

USFWS Virtual Public Meeting for the Red Wolf Recovery Program
Virtual Public Meeting Transcript
September 24, 2024, 6:00-8:00 PM Eastern Time

1

00:00:04.360 --> 00:00:09.589

AECOM - Megan Stone: Hello, everyone. I'd like to welcome you all to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's

2

00:00:09.690 --> 00:00:15.340

AECOM - Megan Stone: virtual public information meeting for the Red Wolf Recovery Program updates.

3

00:00:15.560 --> 00:00:24.540

AECOM - Megan Stone: We're going to give folks a few minutes here to join the meeting, and then we'll begin the PowerPoint presentation shortly, so please stay tuned.

4

00:00:24.550 --> 00:00:30.490

AECOM - Megan Stone: I do want to note that closed captioning is available by selecting the Live Transcript button

5

00:00:30.610 --> 00:00:34.890

AECOM - Megan Stone: on your Zoom toolbar and then selecting show subtitles.

6

00:00:35.080 --> 00:00:39.139

AECOM - Megan Stone: Thanks for your patience as we give folks a few minutes here to join.

7

00:01:15.440 --> 00:01:25.490

AECOM - Megan Stone: Again, welcome everyone to tonight's meeting. We're going to give folks a few more minutes to join the meeting, so please stay tuned, and we'll start the presentation shortly.

8

00:01:25.760 --> 00:01:32.249

AECOM - Megan Stone: Again, I do want to note that closed captioning is available by selecting the Live Transcript icon

9

00:01:32.350 --> 00:01:36.419

AECOM - Megan Stone: on your Zoom toolbar and then selecting show subtitles.

10

00:01:36.610 --> 00:01:39.990

AECOM - Megan Stone: We'll just give it one more minute here for folks to join.

11

00:02:02.550 --> 00:02:05.610

AECOM - Megan Stone: Alright, we'll go ahead and get started.

12

00:02:05.930 --> 00:02:08.289

AECOM - Megan Stone: We'll move to the next slide, please.

13

00:02:15.510 --> 00:02:22.319

AECOM - Megan Stone: Again. Hello, everyone. We'll get started with our meeting tonight. I'd like to thank you all for joining us.

14

00:02:22.450 --> 00:02:25.440

AECOM - Megan Stone: We appreciate your time and participation.

15

00:02:25.500 --> 00:02:31.500

AECOM - Megan Stone: My name is Megan Stone, with AECOM, a contractor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,

16

00:02:31.550 --> 00:02:35.210

AECOM - Megan Stone: and I'm going to be one of your meeting facilitators tonight.

17

00:02:35.380 --> 00:02:42.700

AECOM - Megan Stone: Additionally, I have several members of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with me on the meeting, who will be introduced in a moment.

18

00:02:43.120 --> 00:02:46.259

AECOM - Megan Stone: On the screen, we have our expected agenda.

19

00:02:46.280 --> 00:02:50.590

AECOM - Megan Stone: I'll first go over some brief ground rules for this evening's meeting.

20

00:02:50.860 --> 00:02:57.109

AECOM - Megan Stone: The Service will provide PowerPoint presentations on the Red Wolf Management Program updates.

21

00:02:57.490 --> 00:03:04.170

AECOM - Megan Stone: After the first presentation, we'll pause to answer any questions you might have on the material presented.

22

00:03:04.400 --> 00:03:07.480

AECOM - Megan Stone: We'll then move into our second presentation.

23

00:03:07.700 --> 00:03:11.820

AECOM - Megan Stone: After the second presentation, we'll take a quick 5 min break.

24

00:03:11.980 --> 00:03:17.440

AECOM - Megan Stone: and then the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will hold a second question-and-answer session

25

00:03:17.580 --> 00:03:22.320

AECOM - Megan Stone: to respond to any questions you might have on the second presentation.

26

00:03:22.680 --> 00:03:29.029

AECOM - Megan Stone: The Service will then provide some closing remarks, and we'll close out the meeting around 8 PM Eastern time.

27

00:03:29.980 --> 00:03:31.489

AECOM - Megan Stone: Next slide, please.

28

00:03:34.740 --> 00:03:39.740

AECOM - Megan Stone: Before we get started with the presentation, I'll go over some ground rules for the meeting.

29

00:03:40.010 --> 00:03:44.310

AECOM - Megan Stone: First, this meeting is being recorded as part of the project record

30

00:03:44.340 --> 00:03:49.150

AECOM - Megan Stone: and a recording will be posted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website.

31

00:03:49.270 --> 00:03:54.259

AECOM - Megan Stone: It does take some time to get that posted on the website, but it will be posted.

32

00:03:54.450 --> 00:03:57.190

AECOM - Megan Stone: And we'll provide information on that later.

33

00:03:57.390 --> 00:04:02.670

AECOM - Megan Stone: Second, your microphones and videos will be turned off for the duration of the meeting today.

34

00:04:03.220 --> 00:04:10.990

AECOM - Megan Stone: Third, questions will be addressed during the question-and-answer sessions after each of the PowerPoint presentations.

35

00:04:11.110 --> 00:04:15.250

AECOM - Megan Stone: We'll do our best to address the questions in the order they come in

36

00:04:15.330 --> 00:04:19.859

AECOM - Megan Stone: to allow everyone an opportunity to voice their questions tonight.

37

00:04:20.420 --> 00:04:28.399

AECOM - Megan Stone: Again, after our first presentation by Emily Weller, we'll pause to answer any questions related to that presentation

38

00:04:28.730 --> 00:04:32.489

AECOM - Megan Stone: before moving on to our second presentation by Joe Madison.

39

00:04:33.130 --> 00:04:37.889

AECOM - Megan Stone: And then there will be a second opportunity to submit electronic questions

40

00:04:37.920 --> 00:04:39.929

AECOM - Megan Stone: after our five-minute break.

41

00:04:40.540 --> 00:04:47.740

AECOM - Megan Stone: If you would like to ask a question at any point, you can type your question in the Zoom chat feature at the bottom of your Zoom screen.

42

00:04:48.060 --> 00:04:54.349

AECOM - Megan Stone: And we do want to note that questions submitted as part of registration do not need to be resubmitted.

43

00:04:54.500 --> 00:05:01.420

AECOM - Megan Stone: We have a list of these questions, and the Service has used them when developing the presentations for this meeting.

44

00:05:01.450 --> 00:05:07.430

AECOM - Megan Stone: However, if the presentations haven't addressed some of those preregistered questions,

45

00:05:07.580 --> 00:05:11.410

AECOM - Megan Stone: we will save a little time to address those at the end of the meeting.

46

00:05:12.310 --> 00:05:17.920

AECOM - Megan Stone: With that, I'll go ahead and turn it over to Emily Weller with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

47

00:05:18.150 --> 00:05:19.860

AECOM - Megan Stone: for introductions.

48

00:05:40.950 --> 00:05:51.090

USFWS - Emily Weller: There we go. I think I'm off mute now. Sorry about that. Good evening, everyone. My name is Emily Weller, and I am the Fish and Wildlife Service Red Wolf Recovery Program coordinator.

49

00:05:51.528 --> 00:06:06.639

USFWS - Emily Weller: Before we get started on our presentation today, I just wanted to take a moment to thank you for joining us tonight. We understand how busy your lives are, and your schedules are. So, we really appreciate that you've taken time to be here.

50

00:06:07.099 --> 00:06:18.559

USFWS - Emily Weller: Your presence tonight is important to the ongoing work of the Red Wolf Recovery Program and our mission to work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance the endangered red wolf.

51

00:06:19.170 --> 00:06:22.349

USFWS - Emily Weller: It was just a few years ago, the red wolf

52

00:06:22.760 --> 00:06:30.940

USFWS - Emily Weller: population was at the lowest it has been since 1987, when we first reintroduced these animals into North Carolina.

53

00:06:30.950 --> 00:06:42.340

USFWS - Emily Weller: America's red wolf, an animal of cultural importance to Native American tribes, and others across the country. The most endangered wolf species in the world.

54

00:06:42.680 --> 00:06:46.169

USFWS - Emily Weller: We had to act. We knew we had to change.

55

00:06:46.240 --> 00:07:00.949

USFWS - Emily Weller: And, as a result of that, we revitalized this program, taking a hard look at our past successes and shortcomings. We found clear successes. We can reintroduce red wolves into the wild

56

00:07:01.180 --> 00:07:18.709

USFWS - Emily Weller: They can survive, they can breed, they can thrive. But we also found areas where we fell short. Reintroducing a large carnivore into the wild had never been done before, and the focus of this program in the beginning was almost entirely biological.

57

00:07:19.447 --> 00:07:27.689

USFWS - Emily Weller: But the social aspects, the community engagement, and human dimensions – those were the cracks in our program's foundation.

58

00:07:28.010 --> 00:07:30.210

USFWS - Emily Weller: And these cracks had an impact.

59

00:07:30.220 --> 00:07:37.790

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, I do want to clarify that this is not to criticize in any way those who came before me, before all of us.

60

00:07:37.850 --> 00:07:40.929

USFWS - Emily Weller: They were pioneers in an uncharted territory.

61

00:07:41.010 --> 00:07:47.550

USFWS - Emily Weller: But now we know more, and we are taking those lessons to build a stronger future in this program.

62

00:07:47.830 --> 00:07:57.759

USFWS - Emily Weller: Today we remain committed to the same mission just with a different approach, one that integrates social science and human dimensions into wildlife conservation,

63

00:07:57.910 --> 00:08:06.969

USFWS - Emily Weller: and that's collaborative conservation. And, while this isn't a new concept, we recognize that in order to ensure the survival of the red wolf,

64

00:08:07.130 --> 00:08:09.780

USFWS - Emily Weller: we needed to change the way we operated.

65

00:08:10.100 --> 00:08:22.170

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, while we continue to rely on proven wildlife management techniques and explore innovative approaches to the challenges we face, as well as the threats that the species faces,

66

00:08:22.560 --> 00:08:29.800

USFWS - Emily Weller: we now know that in order for this program to be successful, we must address the people side of the equation.

67

00:08:29.860 --> 00:08:39.939

USFWS - Emily Weller: That's why we've adopted a collaborative conservation approach, emphasizing the importance of community engagement, transparent communication, and partnerships.

68

00:08:39.970 --> 00:08:48.389

USFWS - Emily Weller: We have to work hand in hand with state wildlife agencies, local communities, landowners, NGOs, and many others.

69

00:08:48.670 --> 00:08:53.479

USFWS - Emily Weller: We have to strengthen the foundation in the Red Wolf Recovery Program, because what we do now

70

00:08:53.620 --> 00:08:59.419

USFWS - Emily Weller: in North Carolina will shape the future of red wolf populations in other areas as well.

71

00:09:00.010 --> 00:09:07.879

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, our goal is not just to meet biological targets, but to build the trust and social acceptance needed to make lasting change.

72

00:09:08.070 --> 00:09:14.909

USFWS - Emily Weller: And by addressing anthropogenic threats and values, we can ensure the future survival of America's red wolf.

73

00:09:15.510 --> 00:09:28.779

USFWS - Emily Weller: And as I looked at tonight's registration list, I saw many familiar names and many that I not familiar with. We have participants from all over the country, and that just shows how

74

00:09:28.790 --> 00:09:32.350

USFWS - Emily Weller: broad the interest and support for this mission is.

75

00:09:32.440 --> 00:09:41.169

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, we're eager to hear your thoughts, your questions, and insights, as public feedback is a critical part of shaping our future efforts.

76

00:09:41.250 --> 00:09:44.040

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, as you listen to our updates tonight,

77

00:09:44.060 --> 00:10:00.020

USFWS - Emily Weller: know that while we still face challenges and change can be slow, progress is being made, and there is a great deal of hope for the future, and by working with others we will build a future where this iconic species thrives once more.

78

00:10:00.810 --> 00:10:09.009

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, I think with that we can go move into our updates, our presentation. Again, thank you for joining us.

79

00:10:09.490 --> 00:10:11.460

USFWS - Emily Weller: I'm just gonna pull up

80

00:10:11.490 --> 00:10:13.290

USFWS - Emily Weller: my presentation here.

81

00:10:15.100 --> 00:10:20.100

USFWS - Emily Weller: So before actually, we get into the team, the program updates,

82

00:10:21.230 --> 00:10:22.430

USFWS - Emily Weller: you can

83

00:10:23.190 --> 00:10:25.270

USFWS - Emily Weller: change the slide, please. Next slide.

84

00:10:27.080 --> 00:10:34.349

USFWS - Emily Weller: Before we get into the updates, I want to talk about our Red Wolf Recovery Program team.

85

00:10:34.940 --> 00:10:40.670

USFWS - Emily Weller: We are a relatively small group, but a very mighty and passionate group.

86

00:10:41.057 --> 00:10:52.850

USFWS - Emily Weller: There's me, again, the Red Wolf Recovery Program coordinator. We also have our field team. And there we have our North Carolina program manager, Joe Madison, who's gonna present a little bit later.

87

00:10:53.290 --> 00:11:02.870

USFWS - Emily Weller: We have three field biologists – a Partners for Fish and Wildlife biologist and typically, we have one to two interns on boarded at any given time.

88

00:11:03.280 --> 00:11:16.759

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, we are growing. We just recently hired a wildlife biologist to join our field biologist. They will be starting soon, and we are working on hiring a community engagement specialist.

89

00:11:16.950 --> 00:11:35.409

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, we do not work in a vacuum. We get plenty of support from other programs in the Service. Our public affairs specialist in our office of communication, Jennifer Koches. She helps us with media inquiries, website updates, press releases, all of those.

90

00:11:35.410 --> 00:11:47.629

USFWS - Emily Weller: We work closely with our Raleigh Ecological Service Field Office, refuges, our social scientists, and law enforcement. So, a lot of support from other programs in the Service.

91

00:11:48.500 --> 00:11:49.890

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide, please.

92

00:11:52.240 --> 00:12:00.539

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, get us to get us started, I'm going to give a super abridged history of the red wolf and the program for those of you who

93

00:12:00.888 --> 00:12:10.429

USFWS - Emily Weller: may not be familiar. So, at one time the red wolf was common throughout Eastern and South-Central United States. You can see the yellow on the map there.

94

00:12:10.670 --> 00:12:21.619

USFWS - Emily Weller: But by early 20th century the population of red wolves had been decimated, due to intensive predator control programs and habitat degradation and alteration.

95

00:12:22.170 --> 00:12:30.909

USFWS - Emily Weller: It was one of the first species to be listed and receive federal protection under the Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966.

96

00:12:30.980 --> 00:12:33.779

USFWS - Emily Weller: That is the precursor to the ESA.

97

00:12:33.890 --> 00:12:38.730

USFWS - Emily Weller: It was listed as threatened with extinction in 1967.

98

00:12:38.760 --> 00:12:47.870

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now by 1972, the range was limited to a small coastal area along Southeast Texas and Southwest Louisiana. That's the red area on the map.

99

00:12:48.410 --> 00:12:56.210

USFWS - Emily Weller: In 1973, in anticipation of the Endangered Species Act, and to prevent extinction of the species,

100

00:12:56.520 --> 00:13:03.479

USFWS - Emily Weller: the Service established a formal recovery program and began trapping canids in this Texas-Louisiana area

101

00:13:03.490 --> 00:13:07.570

USFWS - Emily Weller: to establish a red wolf captive breeding program or

102

00:13:08.118 --> 00:13:15.109

USFWS - Emily Weller: population under human care, with the intention of returning the species to the wild within this historic range.

103

00:13:15.360 --> 00:13:22.440

USFWS - Emily Weller: With the passage of the Endangered Species Act in 1973 the red wolf was listed as an “endangered species.”

104

00:13:22.770 --> 00:13:35.879

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, after trapping canids in this area between 1973 and 1980, to remove the last of the red wolves to prevent its extinction, we declared it extinct in the wild in 1980.

105

00:13:36.540 --> 00:13:43.120

USFWS - Emily Weller: By 1987, the population under human care had grown enough to reintroduce them into the wild.

106

00:13:43.240 --> 00:13:48.609

USFWS - Emily Weller: They were reintroduced into Eastern North Carolina as a non-essential experimental population.

107

00:13:48.910 --> 00:14:01.389

USFWS - Emily Weller: I want to clarify, because we get a lot of questions about this; the term non-essential is just a legal definition or a term under the ESA, and it's not reflective of the value of that population.

108

00:14:02.304 --> 00:14:13.209

USFWS - Emily Weller: Experimental populations have a designated geographic scope, and this one includes five counties on the Albemarle Peninsula—that's Dare, Hyde, Tyrrell, Washington, and Beaufort.

109

00:14:13.410 --> 00:14:28.120

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, one of the really interesting things about this program is that it was the first of its kind. The first to reintroduce a large carnivore into the wild. This was eight years before the well-known 1995 reintroduction of gray wolves into Yellowstone.

110

00:14:28.230 --> 00:14:38.360

USFWS - Emily Weller: Our red wolf biologists and our partners pioneered innovative management techniques that have been used by other reintroduction programs and are standard practices today.

111

00:14:38.750 --> 00:14:53.590

USFWS - Emily Weller: This program really paved the way for other reintroduction programs. Now, today, the Eastern North Carolina red wolf population is our only wild population of red wolves, and Joe will talk about that population in more detail.

112

00:14:55.000 --> 00:14:56.500

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide, please.

113

00:14:59.990 --> 00:15:06.700

USFWS - Emily Weller: We had several questions submitted asking about our plans, goals, timelines, next steps.

114

00:15:07.110 --> 00:15:12.720

USFWS - Emily Weller: We do have a plan. The Revised Red Wolf Recovery Plan that we published a year ago.

115

00:15:12.840 --> 00:15:20.760

USFWS - Emily Weller: This is our guiding document, our roadmap to recovery, and I think going through this will really help answer that question

116

00:15:21.890 --> 00:15:23.280

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide, please.

117

00:15:26.620 --> 00:15:37.780

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, in this plan, we've outlined the strategy of how to get from the species current state to the state of it being recovered and no longer needing the protection of the ESA.

118

00:15:37.920 --> 00:16:00.200

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, the first part of this strategy is to expand distribution of species – that's establishing additional populations in areas of adequate habitat, ideally different habitat that will support multiple paths. Now, at this time we don't have additional population locations identified, and I'll speak to that more later, as we had several questions on that topic as well.

119

00:16:00.570 --> 00:16:08.229

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, the second part of the strategy is to increase the population abundance and maintain genetic diversity long time long-term.

120

00:16:08.450 --> 00:16:18.639

USFWS - Emily Weller: We need a robust population under human care to support the establishment of wild populations and maintain gene diversity long-term.

121

00:16:18.850 --> 00:16:34.939

USFWS - Emily Weller: Establishing and growing populations—that's going to require releases, pup fostering, translocation of wild red wolves (within and among wild populations and propagation sites), and adaptive management, which is coyote sterilization.

122

00:16:38.020 --> 00:16:38.929

USFWS - Emily Weller: Excuse me.

123

00:16:39.300 --> 00:16:45.169

USFWS - Emily Weller: But for red wolf populations to ultimately be viable, be successful,

124

00:16:45.210 --> 00:16:59.080

USFWS - Emily Weller: they can't be reliant on extensive human interventions which we define as annual or frequent releases, pup fostering, translocations, and the placeholder management, that's coyote sterilization.

125

00:16:59.638 --> 00:17:07.429

USFWS - Emily Weller: But to further increase population numbers, maintain genetic diversity, and eliminate the need for extensive human interventions,

126

00:17:07.700 --> 00:17:15.020

USFWS - Emily Weller: threats to the red wolf, both under human care and the wild, must be adequately addressed to ensure survival,

127

00:17:15.569 --> 00:17:17.910

USFWS - Emily Weller: growth, and long-term viability.

128

00:17:18.430 --> 00:17:33.419

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, the third part of the-this strategy is implementing collaborative conservation. This was a major focus of the recovery team. It's a critical component of the recovery plan, and, as I said, it is a focus of the recovery program.

129

00:17:33.930 --> 00:17:37.140

USFWS - Emily Weller: We cannot recover this species alone.

130

00:17:37.260 --> 00:17:46.159

USFWS - Emily Weller: We can achieve better conservation through partnerships, and each party has a role to play and unique perspectives that will make red wolf recovery possible.

131

00:17:46.490 --> 00:17:52.979

USFWS - Emily Weller: Also, looking at the patchwork of landowners in the Southeast, and that federal ownership is less than 10%,

132

00:17:53.020 --> 00:18:10.050

USFWS - Emily Weller: we have to work with others in order for these populations to be successful. This is particularly true for landowners and other community members as they are the backbone of

conservation, and have the most direct bearing on recovery, since they are the ones that live with red wolves.

133

00:18:10.450 --> 00:18:19.330

USFWS - Emily Weller: This collaborative conservation part is critical to implementing and achieving the other parts of the strategy and being successful.

134

00:18:19.840 --> 00:18:25.369

USFWS - Emily Weller: We have to engage the various parties, or contributors, as we refer to them in the recovery plan

135

00:18:25.470 --> 00:18:42.939

USFWS - Emily Weller: and incorporate the various perspectives and values into recovery efforts. We have to give contributors a voice. Having a voice leads to acceptance, and acceptance is needed to minimize threats to a level that will allow the species to persist without extensive human interventions.

136

00:18:43.000 --> 00:19:00.889

USFWS - Emily Weller: But this type of engagement requires establishing trust or rebuilding trust, building a true partnership which includes having a shared understanding among all contributors regarding goals, objectives, roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

137

00:19:01.780 --> 00:19:03.230

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide, please.

138

00:19:11.660 --> 00:19:23.489

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, the recovery criteria. These are objective, measurable thresholds or targets, that, when met, would result in a determination to delist the species. Which-which means

139

00:19:23.600 --> 00:19:30.610

USFWS - Emily Weller: it no longer meets the definition of a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act and no longer warrants

140

00:19:30.620 --> 00:19:32.450

USFWS - Emily Weller: the ESA protections.

141

00:19:32.610 --> 00:19:38.159

USFWS - Emily Weller: This is what we're aiming for, and if we follow our strategy, we will meet these criteria.

142

00:19:38.190 --> 00:19:44.850

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, criteria one: we need three viable populations distributed to maximize redundancy.

143

00:19:45.250 --> 00:19:54.030

USFWS - Emily Weller: Redundancy is needed to protect the species from catastrophic loss. It reduces the likelihood that all populations will be affected simultaneously.

144

00:19:54.690 --> 00:20:00.880

USFWS - Emily Weller: Criterion 2: each red wolf population meets the following criteria for viability.

145

00:20:01.010 --> 00:20:10.540

USFWS - Emily Weller: One of the three populations consist of at least 180 individuals. The other two populations consist of a minimum of 280 individuals each.

146

00:20:10.710 --> 00:20:16.259

USFWS - Emily Weller: At least 80% of current and future founder gene diversity has been maintained.

147

00:20:16.580 --> 00:20:25.989

USFWS - Emily Weller: Once the population meets that minimum abundance, the population is stable or growing for a period of 10 years without extensive human interventions.

148

00:20:26.180 --> 00:20:31.740

USFWS - Emily Weller: And then each population has a 95% probability of persistence for a hundred years.

149

00:20:31.990 --> 00:20:42.360

USFWS - Emily Weller: And the following, criterion three: adequate mechanisms, or long-term commitments are in place that provide a high level of certainty that criteria two, for each population,

150

00:20:42.440 --> 00:20:45.569

USFWS - Emily Weller: will be maintained into the foreseeable future

151

00:20:45.800 --> 00:21:07.470

USFWS - Emily Weller: without the protections of the Act. So, we have the number of populations needed, the criteria that each population needs to meet, and mechanisms in place to ensure those criteria can be maintained into the foreseeable future which gives that the definition of a threatened species under the ESA, or rather not meeting that definition so that the species can be delisted.

152

00:21:08.960 --> 00:21:10.150

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide, please.

153

00:21:12.050 --> 00:21:22.379

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, there is a lot on this screen. I apologize. This was the only way I could think of to get that all the actions on one slide.

154

00:21:22.410 --> 00:21:36.500

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, let me read through those while I. These are the recovery actions, recovery actions or site-specific actions that are needed to meet the criteria, and these are a reflection of the strategy.

155

00:21:36.540 --> 00:21:41.590

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, we have 16 total here. Twelve apply to all populations.

156

00:21:41.600 --> 00:21:44.830

USFWS - Emily Weller: Four are specific to North Carolina.

157

00:21:45.510 --> 00:21:52.130

USFWS - Emily Weller: As you read through them, I'll just quickly say they range from engaging states in a process to identify potential sites,

158

00:21:52.260 --> 00:21:56.209

USFWS - Emily Weller: building teams, developing plans, adaptive management,

159

00:21:56.250 --> 00:21:59.580

USFWS - Emily Weller: outreach, engagement, school programs.

160

00:21:59.790 --> 00:22:10.900

USFWS - Emily Weller: assessing adequacy of management, and long-term commitments, revising the recovery plan to include future sites, habitat restoration, reducing threats, and increasing law enforcement presence.

161

00:22:11.260 --> 00:22:17.380

USFWS - Emily Weller: These are the things that need to be done not only by the service, but other partner agencies and organizations.

162

00:22:17.450 --> 00:22:31.300

USFWS - Emily Weller: And they have priorities assigned to them. Most of them are high priority—priority one. Some of these can be done simultaneously, others may need to be implemented before moving on and starting other actions.

163

00:22:31.680 --> 00:22:39.310

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now each of these actions has a time estimate associated with it, but that is how long we expect it will take to carry out that action,

164

00:22:39.400 --> 00:22:49.620

USFWS - Emily Weller: not a timeline of when actions should be implemented. Some actions may be short like a year, others go the entire length of the estimated recovery time.

165

00:22:50.360 --> 00:22:58.019

USFWS - Emily Weller: The plan also includes time and cost estimates, which is just how they sound: estimates of the time it will take to achieve recovery

166

00:22:58.090 --> 00:23:07.599

USFWS - Emily Weller: and the cost of implementing the actions. So altogether, we estimate delisting criteria can be achieved in approximately 50 years.

167

00:23:08.352 --> 00:23:14.350

USFWS - Emily Weller: We also estimate that this can be achieved with just under 328 million.

168

00:23:14.540 --> 00:23:17.210

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, realize that is a big number.

169

00:23:17.440 --> 00:23:23.399

USFWS - Emily Weller: But recovery of a large species not only takes time, it takes money.

170

00:23:23.855 --> 00:23:45.680

USFWS - Emily Weller: But it's important to note that this is not just federal funding. This includes in-kind contributions, funding from other agencies and organizations, and it covers everything from salaries of staff, federal and non-federal, travel contracts for services, printing services, everything down to purchasing equipment like traps, collars, vehicles.

171

00:23:47.380 --> 00:23:48.720

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide, please.

172

00:23:50.580 --> 00:24:09.410

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now the recovery plan isn't it. The next step in recovery is a recovery implementation strategy. And in September 2023, just almost exactly a year ago, some of the recovery team members met in person to work on developing that implementation strategy.

173

00:24:09.640 --> 00:24:16.470

USFWS - Emily Weller: And what that is is an operations plan that steps down the actions and recovery plan to more detailed activities.

174

00:24:16.840 --> 00:24:26.960

USFWS - Emily Weller: The implementation strategy is a playbook. Any organization, agency, individual can take a look at that strategy and determine where they may fit

175

00:24:27.330 --> 00:24:34.300

USFWS - Emily Weller: based on their interests, expertise, resources, etc. This document should

176

00:24:34.420 --> 00:24:39.479

USFWS - Emily Weller: spark more collaboration, and we are hoping to make this available soon.

177

00:24:39.800 --> 00:24:41.570

USFWS - Emily Weller: It is in draft.

178

00:24:42.020 --> 00:24:43.460

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide, please.

179

00:24:46.050 --> 00:24:57.079

USFWS - Emily Weller: Okay, so we have a plan. We have actions that we need to take and soon activities to implement those actions. Where do we start? What are the next steps?

180

00:24:57.836 --> 00:25:03.919

USFWS - Emily Weller: The following are some of the key actions that the recovery program will be focused on in the coming year or longer.

181

00:25:04.304 --> 00:25:11.439

USFWS - Emily Weller: That's not to say that we aren't working on other things, but these are some of the-the big actions that we need to take to move forward.

182

00:25:11.770 --> 00:25:24.749

USFWS - Emily Weller: First, like I said we, and by we, I mean me, need to finalize the implementation strategy as this is an important source of collaboration. My goal is to have it available to the public this winter.

183

00:25:25.040 --> 00:25:35.339

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next, we will continue to focus on our North Carolina population, managing and increasing that in Eastern North Carolina red wolf population which Joe is going to speak about.

184

00:25:35.730 --> 00:25:43.110

USFWS - Emily Weller: But part of that is our recent formation of a North Carolina red wolf team and working with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to

185

00:25:43.250 --> 00:25:51.520

USFWS - Emily Weller: collaboratively implement red wolf and other canine management concurrently throughout the Eastern North Carolina red wolf population area.

186

00:25:52.290 --> 00:25:58.660

USFWS - Emily Weller: We will also continue to assist our safe partners in increasing space, so that the safe population continues to grow.

187

00:25:59.200 --> 00:26:06.530

USFWS - Emily Weller: And we have heavily invested in conservation conflict transformation, so that we can get to a place of collaborative conservation

188

00:26:06.630 --> 00:26:11.050

USFWS - Emily Weller: and working on this is critical to so many other actions,

189

00:26:11.200 --> 00:26:13.350

USFWS - Emily Weller: most of them, I would say.

190

00:26:13.760 --> 00:26:24.019

USFWS - Emily Weller: And then, last, but not least, we will be working with-working on identifying new reintroduction sites, because well, one population is not enough.

191

00:26:24.430 --> 00:26:25.840

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide, please.

192

00:26:29.470 --> 00:26:37.429

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, to begin with, the North Carolina red wolf team. This was a priority one recovery action in the recovery plan.

193

00:26:37.680 --> 00:26:50.260

USFWS - Emily Weller: We stated in that recovery plan that we would establish red wolf teams at each reintroduction site to facilitate-facilitate a shared understanding regarding cooperation needed for successful recovery.

194

00:26:50.712 --> 00:26:52.360

USFWS - Emily Weller: This is an important-important

195

00:26:52.470 --> 00:27:01.939

USFWS - Emily Weller: to success given differences in agency missions, statutory authorities, expertise, cultures, and constituency expectations.

196

00:27:02.300 --> 00:27:14.800

USFWS - Emily Weller: We anticipate red wolf teams would consist of at least Service and state representatives. This action hits directly on being collaborative and is very different than how we've operated in the past.

197

00:27:14.960 --> 00:27:23.100

USFWS - Emily Weller: We envision this team would develop, with other contributors, strategies to address threats and recover the red wolf at each of those sites.

198

00:27:23.420 --> 00:27:44.709

USFWS - Emily Weller: This team could also regularly review recovery progress, make recommendations as needed, address conflicts, engage with hunting, trapping, and wildlife conservation groups, promote-promote transparency, collaboration and partnerships, and collaboratively develop strategies and recommendations for long-term population viability

199

00:27:44.730 --> 00:27:55.790

USFWS - Emily Weller: and post delisting, monitoring assistance. Right now, we are working on a memorandum of understanding to establish this team and really outline how we are going to work together.

200

00:27:56.590 --> 00:27:58.139

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide, please.

201

00:27:59.400 --> 00:28:10.690

USFWS - Emily Weller: One of our ongoing focuses is to assist with increasing the SAFE population. That's the captive breeding program of the population under human care that was started in the seventies.

202

00:28:10.710 --> 00:28:17.519

USFWS - Emily Weller: SAFE is saving animals from extinction and is an association of zoos and aquariums program.

203

00:28:18.120 --> 00:28:36.470

USFWS - Emily Weller: Because the SAFE population is the genetic fail-safe for the species, and it is critical to supporting the establishment of wild populations, one of our priorities is to ensure that population is robust, which means increasing breeding capability so that the population can increase and hit our target.

204

00:28:37.220 --> 00:28:45.220

USFWS - Emily Weller: Our SAFE partners are amazing. Today, the population and the number of partner facilities is higher than it's ever been.

205

00:28:45.652 --> 00:28:50.340

USFWS - Emily Weller: There are 267 red wolves in the SAFE population and 50

206

00:28:50.450 --> 00:28:54.060

USFWS - Emily Weller: partner zoos and wildlife centers across the country.

207

00:28:54.410 --> 00:29:00.299

USFWS - Emily Weller: They've been able to maintain 88% of the genetic diversity of the 12 founders.

208

00:29:00.630 --> 00:29:10.709

USFWS - Emily Weller: Historically, a whelping success has been around 20 to 25%. But in the last 2 years, that success rate has been 45 and 38%.

209

00:29:10.900 --> 00:29:17.920

USFWS - Emily Weller: Pup survival also increased this past year. It was 80% where historically, it has been around 65%.

210

00:29:18.130 --> 00:29:26.500

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now there are 122 spaces dedicated to red wolves, which equals a capacity of about 280 to 300 red wolves.

211

00:29:26.790 --> 00:29:38.359

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now based on a population viability analysis, the goal is to reach 400 in the SAFE population, so they need approximately 50 new spaces to accommodate that 400 total.

212

00:29:38.850 --> 00:29:46.699

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, someone asked if we would be interested in working with tribes or tribal members in various states to provide captive breeding sites.

213

00:29:46.890 --> 00:29:55.279

USFWS - Emily Weller: Yes, we need new partners. Feel free to contact me. I'll be happy to help set up a discussion with SAFE to talk about

214

00:29:55.290 --> 00:30:00.660

USFWS - Emily Weller: requirements, options, resources, and get that-that conversation started.

215

00:30:01.467 --> 00:30:07.039

USFWS - Emily Weller: We were also asked, what do these institutions-institutions do? And is it helpful?

216

00:30:07.110 --> 00:30:12.129

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, the short answer is a lot. And yes, absolutely, it is helpful.

217

00:30:12.680 --> 00:30:20.160

USFWS - Emily Weller: The Red Wolf SAFE Program supports recovery by providing red wolves that are behaviorally fit for recovery,

218

00:30:20.200 --> 00:30:27.729

USFWS - Emily Weller: increasing capacity and population so that they can support multiple wild populations, and then providing

219

00:30:28.040 --> 00:30:33.700

USFWS - Emily Weller: audiences with knowledge, empathy, and resources to have a positive impact on recovery.

220

00:30:33.890 --> 00:30:41.690

USFWS - Emily Weller: They go beyond just breeding. They recently completed a 5-year action plan that directly supports the Red Wolf Recovery Plan.

221

00:30:42.110 --> 00:31:06.890

USFWS - Emily Weller: Zoos and wildlife centers are often the first source of information or awareness for the public. They're trusted messengers of wildlife conservation and environmental issues. They can educate millions of visitors each year about endangered species and conservation related issues. We cannot do that. Many of these institutions are conducting vital research to improve the health of the safe population.

222

00:31:06.930 --> 00:31:14.749

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, they bring a wealth of resources and expertise to the table, and they are critical to recovery.

223

00:31:15.290 --> 00:31:16.590

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide, please.

224

00:31:19.180 --> 00:31:24.750

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, as I mentioned before, we're embracing a new philosophy, right? Collaborative conservation.

225

00:31:24.880 --> 00:31:43.690

USFWS - Emily Weller: the way we operated in the past did not serve us well. The people part of the equation was missing, and our relationships with different agencies, NGOs, the local community, and landowners was not good. This is critical to not only how we, the Service, operate, but it's foundational to implementing the recovery strategy,

226

00:31:43.720 --> 00:31:49.659

USFWS - Emily Weller: recovery actions, the implementation strategy, and ultimately achieving the recovery criteria.

227

00:31:50.760 --> 00:31:57.590

USFWS - Emily Weller: But how do we collaborate, communicate, and engage with those various agencies, organizations, the community

228

00:31:57.660 --> 00:32:01.019

USFWS - Emily Weller: that we have had so much conflict and distrust with?

229

00:32:01.933 --> 00:32:09.009

USFWS - Emily Weller: We have to overcome that conflict so that we can collaborate. And that's one of our biggest challenges.

230

00:32:09.050 --> 00:32:19.060

USFWS - Emily Weller: We have invested, excuse me, in Conservation Conflict Transformation (CCT). What that is, that is about improving relationships and changing that destructive conflict

231

00:32:19.100 --> 00:32:20.829

USFWS - Emily Weller: that prevents open

232

00:32:21.200 --> 00:32:42.179

USFWS - Emily Weller: communication and trust, sucks up energy and resources, hinders progress into something that's more productive so that we can move forward together. It's engaging other agencies, organizations, the community in processes related to red wolf recovery and giving them a voice. And creating a-a process that is fair, legitimate, and inclusive.

233

00:32:42.470 --> 00:32:55.770

USFWS - Emily Weller: It's addressing the people part of the equation. So, we contracted with Constructive Conflict and are working with Francine Madden and Kim Wolfenden on this in the 5-county Eastern North Carolina population area.

234

00:32:56.370 --> 00:33:04.189

USFWS - Emily Weller: We have contracted with them, but they do not work for us. They are 3rd party neutral, that works for all entities equally.

235

00:33:04.560 --> 00:33:25.259

USFWS - Emily Weller: And what this approach is meant to do is just address directly, address the issues around red wolves, while also reconciling and transforming deeper rooted conflicts that have enabled and inflamed destructive conflict. We are now in year two of a 3-year contract. Our 3rd year begins in December.

236

00:33:26.810 --> 00:33:27.880

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide.

237

00:33:29.730 --> 00:33:44.779

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, some of the goals and outcomes of this CCT process is improve trust, transparency, communication, and operational functioning within the Service and then among the Service, states, NGOs, local partners, the community, and others;

238

00:33:45.332 --> 00:33:50.420

USFWS - Emily Weller: improve perceptions of and relationships among and within these various groups;

239

00:33:50.460 --> 00:33:57.860

USFWS - Emily Weller: improve intergroup alignment and functioning, as well as intergroup functioning and capacity for shared problem solving;

240

00:33:58.813 --> 00:34:04.249

USFWS - Emily Weller: a positive ripple effect of increased shared problem-solving capacity and motivation.

241

00:34:04.796 --> 00:34:10.429

USFWS - Emily Weller: How the conflict over red wolves in North Carolina is addressed, you know, no matter what the outcome is,

242

00:34:10.460 --> 00:34:20.119

USFWS - Emily Weller: will have a significant ripple effect for ripple recovery elsewhere, and that ripple could be positive or negative-negative, just depending on the process and outcome.

243

00:34:20.409 --> 00:34:33.489

USFWS - Emily Weller: And last, involved individuals and entities possess the capacity to continually anticipate and prevent destructive conflict and address emerging challenges and transform conflict as it arises – skill building.

244

00:34:33.870 --> 00:34:44.009

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, this is going to be done through three tasks. Task one is assessing conflict. The link on the screen here will take you to the report which was completed earlier this year.

245

00:34:44.260 --> 00:34:55.960

USFWS - Emily Weller: This report is an overview of the perspectives of the various groups which includes the local Albemarle Peninsula community, red wolf advocacy community, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, and the Service.

246

00:34:56.080 --> 00:35:00.500

USFWS - Emily Weller: At least 155 individuals were interviewed for this report.

247

00:35:01.051 --> 00:35:06.140

USFWS - Emily Weller: In that report, it identifies common ground, areas of divergence, and next steps.

248

00:35:06.560 --> 00:35:12.339

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, task two is building capacity within the Fish and Wildlife Service and other groups

249

00:35:12.460 --> 00:35:20.849

USFWS - Emily Weller: to support transformation of internal and external conflict around red wolves and improve alignment, cooperation and productivity.

250

00:35:21.010 --> 00:35:26.649

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, this task is ongoing. The Service held an internal CCt workshop a year ago.

251

00:35:27.155 --> 00:35:33.239

USFWS - Emily Weller: In March 2024, a workshop was held between the Service and various NGOs.

252

00:35:33.844 --> 00:35:42.309

USFWS - Emily Weller: I have said this at the meeting, I said it in other presentations since that meeting, I will say it now, and I will probably say it whenever I get the chance.

253

00:35:42.960 --> 00:35:52.769

USFWS - Emily Weller: We had decades of conflict in that room—disagreements, probably not saying the best things about other organizations and agencies,

254

00:35:52.780 --> 00:35:54.940

USFWS - Emily Weller: history full of litigation.

255

00:35:54.990 --> 00:36:06.099

USFWS - Emily Weller: But the people in that room recognize the need for change and want to change. And I think there's agreement that we have to change, it's the only way we can make progress on recovery.

256

00:36:06.170 --> 00:36:07.580

USFWS - Emily Weller: And I don't think,

257

00:36:07.660 --> 00:36:12.860

USFWS - Emily Weller: the significance of that cannot be overstated. This was a game changer, and I think

258

00:36:12.880 --> 00:36:26.269

USFWS - Emily Weller: we will look back on this as a pivotal moment for recovery. And from that workshop, we developed a NGO-Fish and Wildlife Service collaboration group to work together more effectively and more efficiently

259

00:36:26.310 --> 00:36:29.310

USFWS - Emily Weller: to have a greater effect on recovery.

260

00:36:30.080 --> 00:36:56.690

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, task three: integrating CCT into existing and new processes. This is just using CCT to change how we operate, reconcile relationships and align individuals and groups toward that shared goal and begin the shared problem solving. Both the assessment, which is task one, and the capacity and building-capacity, building and alignment, task two, will build receptivity and capacity for this task three.

261

00:36:57.223 --> 00:37:08.240

USFWS - Emily Weller: This is same side engagement which is ongoing the bringing of the various groups together until a multi-party engagement process is anticipated to begin this fall or winter.

262

00:37:09.400 --> 00:37:11.232

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now we were asked

263

00:37:13.170 --> 00:37:22.380

USFWS - Emily Weller: what the team had learned through going through this CCT process the past couple of years. And I-I can't speak for everyone, but I don't think

264

00:37:22.440 --> 00:37:28.319

USFWS - Emily Weller: there were any real surprises in the report in regards to the different perspectives. However,

265

00:37:28.570 --> 00:37:38.854

USFWS - Emily Weller: going through the workshop really helped me to step back and try to see other perspectives and the source or factors that play into that perspective.

266

00:37:39.300 --> 00:37:45.520

USFWS - Emily Weller: And this process itself has been really good at opening up opportunities to have better discussions, and really

267

00:37:45.540 --> 00:37:55.870

USFWS - Emily Weller: has helped us to see how important those discussions really are. And that is a great first step. We have already seen significant progress. Like I said,

268

00:37:56.270 --> 00:38:02.899

USFWS - Emily Weller: the relationship-relationship with the with the NGOs and our relationship with North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission,

269

00:38:02.930 --> 00:38:05.360

USFWS - Emily Weller: it's better than it's been in years.

270

00:38:06.170 --> 00:38:07.200

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide.

271

00:38:11.000 --> 00:38:18.620

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, another priority and one that we received many questions about is identifying potential new reintroduction sites.

272

00:38:19.061 --> 00:38:23.890

USFWS - Emily Weller: One population obviously isn't enough, and we've determined that we need three total.

273

00:38:24.360 --> 00:38:38.770

USFWS - Emily Weller: But the Service has not done any analyses yet, so no sites have been identified. Now you're probably asking why? It seems like a pretty important step, and you are correct. But the Service cannot go through that process

274

00:38:38.990 --> 00:38:51.599

USFWS - Emily Weller: that analysis and then announce, "Hey, State A and B, you have been identified as the most suitable site for red wolves. Now, come join us. Let's work together to establish a new population."

275

00:38:51.610 --> 00:38:56.930

USFWS - Emily Weller: That will not work. It's important for state wildlife agencies to be

276

00:38:57.240 --> 00:39:01.789

USFWS - Emily Weller: invested partners working alongside us early in in the process.

277

00:39:01.820 --> 00:39:13.619

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now we outlined in the recovery plan that we will develop with state wildlife agencies criteria for and identifying all potentially, ecologically, and socially suitable reintroduction sites that could

278

00:39:13.630 --> 00:39:16.439

USFWS - Emily Weller: potentially support a viable population.

279

00:39:16.790 --> 00:39:23.929

USFWS - Emily Weller: And once potential sites are identified, we would further engage state wildlife agencies and others to determine final locations.

280

00:39:25.000 --> 00:39:26.891

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, the timeline on this,

281

00:39:27.500 --> 00:39:33.430

USFWS - Emily Weller: I will be taking some of those first steps starting next month to get the identification process started.

282

00:39:33.810 --> 00:39:38.809

USFWS - Emily Weller: How long will that entire process take down to the final locations?

283

00:39:39.130 --> 00:39:48.759

USFWS - Emily Weller: I'm not certain. There is a balance that needs to be struck between getting new sites identified so that we can move forward with establishing a new population

284

00:39:49.000 --> 00:39:57.179

USFWS - Emily Weller: and taking time to have the necessary discussions and input to get the support a program like this needs from the beginning.

285

00:39:57.770 --> 00:40:02.640

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, my best guess for getting red wolves on the ground and in a new population—maybe

286

00:40:02.780 --> 00:40:07.779

USFWS - Emily Weller: 4 to 6 years. That gives time for the identification process-process,

287

00:40:07.920 --> 00:40:22.829

USFWS - Emily Weller:, the SAFE population to increase and be able to support a second wild population, and time for the right groundwork to be laid to-to support, to gain that support prior to any releases.

288

00:40:23.860 --> 00:40:25.249

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide, please.

289

00:40:29.120 --> 00:40:37.499

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now we received several questions about red wolves in Louisiana, the gulf coast canids, red wolf ancestry remaining on the landscape in this area, so

290

00:40:37.580 --> 00:40:53.529

USFWS - Emily Weller: I will address those. So, in case you are not familiar, over the last several years, studies have found red wolf ancestry persists in wild canids in the Texas and Louisiana area, where the last of the red wolves were thought to have been removed in the seventies to start the

291

00:40:53.570 --> 00:40:55.960

USFWS - Emily Weller: captive breeding program.

292

00:40:57.274 --> 00:41:12.390

USFWS - Emily Weller: This ancestry is known red wolf ancestry, meaning these canids share alleles with the original founder red wolves used to establish that program, their descendants, and the reintroduced Eastern North Carolina red wolf population.

293

00:41:12.960 --> 00:41:16.694

USFWS - Emily Weller: These studies also have found Gulf Coast canid populations

294

00:41:17.150 --> 00:41:38.789

USFWS - Emily Weller: may carry red wolf ghost alleles. These are alleles that are absent from any other North American canid source population (coyote, gray wolf, eastern wolf, and dog) and including known red wolves. These ghost alleles were thought to be alleles lost or just not captured when those red wolves were removed in the seventies.

295

00:41:39.210 --> 00:41:42.740

USFWS - Emily Weller: These studies are ongoing. So,

296

00:41:42.820 --> 00:41:50.750

USFWS - Emily Weller: you know, what does that mean? At this time, it is not clear-clear if these Gulf Coast canids are red wolves.

297

00:41:50.760 --> 00:42:07.290

USFWS - Emily Weller: We know that there have been questions and concerns from the public in this area, particularly if red wolves are found to be present. How is that going to affect their land and what they can do on their land? And there are a lot of what ifs in trying to answer these questions, particularly

298

00:42:07.350 --> 00:42:10.879

USFWS - Emily Weller: any questions regarding potential regulations. But,

299

00:42:11.490 --> 00:42:20.419

USFWS - Emily Weller: if any of these Gulf Coast canids were determined to be red wolves, they would receive full protection of the ESA as a federally protected species so

300

00:42:20.480 --> 00:42:24.869

USFWS - Emily Weller: killing and harming a red wolf, among other actions, would be prohibited.

301

00:42:25.040 --> 00:42:26.030

USFWS - Emily Weller: However,

302

00:42:26.440 --> 00:42:35.800

USFWS - Emily Weller: private land is critical in conservation and recovery. Landowners and other community members, like, I said before, are the backbone of conservation

303

00:42:36.110 --> 00:42:46.659

USFWS - Emily Weller: because they have the most direct bearing on recovery. So, it will be critical for the Service and state wildlife agencies to work collaboratively with landowners and the local community

304

00:42:46.850 --> 00:42:52.719

USFWS - Emily Weller: to consider and incorporate their needs into any recovery plans and management actions.

305

00:42:53.610 --> 00:43:02.310

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, one person asked if the genes from the Galveston Island “ghost wolves” can be introduced into the recovery-recovery population. And if not,

306

00:43:02.740 --> 00:43:09.190

USFWS - Emily Weller: why not? And I appreciate this question because it gives me the opportunity to address a couple of things there.

307

00:43:09.470 --> 00:43:18.380

USFWS - Emily Weller: First, I do not use the term “ghost wolves.” I’ve talked to the researchers about my concerns with this term, so I don’t mind bringing it up here.

308

00:43:18.986 --> 00:43:29.530

USFWS - Emily Weller: My first concern is that if you call something a ghost wolf, a Gulf Coast wolf, a Weller wolf, what are people going to think that animal is?

309

00:43:29.680 --> 00:43:45.770

USFWS - Emily Weller: A wolf. And we just don't know yet what those animals are, even if those lost alleles are red wolf, that doesn't necessarily make them a wolf. And I want to be fair to the communities and the landowners in these Gulf Coast areas where these canids are being studied

310

00:43:45.930 --> 00:43:49.750

USFWS - Emily Weller: and not call them something until we know what they are.

311

00:43:50.100 --> 00:43:55.510

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, the other part of this question, can these genes be introduced into the recovery population?

312

00:43:55.560 --> 00:44:00.719

USFWS - Emily Weller: The answer at this time is, no, because we don't know yet

313

00:44:01.280 --> 00:44:05.143

USFWS - Emily Weller: that these are red wolf alleles, and we don't know what these canids are.

314

00:44:05.570 --> 00:44:11.690

USFWS - Emily Weller: If the ghost alleles are determined to red wolf alleles, whether the canids are determined to be red wolves or not,

315

00:44:12.250 --> 00:44:20.059

USFWS - Emily Weller: there would be a discussion about the best course of action, for example, if they should or should not be introduced, and-and how.

316

00:44:20.130 --> 00:44:27.539

USFWS - Emily Weller: There could be policy implications to consider; it would need to be a very well thought through and well-informed decision

317

00:44:27.760 --> 00:44:32.760

USFWS - Emily Weller: process which, with the research that we have going on, we would have that information.

318

00:44:33.100 --> 00:44:38.719

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now, another asked if the population of the Galveston Island coyotes is decreasing or increasing.

319

00:44:38.790 --> 00:44:50.530

USFWS - Emily Weller: I reached out to the researchers working in that area for information on this one. At this time, there's no quantitative population estimate, but based on sampling and reporting of observations,

320

00:44:50.670 --> 00:44:53.210

USFWS - Emily Weller: the population seems stable.

321

00:44:54.000 --> 00:44:55.389

USFWS - Emily Weller: Next slide, please.

322

00:44:57.330 --> 00:45:06.309

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, in summary, we have a new approach, and while we don't focus on the past, we are learning from the past so that we do things differently.

323

00:45:06.490 --> 00:45:16.400

USFWS - Emily Weller: not only to be successful again in North Carolina, but to start new populations differently than before. And this is the only way we're going to be successful.

324

00:45:16.410 --> 00:45:26.460

USFWS - Emily Weller: We have a new guide to recovering the red wolf with the finalization of the implementation strategy, I hope for greater collaboration to really move the needle on recovery.

325

00:45:26.760 --> 00:45:41.620

USFWS - Emily Weller: We will continue managing and growing the Eastern North Carolina red wolf population and working with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission as North Carolina red wolf team to implement additional actions for recovery of the population in North Carolina.

326

00:45:41.820 --> 00:45:54.689

USFWS - Emily Weller: Because, as the population grows, not only are we moving towards that minimum abundance, but the Eastern North Carolina population could be a source of translocations to support a new population site in the future.

327

00:45:55.140 --> 00:46:07.589

USFWS - Emily Weller: We will continue to support efforts to increase the SAFE population so that it can continue to support leases and pup fostering in North Carolina and grow to a level that can support more wild populations.

328

00:46:07.800 --> 00:46:11.035

USFWS - Emily Weller: We are working on collaborative conservation and using

329

00:46:11.490 --> 00:46:19.759

USFWS - Emily Weller: conflict transformation to address the need to engage and collaborate with entities where we've had a lot of conflict and distrust.

330

00:46:19.840 --> 00:46:24.080

USFWS - Emily Weller: We have dedicated a lot of time to this. It's ongoing,

331

00:46:24.406 --> 00:46:35.489

USFWS - Emily Weller: it's hard, it's a difficult process, but hopefully a rewarding one. It has been so far, and I have hope that it is going to get us where we need to be in the future.

332

00:46:35.510 --> 00:46:42.490

USFWS - Emily Weller: And finally, we will be working on identifying potential new reintroduction-reintroduction sites so that we can establish

333

00:46:42.810 --> 00:46:44.410

USFWS - Emily Weller: new population

334

00:46:44.740 --> 00:46:50.439

USFWS - Emily Weller: with state wildlife agencies as vested partners starting the program on the right foot.

335

00:46:50.620 --> 00:46:56.419

USFWS - Emily Weller: Now to wrap up my part of this, someone asked if we had a 10-year goal.

336

00:46:56.740 --> 00:47:04.230

USFWS - Emily Weller: And it's-it's hard to say, because there's so many factors that come into play, and circumstances seem to always be changing. But

337

00:47:04.480 --> 00:47:07.999

USFWS - Emily Weller: in ten years, if we've addressed the social issues—the

338

00:47:08.010 --> 00:47:12.669

USFWS - Emily Weller: people part, we've rebuilt trust, built true partnerships,

339

00:47:12.770 --> 00:47:18.650

USFWS - Emily Weller: we've addressed the greatest threats. The Eastern North Carolina population should be significantly higher.

340

00:47:18.690 --> 00:47:23.830

USFWS - Emily Weller: The SAFE population would be close to hitting the 400 mark, if they haven't done so already.

341

00:47:24.090 --> 00:47:26.260

USFWS - Emily Weller: By then, a second population—excuse

342

00:47:29.050 --> 00:47:48.619

USFWS - Emily Weller: me—a second population could be started with a red wolf team created, possibly a 3rd started or close to being started, depending on whether the SAFE population and the Eastern North Carolina population could support that. But at the very least, a red wolf team for that population is formed and functioning.

343

00:47:48.630 --> 00:47:58.199

USFWS - Emily Weller: I would hope, too, that within ten years America's red wolf, a culturally significant species, is a household name across the country.

344

00:47:58.590 --> 00:48:02.319

USFWS - Emily Weller: And now with that I will turn it back over to you, Megan.

345

00:48:04.790 --> 00:48:08.560

AECOM - Megan Stone: Thank you, Emily. Thank you for that presentation.

346

00:48:08.620 --> 00:48:14.030

AECOM - Megan Stone: We'll go ahead and now pause to answer any questions folks might have

347

00:48:14.210 --> 00:48:16.650

AECOM - Megan Stone: on Emily's presentation.

348

00:48:16.780 --> 00:48:22.949

AECOM - Megan Stone: Again, after we answer questions on this first presentation, we'll pass it over to Joe Madison

349

00:48:23.150 --> 00:48:26.239

AECOM - Megan Stone: for the second presentation of the evening

350

00:48:26.250 --> 00:48:31.570

AECOM - Megan Stone: and there will be another opportunity to submit electronic questions at that point.

351

00:48:32.090 --> 00:48:36.920

AECOM - Megan Stone: But for now, I'll go ahead and provide a reminder of how you can submit questions.

352

00:48:37.100 --> 00:48:43.270

AECOM - Megan Stone: I do see that we have a few questions folks submitted in the chat box, and it seems like, for the most part

353

00:48:43.440 --> 00:48:49.100

AECOM - Megan Stone: Emily addressed those in her presentation, but we will see if we missed any.

354

00:48:49.610 --> 00:48:51.207

AECOM - Megan Stone: But with that,

355

00:48:51.890 --> 00:48:57.279

AECOM - Megan Stone: we'll go ahead and just remind you that you can submit questions through the chat feature.

356

00:48:57.430 --> 00:49:00.970

AECOM - Megan Stone: So, on the screen here you can see the chat icon.

357

00:49:01.060 --> 00:49:09.179

AECOM - Megan Stone: This can be found at the bottom of your Zoom screen. You may have to wave your mouse back and forth over the bottom of your Zoom screen

358

00:49:09.290 --> 00:49:11.660

AECOM - Megan Stone: to get that toolbar to appear.

359

00:49:11.890 --> 00:49:17.859

AECOM - Megan Stone: You can then click the chat box and type your question in and send it to host and panelists.

360

00:49:18.030 --> 00:49:20.929

AECOM - Megan Stone: We'll get an alert that we've got that question

361

00:49:21.040 --> 00:49:25.970

AECOM - Megan Stone: and we'll work our way through questions in the order that they are received.

362

00:49:26.650 --> 00:49:34.619

AECOM - Megan Stone: We'll spend a little bit of time answering questions here and then, like, I said, we'll move on to our next presentation.

363

00:49:34.760 --> 00:49:43.630

AECOM - Megan Stone: If anybody needs any Zoom technical support at any time. Please feel free to also use that chat feature to get in contact with us

364

00:49:43.730 --> 00:49:46.360

AECOM - Megan Stone: and we'll have a Zoom technician help you.

365

00:49:52.180 --> 00:49:56.600

AECOM - Megan Stone: So, with that we'll give it a moment and see if we have some more questions coming in.

366

00:49:57.080 --> 00:50:02.029

AECOM - Megan Stone: And again, we ask that you keep questions related to this first presentation

367

00:50:02.090 --> 00:50:07.590

AECOM - Megan Stone: as we'll have another one coming up next. Please do listen to questions asked by others

368

00:50:07.770 --> 00:50:12.769

AECOM - Megan Stone: and the Service's responses in case your question is asked by another attendee

369

00:50:12.800 --> 00:50:14.500

AECOM - Megan Stone: and responded to.

370

00:50:14.570 --> 00:50:21.390

AECOM - Megan Stone: And then just one more breathe through that—if you submitted a question during registration,

371

00:50:21.490 --> 00:50:26.580

AECOM - Megan Stone: no need to submit that again. We do have a list of those, and we'll work our way through those.

372

00:50:39.840 --> 00:50:43.349

AECOM - Megan Stone: Thanks, everyone, for your patience as the questions load.

373

00:51:46.740 --> 00:51:52.799

AECOM - Megan Stone: Alright, we do have some questions coming in here. Our first question

374

00:51:53.200 --> 00:51:59.420

AECOM - Megan Stone: is, how can we reach out and get involved in the selection process for additional sites?

375

00:52:02.820 --> 00:52:05.169

AECOM - Megan Stone: It looks like you're muted, Emily.

376

00:52:08.950 --> 00:52:13.229

USFWS - Emily Weller: You always remind yourself to not do that, and then you do it anyway.

377

00:52:14.840 --> 00:52:24.710

USFWS - Emily Weller: That's a-that's a good question. Where I will be starting are with the state agencies. That is what we outlined in their in the recovery plan.

378

00:52:24.920 --> 00:52:30.520

USFWS - Emily Weller: I have no idea what the process is going to be like, I need the-I,

379

00:52:31.760 --> 00:52:51.819

USFWS - Emily Weller: need state agencies to help me develop that process. So, if there's an opportunity to involve more in that process, we would provide that as an update in one of these public information meetings, we would get information out. So, I don't have a great answer for you, except that

380

00:52:53.410 --> 00:52:58.469

USFWS - Emily Weller: if that becomes an option, we will-we will reach out, and

381

00:52:58.550 --> 00:52:59.043

USFWS - Emily Weller: the-I'm

382

00:53:00.720 --> 00:53:02.603

USFWS - Emily Weller: sure the states have

383

00:53:03.100 --> 00:53:08.660

USFWS - Emily Weller: contacts. We would reach out through our contacts or-or through this public information meeting.

384

00:53:11.640 --> 00:53:12.430

USFWS - Emily Weller: Great.

385

00:53:12.430 --> 00:53:18.269

AECOM - Megan Stone: Thank you, Emily. We do have quite a few questions popping up in the chat, so we'll try to

386

00:53:18.500 --> 00:53:20.439

AECOM - Megan Stone: get through some of these.

387

00:53:27.440 --> 00:53:30.129

AECOM - Megan Stone: One of our next questions is,

388

00:53:30.280 --> 00:53:36.850

AECOM - Megan Stone: if the ghost alleles you mentioned aren't red wolf, do we have an idea of what they might be?

389

00:53:40.200 --> 00:53:47.780

USFWS - Emily Weller: No, I do not. I will be quite honest. I am not a geneticist.

390

00:53:48.260 --> 00:54:06.760

USFWS - Emily Weller: I think those who are working on this feel pretty strongly that they are-are red wolf, but without further testing or without the analyses that they're currently working on, I don't have an answer for what they could possibly be, if not red wolf.

391

00:54:08.950 --> 00:54:10.239

AECOM - Megan Stone: Thank you, Emily.

392

00:54:11.100 --> 00:54:19.609

AECOM - Megan Stone: Alright! I think you touched on this one, but we'll see if you have anything to add. Has the recovery-recovery program criteria

393

00:54:19.700 --> 00:54:27.060

AECOM - Megan Stone: about population goals always been the criteria, or have these goals been recently made/modified?

394

00:54:30.740 --> 00:54:34.419

USFWS - Emily Weller: Can you read that again? I want to make sure I caught the first part of that correctly.

395

00:54:34.700 --> 00:54:35.640

AECOM - Megan Stone: Of course.

396

00:54:35.790 --> 00:54:42.550

AECOM - Megan Stone: Has the recovery program criteria about population goals always been the criteria.

397

00:54:42.590 --> 00:54:46.490

AECOM - Megan Stone: or have those goals been recently made or modified?

398

00:54:47.620 --> 00:54:57.379

USFWS - Emily Weller: So, I believe in the original—actually, there's been three recovery plans before this one. But the-the last one, the one that was last updated in-in 1990,

399

00:54:57.610 --> 00:55:09.890

USFWS - Emily Weller: it did have some population goals. but the ones that we have now, they have been modified and-and updated. So, there have been population goals in the past. These are certainly updated ones.

400

00:55:13.590 --> 00:55:14.460

AECOM - Megan Stone: Alright.

401

00:55:14.780 --> 00:55:16.309

AECOM - Megan Stone: Thank you, Emily.

402

00:55:16.370 --> 00:55:23.700

AECOM - Megan Stone: Looks like we've gotten a few questions that are really great questions that will be answered in the next presentation.

403

00:55:24.090 --> 00:55:29.229

AECOM - Megan Stone: We also had a question, will this presentation be available to rewatch?

404

00:55:29.580 --> 00:55:31.226

AECOM - Megan Stone: This presentation,

405

00:55:32.140 --> 00:55:37.740

AECOM - Megan Stone: the entire meeting, is being recorded and will be posted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

406

00:55:37.810 --> 00:55:42.670

AECOM - Megan Stone: website later on. So that will be made available to the public.

407

00:55:43.520 --> 00:55:47.270

AECOM - Megan Stone: And we'll go ahead and see if we have time to answer

408

00:55:48.850 --> 00:55:50.370

AECOM - Megan Stone: any more

409

00:55:50.410 --> 00:55:56.070

AECOM - Megan Stone: of these, otherwise the rest we will save for Joe to answer during his presentation.

410

00:56:15.270 --> 00:56:20.600

AECOM - Megan Stone: Alright. One question we had here that we'll pass to Joe is,

411

00:56:21.080 --> 00:56:28.789

AECOM - Megan Stone: are there good resources to monitor, to keep an eye on the latest and greatest on red wolf studies and recovery efforts?

412

00:56:36.740 --> 00:56:38.286

USFWS - Joe Madison: Are you wanting me to answer that now?

413

00:56:40.750 --> 00:56:49.980

USFWS - Joe Madison: The best resources from the red wolf standpoint, or the updates on, you know, the population, that kind of stuff, is the red wolf recovery page,

414

00:56:50.120 --> 00:56:54.039

USFWS - Joe Madison: red wolf recovery program page. The easiest way to remember how to get there is

415

00:56:54.110 --> 00:56:56.030

USFWS - Joe Madison: it's red wolf recovery,

416

00:56:56.270 --> 00:56:59.940

USFWS - Joe Madison: excuse me, redwolfcountry.com is the easy way. There's a much longer

417

00:57:00.400 --> 00:57:02.589

USFWS - Joe Madison: title for the actual thing.

418

00:57:02.620 --> 00:57:07.700

USFWS - Joe Madison: But there's also, the Red Wolf Coalition has a resource library on their website

419

00:57:07.850 --> 00:57:10.175

USFWS - Joe Madison: that has all of the

420

00:57:10.690 --> 00:57:17.970

USFWS - Joe Madison: research and studies that are going on for red wolves and those things that have been published. So that's also an excellent resource to keep up on things. So

421

00:57:18.854 --> 00:57:21.280

USFWS - Joe Madison: those are two really good resources

422

00:57:21.430 --> 00:57:22.260

USFWS - Joe Madison: for that.

423

00:57:24.110 --> 00:57:26.179

AECOM - Megan Stone: Alright. Thank you both.

424

00:57:26.610 --> 00:57:32.910

AECOM - Megan Stone: With that, we've gotten through all of the questions that are related to Emily's presentation

425

00:57:33.020 --> 00:57:41.629

AECOM - Megan Stone: that we can answer at this point. If there's any questions we get-didn't get to, we will follow up separately about those.

426

00:57:41.850 --> 00:57:47.150

AECOM - Megan Stone: And with that, we'll go ahead and pass it over to Joe for his presentation.

427

00:57:49.720 --> 00:57:50.760

USFWS - Joe Madison: Thanks, Megan.

428

00:57:51.640 --> 00:58:00.410

USFWS - Joe Madison: As Emily mentioned, my name is Joe Madison. I am the North Carolina Program manager for the Red Wolf Recovery Program, and a wildlife biologist for the program.

429

00:58:00.740 --> 00:58:05.300

USFWS - Joe Madison: I have been in that position for a little bit shy of eight years now.

430

00:58:05.720 --> 00:58:09.750

USFWS - Joe Madison: And so, it's been an interesting eight years as anybody that follows red wolves know.

431

00:58:10.050 --> 00:58:11.960

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide.

432

00:58:11.970 --> 00:58:13.800

USFWS - Joe Madison: But I want to talk about the team

433

00:58:13.840 --> 00:58:14.510

USFWS - Joe Madison: because

434

00:58:15.260 --> 00:58:18.019

USFWS - Joe Madison: it's a huge part of this, as Emily said, we're kind of a

435

00:58:18.110 --> 00:58:27.069

USFWS - Joe Madison: small group, and we do a lot. But it's a very small but dedicated crew. Ryan Nordsven, specifically, he's been here for 19 years. So

436

00:58:27.360 --> 00:58:33.740

USFWS - Joe Madison: you know, I've dealt with a lot of ups and downs eight years. You guys know what Ryan has dealt with for 19 years so

437

00:58:33.980 --> 00:58:37.890

USFWS - Joe Madison: valuable information, resource for me, institutional knowledge, about

438

00:58:38.060 --> 00:58:46.989

USFWS - Joe Madison: but the history and everything. So, we worked really well together, all of us, on this crew. Morgan Lewis, wildlife, biologist, been here for five years. Can't believe it's been five years already.

439

00:58:47.140 --> 00:58:54.299

USFWS - Joe Madison: Luke Loiles is our Partners for Fish and Wildlife biologist, private lands guy. He does the pray for the pack which I'll talk about

440

00:58:54.926 --> 00:59:06.250

USFWS - Joe Madison: and working with landowners. We all work with landowners-that landowners each seem to have their favorite person to call who, whether it's Luke or myself or Ryan. So, we're all out there dealing with landowners, which is a good thing.

441

00:59:06.450 --> 00:59:12.629

USFWS - Joe Madison: And then there's Laurel Reisman, which is a biotech, that has just joined us in the last few months, but she's hit the ground running to

442

00:59:12.730 --> 00:59:18.610

USFWS - Joe Madison: help us in all things red wolf. And then Nicole Deatherage, who's been here about a year, which again, I can't believe it's already been that long.

443

00:59:18.930 --> 00:59:20.520

USFWS - Joe Madison: She's kind of here on a

444

00:59:20.670 --> 00:59:24.580

USFWS - Joe Madison: temp assignment that I keep hoping to make a permanent assignment. So,

445

00:59:24.996 --> 00:59:28.560

USFWS - Joe Madison: I just you know, everything I'm talking about. It's-

446

00:59:28.860 --> 00:59:33.134

USFWS - Joe Madison: it's those people and myself that are out there doing it. So, we're an

447

00:59:33.520 --> 00:59:35.850

USFWS - Joe Madison: extremely dedicated and passionate about this.

448

00:59:37.230 --> 00:59:39.209

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, I'm gonna-next slide. Sorry.

449

00:59:41.192 --> 00:59:43.490

USFWS - Joe Madison: The area I'm gonna talk about

450

00:59:43.580 --> 00:59:47.480

USFWS - Joe Madison: is the 5-county area that Emily mentioned.

451

00:59:47.810 --> 01:00:00.280

USFWS - Joe Madison: It's the Beaufort, Hyde, Dare, Tyrrell, and Washington counties. The red wolves are found throughout that area. Sometimes people think they're only found on Alligator River, but that's not the case. They are found spread throughout that entire area.

452

01:00:00.330 --> 01:00:03.550

USFWS - Joe Madison: And I'll talk about that a little more in depth as we go through.

453

01:00:03.980 --> 01:00:05.160

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide.

454

01:00:09.140 --> 01:00:28.550

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, we're currently operating under the 10(j) rule of the Endangered Species Act that Emily mentioned. It was last revised in 1995. But there's also applicable court decisions that have affected that. So that's what we operate under. The last major court decision, I suppose, is the one in 2021 that

455

01:00:29.030 --> 01:00:42.140

USFWS - Joe Madison: they issued a ruling that we need to draft a plan to go back to releasing captive red wolves. So, until 2021, we hadn't released any adult red wolves into Eastern North Carolina or anywhere since the mid-nineties. So that was

456

01:00:42.180 --> 01:00:47.179

USFWS - Joe Madison: something and we've been wanting to get back to quite honestly. So, it-it was good for the population.

457

01:00:47.922 --> 01:00:54.199

USFWS - Joe Madison: And as part of that, we have started developing, and implementing, and publishing on our website

458

01:00:54.340 --> 01:00:58.300

USFWS - Joe Madison: a release plan on an annual basis.

459

01:00:58.540 --> 01:01:00.979

USFWS - Joe Madison: We usually have it up by December first.

460

01:01:01.488 --> 01:01:05.789

USFWS - Joe Madison: It kind of just gives you a general overview of what the plan is for that

461

01:01:06.030 --> 01:01:13.699

USFWS - Joe Madison: for that trapping-breeding cycle. So, it kind of goes from, you know, November through early June of the next year.

462

01:01:14.152 --> 01:01:19.469

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we're currently in the middle of developing the one for 2024-2025.

463

01:01:19.680 --> 01:01:26.070

USFWS - Joe Madison: It will look a heck of a lot like the one for 2023-2024, but, and I'll go into the specifics of that as well.

464

01:01:26.360 --> 01:01:38.850

USFWS - Joe Madison: Emily touched on this, but specific questions asked about the population goal for this population area, and it is based on that recovery plan. It is for at least 180 red wolves to be within this 5-county area.

465

01:01:39.330 --> 01:01:44.590

USFWS - Joe Madison: And that's kind of based on what we see as the carrying capacity for this area.

466

01:01:44.860 --> 01:01:45.760

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide.

467

01:01:48.680 --> 01:01:54.419

USFWS - Joe Madison: And I also wanted to mention on that 180, as part of the delisting criteria, and I think she had it on her slide as well,

468

01:01:54.850 --> 01:02:07.570

USFWS - Joe Madison: you would need to stay at that 180 or greater and be stable or increasing for ten years without extensive human intervention. So, without a lot of the things that we currently do, it would need to stay at that population level.

469

01:02:10.090 --> 01:02:12.750

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, for the recovery plan,

470

01:02:12.930 --> 01:02:15.000

USFWS - Joe Madison: excuse me, for the release plans,

471

01:02:15.130 --> 01:02:34.460

USFWS - Joe Madison: the main focus is on pup fostering opportunities whenever possible. We still do the research and experience and all that. The greatest chance of success for increasing the population and increasing genetic diversity is through pup fostering, and most people on the call probably know what we're talking about when I say pup fostering. But pup fostering is

472

01:02:34.530 --> 01:02:44.018

USFWS - Joe Madison: taking pups that are born within the SAFE program and placing them into a wild den. There's a lot of timing, there's a lot of specifics that have to work out for that to be

473

01:02:44.430 --> 01:02:46.169

USFWS - Joe Madison: possible to do that.

474

01:02:46.823 --> 01:02:52.879

USFWS - Joe Madison: But that is our number one goal is to-is to foster as much as we can, and quite honestly, this past spring-

475

01:02:53.090 --> 01:03:00.600

USFWS - Joe Madison: going into the spring, it looked like we had more potential pup fostering opportunities than we've had in, you know well, over a decade.

476

01:03:00.770 --> 01:03:24.569

USFWS - Joe Madison: But the nature of the-the beast, the way things are for various reasons, like the timing of births and a breeding female that didn't end up having a litter in the wild and litter size being too big, that kind of thing that we didn't want to add to and first time mothers that had litters, we didn't end up being able to take advantage of any fostering opportunities. So, we hope next year to be able to get back to doing that.

477

01:03:25.611 --> 01:03:31.840

USFWS - Joe Madison: The next thing we want to do focus on is attempting to pair two wild-wild red wolves. If there's two

478

01:03:32.179 --> 01:03:49.259

USFWS - Joe Madison: red wolves out there that are breeding age, unrelated, both of them are unpaired, and they may be in different areas, and we'll attempt to pair them together, putting them in an acclimation pen in a-in a good territory, one that's open or-or within one of their territories. If we don't have that option,

479

01:03:49.735 --> 01:03:56.910

USFWS - Joe Madison: then what-what we found to be one of the most successful ways to do it is to pair a-an animal from the SAFE program

480

01:03:57.040 --> 01:04:01.390

USFWS - Joe Madison: with an unpaired wild red wolf within their territory, and an open territory.

481

01:04:01.460 --> 01:04:05.170

USFWS - Joe Madison: And that allows that wild animal to help that

482

01:04:05.220 --> 01:04:07.469

USFWS - Joe Madison: one from a SAFE population

483

01:04:08.070 --> 01:04:09.990

USFWS - Joe Madison: transition into the wild.

484

01:04:10.340 --> 01:04:22.730

USFWS - Joe Madison: And this was one of the live questions just came in a minute ago, but if the appropriate conditions exist both from a SAFE program, population standpoint and on the ground and that situation,

485

01:04:22.780 --> 01:04:32.970

USFWS - Joe Madison: we will look to release family groups and have in the past, and will again, if the right conditions exist, then that can be trickier than even the other things we're trying to do.

486

01:04:33.449 --> 01:04:37.070

USFWS - Joe Madison: So that-that is one of the options. Next slide, please.

487

01:04:40.170 --> 01:04:49.630

USFWS - Joe Madison: I-folks, kind of, sometimes, I feel-think we're stagnant and what we're doing, and we're doing the same thing every year, and-and it doesn't appear on the Service that it gets working. But I-

488

01:04:49.640 --> 01:04:51.950

USFWS - Joe Madison: I just want to relay, you know, we are

489

01:04:52.010 --> 01:05:10.160

USFWS - Joe Madison: perpetually evaluating everything, the research that's going on the past management similar programs, our own experience, what worked what hasn't worked, because we want to do everything, we can to increase our chance of success. So, we've changed things quite a bit over the years to do that. And all of that feeds into

490

01:05:10.170 --> 01:05:19.689

USFWS - Joe Madison: the development of that annual plan. And even after the development of the annual plan and we did it today-we, there's constant conversation about, because everything changes right

491

01:05:19.720 --> 01:05:30.699

USFWS - Joe Madison: with what's going on- on the ground, what's happening with the population on the landscape? We're constantly evaluating what we need to change, to give us the greatest chance of success for these red wolves out there.

492

01:05:31.170 --> 01:05:32.659

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please

493

01:05:34.950 --> 01:05:37.439

USFWS - Joe Madison: I want to talk about some of the general factors

494

01:05:37.560 --> 01:06:02.020

USFWS - Joe Madison: of the red wolves that come from the SAFE population and, you know, I work really closely with the SAFE management, particularly Chris Lasher, who's the population manager on these criteria. These are like the ideal or what we're looking for. That doesn't mean we're going to tick all these off, right? This is what we look at; one, first and foremost, we don't want to take an animal out of the SAFE program that's going to negatively impact the genetic makeup or viability of the SAFE population.

495

01:06:02.350 --> 01:06:19.930

USFWS - Joe Madison: That would be detrimental to all of us in the long run, so we don't want to do that. We try to select animals that are fed natural, hopefully, food items; we kind of like them to be in the 2 to 4 years old range, they're already breeding age at that point; they haven't been in the enclosures and in the SAFE population for a long time.

496

01:06:19.970 --> 01:06:22.639

USFWS - Joe Madison: And those types of things, and they seem to do pretty well.

497

01:06:22.660 --> 01:06:25.980

USFWS - Joe Madison: They're adaptable, they're young and fit, and those types of things.

498

01:06:26.428 --> 01:06:31.089

USFWS - Joe Madison: They, before they come from enclosures away from public viewing, preferably larger enclosures,

499

01:06:31.170 --> 01:06:36.829

USFWS - Joe Madison: there's, you know less of those out there, of course, but we're getting better at that all the time.

500

01:06:37.100 --> 01:06:47.619

USFWS - Joe Madison: We don't want to put red wolves, this is obvious, that exhibit behavior indicative of habituation, because that won't serve them well in the wild, and will decrease their chance of being successful out there.

501

01:06:47.640 --> 01:07:00.860

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we look at the genetic relatedness of the animals that we're going to release to each other like to the multiple ones we're going to release because they could end up, you know, from pairs with each other, and accordingly with the ones out currently in the wild. Now

502

01:07:00.890 --> 01:07:11.170

USFWS - Joe Madison: that usually isn't a major factor, and because of the-there hasn't been adult releases in so long until we start again, that's-that's-that one's relatively easy to meet.

503

01:07:11.650 --> 01:07:14.260

USFWS - Joe Madison: But going back to the—next slide, please.

504

01:07:15.420 --> 01:07:21.560

USFWS - Joe Madison: Going back to the changes and perpetually trying to-to, you know, make-increase things to

505

01:07:21.940 --> 01:07:25.860

USFWS - Joe Madison: increase our chance success. I'll talk about some of the specific things we've changed.

506

01:07:26.020 --> 01:07:38.080

USFWS - Joe Madison: I mean, the-the selection factors is one of them. You know, I just mentioned all those-those have been, we've been tweaking those over the years, as we see which ones have greater success out there in the landscape.

507

01:07:38.180 --> 01:07:43.190

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, looking at the SAFE situation, they're in the type of closure there, the food habits, those types of things

508

01:07:43.270 --> 01:07:52.260

USFWS - Joe Madison: is a big part of it. Speaking with the keepers at the various SAFE, you know, because it can take all the boxes. But if we speak to a keeper, and they're saying, you know, that's probably not the best one.

509

01:07:52.370 --> 01:08:11.069

USFWS - Joe Madison: But, you know, such and such would probably be a good fit, then we can kind of go that way, too, because those, you know, they-they are the ones that observe these guys and know their habits and stuff. And looking at reproductive testing, some of them are tested reproductively. You know, we want to know that information before we release them into wild.

510

01:08:11.930 --> 01:08:39.240

USFWS - Joe Madison: We've also changed greatly the type of acclimation pen we use. We used to use soft sided pens. You can put soft sided pens, and they're like elk fences; they were electrified on the bottom. You can put them in a lot more places. So, in that respect they're really good pens, and they did a pretty good job of keeping red wolves in, but they didn't do as great a job of keeping bears out, and they weren't as good against the weather, high winds and other things—trees coming down.

511

01:08:39.602 --> 01:08:52.169

USFWS - Joe Madison: We had early releases of red wolves out of those that we weren't—we weren't wanting to happen yet, so we've switched to completely hard sided pens. I've talked about in the past, and I've got—I'll talk about them again, but that has

512

01:08:52.300 --> 01:08:55.620

USFWS - Joe Madison: not only let us all sleep a little bit better,

513

01:08:55.630 --> 01:09:01.669

USFWS - Joe Madison: because we can at least take that one thing off our box of worries that the red wolves are still gonna be in these pens the next day,

514

01:09:02.091 --> 01:09:05.190

USFWS - Joe Madison: whereas the soft sided ones, that didn't always go that way.

515

01:09:05.700 --> 01:09:21.140

USFWS - Joe Madison: Also, the timing of releases. We used to do all releases when we suspected that the female was in heat. So, if we had a pair in a pen, even if the both were in the pen, we would still release them when the female was in heat. Based on, you know this is based on past successes,

516

01:09:22.130 --> 01:09:28.009

USFWS - Joe Madison: because the thinking is that she'll remain, they'll remain together, the male will remain with a female while she's in heat.

517

01:09:29.000 --> 01:09:34.289

USFWS - Joe Madison: But we've seen over time and through other programs and the Mexican program being a good example,

518

01:09:34.750 --> 01:09:42.359

USFWS - Joe Madison: They saw a greater chance of-of successful pairing and the animal staying where they wanted them to and

519

01:09:43.087 --> 01:09:54.319

USFWS - Joe Madison: being successful if they let them stay and whelp in the pen and then release the pups. And the pups were a little bit older, like six weeks old. So, we've transitioned to doing that with pairs in pens that have pups.

520

01:09:54.510 --> 01:10:05.560

USFWS - Joe Madison: Now there's still, and I'll get into this again, there's still situations where your best situation, best bet is-is releasing them when the female's in heat and-and we still do that when necessary.

521

01:10:06.460 --> 01:10:19.510

USFWS - Joe Madison: How we do releases is also a big part of it. Back when we started doing releases of animals from the SAFE, you know, it was kind of a first couple we did a bit more of a media event, or even if we had one media crew with us.

522

01:10:20.070 --> 01:10:40.959

USFWS - Joe Madison: And, you know, that that's not what you want. The whole point of placement of these acclimation pens, besides acclimating -acclimating to each other for the red wolves, is acclimating to the area. You want them to feel comfortable staying in that area where you release them. So having a film crew, even if you feel like you're off in the distance, looking through spotting scopes,

523

01:10:40.960 --> 01:11:04.320

USFWS - Joe Madison: it's exactly detrimental to what you're trying to do. And so now, and we get a lot of requests for people to be at releases, and I think people have a bit of a misnomer about what a release is. And now that release literally is one of us walking in at dusk on the day that we determine the release, opening the door, making, you know, putting in a hammering in a rebar so it doesn't blow closed and walking away.

524

01:11:04.450 --> 01:11:13.959

USFWS - Joe Madison: That's a release. That's all it entails, because we want them to be comfortable, and they can stay in that pen for two seconds, or they can stay in for two weeks. It's up to them at that point

525

01:11:13.980 --> 01:11:17.270

USFWS - Joe Madison: once the door is open. So that's what a release is, and that has helped

526

01:11:17.753 --> 01:11:20.739

USFWS - Joe Madison: with the with the varices. Next slide, please.

527

01:11:25.880 --> 01:11:45.919

USFWS - Joe Madison: We also changed the type of collars, you know, when we first started doing releases—oops—they were all, they were VHF collars, which are hard to track, especially for a newly released animal. So now they all have GPS and VHF for all new releases, and they're orange. All colors are orange. I'll probably talk about that 50 times between now and the end of my presentation.

528

01:11:46.030 --> 01:11:48.680

USFWS - Joe Madison: But it allows for better tracking and ID.

529

01:11:48.710 --> 01:11:54.450

USFWS - Joe Madison: We also, we've always fed only whole-prey feed food items to the red wolves in acclimation pens.

530

01:11:54.530 --> 01:12:02.199

USFWS - Joe Madison: But we were feeding mostly deer, both roadkill and ones that were-were taken off runways from a safety standpoint. But,

531

01:12:02.500 --> 01:12:12.440

USFWS - Joe Madison: you know, red wolves that come from the SAFE program, they know how to hunt, but they don't—they're not going to be out there taking down a full-grown deer, or, you know, a deer on day one release. So,

532

01:12:12.460 --> 01:12:17.629

USFWS - Joe Madison: and a lot of areas, the focus of even the wild red wolves is on smaller prey items. So, we've shifted

533

01:12:17.660 --> 01:12:23.810

USFWS - Joe Madison: to incorporating smaller prey items into their diet as well like nutrient rabbits, and rats, and mice, and those kinds of things.

534

01:12:24.284 --> 01:12:28.239

USFWS - Joe Madison: Stuff that they, you know, would help them transition into the wild better.

535

01:12:29.468 --> 01:12:39.340

USFWS - Joe Madison: We've also found, and I alluded to this, too, that one of the most successful ways that we can create pairs is with a wild female and a captive born male.

536

01:12:39.400 --> 01:12:44.119

USFWS - Joe Madison: Now, we'll get to instances where that didn't work so well this year, but

537

01:12:44.170 --> 01:12:51.359

USFWS - Joe Madison: it has worked successfully multiple times in 2361, who was the matriarch of the Pongo family group, is an example of that.

538

01:12:52.159 --> 01:13:07.709

USFWS - Joe Madison: And that male, you can, and you can literally kind of real time, through monitoring and cameras you can—you saw her kind of teach him over time, where to be, where not to be, how visible to be, how visible not to be, where to hunt, those types of things.

539

01:13:08.330 --> 01:13:25.079

USFWS - Joe Madison: Also, the age of the red wolves that we're trying to create the pairs with, out of necessity because we didn't have much or too many building blocks, when we started trying to regrow the population, we had to focus on creating pairs of animals that were about one and a half years old. So, yearlings!

540

01:13:25.270 --> 01:13:32.679

USFWS - Joe Madison: Is that possible to be successful? Yes, it is. 2361, I just mentioned, we did that exact thing, but it's not ideal.

541

01:13:32.980 --> 01:14:01.140

USFWS - Joe Madison: Some of them are not prepared to be in a pair, prepared to be breeding at that age. It's much better to focus on a little bit older red wolves, because of some of the building blocks and the individuals we have out there. Now we're able to do that a little more. It's focus on the older ones and potentially not use them. We also want ones that have shown that they're ready to disperse. They have on their own shown that they're leaving their area where they were born.

542

01:14:01.414 --> 01:14:05.110

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we've, and so that plays a role in who we pick as well.

543

01:14:06.100 --> 01:14:07.560

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

544

01:14:11.240 --> 01:14:15.760

USFWS - Joe Madison: This is the acclamation; an example of an acclamation pen I was telling you about.

545

01:14:16.245 --> 01:14:22.130

USFWS - Joe Madison: There's several factors, we don't just throw a dart at a map and of where to put these. We look at a lot of factors.

546

01:14:22.200 --> 01:14:30.460

USFWS - Joe Madison: Is there habitat security there? Is it an open territory? Is there adequate prey there? Is, what's the distance to roads and those types of things?

547

01:14:30.821 --> 01:14:43.379

USFWS - Joe Madison: Is it a good place for them to be? You know, because if they have a litter and we release them, they're gonna stay, at least for the first month or two, in close proximity, and we want them to, they want it to be somewhere that they can survive and thrive

548

01:14:43.968 --> 01:14:49.340

USFWS - Joe Madison: in the acclamation pen. So, this time of year, you know, we're very soon here, we're gonna start

549

01:14:49.867 --> 01:14:56.230

USFWS - Joe Madison: constructing, we have six of them out there right now, and one of them is a double one. So, in theory, we have seven that we could use.

550

01:14:56.610 --> 01:15:04.889

USFWS - Joe Madison: But they're big, they're hard to move, they're not easy. So, we can't just on willy, nilly move these around all over the place. But,

551

01:15:05.321 --> 01:15:10.659

USFWS - Joe Madison: we'll start moving the ones that we feel need to be in different areas than where they currently are.

552

01:15:12.355 --> 01:15:18.160

USFWS - Joe Madison: When we have these constructed there, you know it's a panels of fencing and they get Lego'd together, basically.

553

01:15:18.290 --> 01:15:21.170

USFWS - Joe Madison: They're typically 50 feet by 50 feet.

554

01:15:21.190 --> 01:15:33.439

USFWS - Joe Madison: It's not huge, it's not like a dog run. But we have found it to be sort of a compromise of size that is adequate to support them over that time, but also not too cumbersome out there on the landscape.

555

01:15:34.218 --> 01:15:40.949

USFWS - Joe Madison: These pens, they have very little human interaction like, so they're remote as we can get them. We only go to the pens once a week,

556

01:15:41.540 --> 01:15:46.810

USFWS - Joe Madison: and stay away from other than that to give them that-that solitude and time away from

557

01:15:46.860 --> 01:15:50.589

USFWS - Joe Madison: people and those types of things. And again, they're only fed whole-prey food items.

558

01:15:51.780 --> 01:15:53.209

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

559

01:15:59.260 --> 01:16:01.030

USFWS - Joe Madison: We conduct trapping

560

01:16:01.160 --> 01:16:07.150

USFWS - Joe Madison: November through March every year on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge,

561

01:16:07.700 --> 01:16:15.790

USFWS - Joe Madison: and on private land, with landowner permission both for collaring red wolves and also for coyote sterilization, which I'll talk about.

562

01:16:17.365 --> 01:16:19.569

USFWS - Joe Madison: The one of the main reasons for-

563

01:16:19.650 --> 01:16:27.279

USFWS - Joe Madison: for captured operations is to capture the pair, the red wolves that we're going to try to put in acclimation pens to create these pairs.

564

01:16:27.510 --> 01:16:31.039

USFWS - Joe Madison: Red wolf bonding period for breeding starts in October.

565

01:16:31.140 --> 01:16:40.629

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, from October, even the wild population and I'm-I know, in the SAFE population, too, you can, the behavior of the individuals, excuse me, and start to behave, start to change.

566

01:16:41.080 --> 01:17:01.800

USFWS - Joe Madison: Wild pairs that we have out there, they don't necessarily stay right together all summer long. They're within the same territory, but they're not always right together, some more so than others. But, as October starts, and then starts to get a little more November, a little more December, they're more and more closer together until we get to breeding season, which is in late January, early February then they're like right together.

567

01:17:02.287 --> 01:17:08.399

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, we, you know, we start to do captures in November for-for animals that we hope to put in acclimation pens.

568

01:17:08.790 --> 01:17:13.789

USFWS - Joe Madison: Another key thing with trapping is it's the initial collaring of pups that are born the previous spring.

569

01:17:14.271 --> 01:17:23.240

USFWS - Joe Madison: We don't want to catch them when they're too small. We typically like to wait and catch them until January following when they were born so when they're about nine months old.

570

01:17:23.877 --> 01:17:34.669

USFWS - Joe Madison: They're-they're pretty good size at that point. They're usually in the upper 40 pounds, lower 50 pounds, and-and plenty able to handle the being trapped and collared at that point.

571

01:17:34.820 --> 01:17:40.440

USFWS - Joe Madison: I mean this past winter that we did collar all of the remaining, the five remaining, five pups on Alligator River

572

01:17:40.880 --> 01:17:47.956

USFWS - Joe Madison: from last that were born in spring 2023, and the two yearling female pups that were born

573

01:17:48.320 --> 01:17:50.189

USFWS - Joe Madison: at Pocosin Lakes last year.

574

01:17:51.580 --> 01:17:52.920

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

575

01:17:57.450 --> 01:18:03.740

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, all of the releases and all captured red wolves will continue to be collared with the orange collars.

576

01:18:04.195 --> 01:18:15.220

USFWS - Joe Madison: The orange collar is important. It's-it signifies, and I'll get to that a little bit later, too, but we will continue to do that, and all of them the newer ones, will have GPS VHF collars. We still have

577

01:18:15.430 --> 01:18:32.119

USFWS - Joe Madison: a few of VHF collars out there right now, but we'll be switching those to GPS collars when we're able to. There might be a few instances where a collar, an animal is too small to have a GPS collar, and we may use a VHF collar. It'd still be orange, though.

578

01:18:32.310 --> 01:18:43.680

USFWS - Joe Madison: But generally all releases from the SAFE program, new releases, will have GPS collars and-and we use them whenever we can at this point. The battery life is such that we can use them and-

579

01:18:43.700 --> 01:18:45.409

USFWS - Joe Madison: and not have to replace them.

580

01:18:46.502 --> 01:19:03.279

USFWS - Joe Madison: I will say, too, with the collaring, we don't exceed 4% body weight based on research. So, if an animal is too small—coyote, red wolf, or whatever—if we can't somehow put a collar on it that meets that criteria, then we won't—we won't collar, but

581

01:19:03.350 --> 01:19:11.517

USFWS - Joe Madison: because the collars are getting lighter and lighter and lighter, we know we haven't run into that instance. We actually are able and prefer to stay down

582

01:19:11.960 --> 01:19:15.900

USFWS - Joe Madison: that collar that doesn't see the 3% of their body weight. Just to give them that-

583

01:19:15.910 --> 01:19:26.220

USFWS - Joe Madison: that extra thing you want to put the smallest collar on that will do the job. But research after research shows that it's not detrimental to their survival well-being if you do that.

584

01:19:27.290 --> 01:19:35.739

USFWS - Joe Madison: Pups are too small to be collared like I mentioned, and that's when they're most vulnerable, because their size overlaps with coyotes. So, they, it's not as easy to-

585

01:19:35.870 --> 01:19:38.250

USFWS - Joe Madison: to identify them as a red wolf.

586

01:19:38.694 --> 01:19:44.520

USFWS - Joe Madison: We've-we, in the SAFE population, have tried and looked into different ways of marking pups.

587

01:19:44.817 --> 01:19:50.230

USFWS - Joe Madison: But, as-as of date, mark you, Mr. Red Wolf, but to date there is no effective way to do that.

588

01:19:51.380 --> 01:19:58.569

USFWS - Joe Madison: We're also looking into ways with the, you know, the increasing popularity of using infrared scopes and thermal imaging,

589

01:19:58.955 --> 01:20:14.010

USFWS - Joe Madison: for folks when they're recreating out there in the woods. We're looking for ways to mark these collars in a way that will pop on infrared and thermal imaging. So, it, particularly the red wolf, so that it really, you know, if you look at them and say, you know instantly

590

01:20:14.170 --> 01:20:24.260

USFWS - Joe Madison: what you're looking at in the dark, or where or you know whatever. So, we're looking at ways to do that. We haven't-we haven't successfully found that yet, but we're going to continue that.

591

01:20:25.337 --> 01:20:35.240

USFWS - Joe Madison: I don't know if this is the right slide to talk about it, but one of the questions asked about why we're continuing to release red wolves in an area with coyote hunting, with legal coyote hunting.

592

01:20:35.848 --> 01:20:42.009

USFWS - Joe Madison: I want to say first that coyote hunting is not legal and not allowed on the wildlife refuges within the

593

01:20:42.320 --> 01:20:47.320

USFWS - Joe Madison: the Eastern North Carolina red wolf population area, and it's not allowed on the

594

01:20:47.370 --> 01:20:52.521

USFWS - Joe Madison: North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission Game Lands within Eastern North Carolina.

595

01:20:53.240 --> 01:21:00.550

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, you know, there are areas large areas that are-that are protected from-from legal coyote hunting

596

01:21:01.086 --> 01:21:08.760

USFWS - Joe Madison: and we all, as the collar illustrates, we always are looking for ways to make it easier for the public to identify the difference between

597

01:21:08.840 --> 01:21:10.820

USFWS - Joe Madison: a coyote and a red wolf.

598

01:21:11.570 --> 01:21:23.959

USFWS - Joe Madison: Also, at this point, because of the, there's no longer red wolves throughout the historic range. You know, back when they were throughout the entire southeast, they were keeping coyotes from moving into this

599

01:21:23.970 --> 01:21:26.860

USFWS - Joe Madison: this area, but without that red wolf presence

600

01:21:27.260 --> 01:21:35.526

USFWS - Joe Madison: carries have moved in from the plain states, and-and are found throughout the entire historic range of red wolf. So,

601

01:21:36.100 --> 01:21:50.249

USFWS - Joe Madison: and pretty much everywhere, except for the type of instances, and like, I just said on some-some wildlife refuges or some national parks and those types of things, coyote hunting is legal in-in just about everywhere, in most areas. So,

602

01:21:50.550 --> 01:21:53.419

USFWS - Joe Madison: it would be a pretty daunting task

603

01:21:53.430 --> 01:22:00.770

USFWS - Joe Madison: to try to, only you wouldn't be able to do it, I guess, to have viable populations of red wolves if you only released in areas that did not

604

01:22:00.970 --> 01:22:03.550

USFWS - Joe Madison: allow some level of coyote hunting.

605

01:22:05.050 --> 01:22:06.559

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

606

01:22:09.740 --> 01:22:18.450

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, this past winter we had five active acclimation pens with red wolves in them, and again, the whole purpose was to try to create breeding pairs.

607

01:22:18.600 --> 01:22:23.550

USFWS - Joe Madison: We had two acclimation pens that were that instance of a SAFE-born male and a wild female.

608

01:22:24.580 --> 01:22:28.790

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we had one pen that was two wild red wolves that were together in the pen.

609

01:22:29.300 --> 01:22:34.510

USFWS - Joe Madison: One pen, that was a lone, wild female, which obviously is an ideal.

610

01:22:34.940 --> 01:22:36.639

USFWS - Joe Madison: And I'll talk about that in a minute.

611

01:22:36.980 --> 01:22:38.410

USFWS - Joe Madison: And then we had one

612

01:22:38.480 --> 01:22:45.670

USFWS - Joe Madison: that was the SAFE-born male that was placed in the female, a wild female's territory, and I'll go into that as well.

613

01:22:46.030 --> 01:22:47.390

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

614

01:22:51.510 --> 01:22:52.830

USFWS - Joe Madison: So,

615

01:22:53.960 --> 01:23:02.160

USFWS - Joe Madison: one pairing of a SAFE male and the wild female had a litter of five pups. That's kind of well-known at this point, and I'll talk about the fate of those pups in a minute.

616

01:23:02.820 --> 01:23:22.650

USFWS - Joe Madison: For the female that was alone, 2538, she was captured late in breeding season. We had been attempting to capture a male to put in that pen with her, a wild male, and we're not able to catch him, and he became one of the vehicle strike mortalities on Highway 64 before we were able to capture him and put him in that pen.

617

01:23:22.870 --> 01:23:40.459

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, she ended up staying alone. That pen, we kept her in that pen because she was caught later in the breeding season. If she had, in fact, been pregnant with a hybrid litter, then it would have been an opportunity for us to foster some red wolf pups. That's one of those opportunities I mentioned earlier that we had felt like we had lots of that didn't end up

618

01:23:40.500 --> 01:23:48.540

USFWS - Joe Madison: panning out. So, she was released so she's back on the landscape, and that pen was within her territory, and she still remains within her territory.

619

01:23:49.172 --> 01:23:59.489

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, we will attempt, in some form or fashion again this winter to hopefully try to pair her with somebody, whether it's an acclimation pen or a male within her territory.

620

01:23:59.931 --> 01:24:08.369

USFWS - Joe Madison: None of the other pairs that I mentioned in the acclimation pens other than the SAFE male and wild female pups ended up staying together.

621

01:24:08.810 --> 01:24:13.880

USFWS - Joe Madison: And one of the SAFE males that was in a pen with a wild female, we ended, we did not end up releasing him.

622

01:24:14.560 --> 01:24:27.830

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, and-and that's another thing that we've kind of changed on, because previously, even if the pair didn't have pups, we released both of them in hopes that they would stay together, and that time in the pen had bonded them those types of things, but

623

01:24:28.000 --> 01:24:33.830

USFWS - Joe Madison: too often they would split away from each other pretty readily, and the wild

624

01:24:33.940 --> 01:24:43.139

USFWS - Joe Madison: red wolf, would, you know, go about what they've done before, and leave the-the one from the SAFE population kind of to fend for themselves. So,

625

01:24:43.905 --> 01:24:50.070

USFWS - Joe Madison: even though this litter, this-this, these two in this pen from, you know,

626

01:24:50.880 --> 01:24:56.060

USFWS - Joe Madison: from our observation of them, from remote, sensing cameras, they appear to be

627

01:24:56.560 --> 01:25:01.519

USFWS - Joe Madison: good pair. They appeared to like each other, they got along, those types of things, but because they didn't have a litter,

628

01:25:02.209 --> 01:25:11.039

USFWS - Joe Madison: and because of that past experience, we chose not to release the male. And this, we also know, this wild female, she moves around a lot.

629

01:25:11.431 --> 01:25:21.580

USFWS - Joe Madison: You know, there's no home range for her, she's all over the place. You know, her home range size is the Eastern North Carolina red wolf population area. She-she moves all over the place, and

630

01:25:21.590 --> 01:25:29.720

USFWS - Joe Madison: there's based on our experience. There's no way that captive born male would be able to follow her and keep up with her fresh out of being released. So,

631

01:25:29.810 --> 01:25:40.159

USFWS - Joe Madison: we kept him in the acclimation pen. We will attempt this winter again to pair him with a wild red wolf, either her if she's captured, or a different wild female.

632

01:25:41.610 --> 01:25:43.030

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

633

01:25:45.460 --> 01:25:47.450

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, when we do these releases,

634

01:25:47.745 --> 01:25:58.350

USFWS - Joe Madison: we track and monitor these newly released red wolves every single day. Even if they have GPS collars, it's supposed to give us a, we have it set, they have different schedules that we can put these GPS collars on.

635

01:25:58.440 --> 01:26:09.060

USFWS - Joe Madison: It's set to give us a point every morning at 8 AM. We don't always get that point at 8 AM. Sometimes that 8 AM point comes in at 8 PM which is not really helpful from a management standpoint. But

636

01:26:09.240 --> 01:26:14.429

USFWS - Joe Madison: if that point doesn't come in at 8 AM then we're out there tracking, and we're probably going to be out there anyway

637

01:26:14.774 --> 01:26:22.409

USFWS - Joe Madison: to get a point for where they are so we know where they are every day for at least the first 30 days or so for all the new releases.

638

01:26:22.810 --> 01:26:37.830

USFWS - Joe Madison: And within that timeframe, and as long as we feel like it's needed, based on their behavior and what they're doing, we place supplemental food, whole-prey items again. Not so they know it's us and not, you know, directly, but in areas they're gonna find it wherever it's feasible

639

01:26:37.940 --> 01:26:53.199

USFWS - Joe Madison: to help them do that transition into the wild. Like I said, the-the red wolves in the SAFE program, they know how to hunt. In fact, any small mammal or bird that goes into an enclosure knows that they know how to hunt, but it just hasn't quite triggered yet.

640

01:26:53.360 --> 01:26:56.359

USFWS - Joe Madison: And some of them that they need to hunt to survive

641

01:26:56.688 --> 01:26:59.750

USFWS - Joe Madison: so that we help them with that transition wherever we can.

642

01:27:00.463 --> 01:27:05.279

USFWS - Joe Madison: For all the wild red wolves, we track them multiple times a week, both through GPS and

643

01:27:05.290 --> 01:27:08.660

USFWS - Joe Madison: through ground telemetry like Ryan's doing in the photo

644

01:27:09.056 --> 01:27:16.010

USFWS - Joe Madison: and through aerial telemetry with flights whenever we're able to. We don't- we're not able to do routine flights right now,

645

01:27:16.450 --> 01:27:23.279

USFWS - Joe Madison: just because of the plane and pilot situation, and it's difficult in this part of the country to have those readily available.

646

01:27:24.140 --> 01:27:31.609

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we also have remote cameras all over the place on-on refuges and on private land, with landowner permission.

647

01:27:31.670 --> 01:27:40.210

USFWS - Joe Madison: Over 50 of them, I don't know if that number may even be higher at this point, but it seems like we're always adding some, and very rarely do we take any down.

648

01:27:41.580 --> 01:27:42.929

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

649

01:27:45.480 --> 01:27:52.439

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, we also this is a change, and I talked about it, it's not so much a change now, I guess, because we've been doing it for three or four years, is

650

01:27:52.660 --> 01:28:18.695

USFWS - Joe Madison: whenever, through our monitoring, we know red wolves are spending time on a particular parcel of private land, we call that landowner to let them know that red wolf is there, to make them aware of the presence of that red wolf both so they know about the orange collar, and that they're there so they're not surprised by it, or you know, you know, if they see one, and also so we can address their concerns upfront. It's much better that way than them having no idea that they're on their land and

651

01:28:19.338 --> 01:28:24.980

USFWS - Joe Madison: you know, call in later on to-to let us know it's there, or-or if they're having some sort of issue.

652

01:28:25.020 --> 01:28:34.299

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we encourage those folks and anybody to call and contact us anytime for questions and concerns. We are constantly responding to all sorts of

653

01:28:34.510 --> 01:28:36.490

USFWS - Joe Madison: methods people get a hold of us,

654

01:28:36.810 --> 01:28:40.599

USFWS - Joe Madison: sometimes not the best hours of the day, but it is what it is.

655

01:28:41.029 --> 01:28:46.119

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we will address all time-sensitive issues, you know, 24/7, whenever possible.

656

01:28:46.320 --> 01:29:15.830

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we'll participate in meetings and give presentations when we're invited. You know, if a town, we just had a town meeting in Mann's Harbor as part of that CCT. They had met with Francine, and they felt like they wanted a conversation directly with not only myself, but WRC and the Refuge folks. So, they invited us to a town meeting, and we went to that town meeting and had good discussions with them and so, we, that is an option, you know. And we-we want to be able to do that for the benefit of the species in the-in the program.

657

01:29:20.180 --> 01:29:22.650

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please. Now, I'm going to go into some of the

658

01:29:22.690 --> 01:29:26.279

USFWS - Joe Madison: results of the release stuff from last year.

659

01:29:27.649 --> 01:29:37.719

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, we placed in most of you guys, you know, we placed the wild female, 2413, and a SAFE-born male, 2444, in an acclamation pen on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge.

660

01:29:37.860 --> 01:29:47.679

USFWS - Joe Madison: And they had five pups in the pen. And for our, what we're doing now, we released them when the pups-pups were a little bit shy of six weeks old when they were released.

661

01:29:48.620 --> 01:30:11.089

USFWS - Joe Madison: The male from that group that came from the SAFE program, he was-seemed to be doing really well, transitioning the wild. He was, they moved the pups initially together, the male and the female about, if I remember the math correctly, about a mile and a half from the pen, which is not unexpected, and they had them in a pretty good spot, actually pretty good habitat, not the prey. Pretty decent habitat security to some degree.

662

01:30:12.228 --> 01:30:18.199

USFWS - Joe Madison: And-and the male was doing a pretty good job of-of staying near the pups and seem to be caring for the pups.

663

01:30:18.560 --> 01:30:21.699

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we were supplemental feeding as appropriate

664

01:30:21.900 --> 01:30:25.400

USFWS - Joe Madison: the female after they moved out of the acclimation pen.

665

01:30:25.460 --> 01:30:37.039

USFWS - Joe Madison: From the beginning, she was not staying with the pups very often, or even returning if she-she would go away for two to three days at a time. And this is while they were still in the nursing phase. So, she was

666

01:30:37.270 --> 01:30:50.489

USFWS - Joe Madison: having trouble, you know, transitioning to being a first-time mother, which is not entirely uncommon. It's-it's not out outside of the norm that some first -time mothers don't provide optimal care for pups. So, she was,

667

01:30:50.870 --> 01:30:57.850

USFWS - Joe Madison: that was kind of the mood they were in already. And we were, again, we were helping to try to transition him into the wild and care for those pups.

668

01:30:58.010 --> 01:31:11.499

USFWS - Joe Madison: But he was unfortunately hit by a vehicle and killed a few weeks after that, and she never returned to the pups. And they were about six weeks old at the time, so not able to survive on their own. Now,

669

01:31:11.560 --> 01:31:12.830

USFWS - Joe Madison: do we know the

670

01:31:13.260 --> 01:31:22.619

USFWS - Joe Madison: absolute certainty the fate of pups? We do not, we don't have any, we did not find carcasses. We did do a lot of monitoring in that area, extensive monitoring, remote sensing cameras,

671

01:31:22.720 --> 01:31:26.949

USFWS - Joe Madison: walking in telemetry on the adults, and those types of things.

672

01:31:27.263 --> 01:31:33.279

USFWS - Joe Madison: You know, could there have been something that wasn't the abandonment, perhaps? You know, some sort of disease, or something like that.

673

01:31:33.330 --> 01:31:37.230

USFWS - Joe Madison: Or-or-or predation? We don't know.

674

01:31:37.330 --> 01:31:43.129

USFWS - Joe Madison: But, and I know there's a lot, there's a lot of questions about this, and there's a lot of,

675

01:31:43.530 --> 01:31:44.910

USFWS - Joe Madison: you know,

676

01:31:45.110 --> 01:31:50.409

USFWS - Joe Madison: behind, you know, people wondering, questioning how we took care of it, what we did, how we did it, those types of things.

677

01:31:50.470 --> 01:31:56.420

USFWS - Joe Madison: It is not something we took lightly. It was painstaking for us to go through this and deal with it.

678

01:31:56.620 --> 01:32:02.730

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we, you know, the-the goal of the recovery is the recovery of them in the wild,

679

01:32:02.880 --> 01:32:09.470

USFWS - Joe Madison: right? The-the SAFE population, they're growing, the SAFE population. Our goal is to grow the wild population.

680

01:32:09.610 --> 01:32:19.079

USFWS - Joe Madison: And so, there's a limit to the level of human intervention that we can do, and what we did is and was in line with keeping those limits in mind.

681

01:32:19.320 --> 01:32:43.939

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, you know, these are wild, free, ranging animals. People need to remember that we really, once we release it from the pen, that SAFE-born animal is no longer a SAFE-born animal. It's a wild animal, right? And although we have a really good idea on their movements and what they're doing in their locations, we don't know where every red wolf is at every point in time, especially pups that are small and uncollared, and at that age, they're pretty mobile,

682

01:32:44.190 --> 01:33:06.779

USFWS - Joe Madison: right? So, we can't, and you know, we-we don't know what down to the nth degree, what's happening. We're doing our best without putting a camera right where we are, because we don't want to intervene. We can't get in the middle, because that will just things-make things worse. We can't put food right where we think the pups are, because all that'll do is draw bears in, right? These are all day-to-day tough decisions on how to deal with a situation like this.

683

01:33:07.380 --> 01:33:18.249

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we also, with 2413, we have no idea what 2413 is thinking, what her actions are, how she's gonna behave, when she would return,

684

01:33:18.350 --> 01:33:43.869

USFWS - Joe Madison: you know, if she was going to return. In the best possible scenario even after that male's mortality, was her returning to those pups and being a successful mother. That's what we were hoping for. That's what we were, you know, trying to help with as much as we could. That didn't happen, but we didn't, you don't know in the time as you're dealing with that, whether that's going to happen or not. And you're still planning for the best-case scenario. I mean, you're planning for the worst, but you're hoping for the best.

685

01:33:44.750 --> 01:34:00.939

USFWS - Joe Madison: On the flip side of that, these pups were six weeks old. that is, beyond when you can foster them successfully. One of the reasons pup fostering occurs within the first two weeks is because that's when the maternal instinct of the mother, of the recipient mother getting the new pups, is the strongest.

686

01:34:00.980 --> 01:34:04.820

USFWS - Joe Madison: And when you do it within that timing you don't have pups rejected.

687

01:34:05.160 --> 01:34:16.469

USFWS - Joe Madison: Doing it at six weeks, it's not anywhere near as likely to be successful and maybe not successful at all. So, we couldn't really foster, even if we were, that's a big if, we were able to capture them.

688

01:34:16.720 --> 01:34:18.979

USFWS - Joe Madison: We would not have been able to foster them.

689

01:34:20.310 --> 01:34:22.380

USFWS - Joe Madison: So okay, you don't foster them

690

01:34:22.400 --> 01:34:34.830

USFWS - Joe Madison: but you put them in captivity, so you don't lose these pups. That doesn't, that's not in line with the Fish and Wildlife Service and SAFE program guidelines for covering species. They would have to be hand-raised.

691

01:34:35.260 --> 01:34:38.499

USFWS - Joe Madison: This is a recovery species. They're not treated like other

692

01:34:39.065 --> 01:34:44.840

USFWS - Joe Madison: animals in-in zoos, and-and such are because those animals aren't recoverable, releasable species.

693

01:34:44.860 --> 01:34:54.559

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, if these animals were put in the SAFE pen, they would take up pen space and they would have to be hand fed. They wouldn't be releasable because they would be too habituated to people.

694

01:34:54.680 --> 01:34:56.400

USFWS - Joe Madison: And they wouldn't be good

695

01:34:56.440 --> 01:35:04.050

USFWS - Joe Madison: candidates for breeding in-in the SAFE program, either, because they could pass along those behaviors and traits of habituation

696

01:35:04.170 --> 01:35:11.460

USFWS - Joe Madison: to their pups, which need to be considerable as recoverable-recovery species and potentially releasable in the wild.

697

01:35:12.192 --> 01:35:18.700

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, you know, I'm-I'm-I'm not, this is not to defend our actions or anything like that, but this is to try to get a little more

698

01:35:18.770 --> 01:35:28.370

USFWS - Joe Madison: fine tune understanding of how that situation fold, and what we were doing behind the scenes about it. The monitoring of that pair was extensive.

699

01:35:28.430 --> 01:35:33.419

USFWS - Joe Madison: Supplemental feeding was done extensively to the degree that we could.

700

01:35:33.560 --> 01:35:50.619

USFWS - Joe Madison: We closed that entire area to farming for the year, not even for that time, because by the time we lifted the restrictions it was too late. So, we worked with refuges, we shifted the entire plan of the cooperative farming to have no farming in that field where those pups were.

701

01:35:50.850 --> 01:35:52.759

USFWS - Joe Madison: And in addition to that,

702

01:35:52.790 --> 01:36:14.219

USFWS - Joe Madison: someone posted about seeing the-the wild female mother in that area on social media, and almost within 2 hours of that, we had people walking on the roads in that area. So, we had to shut down that area. Working with refuges, we had to close that area to the public so that they didn't get an increased pressure. So,

703

01:36:14.250 --> 01:36:15.400

USFWS - Joe Madison: again,

704

01:36:16.080 --> 01:36:22.819

USFWS - Joe Madison: I just wanted to relay a lot of questions about that litter, a lot of them, and-and, you know, I wanted to address those as openly and

705

01:36:22.840 --> 01:36:25.189

USFWS - Joe Madison: honestly as-as I possibly can.

706

01:36:27.680 --> 01:36:29.020

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

707

01:36:31.660 --> 01:36:33.600

USFWS - Joe Madison: And if you could play the video

708

01:36:33.830 --> 01:36:34.949

USFWS - Joe Madison: on this one,

709

01:36:36.250 --> 01:36:37.160

USFWS - Joe Madison: hopefully.

710

01:36:39.150 --> 01:36:40.620

USFWS - Joe Madison: Another result

711

01:36:40.630 --> 01:36:44.907

USFWS - Joe Madison: of the-the plan was the,

712

01:36:46.590 --> 01:36:48.960

USFWS - Joe Madison: you know, most of you know, last fall,

713

01:36:49.090 --> 01:36:49.990

USFWS - Joe Madison: they,

714

01:36:50.220 --> 01:36:55.339

USFWS - Joe Madison: the breeding male of the Milltail pack, 2323, was a vehicle strike mortality on Highway

715

01:36:57.290 --> 01:36:58.590

USFWS - Joe Madison: 64.

716

01:36:58.620 --> 01:37:02.840

USFWS - Joe Madison: And at one point we were thinking we would wait a year to try to

717

01:37:02.870 --> 01:37:13.269

USFWS - Joe Madison: find a new mate for 2225, but she really quickly, within the next couple of weeks, because that's what they do, that's what they're driven to do. She had started hanging out with a coyote again,

718

01:37:13.290 --> 01:37:20.410

USFWS - Joe Madison: potentially as-as with a coyote mate. So, we made the decision that we need to strike fast to try to get her a red wolf mate.

719

01:37:20.560 --> 01:37:43.199

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we quickly constructed an acclimation pen within her territory, and we placed the SAFE-born male, 2191, so that's them. This is about a week after he was released, so we released him when she was in heat, so that he would be more likely to find because we didn't have her in the acclimation pen. She's extremely savvy on the trapping. We'll probably never catch her again until-

720

01:37:43.840 --> 01:38:08.529

USFWS - Joe Madison: until she loses some of her senses and gets lose, you know, gets older, and it's quite, doesn't, you know, her smell, and sight, and hearing, all that isn't quite as good, we probably won't catch her. So, she was not in the pen with him, so we released him when she was in heat, and we know pretty closely when she's in the heat, because she's had litters the past two years, you know, 63 days of the gestation period. So, we can backtrack from when we know they were born to those 63 days.

721

01:38:08.540 --> 01:38:14.449

USFWS - Joe Madison: I'm looking at the time, and I'm-I'm no way I'm gonna be done by 8. I'm just-just throwing that out there

722

01:38:14.640 --> 01:38:16.060

USFWS - Joe Madison: to Megan.

723

01:38:17.002 --> 01:38:24.040

USFWS - Joe Madison: But this is all valuable information, and I try, and I'm incorporating a lot of your questions specifically on that. So that's gonna make it a little bit longer.

724

01:38:25.410 --> 01:38:27.829

USFWS - Joe Madison: So that's the deal on that that pair.

725

01:38:27.870 --> 01:38:29.579

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

726

01:38:34.690 --> 01:38:45.959

USFWS - Joe Madison: We did confirm in April that they did have a litter of eight pups, four females, four males. As with most, we go and we find dens based on the area, the telemetry of the female,

727

01:38:46.635 --> 01:38:53.529

USFWS - Joe Madison: and we go in, and we cheek swab the pups for genetic analysis. We do a general exam, remove any ticks and things they might have.

728

01:38:53.911 --> 01:39:12.709

USFWS - Joe Madison: And then we microchip them just like you would your pet. And then we get out of there. We don't want to be in there fast. We never go back in. The best thing for those pups after we do the initial analysis so we can track them later on, you know, and-and if there, something happens to them we can, we can know, microchip who they are. That type of thing is for us to stay out of there. So that's what we

729

01:39:12.750 --> 01:39:14.910

USFWS - Joe Madison: we did with that litter as well.

730

01:39:15.300 --> 01:39:16.600

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

731

01:39:21.400 --> 01:39:22.749

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, for that,

732

01:39:24.190 --> 01:39:31.440

USFWS - Joe Madison: bear it's the-it was, excuse me, for that litter, it was the third consecutive litter for 2225. She's the matriarch of the Milltail family.,

733

01:39:32.120 --> 01:39:35.829

USFWS - Joe Madison: But it was her first litter with 2191 since he was a SAFE release.

734

01:39:36.330 --> 01:39:43.060

USFWS - Joe Madison: That-that release went better than we could have imagined. Like I said, they almost immediately paired up and stayed together

735

01:39:43.180 --> 01:39:44.930

USFWS - Joe Madison: after release.

736

01:39:45.570 --> 01:39:54.570

USFWS - Joe Madison: They stayed in the area of the den for the first several weeks, which is pretty typical. Then the entire family group moved to an area of the farm fields.

737

01:39:54.910 --> 01:39:59.929

USFWS - Joe Madison: The-the pups were busily observed there, and our monitoring indicator there.

738

01:39:59.940 --> 01:40:02.350

USFWS - Joe Madison: The adults were going back there, and you know,

739

01:40:02.460 --> 01:40:06.080

USFWS - Joe Madison: some adult or re-collared animal was always there.

740

01:40:06.260 --> 01:40:11.660

USFWS - Joe Madison: We-we buffered that area from all management activities so nothing, no harm would come to them.

741

01:40:11.940 --> 01:40:28.829

USFWS - Joe Madison: They stayed there for about three weeks, which is-which is normal. And then they moved to yet a different area, which, again is-that's normal behavior. As the pups grew, you've got them in a place, and then you move them all somewhere else, and they moved to another area. That was a little bit more difficult to monitor, but we were still able to monitor it fairly well.

742

01:40:28.910 --> 01:40:36.979

USFWS - Joe Madison: We buffered that from farming activity again, and the adults were going there day after day. You know, there was typically an adult in that area.

743

01:40:37.180 --> 01:40:38.950

USFWS - Joe Madison: But then, that, over time,

744

01:40:39.340 --> 01:40:41.360

USFWS - Joe Madison: that sort of dissipated.

745

01:40:41.390 --> 01:40:53.169

USFWS - Joe Madison: And that's what we see naturally. But typically, when that happens, we start seeing pups on remote sensing cameras. Or visually, if we have a visual adult, we start seeing a pup with them.

746

01:40:53.260 --> 01:41:11.719

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we had a few early-on sightings of a pup, a single pup it seemed like, on the remote sensing camera. But since late June, we have not had any confirmed sighting of those pups. Now again, with that other litter, we don't not saying definitively; there's no pups out there.

747

01:41:11.770 --> 01:41:14.079

USFWS - Joe Madison: But, by now,

748

01:41:14.140 --> 01:41:26.589

USFWS - Joe Madison: we typically are seeing all over the place, within the-the territory, with the adults on multiple cameras and we just, we're not seeing that. So, we-we expect or speculate that they're,

749

01:41:27.050 --> 01:41:28.930

USFWS - Joe Madison: that they're no longer out there.

750

01:41:29.365 --> 01:41:34.869

USFWS - Joe Madison: I-I assure you, we would all be extremely ecstatic if we're wrong, I would love to be wrong, and

751

01:41:35.080 --> 01:41:40.910

USFWS - Joe Madison: if that's the case. I don't want to speculate on too much, what could have happened to them?

752

01:41:41.348 --> 01:41:46.009

USFWS - Joe Madison: You know, pups are extremely elusive to keep track of and find.

753

01:41:46.590 --> 01:41:54.750

USFWS - Joe Madison: It could have been anything, you know, it could have been an interest-specific stripe, it could have been red wolf stripe. You know, it was a new male, he was a first-time male. I don't know.

754

01:41:54.950 --> 01:42:01.250

USFWS - Joe Madison: 2413 was over in that area after she was not with her pups. I don't know. It could have been disease:

755

01:42:01.420 --> 01:42:06.149

USFWS - Joe Madison: Parvo distemper. I don't know. Predation by bears? Again, the-the list is

756

01:42:06.470 --> 01:42:09.929

USFWS - Joe Madison: is immense, and I can tell you that

757

01:42:10.060 --> 01:42:16.380

USFWS - Joe Madison: it's been running through all of our minds for the last three months of what-what happened and what could-could have gone-

758

01:42:16.640 --> 01:42:18.210

USFWS - Joe Madison: gone wrong out there.

759

01:42:19.040 --> 01:42:20.690

USFWS - Joe Madison: Alright. Next slide, please.

760

01:42:24.190 --> 01:42:34.899

USFWS - Joe Madison: The, after all that, the releases, the-the mortalities, all that the current known population is 16 collared red wolves out there in the landscape.

761

01:42:35.606 --> 01:42:40.600

USFWS - Joe Madison: And I know that doesn't sound like a lot. It's not a lot. It's perishly low. We all wish it was higher.

762

01:42:40.780 --> 01:43:03.449

USFWS - Joe Madison: But it is creeping up, and that is, and this was a surprise even to me, and I think to the crew as well, that-that actually is a 23% in the population since last year. So, it doesn't necessarily feel like it, but these efforts are paying off. Are there mortalities? Yes. Are there activities that are not successful? Yes.

763

01:43:03.580 --> 01:43:11.480

USFWS - Joe Madison: But this, what we're doing is a difficult task to release a large predator on a landscape

764

01:43:11.620 --> 01:43:12.889

USFWS - Joe Madison: out there.

765

01:43:13.010 --> 01:43:17.830

USFWS - Joe Madison: And there's it's fraught with-with down with downsides.

766

01:43:18.140 --> 01:43:31.470

USFWS - Joe Madison: Of those 16 red wolves. Eleven of them have GPS collars. We'll be attempting to change those-those five that don't have GPS collars this winter. But we'll see how successful we are at that.

767

01:43:31.620 --> 01:43:34.999

USFWS - Joe Madison: The estimated total wild population is 17 to 19.

768

01:43:35.100 --> 01:43:36.920

USFWS - Joe Madison: And the-the estimated

769

01:43:37.180 --> 01:43:53.969

USFWS - Joe Madison: total wild population it's to account for if there's one out, if we're seeing an animal on camera that we think is a red wolf, but it's not collared, or there's a sighting of someone you know, one that we suspect is, or there's ones whose collars had died or pups that we suspect are still out there.

770

01:43:54.809 --> 01:44:04.060

USFWS - Joe Madison: And it's just, you know, it's kind of to convey that we-we can't say for certainty that there's only 16 red wolves out there. That's not possible. It's a wild population.

771

01:44:04.260 --> 01:44:15.579

USFWS - Joe Madison: But-but right now, we don't know of any that fit in all those categories. I just said a collar that isn't working one that we've seen on camera that we feel strongly is a red wolf, that kind of thing. So,

772

01:44:15.950 --> 01:44:20.190

USFWS - Joe Madison: I suspect, we suspect that number of total is closer to that-

773

01:44:20.200 --> 01:44:24.499

USFWS - Joe Madison: that lower end of that 17 to 19, and maybe the 16. But,

774

01:44:24.670 --> 01:44:26.789

USFWS - Joe Madison: I don't wanna say; that's not certainty.

775

01:44:32.110 --> 01:44:35.120

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, somebody asked, if we look at the-

776

01:44:36.552 --> 01:44:42.000

USFWS - Joe Madison: all of this, the management actions and everything we're doing at the individual level or the population level.

777

01:44:42.520 --> 01:45:10.289

USFWS - Joe Madison: And I guess the full answer is both; you have to do both. But even when we're looking at it from an individual, it's about the population. This is not about saving an individual. This is about saving the individual because of what they represent for the population, right? Every individual is important, especially at a population of 16. One individual is 6% of the population. So, from that aspect and from looking at it from a genetic

778

01:45:10.290 --> 01:45:38.279

USFWS - Joe Madison: match, when we're talking about creating pairs or that kind of thing, we have to look at it at the individual level. And we have to look at the individual level because we have to know the situation that individual came from and the behavior that they've exuded both in the SAFE population and in the wild, so we know how to use them, where to put them, to give them the greatest chance of success, right? We want, we want that for them. But as an individual, but because of what they represent for the population.

779

01:45:39.090 --> 01:45:45.509

USFWS - Joe Madison: Every action we take is intended to increase the population and sustain the growth and viability of the population.

780

01:45:45.830 --> 01:45:52.979

USFWS - Joe Madison: Some of the actions we take, if you're really looking at it from an individual, is not really better, the best

781

01:45:53.190 --> 01:45:54.819

USFWS - Joe Madison: for that individual.

782

01:45:55.080 --> 01:45:58.539

USFWS - Joe Madison: And-and an example is what I talked about earlier, ideally,

783

01:45:58.830 --> 01:46:05.960

USFWS - Joe Madison: we would like a wolf that's two years red wolf, that's two years old or older, and showing signs of natural dispersal

784

01:46:06.020 --> 01:46:14.310

USFWS - Joe Madison: before we take them and put them in acclimation pens. But we don't always have that luxury with a population this low, we have to push the envelope sometimes.

785

01:46:15.751 --> 01:46:20.909

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, we use younger red wolves that are a year and a half instead, and ones that haven't shown

786

01:46:20.940 --> 01:46:50.249

USFWS - Joe Madison: that they're dispersing. 2361, again, who is the now the matriarch of the Pungo family, is a perfect example that she was a year and a half, she hadn't shown any time to dispersing, but in order for us, before we can get back to pup fostering, you got to have breeding pairs. So, we gotta, you know, try to create these, bring pairs. So, we put her in an acclimation pen, and in that instance it was successful. Was that the best for that individual? That can be debated-debated. Was that the best for the population? It absolutely was.

787

01:46:51.580 --> 01:46:53.009

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

788

01:46:55.430 --> 01:47:00.430

USFWS - Joe Madison: I get told I don't smile enough on these presentations, and I don't think I've smiled once. But, I'm just trying to

789

01:47:00.480 --> 01:47:10.185

USFWS - Joe Madison: convey all of this information in as much detail, and-and give this information as I can. So, if I don't smile, you'll have to forgive me.

790

01:47:12.440 --> 01:47:25.359

USFWS - Joe Madison: Okay, so a lot of the information on this slide comes directly from information that was asked in the-in the questions. There's currently two red wolf breeding pairs, family groups on the landscape

791

01:47:25.470 --> 01:47:29.520

USFWS - Joe Madison: and they're the Milltail pair on Alligator River and the Pungo pair

792

01:47:29.570 --> 01:47:35.840

USFWS - Joe Madison: over on National Wildlife Refuge-Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and adjacent. They use a lot of private land

793

01:47:36.020 --> 01:47:44.289

USFWS - Joe Madison: Now, I say they're breeding pairs, but the-the one on Pungo, we also feel like she had pups early

794

01:47:44.300 --> 01:47:48.899

USFWS - Joe Madison: and something happened. And we, so we're-we're not sure what it, but she didn't up, it didn't up have any,

795

01:47:49.496 --> 01:47:57.580

USFWS - Joe Madison: she did not exhibit denning behavior very long, so she either didn't whelp, or- or something happened to those pups early on as well.

796

01:47:57.880 --> 01:48:06.369

USFWS - Joe Madison: Seventeen of the red wolves are on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, and one of the questions specifically asked, how many red wolves are on Alligator River?

797

01:48:06.410 --> 01:48:21.950

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, I say that there's seven on Alligator River. But a lot of times when people ask me how many red wolves are on Alligator River, what they're really thinking is that there's only red wolves on Alligator River. So, I want to dispel that again, I mentioned it earlier.

798

01:48:22.470 --> 01:48:42.300

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, 17 to 16, so more than half of them aren't even on Alligator River and the other nine, a lot of them are not on refuges at all. The four-family group of the Pungo family group are on refuges sometime. The other ones are not using any refuge habitat. Currently, they're on private land.

799

01:48:42.360 --> 01:49:08.979

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we need that, we cannot have a viable population of red wolves on refuges alone. It's not enough habitat. It cannot support a viable population, so we need them on that private land which goes back to what Emily was talking about: why it's so vital that we have that communication, and that trust, and work in these landowners and be honest with them and upfront about what we're doing and what we want to do, and we hear what they need from us to make this successful.

800

01:49:10.000 --> 01:49:16.000

USFWS - Joe Madison: There's currently, of the 16, there's seven unpaired wild red wolves out there: six of them are female, one is male.

801

01:49:16.190 --> 01:49:22.100

USFWS - Joe Madison: We do not have any currently considered adult wild males out there.

802

01:49:22.349 --> 01:49:24.979

USFWS - Joe Madison: And I'll get to that in a little bit. And you know,

803

01:49:25.030 --> 01:49:32.410

USFWS - Joe Madison: come survival until next spring, that one male, 2411, he'll be an adult. He'll be 3 years old. He'll be, you know, classified as an adult, I guess.

804

01:49:35.920 --> 01:49:37.450

USFWS - Joe Madison: As far as

805

01:49:38.230 --> 01:49:43.719

USFWS - Joe Madison: what we're gonna do this winter, as far as creating pairs, how many pairs are we gonna create? How many acclimation pens?

806

01:49:43.910 --> 01:49:48.459

USFWS - Joe Madison: There's so many factors. And we discuss, again, we discussed this today.

807

01:49:48.510 --> 01:49:55.789

USFWS - Joe Madison: Whatever we say now is probably going to change by November, when we start actually doing capture operations to put them in pens, and it-

808

01:49:55.800 --> 01:50:06.810

USFWS - Joe Madison: it's based on our access to where the red wolves are. It's based on how many unpaired red wolves we have, changes in the population numbers, movements of them between now, and then things that happen over the course of the winter.

809

01:50:07.550 --> 01:50:14.000

USFWS - Joe Madison: But our goal is to have a minimum of three acclimation pens active and potentially up to five

810

01:50:14.482 --> 01:50:18.860

USFWS - Joe Madison: depending on the conditions. So, we'll see how that that all pans out.

811

01:50:18.890 --> 01:50:23.610

USFWS - Joe Madison: And I also wanted to-to just point out that there were, there have been no

812

01:50:23.650 --> 01:50:43.480

USFWS - Joe Madison: red wolf-coyote hybrid litters in the last two years. So, we have every known red wolf collared, and we know, you know, the situations with those-those 16 red wolves, and there were no, the last two years there have been no hybrid litters. Is that to say that there's no hybrids out there? Absolutely not. There's almost certainly hybrids out there.

813

01:50:43.859 --> 01:50:51.209

USFWS - Joe Madison: From previous, you know, older ones from previous events of hybridization, but there wasn't, there hasn't been in the last couple of years.

814

01:50:51.820 --> 01:50:53.089

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

815

01:50:57.190 --> 01:50:59.470

USFWS - Joe Madison: I was like, man that didn't look like the next slide. Okay.

816

01:50:59.500 --> 01:51:03.739

USFWS - Joe Madison: This is the age class for the red wolf population currently

817

01:51:03.880 --> 01:51:21.659

USFWS - Joe Madison: I put the one on there from 2021 so you can see how different it looks now. That's when we were down to seven individuals, and when we had those seven individuals. That chart on the left goes to age 14 so it shows you how old those red wolves were. We had several that were past breeding age. We had no reproduction going.

818

01:51:21.690 --> 01:51:26.559

USFWS - Joe Madison: And those were aging out, and there were no pairs. There were no breeding pairs.

819

01:51:26.780 --> 01:51:33.589

USFWS - Joe Madison: Now, you can see 16 still low. Nobody thinks 16 is enough. Well, there's probably somebody that thinks 16 is enough. But

820

01:51:34.050 --> 01:51:40.649

USFWS - Joe Madison: nobody that's looking forward to red wolf recovery thinks 16 is enough. But we have a lot more building blocks

821

01:51:40.780 --> 01:51:48.667

USFWS - Joe Madison: there. There's a lot more for potential for growth. We have a lot more opportunities that there may be pairs that create themselves

822

01:51:49.509 --> 01:51:57.899

USFWS - Joe Madison: and that kind of thing. So, we're in a much better place. Sixteen now is, compared even, just not in numbers, but the type of who those 16 are.

823

01:51:58.300 --> 01:52:20.069

USFWS - Joe Madison: And again, I want to point out to folks that say you need to quit releasing the same things happen again. I want to point to that 3% increase. But I also want to point out that 31% of the red wolves that are out there are direct releases from SAFE, and that doesn't count the ones that are out there that are a result of breeding from ones that came from SAFE. That is just, they, animal, themselves

824

01:52:20.070 --> 01:52:31.429

USFWS - Joe Madison: were released from SAFE, either as a yearling, in one case, adult males in the two that you see on there, and we fostered to the two-year old the two three-year old females that you see on there

825

01:52:31.460 --> 01:52:47.390

USFWS - Joe Madison: were fostered from SAFE program, and one of those is again 2361 that I brought up a billion times is the matriarch of the Pungo family group. So, it all ties in together. It all feeds together. These releases are being successful. Is it to the rate and degree we want? No.

826

01:52:47.480 --> 01:52:53.139

USFWS - Joe Madison: We will always be trying to increase that success. But it is working. It just is gonna take time.

827

01:52:54.470 --> 01:53:06.819

USFWS - Joe Madison: And I also want to point out that, you know, of those direct releases, two of them. they're both family group breeding males are from captive releases, as is the one female of one of those breeding groups.

828

01:53:07.670 --> 01:53:09.120

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

829

01:53:13.740 --> 01:53:17.619

USFWS - Joe Madison: This is the general distribution map across the five counties.

830

01:53:18.246 --> 01:53:23.290

USFWS - Joe Madison: To show you generally where these red wolves are, and that's, I say, dispersing on the ones

831

01:53:23.300 --> 01:53:29.459

USFWS - Joe Madison: that we're not, you know, they're not necessarily set in that territory. They're still moving a lot.

832

01:53:29.480 --> 01:53:39.603

USFWS - Joe Madison: And you know, I think it's self-explanatory. The F's are females, the M's are males, and the Y-F's or Y-M's are yearlings. So, I just want to give a kind of a breakdown of the-the,

833

01:53:40.470 --> 01:53:41.902

USFWS - Joe Madison: of that, and I-

834

01:53:42.350 --> 01:53:54.900

USFWS - Joe Madison: and the two dispersing red wolves you see on the far western side of this map, there's a male and a female. Those are both wild red wolves. They're both unrelated. They're unrelated to each other

835

01:53:54.910 --> 01:53:58.760

USFWS - Joe Madison: and they keep getting closer to each other, and then kind of splitting.

836

01:53:58.790 --> 01:54:08.990

USFWS - Joe Madison: But they know each other exists. We know that from monitoring now, and one of those is the disperser from Alligator River so one of them dispersed quite a bit. So, our hope—don't

837

01:54:09.100 --> 01:54:27.820

USFWS - Joe Madison: know if it'll happen—our hope is that those two will, you know, we haven't got to the bonding period yet so even if they know each other exist, even if they wanted to pair, they wouldn't have done it yet, so our hope is as the bonding period progresses, those two will continue to remain close to each other and eventually pair up. But we will monitor that heavy.

838

01:54:28.360 --> 01:54:45.899

USFWS - Joe Madison: I also want to point out with this map, because I've shown ones like this and ones with even more detail greatly. But I show this map in order to be honest with the public and forthcoming and disclose where red wolves were at: their current locations as we know it, based on our monitoring.

839

01:54:46.330 --> 01:54:54.739

USFWS - Joe Madison: Please don't take this map as a challenge to go find these individuals, because in most cases that's not the best-case scenario for-for the red wolves.

840

01:54:55.423 --> 01:55:12.409

USFWS - Joe Madison: This is, you know, it's not a check mark to say, "Oh, found them, need to go find the other one." And I also will say as we are, please be very aware of private land and very

respectful of private land out there on the landscape, because that will be detrimental to the Red Wolf Recovery Program and red wolves,

841

01:55:12.660 --> 01:55:18.150

USFWS - Joe Madison: if we have folks on private land, without permission, looking for red wolves.

842

01:55:21.200 --> 01:55:23.139

USFWS - Joe Madison: Alright. Next slide, please.

843

01:55:31.870 --> 01:55:32.800

USFWS - Joe Madison: Alright.

844

01:55:33.340 --> 01:55:40.799

USFWS - Joe Madison: Similar disclaimer to this. What I'm showing you now, this is something that we've been working on and when I say we—95% Morgan—have

845

01:55:41.080 --> 01:55:51.510

USFWS - Joe Madison: been developing to help the public and to disclose, to kind of hopefully get rid of some of the misinformation that's out there regarding the wild population.

846

01:55:52.285 --> 01:56:19.810

USFWS - Joe Madison: Who's with who or what? Who's survived? And-and what's-what's going on? Who? What numbers? Who, you know, who's, and the letters on their collars, that kind of thing. So, that we've been working on this for months, to try to get it right, to try to get it look right, to-to read

right, to be a good, a good documentation of what's going on out there, that and, it we've and based on what we're hearing that-that people want and the questions we get and those types of things.

847

01:56:19.880 --> 01:56:24.240

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, I'm just showing this to you as a precursor to when this thing comes out.

848

01:56:24.280 --> 01:56:26.879

USFWS - Joe Madison: And I don't know when we're gonna,

849

01:56:27.150 --> 01:56:30.250

USFWS - Joe Madison: it's gonna release it. And I don't know how often we're gonna release it.

850

01:56:30.270 --> 01:56:39.180

USFWS - Joe Madison: It will be a periodic release. We certainly don't have the ability and-and time to-to update it every time something changes.

851

01:56:40.130 --> 01:56:42.830

USFWS - Joe Madison: But this is something that will be coming out there

852

01:56:43.320 --> 01:56:47.820

USFWS - Joe Madison: that I hope, kind of dispel some of the misinformation, and it is a good resource.

853

01:56:48.334 --> 01:56:51.169

USFWS - Joe Madison: And again, my disclaimer on this slide is

854

01:56:51.660 --> 01:57:00.609

USFWS - Joe Madison: that for to ensure you get accurate information, please refer to this and the recovery program website. The top of the recovery program website

855

01:57:00.680 --> 01:57:07.640

USFWS - Joe Madison: has the update of population as soon as it's information that could be publicly available. That number changes on our website.

856

01:57:08.008 --> 01:57:15.109

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, for accuracy, for all population information, I would urge you to please use the Red Wolf Recovery Program as the resource

857

01:57:15.250 --> 01:57:16.580

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

858

01:57:17.560 --> 01:57:20.939

USFWS - Joe Madison: Oh, boy, I got a long way to go. I can have to speed up.

859

01:57:23.160 --> 01:57:26.660

USFWS - Joe Madison: Mortalities. There have been four mortalities in 2024,

860

01:57:26.740 --> 01:57:38.459

USFWS - Joe Madison: Two of those were vehicle strike mortalities on Highway 64, and the same general stretch: 2410, 2444. One wild red wolf was mainly

861

01:57:38.620 --> 01:57:45.520

USFWS - Joe Madison: euthanized after she was acting really bizarre and not her normal self. She's all very, very elusive, red wolf, but

862

01:57:45.865 --> 01:58:00.520

USFWS - Joe Madison: she was seen, right? We saw her along the roadside several days in a row, and she ended up having a brain tumble that was not treatable. So, she was euthanized. And then one mortality of a yearling male is an unknown cause and under investigation.

863

01:58:02.700 --> 01:58:09.379

USFWS - Joe Madison: Couple of questions have been brought up about. Steps were taken to monitor the roadside baiting of red wolves intentionally

864

01:58:09.510 --> 01:58:20.620

USFWS - Joe Madison: or the feeding and baiting of red wolves in general. I just want to say we haven't seen evidence of that, of what we consider intentional roadside baiting, and we don't have any information or knowledge

865

01:58:20.640 --> 01:58:23.489

USFWS - Joe Madison: that baiting is currently occurring.

866

01:58:24.079 --> 01:58:30.310

USFWS - Joe Madison: But you know, we'll take the appropriate actions if-if that occurs and involve law enforcement.

867

01:58:30.732 --> 01:58:41.607

USFWS - Joe Madison: We are, however, continuing to look at ways to potentially increase monitoring along Highway 64 and in the Red Wolf Recovery Program in general to kind of

868

01:58:42.240 --> 01:58:45.740

USFWS - Joe Madison: detect or-or deter those types of activities.

869

01:58:46.810 --> 01:58:48.249

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

870

01:58:49.890 --> 01:59:00.159

USFWS - Joe Madison: I want to talk about vehicle strike mortalities. I know a lot of people don't like seeing pictures like this. I don't like seeing pictures like this, but it's a reality, and it's a reality we face way, way too often.

871

01:59:00.520 --> 01:59:13.719

USFWS - Joe Madison: Vehicle strikes are the second leading cause of mortality since reintroduction so since 1987. Gunshot mortality is still the leading cause of mortality. However, over the last ten years, vehicle strike mortalities is the leading cause of mortality.

872

01:59:13.980 --> 01:59:20.159

USFWS - Joe Madison: Highway 64 through Alligator River, that 12-mile stretch is where the most vehicle strike mortalities have occurred.

873

01:59:20.250 --> 01:59:30.300

USFWS - Joe Madison: Now, part of that is because of that's-that's closest to where there's been red wolves the longest, because you know where the original ones were released in 1987.

874

01:59:30.360 --> 01:59:40.700

USFWS - Joe Madison: We've had packs there that sustained and, you know, reproduced over the years there more than in other areas. So, there's just more been more time, but it is problematic.

875

01:59:40.730 --> 01:59:54.740

USFWS - Joe Madison: And it's not just about red wolves that were released close, either, because, you know, red wolves that have been released over 15 miles away have still been vehicle strike mortalities on Highway 64. It's just, it's just a bad spot for-for multiple reasons.

876

01:59:55.470 --> 02:00:07.629

USFWS - Joe Madison: Sixteen different red wolves have been on, or north of the highway, and I say on or north, most of them that have been on, have been north of the highway, so 16 different ones just in the last five years

877

02:00:07.870 --> 02:00:11.130

USFWS - Joe Madison: And seven of those were vehicle strike mortalities.

878

02:00:11.360 --> 02:00:14.460

USFWS - Joe Madison: And four of them we actually captured north of the highway

879

02:00:14.500 --> 02:00:22.620

USFWS - Joe Madison: and either put them in acclimation pens or they were returned to captivity. So, it's definitely a continuing problem. Next slide, please.

880

02:00:24.970 --> 02:00:30.319

USFWS - Joe Madison: What are we doing about it? I think a lot of people feel we're doing nothing about it. But that's not accurate.

881

02:00:30.410 --> 02:00:42.350

USFWS - Joe Madison: Would we like to find more effective ways. Yes, we definitely would. But there are lots of things being done about it. We have the mobile highway signs that anybody in the area have seen that we put in areas where red wolves use roads.

882

02:00:42.470 --> 02:00:59.929

USFWS - Joe Madison: We move those around believe it or not. Anybody that's driven through Highway 64 to the refuge the last three years knows those signs have never moved. That's because there's been red wolf use in close proximity to the road the entire three years. When we put those out, we did not expect to leave them there this long, but that's the reality of the situation.

883

02:00:59.940 --> 02:01:05.329

USFWS - Joe Madison: We also have started putting the orange reflective material on all the red wolf collars a couple of years ago to increase visibility.

884

02:01:05.460 --> 02:01:11.090

USFWS - Joe Madison: It has helped. Is it a is it a cure? Definitely not. Red wolves with reflective material still get hit.

885

02:01:11.800 --> 02:01:27.960

USFWS - Joe Madison: We've commissioned a road ecology study through a contractor, Western Transportation Institute, and that-that report was given to us in last September, and that gives us a lot of information on crossings and ways to deal with it, and those types of ends and the mortalities,

886

02:01:28.273 --> 02:01:31.790

USFWS - Joe Madison: and that information. I'll talk about that again in the next slide.

887

02:01:32.284 --> 02:01:40.479

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we're also currently in the middle of collaborating on multiple research projects. Multiple I don't, I don't even know honestly the count off top my head, but four or five

888

02:01:40.660 --> 02:01:54.249

USFWS - Joe Madison: having to do with the spatial movement of red wolves in relation to roads or-or residential areas on the different types of deterrent methods, to try to keep them from wanting to go to the road, to detection methods of when they're on the road, and those types of things.

889

02:01:54.765 --> 02:02:05.520

USFWS - Joe Madison: You know, we we're-we're-we're looking at all those different things and different technologies and we're, you know, we try, we'll try anything that seems to have merit, I guess, and viable.

890

02:02:05.860 --> 02:02:14.890

USFWS - Joe Madison: We've also created, and this is a picture of the front side of it, and distribute this outreach and tools that are specific to driving in red wolf country to

891

02:02:15.329 --> 02:02:20.599

USFWS - Joe Madison: raise the alarm. Those are placed at rest areas throughout the Eastern North Carolina area,

892

02:02:20.730 --> 02:02:33.910

USFWS - Joe Madison: not just within the five counties. And they're also distributed through some of the vacation rental companies. When you, if you book a vacation rental, since you're gonna be driving here, a great deal of people, they're distributed through that way as well.

893

02:02:34.350 --> 02:02:36.020

USFWS - Joe Madison: Man, I'm gonna be so over.

894

02:02:39.620 --> 02:02:49.200

USFWS - Joe Madison: People ask about the wildlife crossing. So, this is the, you know, it is a lot of people ask why we're not in a rush to put wildlife crossings. Wildlife crossings are not something you can rush.

895

02:02:49.260 --> 02:02:50.929

USFWS - Joe Madison: It's just, they just aren't.

896

02:02:51.230 --> 02:03:09.510

USFWS - Joe Madison: But we are working towards that. We're trying to work towards that. We are currently collaborating with NCDOT in NCDO Wildlife Resource Commission to submit a grant proposal that was submitted three weeks ago for \$25 million to do wildlife crossings in one of the worst areas.

897

02:03:09.660 --> 02:03:16.179

USFWS - Joe Madison: And as part of that, there's a required 20% match in funding, so the funding would be over 31 million total of this project.

898

02:03:16.300 --> 02:03:29.809

USFWS - Joe Madison: And that's being covered both by DOT, but also through the efforts and private donations secured by Center for Biological Diversity and Wildlands Network. So that's a big, that's a big piece of this—the funding—this stuff is not -not cheap. Next slide.

899

02:03:37.130 --> 02:03:52.470

USFWS - Joe Madison: Alright. So, this phase one, this is just a phase, we'd like to do that whole 12 stretch mile stretch on there that would cost, you know, way more than the-the, we-we, put in for 25 million, because that's the-the highest amount you're allowed to put in on this application

900

02:03:52.530 --> 02:03:58.699

USFWS - Joe Madison: for this wildlife crossing grant through federal highways. I think I even skip talking about that, but that's who we did the grant application with.

901

02:03:59.590 --> 02:04:06.510

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, phase one focuses on the placement of underpasses in the area that has the most vehicle strike mortalities and highway crossings.

902

02:04:06.670 --> 02:04:13.280

USFWS - Joe Madison: And on that map it's the section that's in the red box. It's about a 2-and-a-half-mile stretch. So that would be the focus.

903

02:04:13.360 --> 02:04:22.839

USFWS - Joe Madison: And it would include multiple underpasses. It's not just one. It's multiple and at least two, if not three that are the size that would allow for red wolf passage.

904

02:04:22.990 --> 02:04:32.530

USFWS - Joe Madison: And then, but then all sorts of different sizes to allow for all the species that would be expected to cross there and, or vehicle strike mortality so black bear, white-tailed deer, those types of things.

905

02:04:32.740 --> 02:04:39.040

USFWS - Joe Madison: And it-it's, but even if we get the award granted, and we don't know how long it'll take. It could be six months longer to get this award

906

02:04:39.190 --> 02:04:52.179

USFWS - Joe Madison: completion. This project from start to finish is, we're probably still looking at four to five years to complete which is why we need to continue to focus on ways to reduce vehicle strike mortalities. Next slide, please.

907

02:04:54.110 --> 02:05:22.450

USFWS - Joe Madison: Another thing that people ask a lot about is coyote management, and quite honestly, as part of the settlement agreement, and doing of lawsuits, and doing this, coyote management is one of the big pieces that we said we would talk about in Eastern North Carolina.

So, we have a strategy called the adaptive management strategy and basically, it was developed in the late nineties by a group of scientists to try to reduce inbreeding between coyotes and red wolves.

908

02:05:22.500 --> 02:05:33.029

USFWS - Joe Madison: It entails the removal of some coyotes and the sterilizing of other coyotes. So, sterilized coyotes, if they're left hormonally intact, they will defend their territory

909

02:05:33.429 --> 02:05:38.519

USFWS - Joe Madison: in areas that don't have red wolves. So, they'll keep other coyotes out and

910

02:05:39.203 --> 02:05:51.570

USFWS - Joe Madison: if-if, and when a red wolf moves that area, they will displace the coyote. We've never seen an instance of coyotes displacing red wolves, but there's lots of instances of red wolves displacing coyotes.

911

02:05:51.891 --> 02:05:54.990

USFWS - Joe Madison: So that's why it's sometimes referred to as the placeholder theory.

912

02:05:56.450 --> 02:05:57.780

USFWS - Joe Madison: I'm gonna have to

913

02:05:57.840 --> 02:05:59.905

USFWS - Joe Madison: go a little faster on some of this.

914

02:06:00.810 --> 02:06:01.810

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide.

915

02:06:05.800 --> 02:06:18.280

USFWS - Joe Madison: Coyote sterilization is done at no-cost to landowners. It's actually covered by the Red Wolf Coalition, which I'll talk about. All sterilized coyotes are collared with white collars at this point, and they're released where they're captured.

916

02:06:18.380 --> 02:06:45.241

USFWS - Joe Madison: We used to collar coyotes with black collars, and there's still 14 of them out there that have black collars. But from here on, and for the last couple of years, they're white collars. So over time, as the coyotes that are collared age out or mortalities, they will all have white collars. It helps reduce hybridization, and it also helps reduce the coyote population locally. It actually benefits a lot of the land management goals for a lot of the landowners because they're wanting to have more turkey or

917

02:06:46.076 --> 02:06:53.269

USFWS - Joe Madison: quail, and coyotes focus more on some of the predators of those species, whereas red wolves don't eat a whole lot of

918

02:06:53.310 --> 02:06:58.630

USFWS - Joe Madison: bird species so it can benefit landowners and their goals. It also benefits red wolf recovery.

919

02:06:59.402 --> 02:07:05.329

USFWS - Joe Madison: And it's been shown to be effective, based on research that was done here in the Albemarle Peninsula back

920

02:07:05.990 --> 02:07:08.260

USFWS - Joe Madison: ten-fifteen years ago. Next slide, please.

921

02:07:15.300 --> 02:07:21.050

USFWS - Joe Madison: Alright. So as part of the population viability analysis that was done and published last year,

922

02:07:21.120 --> 02:07:30.999

USFWS - Joe Madison: it was a piece of the Red Wolf Recovery Plan; it recommends that we sterilize 10% of the coyote population every year and-and remove or euthanize 5%.

923

02:07:31.590 --> 02:07:55.410

USFWS - Joe Madison: Our goal is to increase the level of coyote capture and sterilization. We-we, the Red Wolf Recovery Program, the ones that are up to us that are part of the trapping program, part of that we, with the time that we have, try to trap and sterilize and re-release as many coyotes as we can. But we need, that number needs to increase so we can try and get to that 10% goal recommended in the PVA.

924

02:07:55.630 --> 02:08:02.120

USFWS - Joe Madison: Now, we based on how we trap this year, we-we were able to trap 10% within

925

02:08:02.733 --> 02:08:07.810

USFWS - Joe Madison: local areas, but certainly not 10% of coyote population five-countywide.

926

02:08:10.790 --> 02:08:25.060

USFWS - Joe Madison: The focus of where we do coyote trapping and sterilization, people ask that a lot. Again, it's not just throwing darts at a map, it's systematic. We trap around where we're going to have acclimation pens because that's where we're trying to establish red wolves.

927

02:08:25.130 --> 02:08:44.829

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, we want them to not be, hybridization not occur. But we want them to, we don't want additional coyotes there. We want to, you know, lessen that so that they're able to push them out and take over that territory. We are trapping in areas adjacent to existing red wolf presence to allow for that same to make expansion more likely and hybridization less likely.

928

02:08:44.950 --> 02:08:53.629

USFWS - Joe Madison: And also, we focus on Prey for the Pack partials with past or present readable fuse as part of that. That's kind of a prioritization of how we do it.

929

02:08:53.750 --> 02:09:03.260

USFWS - Joe Madison: But honestly, you know, we'll any, if time allows, any private landowner, whether they're Prey for the Pack or not, that will allow us to trap and sterilize and release on their lands, we'll do it,

930

02:09:03.350 --> 02:09:05.820

USFWS - Joe Madison: if we have the time. Next slide, please.

931

02:09:09.550 --> 02:09:12.629

USFWS - Joe Madison: This-this last trapping season, we captured

932

02:09:12.770 --> 02:09:21.419

USFWS - Joe Madison: and released 24 coyotes. I'm sorry we captured 24 coyotes during the, and that was on refuges and on four different parcels of private land.

933

02:09:21.570 --> 02:09:36.049

USFWS - Joe Madison: Twenty of those coyotes were sterilized, collared, and released, and four were euthanized. Euthanization is based on location, and age, and those types of things. We're trying to make sure we keep the age of the coyote, trying to make sure we keep the breeding pairs on the landscape.

934

02:09:36.639 --> 02:09:43.679

USFWS - Joe Madison: And then two additional coyotes were caught by private trappers, sterilized, collared, released by Fish and Wildlife Service where they were,

935

02:09:43.730 --> 02:09:46.730

USFWS - Joe Madison: where they were captured with landowner approval.

936

02:09:47.090 --> 02:09:54.899

USFWS - Joe Madison: And four different sterilized coyotes from past years, or even this year, I guess, were mortalities throughout 2024.

937

02:09:55.010 --> 02:10:00.099

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, all that together, there's currently 36 sterilized coyotes out there with active radio collars.

938

02:10:00.370 --> 02:10:04.959

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, you can see, we added 20 last year. You know, so in theory

939

02:10:05.269 --> 02:10:09.849

USFWS - Joe Madison: we'll be hoping to add that that amount or more in different areas as we go along.

940

02:10:10.296 --> 02:10:15.280

USFWS - Joe Madison: Like, I said, the sterilization is paid for by the Red Wolf Coalition, and it's performed by Dr. Ford

941

02:10:15.300 --> 02:10:23.630

USFWS - Joe Madison: whose picture is there on the right, and Ashley Schwain, who's the vet tech at the Chowan Animal Hospital. So, they do, all of our current, they currently do all of our sterilizations.

942

02:10:23.650 --> 02:10:31.530

USFWS - Joe Madison: We are looking into ways to increase our ability to do more sterilizations as the need and captures increases. Next slide, please.

943

02:10:35.250 --> 02:10:40.990

USFWS - Joe Madison: I want to briefly talk about St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge. It is a massive piece of the Red Wolf Recovery Program.

944

02:10:41.714 --> 02:10:46.949

USFWS - Joe Madison: It is an island propagation site off the Gulf-Gulf-Gulf Coast of Florida.

945

02:10:47.340 --> 02:10:59.439

USFWS - Joe Madison: The plan there is that we maintain a breeding pair on the island in the wild. They reproduce in the wild. When those pups get dispersal age, one and a half years old or so, we trap those young and move them up here to the-

946

02:10:59.590 --> 02:11:09.789

USFWS - Joe Madison: right now, we move them up here to the Eastern North Carolina red wolf population area. Once we establish more populations and they can help to-to, you know, we can translocate to other population areas as well.

947

02:11:10.720 --> 02:11:24.149

USFWS - Joe Madison: Unfortunately, currently, there is a pair. There is a pair of red wolves on there, and they-they're a good pair in the sense that they're-they work well together. They stay together. It's a SAFE-born male, but he's been out there for two and a half years, so he's definitely a wild red wolf.

948

02:11:24.480 --> 02:11:26.150

USFWS - Joe Madison: But they haven't had any litters.

949

02:11:26.650 --> 02:11:32.520

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, I guess this is an example of we're looking at the population rather the individual because

950

02:11:32.560 --> 02:11:37.330

USFWS - Joe Madison: they've had two and a half breeding seasons, basically, and they weren't successful so that they're-

951

02:11:37.370 --> 02:11:43.490

USFWS - Joe Madison: there's clearly something not successful with them, with breeding. We have seen them on camera with attempted breeding.

952

02:11:43.570 --> 02:11:52.710

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, with no indication of litter this year, we're gonna have to try to switch out the male. And, you know, hopefully, we'll be successful, that but the plan will be to-

953

02:11:52.970 --> 02:12:04.640

USFWS - Joe Madison: to take a new male from the SAFE population that's already been identified to the island, and then trap the existing male and remove him from the island and-and try to create a new pair with the breeding female there.

954

02:12:05.352 --> 02:12:13.797

USFWS - Joe Madison: Hopefully, that's successful. And Ryan sent us a text not too long before the presentation that there's actually a hurricane

955

02:12:14.270 --> 02:12:20.846

USFWS - Joe Madison: that's supposed to hit or looks like it's gonna go right over St. Vincent in the next couple of days. So hopefully they-they-

956

02:12:21.180 --> 02:12:22.660

USFWS - Joe Madison: they weather that well.

957

02:12:23.890 --> 02:12:25.270

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

958

02:12:27.590 --> 02:12:40.980

USFWS - Joe Madison: I talked briefly about the Red Wolf Center. I'd actually taken this slide out just because I talk about all the time, but then questions came up about it again, so I wanted to talk about the Red Wolf Center. It is located just outside of Columbia, North Carolina, on Highway 94.

959

02:12:41.298 --> 02:12:46.199

USFWS - Joe Madison: It used to be a really ugly brown building. For a year and a half now, we've had this awesome

960

02:12:46.300 --> 02:12:53.419

USFWS - Joe Madison: mural and that mural, and-and the events surrounding that mural has increased the visitation to that and the visibility of that-

961

02:12:53.740 --> 02:12:55.070

USFWS - Joe Madison: that facility.

962

02:12:55.508 --> 02:13:23.099

USFWS - Joe Madison: And I know it also helps the town and the county to kind of embrace it a little more, which is a huge positive for red wolves in that area. So, we're always looking to further the benefit of that facility to that end. You know we've done this remodel on the outside, so to speak, but we have been working on a remodel of the inside, the front portion of this building like, for that door, you see, goes in, it's a public,

963

02:13:23.997 --> 02:13:32.570

USFWS - Joe Madison: like a small visitor center interpretation area. It is operated by Cat Ramos, and the North Carolina Wildlife Federation

964

02:13:33.327 --> 02:13:34.849

USFWS - Joe Madison: for people, and

965

02:13:34.920 --> 02:13:49.809

USFWS - Joe Madison: the, she's overseeing the interior remodel of that area as well. So, we put in new flooring. They've been, it's been freshly painted, some of the new displays, and but there's going to be all new displays in there. So, it's going to be an even,

966

02:13:50.288 --> 02:13:59.530

USFWS - Joe Madison: it-it's an awesome building. It was, been awesome since it was there. But it's gonna be an even greater experience for people and-and a better learning opportunity, outreach opportunity.

967

02:14:00.232 --> 02:14:17.259

USFWS - Joe Madison: And we, there is an enclosure in the back there that, there's a pen with a pair of-of SAFE animals from the SAFE population back there that the public can see. It's typically, and there's also 24-hour webcams that North Carolina Wildlife Federation operates

968

02:14:17.703 --> 02:14:43.739

USFWS - Joe Madison: that folks can typically, normally see red wolves there 24/7. Having said all that, and how great it is, we currently have it closed because we are working on that enclosure to get ready for the next set of red wolves that will be moved into there on. The ones that were there, are no longer there; they've been transferred. So, we will be getting new ones in. We're doing work on that pen to get it ready, and then it will be back open in mid-October.

969

02:14:44.090 --> 02:14:49.309

USFWS - Joe Madison: But we encourage folks to come out if they're in the area and to tell folks about it.

970

02:14:50.100 --> 02:14:51.499

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

971

02:14:56.690 --> 02:15:01.059

USFWS - Joe Madison: Collaborative-community. Collaborative conservation.

972

02:15:01.420 --> 02:15:19.990

USFWS - Joe Madison: The one of the main ones that we need, collaborative conservation, of course, is landowners. And one way we're trying to do that, the CCT is going to bring them into the full: we're going to hear from them more, we're going to talk about potential ways that you know it could benefit them, or potential ways, that-how we could work better with them for-for them

973

02:15:20.403 --> 02:15:42.249

USFWS - Joe Madison: to be more accepting of the red wolves and Red Wolf Recovery Program, those types of things. But one way is, Prey for the Pack. A lot of you probably have heard of that. It's- we sign up landowners, and we provide financial and technical assistance to do habitat work that meets their land management goals. This isn't about us trying to get them to do something on their land, with their habitat, that to benefit,

974

02:15:42.640 --> 02:15:58.510

USFWS - Joe Madison: to change what they want to do on their lands. We're not trying to talk them into anything. This is goals that they have established for themselves, that if they do those, they also would benefit prey species for red wolves. So, we'll provide financial and technical assistance for that.

975

02:15:58.690 --> 02:16:06.219

USFWS - Joe Madison: And in-in return, they agree to allow red wolves to be present on their lands, unharassed, and allow some level of monitoring by us.

976

02:16:06.250 --> 02:16:11.009

USFWS - Joe Madison: And then up to their comfort level, allow for coyote sterilization.

977

02:16:11.330 --> 02:16:32.369

USFWS - Joe Madison: Luke Lokies is the one that works with landowners to-to sign these agreements. There's also an option if you're not wanting to do habitat work, but you live within those five counties that you can sign one that doesn't involve the money part of it, and you can just sign up saying, you know, you'll allow monitoring on your lands, support red wolves or Red Wolf Recovery Program, and Luke can sign you up for that.

978

02:16:33.610 --> 02:16:34.889

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

979

02:16:37.799 --> 02:16:51.749

USFWS - Joe Madison: A couple of huge programs that we have that I wanna to-to bring to light, one is to the red wolf cover, excuse me, is the Red Wolf Coalition, is the Depredation Compensation Program. Red Wolf Coalition funds it and administers it.

980

02:16:52.000 --> 02:17:00.900

USFWS - Joe Madison: And it's to reimburse landowners if there's loss of livestock from depredation by red wolves, I want to stress that depredation by red wolves is still extremely rare.

981

02:17:01.358 --> 02:17:09.999

USFWS - Joe Madison: It's happened 11 times in the 37 years since reintroduction, and a few of those, you know, I think three of those were just last year from one of the-

982

02:17:10.150 --> 02:17:24.539

USFWS - Joe Madison: the SAFE releases that was put in dire circumstances after her mate was- was a mortality. So, it's a very rare, but it's still a concern for landowners. And it's-it's still something they worry about. So, by having this program,

983

02:17:24.559 --> 02:17:41.690

USFWS - Joe Madison: it's a way to provide assurance to those landowners that if something happens with red wolves and their livestock that they'll be reimbursed. So, it's been a valuable program to have, and I do think it has helped increase the tolerance. Even talking about the presence of this program has helped.

984

02:17:41.780 --> 02:17:43.100

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

985

02:17:44.260 --> 02:18:02.790

USFWS - Joe Madison: Another key piece is the trapper reimbursement program. There's a lot of trappers out there. We're not asking anybody to trap for us, but if they're out there and they're licensed trappers and they're trapping already, we have this program to reimburse them. If they catch a red wolf, or a radio-collared canid like a coyote,

986

02:18:02.790 --> 02:18:16.550

USFWS - Joe Madison: or a coyote that can be sterilized, collared, and released. Or it's an animal, they don't know what it is, and you know they-we suspect it could be red wolf that we weren't familiar with anything like that if they hand those animals over to us,

987

02:18:16.570 --> 02:18:29.057

USFWS - Joe Madison: and they're live and in releasable condition, then we can reimburse them for that and-and that's a good way for trappers that come across one that has an orange collar or something like that to let us know. And

988

02:18:29.379 --> 02:18:40.579

USFWS - Joe Madison: some of the orange collared red wolves were caught by licensed trappers last year, and they did notify us and handed over those red wolves, though. So, it is a program that it's very viable and working.

989

02:18:40.830 --> 02:18:44.109

USFWS - Joe Madison: I wanna just throw some shout outs. Next slide, please.

990

02:18:44.200 --> 02:18:57.229

USFWS - Joe Madison: I want to throw shout outs to several of the organizations that we collaborate with beyond the private landowners. The SAFE program is a huge one, Emily went through it so I don't even, I'm not even going to take the time since I'm way over

991

02:18:57.544 --> 02:19:04.420

USFWS - Joe Madison: to go through all that, but they're extremely valuable partner to us, and we- and we try to be extremely valuable partner to them as well.

992

02:19:04.660 --> 02:19:06.010

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

993

02:19:06.320 --> 02:19:27.150

USFWS - Joe Madison: The Wildlife Resource Commission is, as Emily mentioned them again, we work very closely with them on all things canid management related within the Eastern North Carolina, and that collaboration has only increased in recent years. The wildlife refuges, we're Fish and Wildlife Services, but we're a different department. We coordinate with refuges all the time on many levels.

994

02:19:27.631 --> 02:19:32.160

USFWS - Joe Madison: Multiple things for the benefit of red wolves. Next slide, please.

995

02:19:32.719 --> 02:19:39.509

USFWS - Joe Madison: I mentioned these partners already, but the North Carolina Wildlife Federation and Red Wolf Coalition help us out in a ton of ways

996

02:19:39.590 --> 02:19:48.420

USFWS - Joe Madison: by partnering with us on different things: funding opportunities, the Red Wolf Center, you know, the cost of coyote sterilization, those kinds of things. Next slide, please.

997

02:19:50.580 --> 02:20:03.260

USFWS - Joe Madison: Defenders of Wildlife is a good partner as well, and hugely helping out on a project to fence the-the transfer station that's adjacent to the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge.

998

02:20:03.330 --> 02:20:15.190

USFWS - Joe Madison: It's-there's a lot of garbage over there, human garbage that is accessible to all wildlife. And it is a massive problem, and we have been working closely with Defenders in the county to solve that problem.

999

02:20:15.210 --> 02:20:20.209

USFWS - Joe Madison: And Defenders is-is doing a great job working towards that-that project.

1000

02:20:20.280 --> 02:20:37.450

USFWS - Joe Madison: The Red Wolf Conservation Center is giving us-they've given us 50,000 to help us towards GPS and VHF collars for red wolves and coyotes. That's a massive benefit that allows us to-to use our limited funds on other aspects of red wolf recovery that are much needed.

1001

02:20:37.810 --> 02:20:39.299

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

1002

02:20:41.410 --> 02:20:53.930

USFWS - Joe Madison: North Carolina State University is a huge partner in so many ways-ways that the veterinary hospital takes care if there's a wrench, an injured red wolf, for whatever reason we know that they have a dedicated

1003

02:20:54.090 --> 02:21:10.889

USFWS - Joe Madison: both pen space funding and specialists to take care of those red wolves so they can be released to the wild. That's huge. I also am mentoring engineering students there that are working on some of the roadside, the vehicle strike mortality. So that's a huge, and it seems like

1004

02:21:10.930 --> 02:21:15.149

USFWS - Joe Madison: our ties with NC State just grow as the years goes on. So that's massive.

1005

02:21:15.400 --> 02:21:24.920

USFWS - Joe Madison: The North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences is also a big partner. Red Wolf Teacher Ambassadors that we've had, we didn't have one this summer, it just didn't work out for various reasons, but

1006

02:21:24.940 --> 02:21:42.869

USFWS - Joe Madison: we hope to do that again. It's local area teachers out on the Refuge that are talking to folks about red wolves and red wolf management and then helping us do some of the management techniques like radio tracking and the-the remote sensing cameras. So, they're- they're a huge partner as well.

1007

02:21:44.770 --> 02:21:57.680

USFWS - Joe Madison: And also, they offer a program for teachers of North Carolina, and they bring them out and they teach them about red wolves so they can take that information back to the classroom, which is valuable for the next generation.

1008

02:21:57.770 --> 02:22:00.059

USFWS - Joe Madison: Alright, we're getting close, I promise.

1009

02:22:02.010 --> 02:22:03.600

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

1010

02:22:03.810 --> 02:22:09.309

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, the next several slides. There's a lot of questions about, how can people help? How can you get involved?

1011

02:22:09.846 --> 02:22:15.139

USFWS - Joe Madison: In-in a lot of ways, that's a difficult one to answer. But then there's also lots of ways you can. So, I'm gonna run through them

1012

02:22:15.780 --> 02:22:18.410

USFWS - Joe Madison: faster than-than we'd like, probably.

1013

02:22:20.775 --> 02:22:36.209

USFWS - Joe Madison: One way you can help get involved is contacting us directly. If you have questions, concerns, or issues, instead of speculating, or, you know, listening to the rumor mill, just

contact us so we can-can help with that, and we'll-we can address your-your concerns directly.
Next slide, please.

1014

02:22:42.602 --> 02:22:48.089

USFWS - Joe Madison: Don't shoot collared canids! Know your species before you shoot. If you see orange, don't shoot!

1015

02:22:48.552 --> 02:22:56.677

USFWS - Joe Madison: That should be sort of a hunter safety thing, anyway, even if it's not a red wolf, but it and it's so it's illegal to shoot red wolves, it is,

1016

02:22:59.080 --> 02:23:07.939

USFWS - Joe Madison: you know, can result in civil criminal penalties and result fines and forfeiture of the property that was used in the shooting, so just don't do it.

1017

02:23:08.200 --> 02:23:15.590

USFWS - Joe Madison: It's likely to your benefit not to shoot a collared coyote because they're sterilized, and for all the benefits that I discussed earlier

1018

02:23:16.655 --> 02:23:21.380

USFWS - Joe Madison: And all, and another one is to drive with caution in areas with red wolves.

1019

02:23:21.791 --> 02:23:25.040

USFWS - Joe Madison: Just, you know, common-common sense. Next slide, please.

1020

02:23:27.900 --> 02:23:30.150

USFWS - Joe Madison: You know, engaged in red wolf meetings,

1021

02:23:30.170 --> 02:23:33.039

USFWS - Joe Madison: planning meetings, or like that type of stuff.

1022

02:23:33.430 --> 02:23:37.639

USFWS - Joe Madison: Participate in the CCT stuff that Emily talked about in in detail

1023

02:23:37.660 --> 02:23:43.849

USFWS - Joe Madison: within the-the red wolf recovery area so your voice is heard. That's the way you can do it. If there's meetings that Francine's holding meetings or

1024

02:23:43.880 --> 02:23:47.700

USFWS - Joe Madison: you know, once there's larger meetings of those types of things, you know, participate in those.

1025

02:23:48.243 --> 02:23:53.639

USFWS - Joe Madison: And invite the Red Wolf Recovery Program to come meet to your town or group like Mann's Harbor did-

1026

02:23:53.710 --> 02:23:59.790

USFWS - Joe Madison: did last-last time, you know, so you can hear straight from us and answer your questions directly, if need be.

1027

02:23:59.840 --> 02:24:09.569

USFWS - Joe Madison: And then there's a nationwide process going on right now with wolves. It's kind of along the CCT lines. It's-it's called the People's Process:

1028

02:24:09.900 --> 02:24:18.590

USFWS - Joe Madison: A National Conversation About Thriving Communities, Tribes, Conservationists, Working Landscapes, and Wolves. And they say we use crazy long names? That's a mouthful.

1029

02:24:18.860 --> 02:24:24.689

USFWS - Joe Madison: But that project, like I said, it kind of mirrors the CCT in some ways, but it's different.

1030

02:24:25.148 --> 02:24:28.849

USFWS - Joe Madison: And it involves all wolves: Mexican wolves, gray wolves and red wolves.

1031

02:24:28.930 --> 02:24:49.719

USFWS - Joe Madison: And it's a 3-year project, and it's the objective is to convene people to address the long-standing conflict about wolves and it, but it's and it's aiming to give a voice for all perspectives and not just be, you know, agency talk about that but to actually invite those voices to build a shared understanding to determine the best path forward for wolves in general.

1032

02:24:50.282 --> 02:25:09.880

USFWS - Joe Madison: You know, just opening up that conversation, having those group meetings, smaller group meetings, but-but it's growing into a larger conversation across the country. And-and they're actually gonna have, my understanding is they're gonna have traveling meetings throughout the United States to have these meetings in person. They've had some online meetings, but it's gonna grow.

1033

02:25:10.290 --> 02:25:26.030

USFWS - Joe Madison: What the outcome is we don't really know, because part of the-the thing about the CCT is you don't-you don't have a particular outcome in mind because you want to get to that outcome with the folks involved. You're not dictating the outcome; you're building that outcome together. So that's one of the key things.

1034

02:25:26.150 --> 02:25:37.880

USFWS - Joe Madison: The hope for having red wolves involved in this process is it will it help inform all this, both in North Carolina, but also because it's a nationwide thing to give us better insight and better information

1035

02:25:37.910 --> 02:25:42.640

USFWS - Joe Madison: on potential new population sites, reintroduction sites

1036

02:25:42.710 --> 02:25:47.539

USFWS - Joe Madison: where it might be most successful, what we need to know in a particular area that we may not know yet.

1037

02:25:47.860 --> 02:25:53.610

USFWS - Joe Madison: So, and if you're interested in being part of that, you can go to that with the website is peoplesprocess.com.

1038

02:25:55.570 --> 02:25:57.020

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

1039

02:26:00.760 --> 02:26:05.489

USFWS - Joe Madison: If you think-if you're sick of hearing me talk, just think how sick I am of hearing me talk, so we're almost there.

1040

02:26:05.990 --> 02:26:23.509

USFWS - Joe Madison: Another way you can help, if you, you know, by visiting Eastern North Carolina and the counties that comprise the only wild population of red wolves. It helps support the economy of these local populations. You know the food, the gas, lodging, people come here to see red wolves. It is a, it helps these-these counties, and

1041

02:26:23.580 --> 02:26:30.689

USFWS - Joe Madison: it's sometimes hard to quantify that. But you know, since Covid especially, we've seen a-a

1042

02:26:31.010 --> 02:26:36.539

USFWS - Joe Madison: steady increase of visitors on-on refuges, and a lot of that is to view red wolves.

1043

02:26:36.949 --> 02:26:40.840

USFWS - Joe Madison: And it's no-it's no coincidence that to-to-

1044

02:26:41.430 --> 02:26:52.260

USFWS - Joe Madison: to talk about that I use the keep wildlife wild logo, because we want people to come visit. We do, we want people to try to get a glimpse of a wild red wolf, but we need to be done responsibly,

1045

02:26:52.290 --> 02:27:07.049

USFWS - Joe Madison: needs to stay at a safe distance. It needs to not habituate red wolves, because that's not going to be good for red wolves, the individual, the population, the program, the counties, anything like that. So, seeing a red wolf in the wild is an amazing experience, but it has to be done

1046

02:27:07.130 --> 02:27:10.640

USFWS - Joe Madison: ethically and at a distance and maintained at a distance.

1047

02:27:10.790 --> 02:27:17.540

USFWS - Joe Madison: And also, you can visit one or more of the-the 50 zoos and wildlife conservators-conservation centers that make up a SAFE program.

1048

02:27:17.690 --> 02:27:30.360

USFWS - Joe Madison: They're a great resource of outreach and education. And you can see the animals in person and see how it works and what they're-what they're doing. And-and it's kind of fun I-I feel to view that, to go to the different ones, they all have a different approach

1049

02:27:30.420 --> 02:27:38.650

USFWS - Joe Madison: to, you know, to their habitats, and-and the, and what they look like, and-and how they're how-they're available for viewing. So, it's it,

1050

02:27:38.720 --> 02:27:40.510

USFWS - Joe Madison: I encourage folks to do that.

1051

02:27:41.882 --> 02:27:43.330

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

1052

02:27:44.070 --> 02:27:52.939

USFWS - Joe Madison: Another way you can help is to join Prey for the Pack. If you own land within this county, within these five county areas, you can Prey for the Pack and you can contact us.

1053

02:27:53.272 --> 02:27:57.800

USFWS - Joe Madison: And the next couple of slides, the next slide, next slide, please, is our contact information

1054

02:27:58.939 --> 02:28:02.129

USFWS - Joe Madison: for all of us. It's also available on our website.

1055

02:28:02.230 --> 02:28:04.946

USFWS - Joe Madison: Again, the-the website is,

1056

02:28:05.520 --> 02:28:07.620

USFWS - Joe Madison: well, that's on the next slide, too. But it's

1057

02:28:07.900 --> 02:28:18.341

USFWS - Joe Madison: the easiest way is redwolfcountry.com. But if you just do a search for the Red Wolf Recovery Program website and go to the one that's the Fish and Wildlife Service, you'll find it.

1058

02:28:18.750 --> 02:28:20.269

USFWS - Joe Madison: Next slide, please.

1059

02:28:23.790 --> 02:28:26.480

USFWS - Joe Madison: Alright. This is literally last slide.

1060

02:28:26.500 --> 02:28:36.089

USFWS - Joe Madison: Hey, so if you have questions that we don't get to, because there's no way we're gonna get to, and again, I tried to incorporate all of the questions pre-talk

1061

02:28:36.430 --> 02:28:43.609

USFWS - Joe Madison: into the talk so that I made sure I cover that information. So, I know, I'm sure there's been

1062

02:28:43.940 --> 02:28:48.409

USFWS - Joe Madison: you know, a thousand questions added to the chat since I have been talking. I haven't looked at them.

1063

02:28:48.440 --> 02:28:54.770

USFWS - Joe Madison: But if you have questions that you think of later or you know, we're gonna submit. We're gonna

1064

02:28:55.070 --> 02:29:02.019

USFWS - Joe Madison: put up the questions to the answers that submitted. It won't be quick. Again, we're a small crew. There's a lot going on in October.

1065

02:29:02.070 --> 02:29:14.850

USFWS - Joe Madison: Every month is crazy busy for us. But October, trying to get ready for trapping and acclimation pens is really busy, so these answers won't be up tomorrow, but eventually they'll be up. But if a new question comes to your mind,

1066

02:29:15.344 --> 02:29:24.569

USFWS - Joe Madison: you can email us@redwolf@fws.gov, or and there's the full website address that's a little a little less easy to remember.

1067

02:29:25.370 --> 02:29:28.159

USFWS - Joe Madison: And with that, I will turn it back over to Megan.

1068

02:29:30.640 --> 02:29:37.609

AECOM - Megan Stone: Thank you so much, Joe, and we will go ahead and actually turn it over to Emily for some closing remarks.

1069

02:29:55.130 --> 02:30:16.560

USFWS - Emily Weller: Okay, there we go. Even my computer is-is tired this late. Alright, I won't take much of your time here. We appreciate your-your patience and-and staying with us this evening. We had a lot of information we wanted to cover. We wanted to make sure we incorporated the questions, the many questions that were submitted prior to the meeting

1070

02:30:16.940 --> 02:30:29.519

USFWS - Emily Weller: and prioritize-prioritize presenting these key updates. We obviously, you're not gonna get to-to questions. But we, like, Joe said. We are committed to getting those questions answered

1071

02:30:29.550 --> 02:30:35.320

USFWS - Emily Weller: in as timely a fashion as we can, since trapping season is coming up.

1072

02:30:35.850 --> 02:30:41.250

USFWS - Emily Weller: Again, the recording of this meeting will also be posted on our website for people who had to step away.

1073

02:30:41.746 --> 02:31:02.599

USFWS - Emily Weller: If you would like to provide feedback on this meeting, the meeting's format, we're always looking to improve and would appreciate your input. Again, we apologize for-for going long. If you think of questions after tonight's meeting, please feel free to submit those as well. You can send those to

1074

02:31:02.600 --> 02:31:16.000

USFWS - Emily Weller: redwolf@fws.gov. I believe it was put in the chat. Thank you all once again for joining us this evening. Your engagement is critical to the success of the Red Wolf Recovery Program.

1075

02:31:16.040 --> 02:31:29.589

USFWS - Emily Weller: We have many challenges ahead, but with collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment, we are making progress, and through collaboration we can ensure a brighter future for America's red wolf.

1076

02:31:29.820 --> 02:31:32.080

USFWS - Emily Weller: Have a wonderful night, everyone. Thank you.