

Feature Bio – “Chilli” By Char Hakes

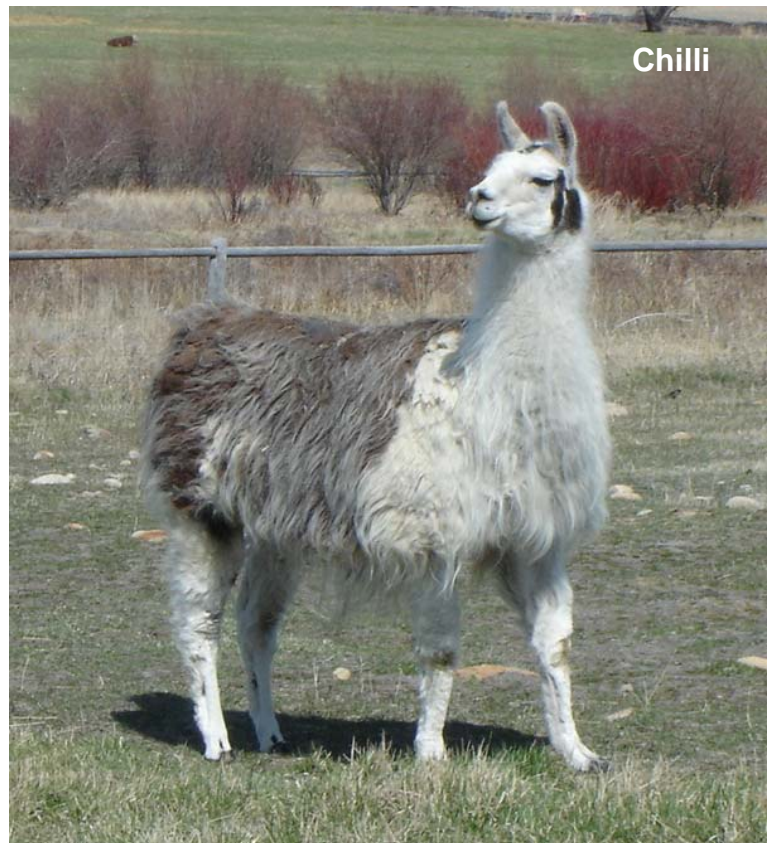
In the early 1990's, when Chilli was still real young, he was purchased from one of the larger ranches in the Bitterroot Valley for the intended purpose of packing. The new owners loved Chilli and he did a good job for them for many years.

Around 2005, now older, Chilli was given to a friend of the owner to continue doing some packing. The friend's life became so busy that Chilli ended up just hanging out

with the goats and mules for a few years, happily evading the new owner's attempt to catch him. Llamas do know how to work us humans when they sense they can get away with it!

Eventually, the new owners arranged for Chilli to be relocated to *Safe Haven*. However, three or four weeks before he was to be picked up, a mule kicked him in his chest and shoulder area. Since he wouldn't let the owner catch him, poor Chilli didn't receive any medical care right away.

Finally I went and caught Chilli and brought him to the Sanctuary – this was October 2008. A veterinarian checked him out and treated him for about a month. He continued to lay a lot and seemed to prefer to be alone, even when I placed him among some alpacas. Then I put him with another elderly llama, “Shiloh”, and they became instant buddies. Perhaps they found comfort in realizing they both had to put up with aches and pains every waking day.



A few months later in February 2009, the veterinarian checked Chilli and said he would not be able to pack ever again. His front leg was so badly injured he would always walk with a limp. But, at least he was walking. At *Safe Haven*, Chilli is often chased away from the feeding troughs, so we have to take special care to make sure he gets enough hay during the winter months. When the grass grows back this spring, he should be able to claim his own patch to chow down.

Sadly, Shiloh died earlier this year and left Chilli alone once again. Chilli looked for Shiloh for a long time, which is always heartbreaking to watch. But spring is arriving and Chilli will be sheared for the first time in many years. Hopefully, getting all that weight off his body will perk him up and make him feel and look like a new man. As a permanent, special needs resident of *Safe Haven*, Chilli is a perfect candidate for a monthly sponsorship. Come by and check him out after he is sheared!