

Gumbie's Travels
by Doug Aichele
Stillwater, Oklahoma

This is a story - largely a photo story - of how one man and one very special dog spent the summer together in the mountains of Colorado at 11,000 feet building a log cabin and learning about each other.

Gumbie, that's right, Gumbie! Gumbie is an Alaskan Husky who spent most of his six years in Yellowknife, NT with the Warren and Kate Palfrey family in their NorthernStar Kennels. He was a team member in Warren Palfrey's 2006 Iditarod team, his 2009 Yukon Quest Team, and ran in many shorter races. Gumbie is also a father to several dogs in the Palfrey's kennel now located in Quesnel, BC. Here's a picture of Gumbie Chillin'.



About Gumbie, Warren said,

"Gumbie is a very athletic dog, with a nice coat, a bit thicker boned than his brother Archie, but still very fast, never injured, great attitude and has really come on as a leader this fall."

I first met Gumbie at the 2009 Iditarod while helping Kate feed and tend to their dogs prior to the start of the race. At that time I had NO IDEA that he and I would become such good friends. Here are some pictures of him and me hanging out before the Start.





Before long, plans were underway for Gumbie to move to Oklahoma to join my wife and our dogs, Lilly and MAXine. Warren brought him to Seeley Lake, MT on one of his trips south which was a good idea. We had some false starts in the moving process from Seeley Lake though; shipping him by air didn't work out because it is too hot. We thought we has going to be able to take a road trip to Dallas and I would intercept him along the way - that didn't work out either. While all of this is happening, I was heading to Pitkin, CO for the summer to help one of our sons build his log cabin. All said and done, Gumbie was placed temporarily (about a week) at Cindy Gallea's kennel in Seeley lake until I could pick him up.

Now that you know a little about Gumbie and his recent past, let's move on with his journey to Oklahoma through a wonderful summer in Colorado. I arrived in Seeley Lake on Monday, June 8th, very excited to reconnect with him. Here's what I saw waiting for me; I recognized him immediately. He was barking and running around like all of Cindy's other dogs. He looked happy, but a little thin. Did I really want to take him away from this? Would he be happy with his new life and me?



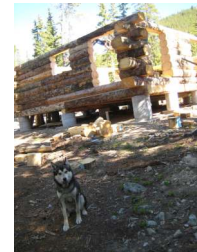
I had a large dog crate in the back of my truck and he seemed anxious to get in and get started. We drove south though Montana, Idaho, Utah, and Colorado; we arrived at my cabin near Pitkin, CO on Wednesday, June 10th. We arrived to a fresh dusting of snow.



During the summer we became well acquainted and he began to appreciate that the world as he had understood it would be changing. He traded a doghouse for a log cabin...He liked the porch.



Each morning, Gumbie and I would walk up to the jobsite where we were building the cabin. He was cautious around his new environment but liked to be part of the work crew!



At the end of June we made a quick trip back to Oklahoma. Gumbie liked traveling in the back seat of my truck better than in his crate. Yep, a regal looking Gumbie - paws crossed and all!



When we got Oklahoma, he met my wife and his new friend Lilly... It turns out that Lilly and Gumbie are the same age -- their birthdays are one day apart! He also met MAXine who is quite a bit older and more subdued than either Lilly or Gumbie. Here's Lilly and Gumbie chillin' in our backyard; MAX chillin' at our cabin in CO.



Our cabin building adventure ended for us in early August. We posed for this last picture before returning to Oklahoma.



Life is good in Stillwater...



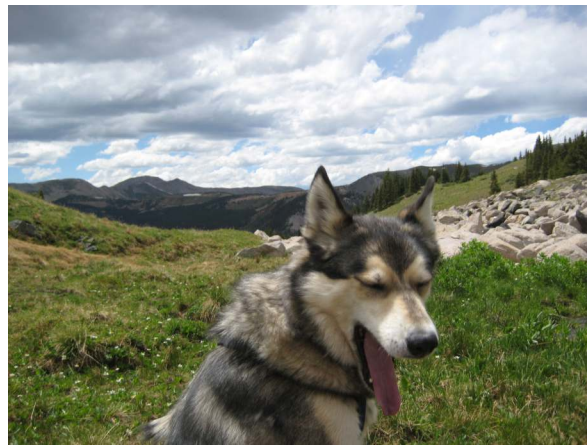
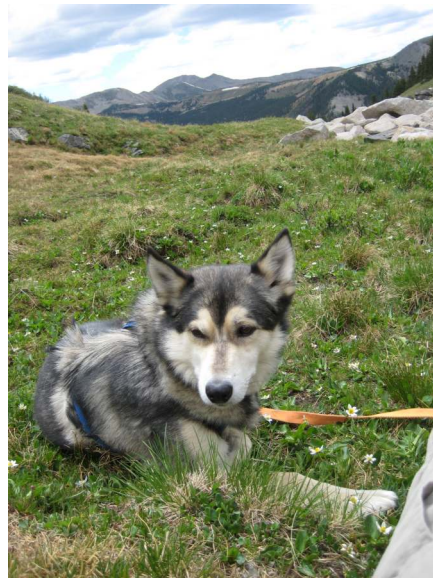
Then came winter... and it got better



Then came Spring...



Then came Summer... Took a hike to one of the most beautiful Continental Divide lakes imaginable - Graphite Lake, CO (elev. 13,000 ft approx.)



Happy Trails!

Gumbie's Claim to Fame: Gumbie has been chosen as the Pin and Patch Dog for the 2010 Yukon Quest. So, even though he has retired to a wonderful home with great new friends, he will still be a big part of the Quest this year.

To read more about the 2010 Quest and their mascot Gumbie visit this link:

http://c.ss36.on9mail.com//new/en_send_preview_iframe2.aspx?SID=13&SiteID=4304&NewsletterID=28830&EmailID=22200665

Here's the picture that was used to create the Yukon Quest 2010 Patch and Pin ...



The complete story is available online at: <http://www.canadog.ca/home>