

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
Red Wolf Plan Update
Virtual Public Meeting Transcript
February 1, 2022, 7:00-9:00pm Eastern Time**

00:00:04.680 --> 00:00:14.400

Alli Yamnitsky: Alright hello everyone, we are going to go ahead and get started with our meeting today, I would like to thank you all for joining us, we appreciate your time and participation.

00:00:14.940 --> 00:00:24.720

Alli Yamnitsky: My name is Alli Yamnitsky, and I am with environmental management and planning solutions, a contractor with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and I'm going to be one of your meeting facilitators today.

00:00:25.590 --> 00:00:32.040

Alli Yamnitsky: Additionally, I have several members of the US Fish and Wildlife Service with me on the meeting today who will be introduced in a moment.

00:00:33.330 --> 00:00:36.690

Alli Yamnitsky: Here is our expected meeting agenda for today well.

00:00:36.720 --> 00:00:45.000

Amanda Biedermann: Sorry Alli actually we're going to hold on a minute and we're going to let some more people join the meeting first, since we have a lot of participants here thanks.

00:01:27.360 --> 00:01:36.330

Alli Yamnitsky: Alright again welcome everyone to today's meeting, we will give folks just a few more minutes to join the meeting, so please stay tuned and we will start the presentation shortly.

00:01:37.620 --> 00:01:49.260

Alli Yamnitsky: I want to note that closed captioning is available by selecting the closed captioning icon at the bottom of your zoom screen, if you are using the zoom web or zoom web portal or the zoom APP. on your computer.

00:03:28.470 --> 00:03:37.890

Alli Yamnitsky: Hello everyone, we are going to go ahead and get started with our meeting today, I would like to thank you all for joining us, we appreciate your time and participation.

00:03:38.550 --> 00:03:48.030

Alli Yamnitsky: My name is Alli Yamnitsky, and I am with environmental management and planning solutions, a contractor with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and I'm going to be one of your meeting facilitators today.

00:03:48.870 --> 00:03:55.260

Alli Yamnitsky: Additionally, I have several members of the US Fish and Wildlife Service with me on the meeting today who will be introduced in just a moment.

00:03:56.670 --> 00:04:02.520

Alli Yamnitsky: Here is our expected meeting agenda for today. I will first go over some brief logistics for the meeting.

00:04:03.150 --> 00:04:08.010

Alli Yamnitsky: Then the Service will provide a PowerPoint presentation on the red wolf management program update.

00:04:08.850 --> 00:04:19.620

Alli Yamnitsky: The Service will then hold a question-and-answer session to respond to participants questions. Finally, the Service

will provide some closing remarks and we will close out the meeting at 9pm eastern time.

00:04:22.890 --> 00:04:34.560

Alli Yamnitsky: Before we get started with the presentation, I'm going to go over some logistics for the meeting. First this meeting is being recorded as a part of the project record and a recording will be posted to the US Fish and Wildlife Service website.

00:04:36.120 --> 00:04:44.760

Alli Yamnitsky: Second, your microphones and videos will be turned off for the duration of the meeting today. The host will unmute you only as needed to during the question-and-answer session.

00:04:46.350 --> 00:04:51.210

Alli Yamnitsky: Questions will be addressed during the question-and-answer session after the PowerPoint presentation.

00:04:51.900 --> 00:05:02.100

Alli Yamnitsky: As of right now we are going to go first through our list of questions that were submitted upon registration and that are within the scope and ability of the Fish and Wildlife Service to respond to at this time.

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Alli Yamnitsky: We will do our best to address the questions in the order they come in and to give everyone an opportunity to voice their questions today. I will now turn it over to Amanda Biedermann.

00:05:14.430 --> 00:05:30.720

Amanda Biedermann: Great, thank you Alli. I'll go ahead and put you on mute and at this time Shannon Estenoz with the Fish and Wildlife Service is going to provide some opening remarks, so let me go ahead and ask her to start her video and ask to unmute here.

00:05:32.580 --> 00:05:35.370

Shannon Estenoz: All right, Amanda can you hear me, and can you see me?

00:05:36.420 --> 00:05:37.830

Amanda Biedermann: Yes, we can thank you.

00:05:38.340 --> 00:05:53.490

Shannon Estenoz: Wonderful well thank you Amanda and Alli, and I am Shannon Estenoz. I'm actually the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks at the US Department of the Interior and as the Assistant Secretary

00:05:53.910 --> 00:06:04.530

Shannon Estenoz: I actually oversee the policy decisions of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. I'm dialing in this evening from Washington DC.

00:06:05.130 --> 00:06:13.710

Shannon Estenoz: And mostly I'm here to listen and to learn, but I did want to take just a few minutes to provide some opening remarks for tonight's session.

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Shannon Estenoz: I had the wonderful opportunity to travel to North Carolina just before the holidays and to learn more about red wolves

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Shannon Estenoz: and about the beautiful Albemarle Peninsula. I was able to visit the North Carolina Zoo. I was so grateful

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Shannon Estenoz: for the warm welcome that I received from scientists and landowners, from state leaders, members of the public

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Shannon Estenoz: that I had the opportunity to meet, while I was down there. It was also really great to spend time with our dedicated

00:06:43.860 --> 00:06:52.620

Shannon Estenoz: Fish and Wildlife Service staff exploring the region because you know I have found that, for me, the best way for me to understand, an issue

00:06:53.100 --> 00:07:00.570

Shannon Estenoz: particularly you know, a big challenging issue like red wolf conservation, is to sort of see things for myself and talk to folks on the ground.

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Shannon Estenoz: and really you know, my visit to the region, and my conversations with folks in North Carolina, have really persuaded me that if we dedicate ourselves to good communication,

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Shannon Estenoz: to transparency and to collaborative conservation, we will be able to embark

00:07:22.980 --> 00:07:35.910

Shannon Estenoz: on a renewed vision for red wolf recovery and that's really what tonight's meeting is all about. It's about communication, it's about transparency, collaboration, and new beginnings.

00:07:36.870 --> 00:07:49.920

Shannon Estenoz: So, I want to thank each and every one of you for taking the time out of your evening, your busy schedule this is family

time for many of you, and you have chosen to spend it with us, and we are so grateful, I want you to know how grateful we are.

00:07:50.430 --> 00:07:58.470

Shannon Estenoz: I also want to especially thank our valued partners from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission who are also here this evening.

00:07:59.340 --> 00:08:06.270

Shannon Estenoz: Communities and countries all over the world are dealing with this crisis of extinction and stemming the crisis here

00:08:06.570 --> 00:08:14.910

Shannon Estenoz: at home in the United States is a key priority for the US Department of the Interior and we're working throughout the country to recover species

00:08:15.540 --> 00:08:23.640

Shannon Estenoz: that face the threat of extinction, and this really is our goal for the red wolf, which is of course America's only endemic wolf.

00:08:24.210 --> 00:08:33.630

Shannon Estenoz: Meaning that it's the only, unlike the gray wolf which lives in the United States and in Mexico and in Canada, red wolves only live in the United States, so in many ways it is America's wolf.

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Shannon Estenoz: And it is also the most endangered canid in the world. Now Albemarle Peninsula is really critically important region for the continued existence of the red wolf so

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Shannon Estenoz: while we know there is wild widespread interest in our work that we're doing on red wolves, and we welcome that interest we want

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Shannon Estenoz: you know, to encourage interest in our work, we really wanted to engage also directly with the communities and partners in eastern North Carolina so that means engaging directly with folks in Beaufort County,

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Shannon Estenoz: Terrell and Washington counties so many of you have been with us since we celebrated the first release of red wolves back into the wild back in 1987

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Shannon Estenoz: after they had been declared extinct in the wild just seven years earlier. That release was the first time that a large carnivore

00:09:29.910 --> 00:09:41.010

Shannon Estenoz: was introduced, reintroduced after having been declared extinct in the wild, and it continues to serve as an important milestone for reintroduction efforts of other species.

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Shannon Estenoz: Across the country together we watched that reintroduction program succeeds for a good long period of time and at one point

00:09:52.140 --> 00:09:57.930

Shannon Estenoz: the population of red wolves reached 120 wild red wolves in the wild.

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Shannon Estenoz: But together we've also experienced setbacks and today we find the landscape, once again, largely without red wolves, so I am here tonight, on behalf of the Interior Department

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Shannon Estenoz: to express our commitment to build back the success of this program. As the Assistant Secretary, I will stay engaged in the months and years ahead

00:10:21.810 --> 00:10:32.940

Shannon Estenoz: you know, to ensure that the US Fish and Wildlife Service has the support they need to be successful, because what we want is to find enduring solutions for America's wolf.

00:10:33.810 --> 00:10:44.070

Shannon Estenoz: And those solutions are going to come through collaborative conservation that addresses the needs of the species and the surrounding communities so to that end

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Shannon Estenoz: we invite you to engage with us, not just tonight, but throughout our efforts to recover the red wolf. So again

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Shannon Estenoz: thank you so much for being here and for your interest in red wolf recovery. I'm now going to turn the program over to our dedicated red wolf recovery team who collectively have decades of experience

00:11:01.020 --> 00:11:16.470

Shannon Estenoz: in in trying to conserve this imperiled species so to get us started, let me introduce Dr. Catherine Phillips, who is the assistant regional director in the Service's South Atlantic Gulf and Mississippi Basins Region, so Catherine let's get started.

00:11:29.850 --> 00:11:36.180

Amanda Biedermann: Let's see Catherine, I've unmuted you from my end, you might need to unmute yourself from your end, let me try again here there we go.

00:11:36.930 --> 00:11:43.410

Catherine Phillips: Apologize for that, always happens in a virtual environment now doesn't it, thank you Shannon for sharing your thoughts with us.

00:11:44.250 --> 00:11:54.360

Catherine Phillips: I am so pleased to join you all tonight as we seek your feedback your concerns and your voices, thank you for taking time to be here.

00:11:55.140 --> 00:12:06.900

Catherine Phillips: My name is Catherine Phillips, and I lead the program in the Service charged with recovery of red wolf and other listed species and I'm fairly new in this role, but I've been learning a lot about this program.

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Catherine Phillips: It is clear that we have missed opportunities for engagement in the past.

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Catherine Phillips: And I want to commit to you that we can learn from those moments and charter a future together in a manner that's more inclusive of all of your voices and when I say all voices, I mean all voices. We're not looking for voices that just support what the program traditionally looks like.

00:12:30.360 --> 00:12:33.210

Catherine Phillips: Please tell us what we did well

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Catherine Phillips: and where we went wrong and how we can get it right.

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Catherine Phillips: I want you to know that we are making changes to our program and to our approach.

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Catherine Phillips: For example, we have revamped the membership of the recovery team to include over 50 individuals, from landowners to state agencies to NGOs to academics.

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Catherine Phillips: But we recognize that this expanded group still doesn't represent this community fully so we really want to hear from you.

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Catherine Phillips: Some other changes we are making include increased levels of public engagement. We fully expect we're going to have more meetings, just like this meeting, more often.

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Catherine Phillips: But that is just one way, we also want to talk with you on a more personal level.

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Catherine Phillips: We are establishing a hotline that will give you a point of contact in the agency that can direct you to the right person to have your questions answered or your concerns heard.

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Catherine Phillips: And we are committed to answering that hotline live or when not possible, providing a response within a short turnaround time with 24 hours.

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Catherine Phillips: We're also establishing a community engagement liaison. This will be someone will be a close point of contact for landowners in the area.

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Catherine Phillips: And these are just a few of the changes were making, and I anticipate we're going to make more changes after we hear from you tonight.

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Catherine Phillips: So tonight, we're going to address a few things, status of ongoing activities and the red wolf program,

00:14:12.810 --> 00:14:15.810

Catherine Phillips: the Service's coyote sterilization program,

00:14:17.310 --> 00:14:27.780

Catherine Phillips: how you can communicate with us, after this meeting. I'm sure you may think of things that that come up just from the presentation today, and you may want to ask a question after the meeting. We'll let you know how.

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Catherine Phillips: Also, we're going to talk to you about how you can get involved in red wolf recovery.

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Catherine Phillips: Then, finally we're going to answer your questions, and many of those questions we're hoping that we can cover them in our presentation today.

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Catherine Phillips: But before I turn it over to our team, I want to recognize the members that are here today, not all of them have speaking roles, but all of them are dedicated members of the red wolf conservation team.

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Catherine Phillips: Emily Weller, she is our recovery coordinator for the species.

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Catherine Phillips: Pete Benjamin, he's the field supervisor for the Raleigh field office.

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Catherine Phillips: Joe Madison is the manager of the North Carolina non-essential experimental population.

00:15:13.170 --> 00:15:18.780

Catherine Phillips: Luke Lollies, he's a private lands biologist and he will be our community engagement liaison.

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Catherine Phillips: Ryan Nordsven, as a wildlife biologist.

00:15:24.510 --> 00:15:27.330

Catherine Phillips: Morgan Lewis, wildlife biologist.

00:15:28.830 --> 00:15:31.380

Catherine Phillips: Sean Olson, our wildlife technician.

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Catherine Phillips: And two student conservation association red wolf interns, Alex Luca and Aubrey Lowbar and that completes our team, so I just want to thank Fish and Wildlife Service team for being present.

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Catherine Phillips: And with that I'm going to turn over the to the leading presenter tonight, our recovery coordinator, Emily Weller, who's going to present begin the presentation, thank you Emily.

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Emily Weller: Okay, there we go, thank you, Catherine for that good evening, everyone again, my name is Emily Weller, and I am the red wolf recovery lead.

00:16:25.710 --> 00:16:35.730

Emily Weller: I'm just for a few minutes, I'm going to give you some information on the red wolf itself, species information and a little bit of

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Emily Weller: background information on the recovery program as a whole, before turning it over to Pete and Joe to talk about our Northeast Carolina population.

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Emily Weller: So, first the red wolf is a distinct species native to the eastern, central US. As Shannon mentioned, the red wolf is the only wolf species endemic to the US.

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Emily Weller: While various studies show conflicting conclusions as to the origin and therefore the correct taxonomic status of the red wolf, in 2019 the National Academy of Sciences concluded that the red wolf is a taxonomically valid species.

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Emily Weller: The red wolf is larger than a coyote but smaller than the gray wolf weighing in between 45 and 80 pounds. Some of the distinguishing characteristics include long slender legs with large feet.

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Emily Weller: broad muzzles, and tall pointed ears. Their diet varies depending on prey availability. They usually consist mainly of whitetail deer, also smaller mammals, like our raccoons, rabbits, and nutria.

00:17:40.980 --> 00:17:59.460

Emily Weller: Once common throughout its historic range, red wolf populations were decimated by the early part of the 20th century, due to intensive predator control programs, loss of habitat, and coyote hybridization. It is listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. Next.

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Emily Weller: We have a lot of exciting things going on in the red wolf recovery program, Shannon and Catherine mentioned some of them.

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Emily Weller: At this time, the Service is focused on updating the red wolf recovery plan. The last revision to this plan was made in 1990.

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Emily Weller: So many things have changed and new information on the red wolf has become available in the last three decades.

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Emily Weller: We are updating the plan to better guide recovery actions, given the current status and new information that has become available.

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Emily Weller: As Catherine mentioned, we have a great diverse team that has been appointed to not only update that recovery plan, but also develop a recovery and implementation schedule.

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Emily Weller: We anticipated these recurring planning efforts will include identification of potential new reintroduction sites.

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Emily Weller: We're also focusing on increasing captive breeding. We're working with our species survival partners that are in the red wolf captive breeding program

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Emily Weller: to increase based capacity so they can increase breeding capability. This not only ensures survival as a species will also produce a population capable of supporting future reintroductions.

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Emily Weller: As Shannon and Catherine mentioned, we are revitalizing our efforts to recover the red wolves. We can't recover this species alone

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Emily Weller: with the patchwork of landowners that comprise the entirety of the southeast. We need support from numerous people, private landowners, state agencies, general public, NGOs, academia, all of those to be successful.

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Emily Weller: And therefore, we are focusing on collaboration and community and partner engagement to recover the species. We want to increase

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Emily Weller: landowner and stakeholder engagement communications and transparency in all of our actions, and I can tell you that the team is really excited about moving forward down this this new path.

00:20:01.290 --> 00:20:13.110

Emily Weller: And finally, we are focusing on restoring the North Carolina population of red wolves. And with that I'm going to turn it over to Pete so that he can talk about that in more detail.

00:20:32.490 --> 00:20:35.010

Amanda Biedermann: All right, Pete you're unmuted and your video is on.

00:20:36.180 --> 00:20:37.320

Pete Benjamin: Great. Thank you.

00:20:37.740 --> 00:20:40.050

Pete Benjamin: Thanks Emily, good evening, everybody.

00:20:41.970 --> 00:20:53.160

Pete Benjamin: As Emily mentioned I'm Pete Benjamin. I'm the supervisor of our Raleigh North Carolina ecological services field office that delivers Fish and Wildlife Service programs throughout central

00:20:53.460 --> 00:21:05.430

Pete Benjamin: and eastern North Carolina. It's great to be with you tonight. I wish we could be together in person. There were a lot of familiar names in the registration and a lot of new ones, so thank you all for joining us.

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Pete Benjamin: We're going to start to focus in on the eastern North Carolina red wolf population and my job is to give you a quick summary of the history of that population.

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Pete Benjamin: There's a lot that has happened, and folks have been around for a while now. I'm going to try to be very brief.

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Pete Benjamin: The population was established in 1986 as an experimental non-essential population. Originally based on the science available to time, we thought Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge would support a sizable population of red wolves.

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Pete Benjamin: The original rules we wrote said that the population would be contained within the refuge and animals that left the refuge would be captured and returned. And in the early days, as Shannon mentioned,

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Pete Benjamin: We saw a lot of success. The population grew, the wolves, even though they were released from captivity, established territories, found mates,

00:22:11.130 --> 00:22:24.180

Pete Benjamin: raised puppies, and the population grew, but it did very quickly start to prove to us that the refuge was too small to continue to sustainable population levels.

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Pete Benjamin: We began to use private lands, and our rules changed over time to reflect that. In 1995 we modified the rules in recognition of, the wolves were using private lands

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Pete Benjamin: and provided provisions in those rules for that, for landowners, to help us work with landowners to deal with issues that might arise on their property.

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Pete Benjamin: Then the population, continued to grow, but in also in the mid-90s,

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Pete Benjamin: the coyotes which were not present on the Albemarle Peninsula when we started the red wolf introduction had moved in, they covered the entire eastern United States by that time.

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Pete Benjamin: And, once again, a problem that was part of the threat to the extinction of the red wolf was hybridization with coyotes that's what almost drove them to extinction in the early 70s now coyotes back on the peninsula again posing that threat of hybridization.

00:23:35.370 --> 00:23:43.920

Pete Benjamin: So, in 1999 we convened a meeting of experts and came up with what we call the adaptive management plan

00:23:44.640 --> 00:23:48.810

Pete Benjamin: to deal with hybridization between red wolves and coyotes as part of that plan.

00:23:49.110 --> 00:24:03.120

Pete Benjamin: Joe will go into it in more detail in a minute, involves sterilizing coyotes and putting them back out on landscape, so they hold territory, and keep other coyotes at bay and hold that territory until red wolves can move in

00:24:03.900 --> 00:24:11.250

Pete Benjamin: and take it over, but in the meantime sterile system, not, one, not producing more coyotes and two, they're not breeding

00:24:11.640 --> 00:24:20.550

Pete Benjamin: with red wolves. That program was very successful in dealing with the hybridization issue, but as the coyote population continue to build

00:24:21.270 --> 00:24:27.630

Pete Benjamin: through the 90s, and into the 2000s more people became concerned about the increase in coyotes.

00:24:28.140 --> 00:24:39.390

Pete Benjamin: More folks getting interested in hunting and trapping coyotes and that's when we started to see a rainbow of mortality increases as a result of gunshot.

00:24:40.170 --> 00:24:48.090

Pete Benjamin: The animals are somewhat similar in appearance, and we think a lot of folks were shooting red wolves simply by mistake when they're out

00:24:49.860 --> 00:24:50.880

Pete Benjamin: hunting coyotes.

00:24:52.140 --> 00:25:07.590

Pete Benjamin: So, that continues to grow as a concern. The population of red wolves peaked around 120 animals, as was mentioned in around 2012 or so it's been in decline, ever since to a point where the

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Pete Benjamin: our last one wild leader was born in 2015.

00:25:13.440 --> 00:25:15.060

Pete Benjamin: As I mentioned, the rules have changed

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Pete Benjamin: over the years, and also in 2018 when we proposed another revision to the rules that would attempt to kind of deconflict, the issue of red wolf management with coyote management.

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Pete Benjamin: The proposed rules would have again restricted the red wolf population to the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge like it was back in the beginning. We published those rules, proposed rules in the Federal Register.

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Pete Benjamin: The public response we got was overwhelmingly opposed to that rule change, also at about the same time, some.

00:26:00.930 --> 00:26:09.240

Pete Benjamin: Federal Court made some rulings that affect how we implement the rules we have and also indicated that the

00:26:10.530 --> 00:26:14.460

Pete Benjamin: the proposal changes when it was not like going to be viewed favorably.

00:26:15.990 --> 00:26:24.300

Pete Benjamin: So in last year when withdrew the those proposed rule changes. Next slide, please.

00:26:27.300 --> 00:26:33.060

Pete Benjamin: So, as it currently stands, just a brief synopsis of the rules governing the program.

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Pete Benjamin: Rules that we operate on are still rules we published in 1995 with a couple changes as

00:26:42.690 --> 00:26:43.680

Pete Benjamin: required by the Court.

00:26:45.060 --> 00:26:51.990

Pete Benjamin: So, the rules do still cover the five counties Dare, Hyde, Tyrrell, Washington ,Beaufort.

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Pete Benjamin: They do allow us to release wolves

00:26:56.850 --> 00:27:01.410

Pete Benjamin: from captivity to build the population. They do allow

00:27:02.670 --> 00:27:13.500

Pete Benjamin: anyone to take a wolf that is threatening human safety, and anyone can take a wolf that's in the act of killing a livestock or pets.

00:27:15.000 --> 00:27:16.650

Pete Benjamin: That's a given.

00:27:18.090 --> 00:27:31.140

Pete Benjamin: Folks can also harass wolves, if it was becoming a little too familiar, causing you concerns, getting a little closer than you're comfortable. You can certainly harass to scare it off, as long as a, in the manner that you do that, and is not

00:27:32.400 --> 00:27:35.010

Pete Benjamin: injurious to the wolf.

00:27:36.540 --> 00:27:45.210

Pete Benjamin: And if a landowner is having issues with a wolf, it's not posing an immediate threat but is

00:27:46.500 --> 00:27:54.360

Pete Benjamin: behaving in a way that it's problematic, a Fish and Wildlife Service or state biologist

00:27:55.830 --> 00:27:59.730

Pete Benjamin: can assess the situation, if needed remove that animal

00:28:01.410 --> 00:28:03.510

Pete Benjamin: before it becomes an actual

00:28:04.800 --> 00:28:14.880

Pete Benjamin: threat, and we can also move animals around within the experimental population area for genetic purposes to form new pairs and

00:28:16.020 --> 00:28:16.410

Pete Benjamin: hopefully.

00:28:17.610 --> 00:28:22.620

Pete Benjamin: increase the genetic health of the population. So those are our rules

00:28:24.000 --> 00:28:28.080

Pete Benjamin: from 1995, until very recently also allowed

00:28:29.760 --> 00:28:36.090

Pete Benjamin: and said that we would remove wolf from private lands upon landowner request, whether the wolves were

00:28:37.200 --> 00:28:42.210

Pete Benjamin: threatening or not. We can no longer do that per the courts.

00:28:43.320 --> 00:28:57.210

Pete Benjamin: And we also were able to issue authorizations to landowners to take wolves, remove wolves from the property if we abandon those efforts, we can no longer do that so

00:28:58.260 --> 00:29:07.920

Pete Benjamin: The only situations in which we can remove wolves from private lands is, as I said, if they are either an active threat or a

00:29:09.390 --> 00:29:13.530

Pete Benjamin: potential not immediate threat or if we need to move animals for

00:29:15.960 --> 00:29:17.730

Pete Benjamin: management of the population overall.

00:29:19.050 --> 00:29:19.980

Pete Benjamin: Next slide please.

00:29:24.090 --> 00:29:27.480

Pete Benjamin: So, to bring us up to a up to a little closer current time.

00:29:28.680 --> 00:29:30.330

Pete Benjamin: Like I said there's, we haven't had

00:29:31.530 --> 00:29:43.950

Pete Benjamin: any wild litters going since 2008, 2018 sorry. We began our efforts to increase the size of the wild population in 2019, next slide please.

00:29:47.460 --> 00:30:02.790

Pete Benjamin: So, what we've done in the last couple years in 2019 we bought a red wolf up from our island propagation site and on St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge down in Florida we moved that male

00:30:04.260 --> 00:30:09.510

Pete Benjamin: up to Alligator Refuge. Still in 2019 we lost track of that animal.

00:30:10.140 --> 00:30:28.410

Pete Benjamin: We lost contact with him in 2020. That happens that the transmitter might go bad, animal could get hit by a car, and the transmitters destroyed, and things like that happen so his whereabouts are unknown in 2020 and 2021 kind of last winter we

00:30:29.730 --> 00:30:42.780

Pete Benjamin: moved two more adult red wolves up from St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge. Both were paired with resident females. We

got the resident female, we brought up the male, and put them together in an acclimation pen

00:30:44.220 --> 00:30:51.420

Pete Benjamin: to different parts Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge and then those wolves, after acclimation period, those wolves were released.

00:30:52.710 --> 00:31:07.500

Pete Benjamin: One of those animals, it has integrated, it stayed with the pack we put them into and we're hopeful that they will form a breeding pair. The other animal was struck and killed by an automobile.

00:31:09.960 --> 00:31:21.180

Pete Benjamin: Also, last winter we translocated, moved four red wolves, two pairs, male female, from the captive population

00:31:23.640 --> 00:31:45.360

Pete Benjamin: and released them. One pair on the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, one pair on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Unfortunately, three of those animals were struck by cars and one was shot so that was that was, that was disappointing, but also last

00:31:46.620 --> 00:31:56.730

Pete Benjamin: spring, we fostered four bucks into an, into a wild litter, which was, the litter was wild and was a result of a

00:31:57.900 --> 00:32:02.760

Pete Benjamin: female and male coyote, but what we do is take

00:32:04.050 --> 00:32:16.260

Pete Benjamin: puppies born in captivity that are about the same age as wild litter that we happen to know about, and we insert those puppies into the wild litter, and since wolves can't count, they adopt them as their own.

00:32:17.040 --> 00:32:24.870

Pete Benjamin: And they raised them and it's generally very successful. We do know that as of now at least some of those puppies appear to be alive.

00:32:25.740 --> 00:32:40.710

Pete Benjamin: Because we see them on trail cameras that we have out, and we'll start trapping this winter, to try to capture those animals, put collars on, so we're optimistic about the results of that effort, next slide please.

00:32:43.230 --> 00:32:51.120

Pete Benjamin: And finally, just a summary, so in the last year there's been seven mortalities in the wild population. Those are

00:32:51.480 --> 00:33:08.430

Pete Benjamin: mostly five vehicle strikes, one gunshot, and one undetermined. By the time we found the animal, nothing but bones we couldn't determine the cause of death, so that hopefully kind of bring this up to speed, gives us a whirlwind tour of the

00:33:09.960 --> 00:33:17.550

Pete Benjamin: wild population here in eastern North Carolina. I'm now going to turn it over to Joe Madison to tell us what's going on next.

00:33:35.790 --> 00:33:47.310

Joe Madison: My name is Joe Madison, I'm the program manager for the recovery program here at eastern North Carolina out of the main office to oversee the management of the population here in eastern North Carolina.

00:33:48.510 --> 00:33:57.630

Joe Madison: So, picking up where Pete left off, we currently have eight known, meaning radio collared, red wolves out there on the landscape, in the NC NEP.

00:33:58.500 --> 00:34:06.720

Joe Madison: Seven of those eight animals have the orange colors that we are now putting on the red wolves to make it harder to mis-identify that animal.

00:34:07.470 --> 00:34:14.520

Joe Madison: And one of those is wearing a GPS collar, that being the male we brought up from St. Vincent last winter that Pete mentioned.

00:34:15.330 --> 00:34:27.630

Joe Madison: And we are currently attempting to catch the one remaining known red wolf, has a black color, actually started those capture operations yesterday to replace her black color with the orange one.

00:34:29.100 --> 00:34:42.990

Joe Madison: And the estimated total population, we believe, based on trail camera work and sightings and pups that we follow certain things like that, we believe, is less than 20 animals right now on the NC NEP.

00:34:47.220 --> 00:34:57.720

Joe Madison: So currently we track and monitor all of the red wolves and the sterilized coyotes that are colored from the ground and from the air, when we're able to, multiple times a week and we get

00:34:58.050 --> 00:35:06.090

Joe Madison: points for the red wolves multiple times a week and the newly released wolves mentioned, that Pete mentioned. Of the upcoming ones we

00:35:06.630 --> 00:35:14.160

Joe Madison: monitor even more frequently to keep even closer tabs on them. We also routinely monitor with remote sensing cameras on the

00:35:14.970 --> 00:35:25.380

Joe Madison: national wildlife refuges and areas with private land with landowner permission and or request based on activity they're seeing, and they call us about.

00:35:25.830 --> 00:35:35.310

Joe Madison: We currently have about 40 to 50 cameras out, and we're constantly moving those around where we feel they need to be to monitor the different areas and

00:35:35.940 --> 00:35:46.800

Joe Madison: get a sense for what we've got out there. We can capture operations from November through February so we're in the middle of the trapping season right now. We do that

00:35:47.760 --> 00:35:58.680

Joe Madison: to collar individuals to potentially translocate animals to form new breeding pairs to sterilize or remove coyotes and just to monitor the population as a whole.

00:35:59.070 --> 00:36:06.780

Joe Madison: And I will note, through this picture, we don't trap when the temperature gets below freezing at nighttime for the safety of the animals so.

00:36:08.190 --> 00:36:15.720

Joe Madison: January is usually one of our main trapping months, especially in areas where we think there's pups because we don't want to catch those pups

00:36:16.440 --> 00:36:19.740

Joe Madison: before the beginning of the New Year to get it, let them get a little bit larger.

00:36:20.310 --> 00:36:35.640

Joe Madison: Before we try to put a collar on them, so you know with the way the weather's been this this January, our trapping efforts have definitely been a little bit less than normal, but the weather's warmed up, at least for the next few days. We'll be trapping heavily in high priority areas.

00:36:36.960 --> 00:36:37.620

Joe Madison: Next slide.

00:36:41.460 --> 00:36:46.860

Joe Madison: There are currently no fully functioning packs and what I mean by that is we don't have,

00:36:47.760 --> 00:36:58.650

Joe Madison: in packs from a red wolf standpoint. You know we think of gray wolf packs. For red wolves, it's just more of a family group, it's the breeding pair they're young from previous litters that,

00:36:59.220 --> 00:37:10.950

Joe Madison: yearlings or you know, maybe two-year-old sometimes hang around and help them raise the new pup before they disperse and sometimes, they don't disperse at all, but as Pete mentioned that lack of not having a

00:37:12.030 --> 00:37:17.700

Joe Madison: wild litter since 2018, we don't have any proven breeding pairs out on the ground.

00:37:18.750 --> 00:37:24.810

Joe Madison: However, in that picture right there from Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge the male we brought up from St Vincent,

00:37:25.290 --> 00:37:38.250

Joe Madison: we actually placed them in an acclimation pen with an older female that's past her breeding, because we were unable to catch the female. We were hoping to put them with, and our hope was if the mother sort of

00:37:39.330 --> 00:37:46.950

Joe Madison: accepted him into the area, that the daughter would as well and that's what we saw happen once we released him from the acclimation pen.

00:37:48.360 --> 00:37:58.230

Joe Madison: So, over the course of the next month or so after his release, pretty much went straight to where the younger female was, and she was with a sterilized coyote.

00:37:58.740 --> 00:38:09.300

Joe Madison: And over the course of about a month, he displaced that coyote, that sterilized coyote, and those two have been a pair since about March of last year, so they got together, right after

00:38:09.720 --> 00:38:19.470

Joe Madison: breeding season and they've remained together, so our hope and is that they're going to successfully breed this year, and it'll be the first litter of many for those two.

00:38:21.210 --> 00:38:21.720

Joe Madison: Next slide.

00:38:25.620 --> 00:38:34.800

Joe Madison: This is a map of the general distribution of the wolves' known landscape right now, you'll see in the upper right-hand portion there's the Milltail pack, which is one of the

00:38:35.550 --> 00:38:43.230

Joe Madison: three areas that has multiple red wolves and it's the two females I just talked about, the mother and the daughter; the mother will be turning

00:38:44.820 --> 00:38:53.880

Joe Madison: 12 this spring so she's pretty old and past her reproductive years. Then it's the daughter, and the male we brought from St. Vincent, that pair I mentioned.

00:38:54.300 --> 00:39:03.810

Joe Madison: And then, if you go a little bit below then you'll see the Gator, it's a female and that female, she was born in the military area and she's actually almost 13 years old.

00:39:04.650 --> 00:39:10.500

Joe Madison: But she spent the majority of her adult life on the bombing range and now she's sort of goes back and forth between the two.

00:39:11.460 --> 00:39:26.880

Joe Madison: And then moving further to the south you'll see the boundary animals, and those are, actually half siblings, are the female red wolf and a male red wolf and they pretty much use entirely private lands, multiple landowner private lands in that area.

00:39:27.930 --> 00:39:34.080

Joe Madison: And then moving to the center upper part of the screen, you'll see the northern female she's the one I mentioned

00:39:35.070 --> 00:39:39.840

Joe Madison: that has a black collar that we're attempting to capture and fit with an orange color.

00:39:40.380 --> 00:39:46.140

Joe Madison: And then, further to the left of the screen you see the pongo area, which is one of the other ones that has multiples because

00:39:46.620 --> 00:39:59.970

Joe Madison: that's the female that we fostered the pups with the and we have video evidence, are still in the landscape and traps were actually set out there today to attempt to capture and collar those foster pups.

00:40:01.770 --> 00:40:02.430

Joe Madison: Next slide.

00:40:06.300 --> 00:40:15.150

Joe Madison: So, our plans for this winter, as were mentioned in the flyers and the public notice for this meeting, is to release nine wolves into the MPC.

00:40:15.630 --> 00:40:19.290

Joe Madison: From the captive population to try to form two breeding pairs and we've,

00:40:20.070 --> 00:40:31.080

Joe Madison: the areas that have been selected currently are unoccupied by red wolves and have adequate prey and are you know remote locations or as remote as we get on the national wildlife refuge.

00:40:31.860 --> 00:40:39.750

Joe Madison: So, the family group of five, which is two adults, two yearlings, and then a pup that was born in 2001

00:40:40.500 --> 00:40:48.270

Joe Madison: that we released on Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and then there's two pairs that will be released on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

00:40:49.170 --> 00:41:00.000

Joe Madison: on different areas that are currently unoccupied the family group came to us from Rowan Wild, which is an SSP, a red wolf species survival plan facility in North Carolina.

00:41:01.290 --> 00:41:06.900

Joe Madison: One of the pairs was an existing pair and they came to us from North Carolina State University.

00:41:07.620 --> 00:41:17.100

Joe Madison: And then, one of the pairs was formed newly formed in September, a female from Zoo Knoxville and a male from the Western North Carolina Nature Center.

00:41:17.520 --> 00:41:33.660

Joe Madison: Both transferred to the endangered wolf center outside St. Louis where they were put together to begin their bonding periods that September and then all of those wolves were transferred to us in late November early December by those facilities.

00:41:34.950 --> 00:41:41.070

Joe Madison: And they they'll all be fitted with orange GPS radio collars before release, they already haven't been

00:41:41.460 --> 00:41:56.190

Joe Madison: And they're currently in remote acclimation pens in the different areas that they'll be released where they're receiving limited human interaction, as limited as we possibly can, and they're fed only natural prey items on a regular schedule.

00:41:58.170 --> 00:42:05.010

Joe Madison: The releases of those animals work will occur sometime in February or March, it's based on a variety of factors such as weather,

00:42:05.400 --> 00:42:11.850

Joe Madison: the individual behavior of the wolves, the pair status, you know they're a new breeding pair or they're proven breeders,

00:42:12.270 --> 00:42:23.130

Joe Madison: the reproductive status of the female, and things of that nature, so no set dates have been established, but it will be sometime in the next you know month to month and a half.

00:42:24.570 --> 00:42:31.290

Joe Madison: Excuse me, we'll also pursue opportunities for forming additional pairs if they arise, we're getting kind of late in the

00:42:31.740 --> 00:42:41.700

Joe Madison: the breeding cycle, to be able to do that, and then in the spring we'll evaluate opportunities to foster either with the same female or others, depending on what happens on the landscape

00:42:43.290 --> 00:42:43.860

Joe Madison: looks like.

00:42:46.350 --> 00:42:51.900

Joe Madison: So human caused mortality is you know by far the leading cause of mortality for red wolves.

00:42:53.220 --> 00:42:57.300

Joe Madison: A red wolf, based on research here that dies of natural causes,

00:42:57.600 --> 00:43:06.210

Joe Madison: the average age is about nine years of age, if you factor in human cause mortality that it drops down to about four years of age, so it's a primary driver

00:43:06.540 --> 00:43:15.120

Joe Madison: in the population dynamics, particularly when a red wolf in a breeding pair is killed, particularly in like

00:43:15.900 --> 00:43:23.130

Joe Madison: Fall, early winter, you know right as you're going into breeding, it breaks up that breeding pair and causes issues in the cycle.

00:43:24.000 --> 00:43:35.550

Joe Madison: Vehicle mortalities have been the second cause of mortality over the life of the program, and as Pete mentioned five of the seven mortalities last year, were, as a result of people, so it's a major issue.

00:43:36.450 --> 00:43:41.430

Joe Madison: So, a couple of ways we've gone about in the short term, of trying to reduce that

00:43:42.090 --> 00:43:48.210

Joe Madison: with these new releases is one you know, trying to have these acclimation pens as remote as we could possibly get.

00:43:48.690 --> 00:43:55.350

Joe Madison: But also, we have fitted the radio collars with the orange reflective material on the bottom on the side

00:43:55.650 --> 00:44:02.760

Joe Madison: To try to make them more visible in low light along roadways, and you can see that one picture that dark picture, there's two bright spots,

00:44:03.030 --> 00:44:12.210

Joe Madison: the reflectors are going to give you a sense. Now that's an infrared camera within the acclimation pen, so it doesn't show the color but on headlights that color is actually,

00:44:12.870 --> 00:44:24.690

Joe Madison: it's bright orange so it's in line with the orange collar that makes them a lot more visible, and we hope more likely for motorists to avoid vehicle collisions with the wolves.

00:44:26.040 --> 00:44:32.430

Joe Madison: Another thing we've done since the last release is that we've partnered with the North Carolina Wildlife Federation to purchase four of the

00:44:33.000 --> 00:44:42.540

Joe Madison: electronic mobile signs like you see there, and that picture doesn't give you a good idea of how big that is. That sign is actually 11 feet by seven feet so it's a pretty massive sign.

00:44:43.200 --> 00:44:51.960

Joe Madison: and working with DOT on where and how we can place those. We've got a permit we have for those boards and those will be deployed

00:44:52.560 --> 00:45:03.810

Joe Madison: along roadways in the areas closest to where we release the red wolves and also, they will be moved into areas where through monitoring, we know that red wolves are active

00:45:04.530 --> 00:45:14.430

Joe Madison: in that particular area and, in addition to those short-term efforts we're working with a variety of partners, organizations, researchers,

00:45:14.790 --> 00:45:26.490

Joe Madison: on ways to explore other opportunities to in the short term and long term, to address the vehicle mortality issues, so we can reduce that down to the smallest number possible.

00:45:27.960 --> 00:45:28.560

Joe Madison: And

00:45:31.590 --> 00:45:40.500

Joe Madison: gunshot mortality continues over the life of the program continues to be the leading cause of mortality so it's still it's still a major issue for us.

00:45:41.100 --> 00:45:54.450

Joe Madison: It's the one of the main reasons that we switched to the orange collars three, four years ago, to try to limit the possibility of misidentification as a coyote and a red wolf

00:45:55.440 --> 00:46:07.230

Joe Madison: you know red wolves are fitted with those orange colors. In the end we're hoping that the orange reflectors will help with that as well in lower light and situations where it shines so that they can also

00:46:08.340 --> 00:46:15.360

Joe Madison: be identified as a red wolf. So if you see the orange collar, that means it's a red wolf and that means that it's a federally protected species under ESA.

00:46:15.840 --> 00:46:25.230

Joe Madison: And the killing or harming them is illegal and can result in civil or criminal penalties and you know Pete mentioned the rare occasions that there are exceptions.

00:46:26.010 --> 00:46:36.270

Joe Madison: And I also want to point out that pups, as I mentioned, are too small to be collared so they're vulnerable to both from a size standpoint be mistaken for a coyote and they won't have an orange color so

00:46:36.960 --> 00:46:49.290

Joe Madison: I would still urge you to think about the key physical diagnostics, because even a pup as they you know start to get of any size their legs look crazy long almost like they're up on stilts.

00:46:51.270 --> 00:46:58.800

Joe Madison: And we will continue to do outreach about the orange collars and what it means and increase our outreach that it means a red wolf.

00:47:00.570 --> 00:47:06.090

Joe Madison: And we're also looking into possible options for pups of how we could somehow mark them that would

00:47:06.780 --> 00:47:15.750

Joe Madison: identify them as a red wolf, whether that be, you know, trying to put just an orange leather color that doesn't have radio transmitters and things like that, so that they can handle the weight.

00:47:16.140 --> 00:47:21.750

Joe Madison: Or things like that we're looking at potential options so we're always looking into new ways to

00:47:23.610 --> 00:47:30.810

Joe Madison: make it less likely that they'll be shot from misidentification and again, if you look closely for an orange color and if you see one don't shoot.

00:47:32.850 --> 00:47:33.630

Joe Madison: Next slide.

00:47:37.290 --> 00:47:45.930

Joe Madison: And this is just a snippet of the hunter ID card postcard that we hand out to folks and at the visitor centers and WRC also hands them out

00:47:47.250 --> 00:47:51.210

Joe Madison: during their you know, like hunter safety classes and those types of things and it's just,

00:47:51.690 --> 00:48:06.600

Joe Madison: It's another tool we're using, and it talks about the orange collars and talks about the comparison of the two animals and ways to help distinguish the two and we work with the WRC and directly with the public, particularly hunters and trappers during hunting and trapping season

00:48:08.070 --> 00:48:24.090

Joe Madison: to try and eliminate the possibility of red wolves being mistaken for a coyote and being taken either through hunting or trapping, and we're going to continue those efforts through all of our partners, and specifically WRC to try to limit those incidences of mortality.

00:48:25.500 --> 00:48:25.980

Joe Madison: Next slide.

00:48:29.880 --> 00:48:35.490

Joe Madison: Pete mentioned the coyote sterilization program and I wanted to go into a little bit more in depth, since it's one of the key

00:48:35.730 --> 00:48:48.840

Joe Madison: components of the red wolf recovery. As he mentioned it's part of the adaptive management plan that was, began in 2000 as a result of a meeting between researchers, scientists, and a lot of different folks from a different, diversity of background.

00:48:50.670 --> 00:48:56.730

Joe Madison: You know, and the general, based on the home range size of red wolves and

00:48:57.270 --> 00:49:04.110

Joe Madison: you know the number of, the average pack size of red wolves is not that large, it's usually in the four to six range, sometimes it will you know get larger but

00:49:04.890 --> 00:49:14.130

Joe Madison: they don't have a massive pack size, so typically within an established red wolf territory you're going to have a much lower number of total canids.

00:49:14.520 --> 00:49:22.260

Joe Madison: And it's going to be mostly red wolves. Again they largely exclude coyotes in their well-established corridor. That does not mean there's no coyotes

00:49:22.800 --> 00:49:28.980

Joe Madison: in a red wolf territory but the number of coyotes is substantially lower within an established red wolf territory.

00:49:29.730 --> 00:49:41.700

Joe Madison: In an area with no red wolves, you're going to have a much higher total number of canids made up of coyotes because they have larger home range sizes so you're going to have a much higher density of canids made up of coyotes.

00:49:44.340 --> 00:49:55.800

Joe Madison: And you know managing the coyote population is proven to be an effective means of reducing predation on particular game species like small mammals and particularly birds and

00:49:56.700 --> 00:50:11.280

Joe Madison: canids as compared to red wolves have a much higher diversity of prey species that they'll go after particularly birds, as I mentioned, and then they have a higher need over a given number of acres because they have a higher density of animals.

00:50:12.780 --> 00:50:24.540

Joe Madison: And pretty much anywhere, and lots of research shows that if you remove a coyote from the landscape, it is very quickly replaced by one or more coyotes, and we see this ourselves if we

00:50:24.960 --> 00:50:36.120

Joe Madison: you know, trap and have an animal that we're going to sterilize it within a week, sometimes even we can tell the other coyotes have moved into that area.

00:50:36.990 --> 00:50:48.750

Joe Madison: So, you know, removing it is, it's a continuous thing if, instead, you do capture that coyote and you sterilize it and then put it back out landscape.

00:50:49.170 --> 00:50:55.680

Joe Madison: If, when you sterilize them, they leave hormonally intact so it's not just the spay or neuter it's like a tubal ligation.

00:50:56.400 --> 00:51:06.060

Joe Madison: So, they are hormonally intact, and they will continue to hold and defend their territory once they're released, but they can't breed so

00:51:06.480 --> 00:51:21.780

Joe Madison: leads to lower coyote population numbers, particularly locally to where you know where the sterilizations are occurring, but it also leads to the lower prey needs, because they don't have young, they don't have to feed the young and it's just the lower density of animals

00:51:22.890 --> 00:51:24.480

Joe Madison: overall. Next slide.

00:51:28.080 --> 00:51:45.240

Joe Madison: Clearly sterilization is currently being done on the wildlife refuges and on private landowner permission. We never capture, do capture operations, or sterilization or anything on private land without full discussions and agreements and permissions with landowners.

00:51:46.800 --> 00:51:53.520

Joe Madison: And it's also done at no cost to landowners. It's currently paid for, and we typically do the trapping or if

00:51:53.910 --> 00:52:04.710

Joe Madison: private trappers come to us for our land manager, they've caught coyotes, they can come to us, and that the cost of the surgery of the sterilization is paid for by the red wolves coalition.

00:52:05.430 --> 00:52:11.880

Joe Madison: And we appreciate that. It's also it's performed by Dr. Christian Ford at the animal hospital, who has been a

00:52:13.470 --> 00:52:18.180

Joe Madison: wonderful partner for us in this endeavor and we appreciate his efforts as well.

00:52:19.710 --> 00:52:26.850

Joe Madison: All sterilized coyotes are released back to their original capture location, so that they'll go back to that territory and hold that territory.

00:52:27.300 --> 00:52:40.080

Joe Madison: And if it happens to be a transient coyote you know, wherever they've been moved to, if they eventually have a territory, they're going to you know hold and defend that territory, so the same principles apply.

00:52:41.160 --> 00:52:58.920

Joe Madison: We used to use black collars on the case studies for the sterilized coyotes that you can see in that lower picture, but just this year we've switched to white collars to increase the visibility so landowners can more readily identify if a coyote they're seeing as a sterilized coyote.

00:53:00.180 --> 00:53:10.980

Joe Madison: Because there's you know there's benefits to leaving that sterilized coyote out in the landscape, while it hold that territory, it keeps other coyotes out that could come in and breed.

00:53:12.600 --> 00:53:20.790

Joe Madison: Research conducted locally within the eastern North Carolina has shown the coyote sterilization to be a successful management tool at

00:53:21.900 --> 00:53:26.580

Joe Madison: reducing hybridization and controlling the coyote populations to some degree.

00:53:28.050 --> 00:53:33.690

Joe Madison: And it can be a benefit to landowners and their land management goals you know, depending on what their goals are, but if

00:53:34.110 --> 00:53:44.310

Joe Madison: they're you know, trying to create a habitat and increased population for game species, you know quail or turkey or something like that it can be a benefit to landowners to have that

00:53:44.790 --> 00:53:53.970

Joe Madison: sterilized coyote there that will defend that territory and limit the overall population size and as I've mentioned it, it benefits red wolf recovery.

00:53:55.470 --> 00:53:56.040

Joe Madison: Next slide.

00:53:59.190 --> 00:54:07.020

Joe Madison: So, one of our more recent developments in our community engagement and you know we see it as key community engagement.

00:54:07.770 --> 00:54:18.420

Joe Madison: We are always interested in talking to anybody at any time about the red wolf program and things that we can do to assist or to answer their questions or concerns, and you know, myself and

00:54:19.500 --> 00:54:24.210

Joe Madison: the staff and everyone here, you know we're always looking for ways to increase that engagement.

00:54:25.170 --> 00:54:31.830

Joe Madison: But one of the programs that we've developed to try to do that is what we call the Prey for the Pack program.

00:54:32.400 --> 00:54:38.790

Joe Madison: Basically, it's funded through it's an, it's a program through the Fish and Wildlife Service's partners for fish and wildlife programs

00:54:39.300 --> 00:54:50.940

Joe Madison: which provides the funding for the project and it's a partnership between the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the North Carolina Wildlife Federation and the private landowners who voluntarily sign up for the program.

00:54:51.690 --> 00:54:58.770

Joe Madison: The Fish and Wildlife Service provides the funding and technical assistance to landowners for habitat work to meet their land management goals

00:54:59.160 --> 00:55:08.310

Joe Madison: that will also benefit prey species for red wolves, such as white-tailed deer and rabbits, and depending on the agreement that's worked out between landowners

00:55:09.090 --> 00:55:26.700

Joe Madison: the Fish and Wildlife Service will fund up to 80% of the cost of the work that landowners want to do on their lands and their contribution can be either financial or in-kind contributions like you know if it's prescribed burns, doing the burn themselves or that type of thing.

00:55:28.230 --> 00:55:45.420

Joe Madison: But it's important to know that the habitat improvement is tailored to meet the needs of the landowner's interest and the habitats that's available on each of the sites so it's not a one size fits all program, it's tailored to the specific landowner

00:55:46.680 --> 00:55:52.800

Joe Madison: in exchange for the funds and the technical assistance, landowners agree to allow red wolves to be present on their lands.

00:55:53.580 --> 00:56:08.790

Joe Madison: And they allow some level of monitoring, based on the landowners' preferences and up to the landowners comfort level, they allow the use of the adaptive management plan and again that factors into the percentages of the cost year.

00:56:10.050 --> 00:56:23.580

Joe Madison: But I want to you know I want to emphasize that the key to this program is working closely with the landowner to craft an agreement that supports their needs and their land management goals such as you know, improving getting habitat for turkey or quail

00:56:23.970 --> 00:56:37.800

Joe Madison: While providing for the presence of red wolves, so working closely with each individual landowner to figure out what their needs are and how we can fit that is the aim of that program.

00:56:38.910 --> 00:56:45.330

Joe Madison: We encourage you to contact Luke and you'll get his contact information later if you're interested in Prey for the Pack.

00:56:46.410 --> 00:56:49.740

Joe Madison: And it'll be on the, it's always on the website, that contact information as well.

00:56:50.880 --> 00:56:51.480

Joe Madison: Next slide.

00:56:53.940 --> 00:56:59.040

Joe Madison: And I wanted to mention this as well as, we're asking the landowners in the refuges trying to do some.

00:56:59.610 --> 00:57:09.090

Joe Madison: You know, potentially do some habitat improvements and you know, create early successional habitat so things like that we're also trying to mirror that on the refuges to also provide

00:57:09.540 --> 00:57:22.290

Joe Madison: better prey habitat and red wolf habitat so we've partnered again with North Carolina Wildlife Federation on habitat improvement project on Pocosin Lakes to do just that and that will you know,

00:57:22.770 --> 00:57:35.790

Joe Madison: As that matures that project, it will benefit hopefully the family group, that we will be releasing on Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and future red wolves and wildlife on that area, next slide.

00:57:40.020 --> 00:57:56.400

Joe Madison: Another key piece of our community engagement is the red wolf center located in Columbia, it was, it was shuttered for a while, but it's actually been reopened, for the past three years, except for the you know the during the covid-19 closures and shutdowns but.

00:57:58.050 --> 00:58:03.900

Joe Madison: Its back open through a partnership with North Carolina Wildlife Federation and the National Wildlife Refuge Association.

00:58:04.650 --> 00:58:12.660

Joe Madison: It's actually, the education and outreach side of the red wolf center is managed by North Carolina wildlife federation employee Katrina Ramos,

00:58:13.020 --> 00:58:19.590

Joe Madison: who also develops the programs from there and oversees and recruits volunteers to help man that facility.

00:58:20.460 --> 00:58:37.440

Joe Madison: That, the back half of that facility is that working facility for myself and the biologist working with red wolves and other type projects, but the front half is a small interpretation center and then there's also a captive red wolf pair there that's on a display,

00:58:38.790 --> 00:58:50.040

Joe Madison: a public viewing display the red wolf center is currently open on a on a kind of call ahead scheduled basis because of the covid restrictions, the number of folks that can be there any anytime but.

00:58:51.570 --> 00:58:57.150

Joe Madison: You can see Katrina's contact information at the bottom there, and if you call Pocosin Lakes Refuge

00:58:57.570 --> 00:59:04.530

Joe Madison: they can also get you in touch with her and she can schedule a time to talk to your group or give presentations and those type things.

00:59:05.070 --> 00:59:19.830

Joe Madison: And, along with the center, we're always looking for ways to continue and expand our outreach and education efforts with our partners and working with the species survival plan folks, the zoo conservation centers, there's a big way we do that as well.

00:59:21.090 --> 00:59:21.600

Joe Madison: Next slide.

00:59:25.080 --> 00:59:31.200

Joe Madison: So, I want to touch on how can I help or how can I get involved for folks that want to you know, want to, have asked that question

00:59:32.370 --> 00:59:35.520

Joe Madison: both in the participant questions and it comes up all the time

00:59:35.910 --> 00:59:43.590

Joe Madison: when we're talking to folks. One is, a key one is, you know if you're a landowner within the five-county area, you can become a Prey for the Pack participant and

00:59:43.920 --> 00:59:53.190

Joe Madison: receive funding and technical assistance like I mentioned toward your land management goals and, in many instances it's habitat work that these folks were already going to do, and now they're going to get

00:59:53.760 --> 01:00:00.510

Joe Madison: get some funding to help them do it so it's kind of a win, win in that regard, if it helps you meet your land management goals.

01:00:02.010 --> 01:00:02.460

Joe Madison: And so

01:00:06.810 --> 01:00:11.820

Joe Madison: And the other one is to contact us; you know if you're having issues or concerns related to red wolves.

01:00:12.180 --> 01:00:23.460

Joe Madison: I urge you to contact us to not you know think that there's nobody here to listen, or that we're not going to come assist or help or to help you with the situation, we are here, and we are

01:00:23.970 --> 01:00:32.460

Joe Madison: willing and committed to talking with you folks about red wolf and your issues or concerns, or just questions in general about the program.

01:00:34.380 --> 01:00:43.920

Joe Madison: So, I will get contact information at the end, but I urge you, if you have any questions or concerns to get into contact with you, and we'll do, we can work with you to address your concerns.

01:00:45.960 --> 01:00:46.530

Joe Madison: And

01:00:48.840 --> 01:00:56.220

Joe Madison: and other ways folks can get involved is you know if you if you are visiting eastern North Carolina to view red wolves. That supports the local

01:00:56.580 --> 01:01:07.530

Joe Madison: economy, the local communities, and the counties, you know where's the only known population of wild red wolves, you know things like guide services and lodging and food, all that helps support the local area.

01:01:08.610 --> 01:01:17.340

Joe Madison: with red wolves as the backdrop. I also you know you can visit some of the over 40 zoos and wildlife conservation centers nationwide that are part of the

01:01:17.970 --> 01:01:31.620

Joe Madison: red wolf captive breeding program you know that without those guys and the cattle breeding program and education outreach that they do, we wouldn't be able to do that. Right in line with that, we can't do this without help from our state partners and

01:01:33.060 --> 01:01:34.710

Joe Madison: private landowners as well.

01:01:35.820 --> 01:01:36.330

Joe Madison: Next slide.

01:01:40.830 --> 01:01:55.020

Joe Madison: You know I'd also, how you can help is you know, to remember to not shoot collared canids. It's illegal to shoot red wolves, meaning the ones with orange collars or ones that you can identify through their characteristics as a red wolf.

01:01:55.560 --> 01:02:01.620

Joe Madison: And it's to your benefit not to shoot to sterilize coyotes like I touched on previously, and those are the ones that have black

01:02:01.980 --> 01:02:10.680

Joe Madison: or white colors and also you can help by driving with caution in areas where there's red wolves. Our, you know, wildlife is everywhere so just driving with caution in general

01:02:10.980 --> 01:02:24.990

Joe Madison: especially at dusk and dawn when wildlife tends to move around the most and if you see the signs out there, then take heed of those signs and slow down your speed and be extra vigilant as you drive through those areas.

01:02:26.190 --> 01:02:29.640

Joe Madison: And I would encourage you to continue to do what you're doing here tonight, which is

01:02:30.000 --> 01:02:41.220

Joe Madison: to engage in our recovery efforts to attending public meetings such as this and providing comments on things like the recovery plan that you know will have official comment periods. Tonight you know, I think

01:02:43.140 --> 01:02:51.780

Joe Madison: well, a virtual meeting like this may allow for some additional participants, I think we will all agree that we hoped that we could get back soon to a time when we're

01:02:52.350 --> 01:03:00.480

Joe Madison: having these meetings face to face and it's more of a direct dialogue, so we can have these discussions, and you can voice your concerns directly to that and we can do our best to

01:03:00.840 --> 01:03:08.580

Joe Madison: address those concerns and issues and answer your questions face to face. So hopefully we can get back to that before too long, next slide.

01:03:13.080 --> 01:03:19.410

Joe Madison: So, the red wolf team is committed, available, interested in working with the community regarding questions and concerns.

01:03:19.860 --> 01:03:24.930

Joe Madison: And we are working diligently towards increasing our community engagement and transparency.

01:03:25.650 --> 01:03:34.470

Joe Madison: We want you to know what we're doing. We want you to know what's going on out there and what our plans are. It doesn't serve us well to be

01:03:35.430 --> 01:03:42.300

Joe Madison: tight lipped or secretive about what we're doing. That's not our intention, we want you to know where wherever you know generally where we're releasing wolves and

01:03:43.350 --> 01:03:51.510

Joe Madison: we'll be contacting landowners when we are in their general area and talk about them, but any concerns and I really,

01:03:51.750 --> 01:04:03.480

Joe Madison: I want to reiterate again that myself and the entire team is committed to working and collaborating with landowners to address the needs of the communities and the species, so I really encourage you to contact us.

01:04:05.310 --> 01:04:13.170

Joe Madison: And you know the general contact information is there. There's the red wolf hotline it's been around for a while, but we've kind of

01:04:13.890 --> 01:04:20.310

Joe Madison: revamped it and really advertise it. It's manned and it will be answered, we will address your questions, it will go to the right person.

01:04:20.910 --> 01:04:27.300

Joe Madison: And you know regarding Prey for the Pack and private lands liaison type stuff, Luke Lollies, this is your contact.

01:04:27.840 --> 01:04:41.190

Joe Madison: And there's his contact information there and it will be posted again at the end, and if you know, I encourage you to contact any of the red wolf team, if you have issues or concerns, because we are here to answer those questions, next slide.

01:04:43.830 --> 01:04:51.240

Joe Madison: If you have questions specific to this presentation that you thought of or come up after this presentation is over,

01:04:51.990 --> 01:05:00.960

Joe Madison: you can send them to that general email address that we look at on daily basis and it's somewhat easy remember it's redwolf@fws.gov.

01:05:01.770 --> 01:05:10.380

Joe Madison: And answers to the questions that we either don't get to tonight or come in, after the presentation, depending on the question and you know if it's a

01:05:10.800 --> 01:05:16.350

Joe Madison: question about somebody's specific land, we will post that information on the website, but if it's a general question about information

01:05:16.980 --> 01:05:32.490

Joe Madison: or problems or concerns, we'll get a response, either through direct email or we'll post the all the answers that we've received that we've worked on, so far, and that we get in over the course of this on the red wolf recovery website in the days following this program.

01:05:33.780 --> 01:05:36.270

Joe Madison: And there on the bottom of the screen is our

01:05:37.350 --> 01:05:53.130

Joe Madison: red wolf recovery program website address, and it was updated very recently so it's pretty up to date and will be updated frequently as we move forward as part of our commitment to being more transparent and involved in community engagement.

01:05:55.530 --> 01:06:03.120

Joe Madison: And with that I will turn it back over to Amanda, who I believe, who's going to talk about the question-and-answer session.

01:06:04.350 --> 01:06:14.400

Amanda Biedermann: Thanks Joe, and I'm actually going to let Catherine Phillips provide some quick remarks here before we move into that question-and-answer session, so Catherine I'll go ahead and unmute you.

01:06:19.050 --> 01:06:25.560

Catherine Phillips: Thank you Emily, Pete, and Joe. All right back to all of you, thank you for your attention.

01:06:28.530 --> 01:06:32.910

Catherine Phillips: I hope you heard from us that we are committed.

01:06:34.110 --> 01:06:35.520

Catherine Phillips: We are here for you.

01:06:37.200 --> 01:06:43.080

Catherine Phillips: And, as I mentioned earlier, we are planning more meetings like this, but also one on ones connecting with you.

01:06:44.760 --> 01:06:48.480

Catherine Phillips: Recovery of the red wolf will take all of us moving forward together.

01:06:50.220 --> 01:06:57.390

Catherine Phillips: Finally, I want to mention that we have received numerous online questions, and I know many attending tonight have questions too.

01:06:58.560 --> 01:07:04.260

Catherine Phillips: Even though we may be unable to get to everybody, we'll focus on questions that multiple people have asked.

01:07:05.100 --> 01:07:18.990

Catherine Phillips: And for those we do not get to tonight we will respond the way Joe indicated via email on the website, so please know we are committed to getting back to you so with that let's start with those questions Amanda.

01:07:20.850 --> 01:07:30.060

Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you Catherine, let me go ahead and stop your video here and put you back on mute as we move on to our question-and-answer session today.

01:07:31.140 --> 01:07:42.840

Amanda Biedermann: Again, my name is Amanda Biedermann with Environmental Management and Planning Solutions, a contractor for the US Fish and Wildlife Service and I'm going to be acting as your moderator this evening.

01:07:43.740 --> 01:07:56.670

Amanda Biedermann: So, at this time, we are going to begin that Q&A portion of the meeting, and, as we said earlier, we are going to first focus on and respond to those questions that were submitted by participants upon registration

01:07:57.060 --> 01:08:05.310

Amanda Biedermann: for tonight's meeting that are within the scope and ability of the Service to respond to today. As Catherine just mentioned, if you feel that your

01:08:05.610 --> 01:08:12.870

Amanda Biedermann: questions weren't responded to today or you have a question that you would like to ask Service staff again, you can see here on the screen

01:08:13.140 --> 01:08:20.220

Amanda Biedermann: these different avenues for how to submit those questions, and we also just sent those links out via the chat feature.

01:08:20.700 --> 01:08:39.780

Amanda Biedermann: So, at this time we're going to go ahead and move on to our first question again submitted by participants upon registration, so the first question is, how will the hybridization with coyotes be managed? And I'm going to go back to Joe Madison with the Service to respond to that question.

01:08:47.220 --> 01:08:52.380

Joe Madison: So, you know I largely touched on that within the presentation, but just to kind of build on that you know we

01:08:53.370 --> 01:09:08.760

Joe Madison: do, we conduct, carry out sterilization on national wildlife refuge lands and private lands with landowner permission and that's under a permit issued by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission for the sterilization and trapping management activities.

01:09:09.780 --> 01:09:16.650

Joe Madison: The red wolf team here at eastern North Carolina have worked closely with as many willing landowners as possible or those that request

01:09:17.040 --> 01:09:33.720

Joe Madison: to trap on their lands and implement the coyote sterilization which, which is, helps with the hybridization and, as I mentioned that is paid for, the actual surgery itself is paid for by the Red Wolf Coalition and performed by Dr. Ford.

01:09:35.100 --> 01:09:40.320

Joe Madison: You know coyote population management is an essential part of the red wolf recovery efforts here in North Carolina and

01:09:40.740 --> 01:09:47.250

Joe Madison: And as we mentioned if and when there's other risk reduction sites, it's going to be key there since species pretty much

01:09:47.880 --> 01:09:55.020

Joe Madison: span the entire historic range at this point, but it's also, coyote populations, managing the coyote population is an effective means of.

01:09:55.710 --> 01:10:06.870

Joe Madison: Releasing that predation popular game species such a small game animals and birds, and it involves capturing sterilizing and radio collaring and then releasing it back at the site of capture.

01:10:07.560 --> 01:10:18.090

Joe Madison: And those sterile coyotes act as territorial placeholders defending that territory from other canids and they're not capable of breeding, which limits the growth of population and

01:10:18.780 --> 01:10:28.500

Joe Madison: really limits the hybridization events with wolves which again research done here, specifically in eastern North Carolina showed to be quite effective.

01:10:30.120 --> 01:10:38.130

Joe Madison: Sterilization doesn't affect the bond between a coyote pair that's mated for life, nor does it impact the size of their territory or the vigor which they defend it.

01:10:39.090 --> 01:10:47.700

Joe Madison: Which all means that they will continue to limit the intrusion of quote unquote new coyotes within that territory, which is a benefit.

01:10:49.980 --> 01:10:57.870

Joe Madison: Coyotes are typically captured using leg hold traps and on private lands, the red wolf team and landowner coordinate trapping efforts

01:10:58.350 --> 01:11:06.810

Joe Madison: that occur during the winter. Again it's up to the comfort level of the landowner, we're not out there when they don't want us to be out there, like we pull our traps

01:11:07.050 --> 01:11:14.250

Joe Madison: during their hunt times, and we stay off the roads when it's wet because we don't want to mess up the roads and things of that nature. So it's all about

01:11:15.570 --> 01:11:20.310

Joe Madison: the comfort level and working with the landowners so it's done the way they want it to be done.

01:11:21.960 --> 01:11:24.480

Joe Madison: And again, the sterilization is at no cost to the landowner.

01:11:26.430 --> 01:11:31.440

Joe Madison: Prior to the release of the coyote they're fitted with a white VHF collar.

01:11:33.540 --> 01:11:43.860

Joe Madison: So that they're identifiable and trackable and part of that also is that so we can see, over time, are these coyotes staying within the territory where we release them and that's largely what we see.

01:11:44.310 --> 01:12:00.450

Joe Madison: We've got coyotes that were sterilized in 2013 that are, still have active radio collars that are still in the area where they were released nine years ago, so that you know that shows us that we're having, it's working the way as it is intended.

01:12:02.460 --> 01:12:11.850

Joe Madison: And we share that information with WRC as part of our monthly coordination calls about where the coyotes are and that type of information.

01:12:13.680 --> 01:12:23.430

Joe Madison: And, and when possible, trapping attempts will continue until all the coyotes on property are either sterilized or, in some cases euthanized. We do still remove

01:12:24.090 --> 01:12:35.490

Joe Madison: some coyotes in certain instances, and then trapping will potentially be reinitiated in an area when either reports from the landowner or remote sensing camera

01:12:36.720 --> 01:12:51.540

Joe Madison: or collar information tells us that collar, that coyote is either in mortality, or you know, has been pushed out or something we are we see unsterilized coyotes in the property that we might reinitiate trapping on that property.

01:12:53.670 --> 01:12:55.980

Joe Madison: That's the extent of the answer on that one.

01:12:58.230 --> 01:13:05.460

Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you Joe for that response. I'll go ahead and put you on mute as we move on to our second question that was submitted.

01:13:05.880 --> 01:13:17.190

Amanda Biedermann: So the question is, has the US Fish and Wildlife Service defined what a quote pure red wolf is? And I will go to Emily Weller with the Fish and Wildlife Service to respond to that.

01:13:20.010 --> 01:13:29.520

Emily Weller: Hey, sure so at this time, we only have a definition of red wolves for management purposes in the North Carolina NEP.

01:13:29.940 --> 01:13:48.450

Emily Weller: And canids with 87 and a half percent red wolf genes is considered a red wolf. I will note that in the beginning of the program that threshold was at seventy five percent but, as the population increased so did that threshold so again, it's at 87 and a half percent red wolf genes.

01:13:52.740 --> 01:13:58.740

Amanda Biedermann: Alright, great, thank you Emily for that response and I'll keep you unmuted here

01:13:59.250 --> 01:14:09.570

Amanda Biedermann: for this next question, which is, why more isn't being done to save the red wolves, why are they not all over the east coast where they belong?

01:14:09.810 --> 01:14:15.750

Amanda Biedermann: And I do just want to note that I am just kind of reading these questions verbatim as they were submitted

01:14:16.170 --> 01:14:28.050

Amanda Biedermann: upon registration, so I appreciate everyone for being respectful of differing opinions and viewpoints, as we read through these questions. Let's see Emily, I'll go ahead and ask you to unmute again.

01:14:28.650 --> 01:14:39.750

Emily Weller: Yeah, sorry about that so currently there is only one population of red wolves in the wild and while that population saw many successes and exceeded the original

01:14:40.050 --> 01:14:45.720

Emily Weller: population target, there's also been many challenges that we have spoken about today.

01:14:46.590 --> 01:15:01.020

Emily Weller: The NEP has rapidly declined due to anthropogenic mortality, such as gunshot mortality and vehicle strikes and even coyote integration and hybridization, particularly at low population numbers.

01:15:01.410 --> 01:15:13.830

Emily Weller: But with only one population in the wild, we know that additional populations are essential to red wolf viability in therefore its ability to persist and wild, so we are focused on

01:15:14.130 --> 01:15:25.470

Emily Weller: updating the red wolf recovery plan which, again we do anticipate we will include the identification of potential new reintroduction sites.

01:15:30.000 --> 01:15:38.400

Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you Emily for that response. I'll go ahead and let's see put you on mute here, we're going to move on to our next question.

01:15:39.030 --> 01:15:49.740

Amanda Biedermann: So, our next question is, will there be potential for pup foster this upcoming season? And I will go back to Joe Madison with the Service to respond to that one.

01:15:55.050 --> 01:16:00.720

Joe Madison: Thanks Amanda so yeah, we will definitely look at assessing opportunities to foster this spring

01:16:01.380 --> 01:16:05.790

Joe Madison: and pursue them where it's feasible, based on a variety of factors, you know first we have to

01:16:06.210 --> 01:16:17.250

Joe Madison: have the presence of a wild litter, to be able to do that obviously, within the MCP and we have to have the availability of captive born pups that have a similar age as the wild litter

01:16:17.670 --> 01:16:23.160

Joe Madison: to be able to bring those pups in because there's a really short window, you know 10 to 14

01:16:24.030 --> 01:16:29.310

Joe Madison: days old that we have to do this and the litter from the captive population has to be

01:16:29.700 --> 01:16:38.610

Joe Madison: very similar in age within a you know, a couple of days of the age of the pups in the litter, so it can, we can be successful and so there's a lot of things that have to line up.

01:16:39.030 --> 01:16:48.780

Joe Madison: But of course, the availability of a wild litter is the first step, so we, once denning season starts, we will assess that and we also have to have access to the wild in

01:16:49.320 --> 01:17:02.310

Joe Madison: either has to be you know, in a, in a place that's physically accessible, you know not over canals that we can't get across and also has to be on land that we have access to, either national wildlife lands

01:17:03.270 --> 01:17:17.280

Joe Madison: mainly, and then, while fostering has been shown to be really successful method of increasing the population, the reintroduction of you knows of red wolves into the population

01:17:18.480 --> 01:17:30.990

Joe Madison: under the current circumstances on the landscape, we have very limited opportunities to do it because we have no proven red wolf breeding pairs within the NC NEP which we're working to correct as we've gone through.

01:17:32.010 --> 01:17:41.100

Joe Madison: When you're conducting pup fostering, the preferred method is to add one or more pups into a litter of an experienced red wolf mother or a pair preferably.

01:17:41.340 --> 01:17:48.390

Joe Madison: That have proven parental skills, that they've raised their pups, because a lot of times, even in captivity first time mothers aren't you know,

01:17:48.810 --> 01:18:01.860

Joe Madison: they aren't the greatest mothers necessarily, they're trying to figure out what they're doing, and those pups can have lower survival in captivity, or in the wild, so we try not to foster with first time mothers.

01:18:02.910 --> 01:18:20.010

Joe Madison: So, as you saw from the presentation, there's not a lot of options out there and we're releasing pairs into the wild this this winter in hopes that they'll have litters in the wild, but you know that they will be released in relatively close proximity to

01:18:21.390 --> 01:18:33.510

Joe Madison: the pup fostering season so and they'll still be kind of figuring out, getting their legs, and being wild on the landscape, so they won't be ideal candidates so anyway the short answer is

01:18:34.170 --> 01:18:41.100

Joe Madison: we'll evaluate the feasibility and availability of being able to do that this spring, but it is a potential option.

01:18:44.400 --> 01:19:01.380

Amanda Biedermann: Great, thank you for that response, Joe, I'll go ahead and put you back on mute as we move on to our next question here, which is, are there any checks of DNA on large canids in coastal states? And I will go back to Emily Weller with the Service to respond to that question.

01:19:04.410 --> 01:19:24.720

Emily Weller: Sure, um yes, there are studies underway to identify the possibility of red wolf ancestries still remaining in the wild and southwestern Louisiana and southeastern Texas. These studies are

follow ups on previous studies that suggest that there are red wolves ancestries

01:19:26.160 --> 01:19:30.090

Emily Weller: still existing on the landscape in Louisiana and Texas.

01:19:34.410 --> 01:19:44.790

Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you to Emily for that response. I'll go ahead and put you on mute, and we'll move on to our next question. Again right now we are moving through our questions that were submitted

01:19:45.360 --> 01:19:53.010

Amanda Biedermann: during, when people were registering for this meeting that are within the scope and ability of the Service to currently answer.

01:19:53.310 --> 01:20:00.540

Amanda Biedermann: We're going to see if we can make our way through this entire list of questions before we see how much time we have remaining on the meeting.

01:20:00.960 --> 01:20:13.200

Amanda Biedermann: So right now, I'll just move on to our next question here, which is what penalties will be levied against hunters who kill red wolves? And I will go to Pete Benjamin with the Service to respond to that question.

01:20:20.010 --> 01:20:20.670

Pete Benjamin: Thanks Amanda.

01:20:21.900 --> 01:20:24.150

Pete Benjamin: **Thanks** to whoever submitted the question.

01:20:25.380 --> 01:20:45.480

Pete Benjamin: So yeah, I'm read was as Joe touched on this, red wolves are federally protected endangered species, killing or harming a red wolf can result in civil or criminal penalties that may include fines and forfeiture of any property that may have been involved in the crime.

01:20:47.220 --> 01:20:47.970

Pete Benjamin: That said,

01:20:49.560 --> 01:20:58.890

Pete Benjamin: we believe that a lot of the, particularly the gunshot related mortality of red wolves, are a result of mistaken identity with coyotes so as we touched on tonight,

01:20:59.760 --> 01:21:24.990

Pete Benjamin: we're stepping up our efforts to help others distinguish between red wolves, which are protected, and coyotes, which may be hunted, so we're doing things like the bright orange collars as Joe said. We're looking at things we can do that maybe mark the young red wolves are too small to carry

01:21:26.130 --> 01:21:32.370

Pete Benjamin: radio collars. We're working with the Wildlife Resources Commission to get the word out through hunter education and the

01:21:33.450 --> 01:21:40.050

Pete Benjamin: regulation's digest and hunter education cards that these orange collars are out there, and please, please

01:21:41.100 --> 01:21:54.090

Pete Benjamin: look before you shoot and do not shoot an animal with an orange color, certainly, but also that those collared coyotes, which have the white or black collars

01:21:55.830 --> 01:21:59.940

Pete Benjamin: which may be of value on the landscape as well.

01:22:01.230 --> 01:22:05.430

Pete Benjamin: We're also continuing our coyote sterilization program that Joe was talking about

01:22:07.020 --> 01:22:07.380

Pete Benjamin: and

01:22:08.550 --> 01:22:19.680

Pete Benjamin: you know, we work as Joe mentioned to do that, hopefully help manage the coyote population, we also do move coyotes from the landscape as needed.

01:22:21.720 --> 01:22:33.090

Pete Benjamin: So, we want to keep working with landowners and folks out there to find other ways that we can work together to grow the red wolf population while we manage the coyote population.

01:22:35.640 --> 01:22:36.330

Pete Benjamin: Back to you Amanda.

01:22:37.410 --> 01:22:53.550

Amanda Biedermann: Great, thank you Pete. I'll go ahead and keep you unmuted for this next question here, which is, the US Fish and Wildlife Service as a federal agency that uses federal resources, so the question is, why is outreach targeted, if not limited to the local community?

01:22:54.840 --> 01:22:56.310

Pete Benjamin: Yes, thanks for that question.

01:22:58.260 --> 01:23:00.780

Pete Benjamin: Catherine touched on this in her remarks.

01:23:02.220 --> 01:23:08.580

Pete Benjamin: And we're interested in getting input and more engagement from our stakeholders, we know that there,

01:23:09.330 --> 01:23:17.880

Pete Benjamin: they come from all over the country and around the world, very happy tonight to see that we've got folks signed up for this from all over the country.

01:23:18.480 --> 01:23:22.080

Pete Benjamin: But tonight, one thing we really wanted to try to do was to

01:23:22.920 --> 01:23:34.230

Pete Benjamin: engage specifically with the local community and make sure everybody was aware of our plans for this winter, the wolves are going to be released, our efforts to work with you

01:23:34.590 --> 01:23:41.190

Pete Benjamin: regarding wolves on your lands, opportunities that might be available for habitat management, and Prey for the Pack.

01:23:42.750 --> 01:23:55.890

Pete Benjamin: You know, so that support that, as I mentioned, you know wolves do make extensive use of private lands in the five-county

area, that's going to be true wherever reintroductions might take place

01:23:56.730 --> 01:24:12.090

Pete Benjamin: in the future, so landowner support is absolutely critical for success of this program and for red wolf recovery, and so we're, we recognize fundamental changes are needed in the way we engage stakeholders, you know

01:24:13.650 --> 01:24:18.780

Pete Benjamin: across the country but very particularly with those local landowners

01:24:20.070 --> 01:24:35.430

Pete Benjamin: that may have wolves on their property so the meeting tonight, it's an opportunity for us to engage with the local community to tell you what what's going on, like you know, what's coming up, and also to hear from you.

01:24:36.990 --> 01:24:43.530

Pete Benjamin: And but, so that was the main target for tonight, but again, thanks to everybody that was able to

01:24:45.240 --> 01:24:47.010

Pete Benjamin: dial in and participate, really appreciate it.

01:24:50.220 --> 01:24:55.200

Amanda Biedermann: Great, thank you Pete. I'll go ahead and put you back on you as we move on to our next question.

01:24:55.470 --> 01:25:07.740

Amanda Biedermann: Before we do, I realized that we do have quite a few phone callers on our meeting tonight, so I am going to quickly

verbally read through those links that we sent out earlier via the zoom chat feature

01:25:08.010 --> 01:25:12.690

Amanda Biedermann: if you have any additional questions that you want to submit after the meeting tonight.

01:25:13.260 --> 01:25:43.860

Amanda Biedermann: So, the red wolf hotline for those phone callers if you want to grab a pen and a piece of paper is 1-855-4-WOLVES. So I'll just read the number here so 1-855-496-5837 so that is the red wolf hotline, or you can email your questions to redwolf@fws.gov.

01:25:46.350 --> 01:26:06.480

Amanda Biedermann: You can also contact Luke Lollies, who is a private lands biologist and Prey for the Pack at 252-256-3676 or Luke underscore Lollies L-o-l-l-i-e-s at fws.gov.

01:26:07.020 --> 01:26:28.500

Amanda Biedermann: Or you can visit the website and that website address is [www.fws.gov/se/wildlife/mammals/read data-wolf/](http://www.fws.gov/se/wildlife/mammals/read_data-wolf/).

01:26:29.820 --> 01:26:37.290

Amanda Biedermann: So hopefully everybody had a chance to write that down. Again this entire meeting is being recorded so that will be captured in the recording as well.

01:26:38.340 --> 01:26:54.390

Amanda Biedermann: Alright, so I'm going to go ahead and move on to our next question here, which is what is your timeframe for establishing a second reintroduced population in Okefenokee? And I will go back to Emily Weller with the Service to respond to that question.

01:27:00.270 --> 01:27:18.690

Emily Weller: Yeah so, we currently do not have a set time frame, like I mentioned before we're really focusing on updating the red wolf recovery plan, which we do anticipate will include the evaluation and identification of potential reintroduction sites as a high priority.

01:27:25.200 --> 01:27:31.950

Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you Emily for that response. I'll go ahead and put you back on mute, and we'll move on to our next question here,

01:27:32.640 --> 01:27:45.810

Amanda Biedermann: which is, what measures will be taken to ensure the safety of the released individuals in regard to human activity? And I will go back to Joe Madison with the Service to respond to this question.

01:27:49.260 --> 01:27:51.180

Joe Madison: Thanks Amanda and you know, and I don't want to

01:27:53.220 --> 01:28:00.690

Joe Madison: not answer this question, but I think we've largely answered it, so I want to make sure we have time to get to some of the ones that are new information.

01:28:01.320 --> 01:28:11.220

Joe Madison: But you know again it touched on the same things that have been touched on, with the bright orange collars and the highway signs and reflectors and the public outreach regarding the

01:28:12.120 --> 01:28:20.760

Joe Madison: orange collars are the main things that we're doing to help reduce mortality, and we touched on the presentation and Pete's previous answers.

01:28:23.550 --> 01:28:34.350

Amanda Biedermann: Right, thank you, Joe I'll go ahead and keep you unmuted then for our next question, which is, what we can do with the law and individual efforts to protect these beings?

01:28:36.420 --> 01:28:43.920

Joe Madison: It's kind of the same situation with this question, I think we've touched on it, numerous times, both in the presentation with previous answers but

01:28:45.420 --> 01:28:54.240

Joe Madison: quickly we you know we continue to work with the local and state governments and conservation organizations, private landowners, and all other partners of red wolf conservation for

01:28:55.110 --> 01:29:06.360

Joe Madison: you know all sorts of different ways and engagements that we can do to try to increase this and that you know, having a broad support is essential, to the future success of the red wolf recovery program.

01:29:06.870 --> 01:29:12.540

Joe Madison: I hope that that comes across tonight that we neither think we can do it alone or want to do it alone.

01:29:14.580 --> 01:29:21.660

Joe Madison: You know, Prey for the Pack is part of that way to increase individual efforts you know, in coordination and collaboration.

01:29:23.310 --> 01:29:33.690

Joe Madison: You know, and our team managers non-essential populations through a variety of activities, monitoring of the red wolves, remote cameras, assessing the movements, pack dynamics, and the general health,

01:29:34.350 --> 01:29:49.980

Joe Madison: investigating known mortalities, performing the veterinary care, you know the vaccinations, general health assessments, those types of things, you know we're engaged in a lot of different aspects to protect these, the species.

01:29:51.570 --> 01:29:53.460

Joe Madison: And we've touched on a lot of them here tonight.

01:29:57.630 --> 01:30:04.620

Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you Joe for those back-to-back responses. I'll go ahead and put you on mute as we move on to our next question.

01:30:05.250 --> 01:30:15.570

Amanda Biedermann: Which is what, if anything, will be done to stop all of the criminal poaching of these wolves? And let's see I'll go to Pete Benjamin with the Service to respond to that question.

01:30:18.810 --> 01:30:19.350

Pete Benjamin: Thank you.

01:30:21.600 --> 01:30:23.490

Pete Benjamin: Yeah, so as I touched on,

01:30:24.540 --> 01:30:28.710

Pete Benjamin: it is a violation of federal law to harm or shoot a red wolf.

01:30:31.110 --> 01:30:38.550

Pete Benjamin: And we, you know, our Service, our division of law enforcement does investigate suspected

01:30:40.560 --> 01:30:41.460

Pete Benjamin: illegal take

01:30:43.470 --> 01:30:54.690

Pete Benjamin: and we work closely with them to provide information. I can't talk about any specific cases, obviously, but I would go back to what we are doing to try to help

01:30:57.450 --> 01:30:59.070

Pete Benjamin: others distinguish

01:31:00.330 --> 01:31:04.860

Pete Benjamin: between red wolves and canids, which I hope will reduce the

01:31:06.810 --> 01:31:07.950

Pete Benjamin: human-related mortality.

01:31:12.150 --> 01:31:26.880

Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you Pete for that response. I'll go ahead and keep you unmuted here for our next question which is, will the Fish and Wildlife Service remove red wolves that enter a farm or other property if requested by the landowners?

01:31:27.810 --> 01:31:44.190

Pete Benjamin: Yeah, thanks for that, we did touch on this, I think I spoke to it in in my presentation, but it's worth reiterating because things have changed with respect to this part of our rules, we can move wolves from private lands under what are now pretty limited

01:31:45.420 --> 01:32:02.610

Pete Benjamin: circumstances. Obviously, if the animal is posing a direct threat to people or livestock or pets, you know if it's a direct threat ongoing, in the Act, the landowner can certainly

01:32:04.860 --> 01:32:17.730

Pete Benjamin: take that animal. If it's a non-direct threat, the animal is just behaving strangely and making landowners uncomfortable, then we, we can assess that situation to remove the animal if need be.

01:32:19.620 --> 01:32:39.150

Pete Benjamin: And we can also move animals now for the betterment of the population, to make new pairs, to increase the genetic diversity. But we can't anymore, we used to, we used to remove wolves from private lands on landowner's request, whether the wolf was threatening or not. We can no longer do that

01:32:41.100 --> 01:32:42.480

Pete Benjamin: per some

01:32:43.920 --> 01:32:44.880

Pete Benjamin: court injunctions.

01:32:45.990 --> 01:32:53.190

Pete Benjamin: And we, we also can't authorize landowners to remove those from the property on their own

01:32:54.630 --> 01:32:58.710

Pete Benjamin: except in those limited circumstances that I mentioned.

01:33:02.730 --> 01:33:04.860

Pete Benjamin: Okay, one last thing I'll say there is

01:33:04.920 --> 01:33:15.960

Pete Benjamin: if you are having any issues with wolves on your lands as Joe mentioned, please, please reach out, please contact us, we want to work with you and

01:33:18.000 --> 01:33:19.020

Pete Benjamin: address your concerns.

01:33:21.780 --> 01:33:28.860

Amanda Biedermann: Great, thank you Pete for those responses. I'll go ahead and put you on mute as we move on to our next question here,

01:33:29.490 --> 01:33:41.250

Amanda Biedermann: which is, what is being done differently with this program that makes it seem more viable than the last program? And I will go to Catherine Phillips with the Service to respond to this question.

01:33:45.150 --> 01:33:53.700

Catherine Phillips: Thank you, that's a great question and I did touch on some of that in the intro, and I would say that the biggest thing is bringing more voices at the table.

01:33:54.570 --> 01:34:02.940

Catherine Phillips: The Service is committed to that increased transparency interaction so obviously we're doing that tonight, we're having more meetings, we're going to

01:34:03.240 --> 01:34:12.510

Catherine Phillips: have that community liaison that's going to be, you know touching base one on one with each of you so that increased connection,

01:34:13.200 --> 01:34:18.030

Catherine Phillips: and also seeking your feedback and responding to that feedback and making adjustments.

01:34:18.750 --> 01:34:30.330

Catherine Phillips: For trying to pull you in to work with us shoulder to shoulder to make changes to this program including how we can improve. We know that we will not be successful in the recovery of the species without you.

01:34:35.010 --> 01:34:48.990

Amanda Biedermann: Great, thank you Catherine for that response. We'll go ahead and move on to our next question, which is how many wolves will be released to the Pungo? And I will go to Joe Madison with the Service to respond to that question.

01:34:52.200 --> 01:34:56.970

Joe Madison: Thanks Amanda, yeah so under the phase 2 release plan,

01:34:57.900 --> 01:35:05.190

Joe Madison: As I mentioned in the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, we're releasing the family group, but it is not in the area, so there's currently

01:35:05.580 --> 01:35:15.750

Joe Madison: no animals scheduled to be released in the Pungo area, you know, however, that family group will be further to the east, because of the national wildlife refuge and

01:35:16.440 --> 01:35:29.970

Joe Madison: you know, it is possible that all or some of those animals could potentially use the Pungo area at some point, and in addition to that, as mentioned, it may be an opportunity for fostering in the Pungo area, we just don't know yet.

01:35:34.140 --> 01:35:51.090

Amanda Biedermann: Great, thank you for that response, Joe. I'll go ahead and keep you unmuted for this next question here, which is, what is the Service going to do about the coyotes on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, formerly zone one of the hybridization management plan?

01:35:52.500 --> 01:36:09.420

Joe Madison: So, I think we acknowledge this in the first question that, they're basically asking the same type of thing, so while I appreciate multiple people asking the question, I think we've fully covered this at this stage.

01:36:13.530 --> 01:36:19.470

Amanda Biedermann: Okay, great. Thank you Joe. So then, in that case I'll go ahead and move on to our next question here

01:36:19.980 --> 01:36:31.350

Amanda Biedermann: which is, why are these wolves being mandated by court order to be released? Are there a lot of hunters in these counties? And I will go to Emily Weller with the Service to respond to this question.

01:36:34.170 --> 01:36:47.610

Emily Weller: So on November 16, 2020, plaintiffs filed a complaint with the Service alleging violations of the Endangered Species Act and the Administrative Procedures Act, the APA

01:36:48.300 --> 01:37:01.680

Emily Weller: in connection with management of the North Carolina NEP specifically. They alleged that the Service interpreted its **existing 10j regulations** as prohibiting additional releases of captive

01:37:02.100 --> 01:37:08.220

Emily Weller: red wolves into the NEP and prohibiting implementation of the red wolf adaptive management work plan.

01:37:08.910 --> 01:37:17.130

Emily Weller: They stated that this interpretation constituted a new policy that was adopted in contravention of the ESA and the APA.

01:37:17.790 --> 01:37:27.180

Emily Weller: Shortly after filing the suit plaintiffs filed for a motion for a preliminary injunction to require the Service to release red wolves from captivity.

01:37:27.570 --> 01:37:38.520

Emily Weller: So, on January 22, 2021, the court granted the plaintiff's motion for preliminary injunction determining the plaintiffs are for likely to succeed on the merits of their claims.

01:37:39.210 --> 01:37:56.610

Emily Weller: that the Service adopted a policy of preventing them from releasing captive red wolves into the NEP in violation of the Act and APA. The court's injunction barred the Service from effecting this policy and ordered the Service to develop a plan to release red wolves into the NEP.

01:38:01.170 --> 01:38:07.860

Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you Emily for that response. I'll go ahead and put you back on mute as we move on to our next question

01:38:08.610 --> 01:38:23.850

Amanda Biedermann: which is let's see, vehicle collisions are the second highest cause of red wolf deaths; are there any plans to pursue new crossing money from the infrastructure bill? And I will go to Pete Benjamin with the Service to respond to this question.

01:38:27.750 --> 01:38:28.170

Pete Benjamin: Thanks Amanda.

01:38:29.220 --> 01:38:31.770

Pete Benjamin: Yeah, Joe touched on some of the things we're doing

01:38:33.450 --> 01:38:45.000

Pete Benjamin: in the near term to hopefully reduce the level of vehicle related mortality with the reflectors and the signage. We're going to be monitoring the animals we'll release

01:38:45.930 --> 01:39:00.300

Pete Benjamin: very closely, and you're absolutely correct throughout the history of the program, vehicle strikes have been the second leading cause of red wolf mortality but in these past couple years it's been the leading cause five of the seven

01:39:01.980 --> 01:39:05.040

Pete Benjamin: mortalities in last year were vehicles,

01:39:07.020 --> 01:39:25.140

Pete Benjamin: vehicle related. So, we're working in addition to what Joe talked about, and I think you did mention it briefly, we're also working with a number of partners, researchers, state and federal transportation agencies, other organizations, to look at other short- and long-term solutions

01:39:26.220 --> 01:39:39.510

Pete Benjamin: for reducing vehicle related mortality and some of that we haven't hit on, that those discussions are ongoing, so we don't have a longer-term solution to net, but some of it could certainly

01:39:41.460 --> 01:39:56.790

Pete Benjamin: involve some of the funding available through the recent infrastructure bill, and we're going to we're going to be pursuing that option. I will say that you know a lot of these recent fatalities, are you know, a result of

01:39:58.650 --> 01:40:08.490

Pete Benjamin: us having to rely on these captive born animals to rebuild the population, and wolves growing up in a facility under human care

01:40:10.140 --> 01:40:20.940

Pete Benjamin: doesn't grow up you know learning things on its own about things like cars, so when you're, when you're relying on these releases of adult animals to rebuild a population that's kind of,

01:40:21.480 --> 01:40:31.140

Pete Benjamin: it's kind of an unfortunate consequence. We probably will see higher vehicle related mortality, we are going to do everything we can this winter to

01:40:32.550 --> 01:40:40.200

Pete Benjamin: minimize that, and probably the best thing we can do that is get back to the part where the population is building from,

01:40:41.640 --> 01:40:51.000

Pete Benjamin: animals born within the population and raised in that environment where they learn from their parents, how to be wolves and how to avoid cars.

01:40:56.190 --> 01:41:08.670

Amanda Biedermann: Great, thank you Pete for that response, so at this time we did reach the end of our list of questions that were submitted by participants when they registered for today's meeting

01:41:09.030 --> 01:41:15.000

Amanda Biedermann: that were within the scope and ability of the Service to respond to at this time.

01:41:15.390 --> 01:41:31.080

Amanda Biedermann: If you feel that your question wasn't adequately answered today or you have additional questions that you want to send to the Fish and Wildlife Service again, you can submit those questions to red_wolf@fws.gov.

01:41:32.130 --> 01:41:50.010

Amanda Biedermann: You can also visit the website for more information and updates. I'll also flip back here briefly to some more information on the screen, here again, the red wolf hotline is 1-855-496-5837.

01:41:51.030 --> 01:41:53.610

Amanda Biedermann: Or you can contact Luke Lollies.

01:41:54.990 --> 01:42:06.960

Amanda Biedermann: Luke's information is provided on the screen, again his number is 252-256-3676 or Luke underscore Lollies at fws.gov.

01:42:09.150 --> 01:42:11.130

Amanda Biedermann: So, I'll give everyone a second here

01:42:12.180 --> 01:42:13.770

Amanda Biedermann: to write down that information.

01:42:27.000 --> 01:42:40.020

Amanda Biedermann: Alright, so at this time we do only have about 10 minutes remaining here so in the interest of time we do know that a lot of participants are on the meeting today so we're going to ask

01:42:40.500 --> 01:42:54.660

Amanda Biedermann: that you send any questions you have right now, through the chat feature, so I have opened up that chat feature. It

was turned off for the duration of the meeting so far. I have now opened up that chat feature.

01:42:55.080 --> 01:43:08.940

Amanda Biedermann: I ask that you send any questions you have to Alli Yamnitsky, who is the host of today's meeting. Again I want to remind everyone that this is a public meeting in which we are accepting all opinions and thoughts

01:43:09.330 --> 01:43:14.820

Amanda Biedermann: on this matter, so you can send your questions over to her. Again in the interest of time

01:43:15.390 --> 01:43:32.670

Amanda Biedermann: we're going to at least record those questions in the chat feature and the Service can get back to you as needed after this meeting, but right now we're at least going to open up that chat feature give folks the ability to send their questions over to Alli Yamnitsky.

01:43:33.960 --> 01:43:44.730

Amanda Biedermann: Again, please don't send them over to me Amanda Biedermann, please funnel those over to Alli Yamnitsky. You can go to that little drop down menu and select her from that list of

01:43:45.180 --> 01:44:01.530

Amanda Biedermann: participants that are available to you and send your questions over, and we'll see what we get in the chat. If there are any that we are available or able to answer today, we will respond to those so for now please hold while we sort through those questions.

01:44:39.780 --> 01:44:44.760

Amanda Biedermann: Alright, we did receive one quick question that I can go ahead and answer here for that participant.

01:44:45.120 --> 01:44:56.490

Amanda Biedermann: So, the question is, what does an NEP mean? Apologies if others didn't understand that acronym, so that stands for non-essential experimental population.

01:44:56.790 --> 01:45:06.360

Amanda Biedermann: So, thank you for that question. Again, right now we are sorting through those trying to figure out which ones that the Service has the scope and ability to respond to today.

01:45:06.570 --> 01:45:17.550

Amanda Biedermann: But we are recording all of these questions so, even if they don't get responded to during this meeting, the Service will follow up with you as needed after this meeting to respond to your questions.

01:46:06.240 --> 01:46:11.040

Amanda Biedermann: Again, you can send your questions over to Alli Yamnitsky.

01:46:11.550 --> 01:46:20.310

Amanda Biedermann: And we are recording all of those questions that we've received so far. Again, we're kind of sorting through those in the last few minutes we have here remaining

01:46:20.580 --> 01:46:36.840

Amanda Biedermann: so that the Service can either respond to them live today, or they can follow up with you as needed after the meeting. Again this information is up here on the screen, and I'll also flip over to our other slide here to show you how you can submit your questions as well.

01:47:10.380 --> 01:47:30.510

Amanda Biedermann: Alright, so we did get a question that the Service is going to respond to here, so the question is, will more red wolf

crossing signs be placed around the highways for safer wolf crossings? And let's see, I will go to Pete Benjamin with the Service to start us off with this response.

01:47:33.480 --> 01:47:39.930

Pete Benjamin: Thanks, Amanda, yeah folks that are familiar with the area have seen the yellow red wolf crossing signs

01:47:41.520 --> 01:47:48.150

Pete Benjamin: Along the O-64 and I think, for now, as Joe mentioned, we're going to rely on those

01:47:49.440 --> 01:48:02.880

Pete Benjamin: mobile signs that Joe showed that will give us a better ability to indicate kind of where wolves may be near the road in real time, we think that'll be more effective long term.

01:48:07.620 --> 01:48:11.370

Amanda Biedermann: Great, thank you Pete for that response. I'll go ahead and put you on mute.

01:48:13.110 --> 01:48:26.520

Amanda Biedermann: Again, you can send your questions over to Alli Yamnitsky, and they will be documented. We only have about five minutes remaining here so again we're sorting through those questions to see which ones we can respond to today.

01:48:48.030 --> 01:49:11.910

Amanda Biedermann: Again, I'll just read through some of that information on the screen, as we wait for those additional questions. You can submit any questions you have to redwolf@fws.gov. You can also visit the website, which is www.fws.gov/southeast/wildlife/mammals/red-wolf/.

01:49:16.980 --> 01:49:24.150

Amanda Biedermann: And again, please send those questions over to Alli Yamnitsky by selecting her name in that zoom chat feature.

01:49:24.480 --> 01:49:35.190

Amanda Biedermann: The zoom chat feature is located at the bottom of your zoom screen, if you kind of wave your mouse back and forth across the bottom of your zoom screen that chat icon should appear for you.

01:49:57.990 --> 01:50:09.360

Amanda Biedermann: Alright let's see, we have a couple more questions coming in here, so I'll read this question that we just received and then go to a few others, so the question is, let me back up here really quickly.

01:50:09.810 --> 01:50:23.040

Amanda Biedermann: What volunteer opportunities are there for folks who would like to help red wolves beyond what has already been listed? And let's see I'll go to Pete, and then I'll go to Joe to help respond to this question.

01:50:27.810 --> 01:50:32.790

Pete Benjamin: Thank you, as we mentioned the Red Wolf Center in Columbia, South Carolina.

01:50:34.320 --> 01:50:44.370

Pete Benjamin: is one program to help get the message out do education, outreach. Katerina Ramos with the North Carolina Wildlife Federation

01:50:47.100 --> 01:50:57.030

Pete Benjamin: manages that operation for us. I would encourage anybody that lives in the five-county area that would be interested in getting more involved to reach out to Kat.

01:51:00.300 --> 01:51:03.960

Amanda Biedermann: Great, thanks Pete, and any follow up that you wanted to provide Joe?

01:51:06.870 --> 01:51:14.340

Joe Madison: That's kind of what I had in mind, but I guess also you know if you're not able to be in the five-county area, you can always volunteer with any of the

01:51:16.080 --> 01:51:26.250

Joe Madison: organizations that support red wolf conservation in general that are partners like SSP, the captive breeding population, and others like that.

01:51:29.910 --> 01:51:34.710

Amanda Biedermann: Great, thank you Joe and Pete for those responses. I'll go ahead and put you back on mute.

01:51:35.520 --> 01:51:47.310

Amanda Biedermann: Let's see we'll move on to our next question here, which is you have eight wolves for 35 years of work and 514 landowners who have kicked you off of their property.

01:51:47.610 --> 01:51:54.030

Amanda Biedermann: So, the question is what will be different this time? And I'm going to go to Catherine Phillips to provide a response to that one.

01:51:59.550 --> 01:52:07.590

Catherine Phillips: Yeah, thank you, thank you for that question, I know that that's a difficult question because I could say that we share,

01:52:08.970 --> 01:52:15.900

Catherine Phillips: there's a disappointment, you know, on the side of the Fish and Wildlife Service of where we are, there's no doubt about that.

01:52:17.160 --> 01:52:23.250

Catherine Phillips: But I will say what's going to be different is, we want to keep trying.

01:52:24.750 --> 01:52:33.120

Catherine Phillips: It's important that if we make a misstep, if we haven't engaged in the way in the past that we should have, that we correct that.

01:52:33.810 --> 01:52:46.440

Catherine Phillips: And now we're telling you that each landowner is important, every single landowner every voice of every landowner, is important, so this time

01:52:47.160 --> 01:52:58.380

Catherine Phillips: we're going to make that a reality. We're going to engage you and in a transparent way in the work that we're doing so that you know that your voice does matter.

01:53:00.600 --> 01:53:09.510

Catherine Phillips: Because we can't do it any other way. There's no way to be successful in recovery of red wolves on the landscape, it's not possible any other way.

01:53:10.710 --> 01:53:28.110

Catherine Phillips: So, we have to learn, we have to try, and we have to change, that's the only way forward and I'm proud of the Service being able to make this transition, because I think that it's critical at this juncture

01:53:29.370 --> 01:53:41.460

Catherine Phillips: that we make a change so we're here to listen to you, so we can figure out what that change exactly needs to be because we don't have it right, and I'm certain that many of you may have some solutions that we can work with.

01:53:47.610 --> 01:53:50.250

Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you Catherine for that response.

01:53:51.360 --> 01:53:58.590

Amanda Biedermann: Again, we have just a few minutes remaining here so we're going to see if there any additional questions coming in via that chat feature

01:53:58.860 --> 01:54:08.670

Amanda Biedermann: that we can respond to live before I turn it back over to Catherine to lead everyone through some closing remarks, so we'll give it just a minute or two here more.

01:54:09.480 --> 01:54:20.670

Amanda Biedermann: Again, you can send your questions over to Alli Yamnitsky. I'll make sure for anyone who might have sent their questions accidentally to me. I'll make sure that I do save those for the record as well.

01:55:16.080 --> 01:55:24.270

Amanda Biedermann: Alright, we have received a few additional questions, but that this time we are going to flip over to our last slide you can continue

01:55:24.510 --> 01:55:34.380

Amanda Biedermann: to submit those questions, but at this time, I think we have reached the end of our question-and-answer session and have responded to all of the questions again that the Service

01:55:34.830 --> 01:55:47.490

Amanda Biedermann: has the scope and ability to respond to today, so I'm going to go ahead and turn it back over to Catherine Phillips, with the Service to provide just some closing remarks for this evening's meeting.

01:55:56.760 --> 01:56:09.420

Catherine Phillips: Thank you Amanda. I won't take much time with closing remarks, and you've heard from our team today and I thank all of our team for presenting the information and answering questions, but most of all, I thank all of you,

01:56:11.400 --> 01:56:26.340

Catherine Phillips: spending your time this evening with us, and I hope that you see and hear in my voice that we're committed to this change. I hope that you heard and saw that with the team that we're committed to this change and.

01:56:27.330 --> 01:56:34.650

Catherine Phillips: I just want to thank you and know that please give us the feedback, all of it, honest feedback.

01:56:35.070 --> 01:56:47.820

Catherine Phillips: We're ready to listen, we're ready to make changes and adjustments to the program because we want this to be successful, so just thank you for your time tonight, and I hope you have a good evening, thank you.

01:56:51.120 --> 01:57:00.570

Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you Catherine, so I will leave this slide up here for just an additional two minutes until we reach that 9:00pm eastern end time.

01:57:00.810 --> 01:57:13.500

Amanda Biedermann: So you can get your questions over to Alli Yamnitsky. Again, we will save all of those for the record, and the

Fish and Wildlife Service will do their best to respond to your questions if they weren't able to respond to your questions today.

01:57:13.980 --> 01:57:23.460

Amanda Biedermann: And Clayton McGee did just send out the information that is up on the screen. So hopefully you can easily copy and paste that out of the zoom chat.

01:57:24.150 --> 01:57:36.630

Amanda Biedermann: You can save it to your computer, put it into your web browser, so that you can get those questions to the Service. Thank you everyone again for your time and participation this evening, and all of your great questions, we really appreciate it.

01:58:45.210 --> 01:58:54.240

Amanda Biedermann: Alright, everyone we're going to go ahead and close out of our meeting tonight. Hopefully everyone had time to record the information that is on the screen and in the chat feature.

01:58:54.540 --> 01:59:04.620

Amanda Biedermann: Again, thank you everyone for your time and participation this evening, and the Service will follow up with participants on where that recording for the meeting will be located.

01:59:05.010 --> 01:59:11.130

Amanda Biedermann: And for the q&a that we went through tonight, so thank you everyone, and I hope you have a great rest of your evening.