

Far Traveler

A Teacher's Companion to Red Wolf Recovery



Elise McCauley Hammond



*A long time ago, the howl
became a word, a name.
Wa'ya to the Cherokee, to
whom the mountains also
listened in the old time.
Son of the wind;
companion to Kana'ti;
father of Ani'-Wa'ya, the
Wolf people, principal clan.
Familiar spirit to hunters.
Perfect walker. Far traveler.
Revenge taker and altruist.
Unseen shape between the
trees. Shy shadow from the
long past.*

Christopher Camuto

Another Country:
Journeying Toward the
Cherokee Mountains

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Dear Teachers and Students:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is grateful for your use of "Far Traveler." We hope you will find some innovative ideas for teaching and learning about the beautiful and fascinating red wolf.

Learning about red wolves gives students and teachers an opportunity to investigate together the broader issues of biodiversity and conservation in the Southeast. In addition, it offers a way to explore part of America's past and to examine human attitudes toward large predators. Human misunderstanding and superstition have contributed to the widespread hatred and fear of wolves. The campaign to eliminate the red wolf, combined with habitat destruction, was so intensive and so effective that the red wolf was, by 1980, considered functionally extinct in the wild.

For over twenty years, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with the help of other public agencies, organizations and concerned private citizens, has worked to restore the red wolf to a portion of its former range. While the red wolf has reproduced relatively well in captive breeding facilities, and although red wolves have made a remarkable "return to the wild" in eastern North Carolina, there is still much work to be done. Many people remain convinced that the red wolf is a savage killer, a danger to the public, and a liability to farmers. In addition, interbreeding with coyotes, a non-native species of the Southeast, threatens the genetic integrity of the red wolf.

Education is the key to dispelling the myths and to eliminating the unfounded fears that hinder conservation efforts for red wolves. If the public is not informed about the reality of red wolf biology and ecology, restoration efforts will fail. With public acceptance and tolerance, however, ways can be found for humans and red wolves to coexist.

You, the teachers and the young people, hold the keys to wildlife and wilderness conservation in North Carolina and throughout the country. Our thanks to you for your commitment to learning, for your interest in red wolf recovery, and for your leadership to ensure a future for America's red wolves and for America's wild places.

Sincerely,

*Jennifer Gilbreath
Wildlife Biologist/Red Wolf Outreach Coordinator
1991-2000
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