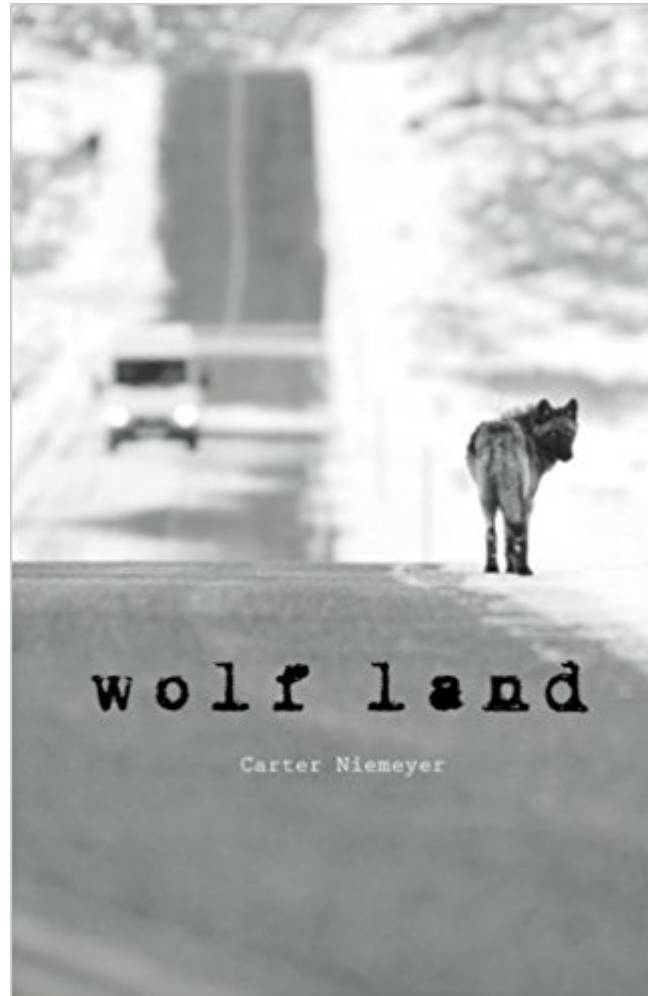


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Wolf Land



Synopsis

Carter Niemeyer has followed wolves and captured many since he helped reintroduce them in the Northern Rockies in the mid-1990s. In his second memoir, *Wolf Land*, he takes us across the rugged West as he tracks wolves, shares in their lives, and seeks middle ground for these iconic animals, both on the land and in our hearts.

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Customer Reviews

Carter Niemeyer is an Iowa native and a recognized expert on wolves, livestock depredation, and trapping. He is the retired Idaho wolf manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Niemeyer wrote his first memoir, *Wolfer*, in 2010.

Carter Niemeyer's much anticipated *Wolf Land* does not disappoint. There is just enough background material, without redundant rehashing of information, to provide a reader new to Carter's career a pretty good grasp of Niemeyer's transition from a generalist wildlife services man to an advocate for wolves in particular and predators in general. "I needed to do whatever I could do to make sure wolves got a fair shake...". A bit choppy at first, a transition to smooth story telling ensues with Carter's Midwest colloquialisms making for easy and enjoyable reading. Perhaps the key figure involved in the capture and movement of wolves trapped in Canada for reintroduction in the Northern Rocky Mountain States, Carter writes that reintroducing many wolves at once was the only way for them to gain a foothold. It certainly did not happen with a few coming in here and there because they didn't appear to be finding one another." Add to this the poisoning of wolves and the

shoot, shovel and shut up cadre, viable populations of breeding wolves became nigh impossible. Carter's work with the wolf reintroduction eventually lead to a position of wolf manager in Idaho. The bulk of wolf land is a series of chapters that deal with his career while in the full time employ of state and federal government as wolf manager, and to his work as an independent wolf trapper/consultant working for Idaho. Each chapter deals with his interactions particular wolves, wolf packs, and the folks with whom he came into contact with while performing his trapping and radio collar duties. It is evident that Niemeyer was good at trapping, as well as caring for the wolves that he trapped tested and radio collared. Each of these chapters help document the history of the reintroduction of the wolves and their expansion, and are written so that the reader can experience the excitement, humor, and tragedy associated with the movement of wolves throughout the Northern Rocky Mountain States. Each chapter is well constructed, easy to follow, and makes the book tough to put down. As a spokesperson for wolves, Carter inserts various nuggets of insight in his chapters. During his career as a government trapper, he realized that killing all the problem animals, including skunks, coyotes, bears and wolves didn't really solve anything. The proof in the pudding was that the killing had to be done in the same place every year. He concludes that ranchers should do a better job at taking care of their animals, and make them less prone to being attacked. Niemeyer concludes it should not be the federal governments responsibility to kill predators, in particular on Public land. Niemeyer also explores two ironies that exist in the West. The first is in respect to many modern ranchers being so anti-fed, but are the same individuals who have benefitted from the federal government taming of the West. The second is wildlife management itself, which includes the wolf. The money to manage wildlife comes from the "hook and bullet club", and the pathway taken in regard to management is going to be whatever they want. The suggestion for non-consumptive vectors to increase funding for wildlife agencies must circumvent the "bullying" of officials by sportsmen who don't want non-hunters to have a voice at the table in regard to wildlife/wolf management. A recent case in point is Montana's recent exploration at the possibility of a wolf stamp that could be purchased by anyone. Wolf Land is a good book about Carter's work with wolves, and interactions with people. It can be read a chapter at a time, or all in one sitting. It is a good compliment to his landmark *Wolfer*, though not as rich in emotion and story telling as *Wolfer*. Carter Niemeyer knows how to keep the reader captivated, and *Wolf Land* should be a welcome addition to the library of anyone fascinated by wolves, and the controversy that surrounds them.

Carter Niemeyer's new book *Wolf Land* is more than just a "good read" it's a superlative read. An expert wolf

biologist retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Niemeyer has eloquently woven the gray wolf's re-introduction, and his primary role within that mission, into the dark past of yesteryear's wolf extermination due to ranching in the West and grazing on public lands. While gray wolves were naturally migrating south from Canada, they were reintroduced into Yellowstone NP encompassing parts of Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho, along with a separate reintroduction into Idaho's The Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. This was the jumpstart that gray wolves needed to establish a permanent presence that was followed by expansion into Oregon and Washington. What also followed was the age-old "War on Wolves" that exploded within Western states' politics, particularly from cattle and sheep ranching holding generations-old grazing lease allotments on hundreds of thousands of acres of federal and state public lands. But in the decades-long wolves' absence, the West had changed. The romanticized Marlboro Man and John Wayne images of the West evolved to a revisionist, contemporary version of the West that included conservation, restoration and preservation of the sole remaining vast stretches of public land. And the West's public land users included wildly enthusiastic recreationalists of the great outdoors who "wanted to see the wolf back." And Yellowstone NP's wolves became a multi-million dollar cash cow (ironic pun) proving that wolves equaled money for a greater, wider range of recreational businesses and service industries. As a young Midwestern boy from Iowa who developed a skill for trapping, Niemeyer unflinchingly reflects that "trapping" funded college and led to a career with the USDA's Animal Damage Control (now Wildlife Services). But the same former occupation strengthens his introspective questions and helps explain his philosophically changed positions. *Wolf Land* chronicles gray wolf reintroduction, its pyrotechnic politics and conflicts, heated animosities and provides a uniquely personal, firsthand perspective to continued efforts to reestablish the wolf in the western wild lands. Through an Aldo-Leopold like journey, Niemeyer summarily concludes: "if wolves can't live in the wilderness, where can they live?" For full disclosure, we are both veterinarians living in Idaho's Valley County only a short drive from locations of many of the events that Carter describes. As a visual treat, Jenny Niemeyer has drawn six delightful maps of western states and provinces to orient the reader to the action described. As veterinarians, we are uniquely concerned and involved in the interface of domestic and wild animals. Those conflicts between domestic animals and apex predators play out largely on public lands and neighboring ranches bordering those wild lands especially in our county which is 88% federal public

lands and includes largest wilderness in the Lower 48 states. In other words, we

live in Wolf Land. Drs. Karen and Olin Balch
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