



# Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **WOLF-HYBRID RECAPTURED IN AKWESASNE**

*Transported to a U.S.D.A. Licensed Facility*

**AKWESASNE TERRITORY** – After being released for over two weeks, the wolf-hybrid re-appeared in Akwesasne on Tarbell Road late in the week of May 4<sup>th</sup>. Tribal Animal Control Officer Derek Comins responded to calls and managed to trap the wolf-hybrid on Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>. “My preference was to not dart him to re-capture him,” said Comins. “So I set up a baited live trap and believe to have caught him. Unfortunately, he may have been released from the live trap.”

After the wolf-hybrid was apparently released from the live trap, Dan Morgan, Wildlife Biologist and Mark Carrara, District Supervisor of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, (USDA) Wildlife Services, arrived in Akwesasne on Friday to re-capture the hybrid. They did so after putting the animal to sleep with a dart.

The wolf-hybrid had been originally captured in late March and was held in a pen until DNA tests could be conducted and a licensed facility could be identified to eventually house the hybrid. The wolf-hybrid was missing out of its pen on April 19<sup>th</sup> where the lock was found to be cut off. Comins reported, “I got reports of sightings from as far away as Canton and Potsdam. We thought that somebody had simply released him, but after he didn’t show up in the community for a couple of weeks, we weren’t sure. It was a problem because we worked hard to find a good home for him and he was scheduled to be transported to a licensed facility the following weekend.”

Following the unauthorized release on April 19<sup>th</sup>, Comins had been receiving reports of the wolf-hybrid sightings and many community members had expressed concerns. “The animal had undergone some stressing and had been getting skittish and defensive. I had reports of him chasing cars and following children around. Sooner or later, somebody would have felt threatened enough to shoot him. In fact, one caller said that they would shoot him if he became a threat to children.”

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Wolf-hybrids are usually raised in captivity and are used to being around humans. So the expectation was that if he had simply been released, he most likely would show up again close by, looking for food from humans. Comins was worried about its release, since he may have eventually gotten struck by a car or even shot. If the wolf-hybrid had been transported somewhere, the other concern was its well-being. “Individuals who operate licensed facilities would not have taken the wolf-hybrid without taking all the proper steps to gain custody,” noted Comins.

The re-capture of the wolf-hybrid was kept confidential until he could be transported to a licensed facility. “The USDA Wildlife Services licenses the facility, so we know that the animal will be in a good home with good conditions. This has always been our priority,” said Comins. “We had been keeping the re-capture of the wolf-hybrid under our hats, so it won’t be released again and have been keeping it in a more secure location. We know that it can’t fend for itself in the wild and may become a threat if it remains in a human household.”

The wolf-hybrid was successfully transferred to the Wolf Creek Habitat in Brookville, Indiana on Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. He was put in with *Waya*, one of the Canadian two-year old wolves residing in the habitat. “A special thanks to Derek Comins, Animal Control Officer of the St Regis Mohawk Reservation for all his work to protect and hold this animal for pick-up,” said Kathy Baudendistel, owner of Wolf Creek Habitat. “We met in a secure location to do the transfer which was a half-way point for both of us. The total trip was 14 hours and it all went well. We named him Mohawk, after the Mohawk people who saved his life.”

News that the wolf-hybrid had been released from captivity in late April re-started interest in the story, both from the general public and media outlets. “For a while, it seemed like there was a wolf-hybrid behind every tree,” stated Comins. “But with their ability to range, none of the reported sightings were too far away to not be considered.” Individuals and media have maintained a high level of interest in the story. Pictures of Mohawk and other wolves can be seen at [www.nighthowls7.com](http://www.nighthowls7.com). Click onto “Mohawks Rescue” to see pictures of the transfer of Mohawk and his placement into the sanctuary.

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The St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government of the St. Regis Mohawk People.