



CALIFORNIA WOLF CENTER
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**CALIFORNIA WOLF CENTER ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH
MINNESOTA ZOO'S "WOLFQUEST" VIDEO GAME:
FREE, DOWNLOADABLE GAME EXCEEDS ALL EXPECTATIONS**

Today, the California Wolf Center announced its partnership with the Minnesota Zoo and "WolfQuest" - a 3D wildlife simulation video game and the first game of its kind to be fully funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Developed by the Minnesota Zoo and St. Paul based EduWeb, WolfQuest: Amethyst Mountain launched in December, 2007 as a free download for both Macintosh and Windows computers at wolfquest.org. WolfQuest includes single player and multiplayer versions that allow gamers to take on the role of a wolf living in Yellowstone National Park.

Since its launch a year ago, WolfQuest has been downloaded over 220,000 times with over 60% of all downloads by youth ages 10-19. The game has attracted worldwide attention: players from 235 countries have downloaded the game with just over half of all players downloading from the United States. Equally exciting is the vibrant WolfQuest online community. The WolfQuest Community forum currently has more than 29,000 registered users that have posted over 490,000 times. "WolfQuest represents a new breed of video game- one that marries state of the art game design with scientifically accurate wolf content," says Grant Spickelmier, Assistant Director of Education at the Minnesota Zoo. "We attract kids who are used to playing in virtual worlds and use the game and website to introduce them to real world issues facing wolves."

Through trial and error, instinct and experience, players learn to maximize both individual and pack survival. Each player discovers how to compete or cooperate, challenge or submit, and defend or attack during complex interactions with other wolves both within and outside their own pack. In the Amethyst Mountain single player version, players play a two-year old gray wolf born in the Northern Range of Yellowstone National Park that has left its natal (birth) pack in search of a mate. In the multiplayer version, up to five players form a pack to hunt and wander in Yellowstone National Park. Players can encounter elk, coyotes, hares, other wolves and grizzly bears in WolfQuest Amethyst Mountain.

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The California Wolf Center joins a national network of zoos and science education centers supporting WolfQuest led by the Minnesota Zoo and including the International Wolf Center, Ely, Minnesota; Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming; Smithsonian National Zoological Park, Washington, D.C.; Wild Canid Survival and Research Center, St. Louis, MO; Rosamond Gifford Zoo, Syracuse, NY; Knoxville Zoo, Knoxville, TN; Phoenix Zoo, Phoenix, AZ; and the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, IL. WolfQuest is made possible through a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) of more than a half-million dollars. Additional funding has been received from the Best Buy Children's Foundation and the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community for the creation of the next episode: WolfQuest: Slough Creek, which is slated for release in summer 2009 and which will allow the virtual wolf players to establish territories, raise pups, leave the park and encounter a ranch.

Founded in 1977, the California Wolf Center is an education, conservation, and research facility located four miles south of Julian, California. The Center offers public educational programs about the role of top predators in North American ecosystems, focusing on the biology, ecology, and behavior of the gray wolf.

For more information about the California Wolf Center, please visit our website at www.californiawolfcenter.org.

[Photos are available to credentialed press upon request.]

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