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## Wolf-dog search is on

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BLACK MOUNTAIN — Armed with tranquilizer guns and an all-terrain vehicle, sheriff's deputies Tuesday scoured a section of southeastern Buncombe County for a pair of wolf dogs.

Authorities continued to caution that people living in the Broad River community should keep children and pets inside after attacks killed two dogs and injured another Monday.

Sightings were reported from residents in southeast Buncombe County as well as Henderson County, Buncombe County sheriff's Lt. Helen Hall said.

Four full-time deputies and a retired deputy searched a radius of up to five miles in the remote area about 15 miles south of Black Mountain, Hall said.

"It's my understanding from talking to some of the neighbors that it's a large black dog and a large white dog," said Hall, who also is the county's animal control supervisor. "We've had several people stop and give information to the officers — some of them from over in Henderson County and some of them from here. They say the white one is about 150 pounds, which concerns me. That's a large dog."

The Sheriff's Office issued a dangerous animal alert Monday night after the attacks. One of the wolf dogs was shot dead by a resident.

Gayle Nanney said she saw five dogs appear in her backyard, where they attacked and killed Goobie, her 13-year-old Jack Russell terrier.

"I was trying so hard not to make the situation more dangerous," she said.

The dogs also harassed her Basset hound. Nanney said this was not the first time wolf dogs have terrorized her pets.

The same dog killed Monday had been seriously injured when wolf dogs escaped the same owner three years ago, Nanney said. She said she sued the owner to help pay for her veterinarian bills related to that attack.

Others who live in the search area also say wolf dogs, which are dogs with a pure wolf ancestor within five generations, have terrorized neighbors before.

"We've had trouble with those dogs for years now, and animal control is never able to do anything," said James Hindle, who lives on Carol Lane off N.C. 9 in southeast Buncombe County. "Several of them have been shot prior to the one that was shot last night."

The wolf dog shot and killed Monday had been embedded with a microchip that identified its owner.

The Sheriff's Office did not identify the owner. Hall said three of the wolf dogs escaped, though witnesses have reported seeing as many as five dogs running in a pack.

Hall said it's too early to tell if the wolf dogs' owner would face charges.

As is normal procedure when dogs are rendered to the county, the wolf dogs likely will be euthanized when captured, Hall said.

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