

History in Brief

Red wolf recognized as distinct species 1905

Red wolf listed as endangered species 1967

Endangered Species Act becomes law 1973

Last red wolves removed from wild. Red wolf declared extinct in wild 1980

14 captured animals become nucleus of Captive Breeding Program to save the red wolf from extinction 1980-1985

Reintroduction begins with release of red wolves into ARNWR 1987*

First pups born in wild at ARNWR 1988*

Reintroduction into GSMNP 1991*

First release into PLNWR in northeastern North Carolina 1993*

Red wolf recovery effects terminated in GSMNP in 1998*

Debate Over Red Wolf Recovery Begins

Plans are underway to investigate the possibility of restoring red wolves to the High Pines State Park. A recent feasibility study conducted by a team of biologists reveals that the High Pines area will support a sustained population of approximately 40 red wolves.

Several factors were studied by the biologists whose findings have been published and released to the public. Prey base was the first criterion examined. Biologists determined that the High Pines has sufficient numbers of small mammals and deer needed to sustain red wolves. Secondly, road density is low. The park is accessible to hikers and to back country campers. Some logging roads are maintained for private timber companies holding leases to log specific areas. Permanent human population is low, although there is some private property within the perimeter of the park. There are no towns or villages within the park, although there are a number of vacation cottages. In addition, two ski resorts operate during the winter season, and three year-round lodges host hikers, hunters, sightseers, and men and women who fish the mountain streams.



The unspoiled wild area of High Pines State Park is the center of controversy over the proposed reintroduction of red wolves.

High Pines State Park is ringed with several small towns and a number of sheep and dairy farms.

A poll of residents living in and near High Pines State Park indicates a division of opinion over red wolf reintroduction. A Citizens Roundtable has been convened.

Community in Conflict

Findings from the recent feasibility study involving the proposed reintroduction of red wolves to the High Pines State Park were greeted with mixed reactions by a Citizens Roundtable held in the town of Clear Creek. A representative of each of several perspectives on the issue of red wolf recovery spoke. Some groups strongly advocate the return of the red wolf to this portion of its former range; others, however, voiced firm opposition. Some stakeholders were undecided. Each of the perspectives will be presented by the representative stakeholders at the next Roundtable session where a compromise plan will be drafted.

*ARNWR - Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

*GSMNP - Great Smoky Mountains National Park

*PLNWR - Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge