed Isaacs rendezvous site, checked for signals, none found. She howled and was answered by the pack, repeatedly for 5 minutes (no pup howls). They were due south in the only unburned timber along Cougar Creek (below Cliff Creek trail "corner") in/below draw. Then at 2:15 she decided to cut down ridge across from east of where the pack howled and she thought it was a new rendezvous site. Wind was out of south, rain. She decided she didn't have time to survey Isaac's site, so she cut down through meadow. Found a patch of mud with fresh pup tracks. Looked around for matted grass beds and saw large 3m diameter matted site with calf elk jaw and skull piece. GPS site, found 8 other single wolf beds. Then she heard grunting like sound down draw and continued to creep along dead tree edge. 2 wolf pups bounded away 20M from her at meadow edge. They split up then she saw 2 together travelling up draw then back toward her to within 30M. They moved up the draw and she quickly retreated downwind and uphill away from all wolf noises. She watched them for less than 5 minutes at close range. (GPS: 671344E 5005228N) The pups made no vocalizations. At 2:55 she watched area from a vantage point 250M away on ridge. Saw 2 wolf pups walking and sniffing along west meadow edge. At 6pm there were no more wolf sightings, howls, or other wolves seen from observation site. Holly hiked back to camp and saw wolf tracks new since 2 days earlier on trail by Cliff Creek cut-off. At 10pm we checked signal from camp; Golden 1 weak signal down Cow Creek to WSW. No signal on Golden 2 throughout the day.

July 19: Checked signals at 6:30 a.m., received no signals from either Golden 1 or 2. At 6:45 we heard wolves howling down Cliff Creek. (GPS: 670200E 500470N) They continued to howl in episodes for 20 minutes, even as we were taking stock down trail to Whiskey Springs. Left stock to feed at Whiskey Springs while we continued to hike down. At 7:50 we reached Holly's observation rendezvous site. It was fogged in and we were unable to see meadow. No telemetry signals. Sat and waited for fog to lift (30min) also heard more howling from Cliff Creek. (GPS: 671500E 500450N) Holly howled during the time we were sitting there, no response. Once fog lifted we watched for activity, none. At 9:10 a.m. we headed down to north end of meadow to search for pups. Saw several bed sites, one site had 7 to 8 beds. In the lower end of the meadow we saw 4 more bed sites including the ones Holly observed yesterday. No sign of pups. Holly howled on two occasions and even used calf call, no response. Headed back to camp. At Cabin Creek (around 6 p.m.) checked telemetry. Received Golden 2 signal fairly strong, we concluded from signal that he is in a forested draw up Vinegar Hill. As we were crossing the bridge to Taylor Ranch (8:30 p.m.), the carpenters heard wolves howling on the ridge with Cliff Creek trail.