

# NATURE

media information



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 9, 2008

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## AN EPIC DUEL BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOLF PAVED THE WAY FOR AMERICA'S ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT IN *NATURE's THE WOLF THAT CHANGED AMERICA*

History Meets Natural History In This Docu-Drama Based On A True Story

Thirteen/WNET New York's *NATURE* Airs New Episode November 23 on PBS

In 1893, a bounty hunter named Ernest Thompson Seton came to the untamed canyons of New Mexico on a mission to kill a renegade wolf called Lobo. Lobo was the legendary leader of a band of cattle-killing wolves that had been terrorizing ranchers and their livestock. Known as "King of Currumpaw," Lobo seemingly had a mythical ability to cheat death. It was up to Seton, a naturalist as well as a professional animal trapper, to exterminate this "super-wolf." The battle of wits between this wolf and this man would engender a real-life wilderness drama, the outcome of which would leave a lasting effect on the country.

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The story of Seton and Lobo and the beginning of America's conservation movement is vividly told in Thirteen/WNET New York's *NATURE's The Wolf That Changed America*, premiering Sunday, November 23 at 8 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings). Narrated by Academy Award-winning actor F. Murray Abraham, the docu-drama features archival footage, reenactments based on Seton's journal, interviews with Seton historians, and insights from Doug

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Smith, the head of today's Yellowstone Wolf Project.

“The extraordinary encounter between Seton and Lobo is both thrilling and humbling,” says Fred Kaufman, Executive Producer of Thirteen/WNET New York's *NATURE*. “Because of Lobo, Seton became the first ecologist to invoke a profound change in the hearts and minds of Americans on the value of our natural environments and the need to protect them for future generations.”

Various techniques were tried to capture the wolf, but each time Lobo outsmarted Seton, just as he had those who had tried and failed before him. Finally, after months of frustration, Seton discovered Lobo's weak spot – his mate, Blanca. The capture and killing of Blanca broke Lobo's heart and spirit, and brought about his downfall. Seton used four traps baited with Blanca's scent to capture him. Finally, face to face with the beast, he lifted his gun to kill. But he couldn't do it. Perhaps killing Lobo no longer felt like a victory, but a crime. Perhaps – in his eyes – Lobo was no longer vermin, but a creature with dignity: courageous, loyal, and loving. Until now, Seton had seen wolves simply as indiscriminate killers. But they were obviously much more than that. They were the very embodiment of America's vanishing wilderness.

Lobo ultimately died from his injuries caused by the traps, and Seton returned east, deeply affected and determined to record what had happened. His book, *Wild Animals I Have Known*, was an immediate worldwide hit. Virtually overnight, it propelled Seton from a little-known naturalist into a major celebrity. He would go on to lobby for hunting restrictions and anti-poaching measures. His views about the value of the wild found favor with politicians like Teddy Roosevelt, and helped to turn the tide of public opinion. Seton used his influence to push for the creation of national parks, and was active in an environmental education movement that laid the groundwork for the Boy Scouts of America, of which he was a founding father.

Right up to his death in 1946, Seton continued to reflect on the wolf that changed his life. “Ever since Lobo, my sincerest wish has been to impress upon people that each of our native wild

creatures is in itself a precious heritage that we have no right to destroy or put beyond the reach of our children.”

*NATURE* has won more than 450 honors from the television industry, the international wildlife film community, and environmental organizations – including 10 Emmys, three Peabodys and the first award given to a television program by the Sierra Club. Most recently, the series won a Peabody Award for *Silence of the Bees*.

*The Wolf That Changed America* is a production of Brian Leith Productions, Thirteen/WNET New York and BBC. *NATURE* is produced by Thirteen/WNET New York for PBS. Fred Kaufman is Executive Producer; William Grant is Executive-in-Charge. Major corporate support for *NATURE* is provided by Canon U.S.A., Inc. and SC Johnson. Additional support is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the nation’s public television stations.

*NATURE Online* features video podcasts (also available on iTunes), behind-the-scenes interviews with filmmakers and producers, program excerpts, and outtakes.

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Thirteen/WNET is one of the key program providers for public television, bringing such acclaimed series as *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *American Masters*, and *Charlie Rose* to audiences nationwide, and serving the entire New York City metro area with unique local productions and broadcasts, cutting-edge Web sites, and innovative educational and cultural projects. More info at: [www.thirteen.org](http://www.thirteen.org).

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