

A Wolf in the Woods

The Forest Lake Getaway Gals are mostly made up of city slickers who come here once a year to get away from the pressures of selling real estate. Unfortunately, they can never get completely away from their jobs since cell phones usually work in most areas of Forest Lake.

Their first trip here sort of set the mood for future visits since it was during that time I came up with what I thought was a great idea. I would create a wolf in the woods! Not a real wolf of course, since I have never seen any real wolves wandering around Forest Lake and besides, how would I ever come up with a real wolf. Actually I let one's imagination do it all. Take a dark night, pick a very secluded place with a campfire, tell some creepy stories about wild animals roaming Forest Lake, add some sound effects from nearby bushes, and there you have it - instant wolf.

To begin, I needed to make a tape recording with nothing but 15 minutes of silence - this would give me some maneuvering time. Next I recorded the sound of horrible growling and snarling off one of my nature tapes. Finally I hid the tape recorder with a long extension cord in the bushes near our campsite and pushed down the play button. All I had to do was to plug it into our outdoor electrical outlet.

Everything went like clockwork. The scene proved to be a perfect one. The night was pitch black except for our campfire. We all sat on benches in a circle and had nice friendly conversations. I only needed an excuse to run back to the cottage and plug in the extension cord. Once that was done, I came back and began telling stories of wild dogs running in packs around Forest Lake and on one occasion, someone even saw a wolf. Almost on cue, a loud wail and snarling came out of the dark. It was followed by the howling of several wolves. The effect was perfect! The faces of nearly everyone around the campfire were frozen in fear (a few Gals were in on the joke). As the sound intensified, wide-eyed looks were exchanged to see who would run back to the cottage first. Unfortunately, right at that point, I just couldn't keep a straight face. Once I started laughing instead of running, the Gals immediately knew something wasn't adding up and I ended up having to tell them the truth much sooner than I wanted to. I have to say, not everyone appreciated my joke.

Many years have passed since that time. On subsequent visits we have heard coyotes howling by the river, seen bats swooping down over our heads, and even saw skunks walking down the middle of the road at night. However, I must say nothing has scared the Gals as much as that first trip to Forest Lake and their encounter with a wolf in the woods.