

*Stakeholder Meeting on Red Wolf Ecotourism in
North Carolina*

*Eastern 4-H Environmental Education Conference Center
Columbia, North Carolina
May 10, 2006*



Dr. Joseph Flood & Christopher Parker
East Carolina University

Edited by Gina Schrader & Heidi Ridgley
Defenders of Wildlife

*Sponsored by Defenders of Wildlife and funded by the
Alex C. Walker Educational and Charitable Foundation*



Photo: USFWS



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prior to European settlement, the red wolf (*Canis rufus*) was the dominant wild canid in southeastern North America; however, years of human persecution and habitat loss reduced red wolf populations to near extinction. Biologists trapped the fewer than 20 individuals that remained in the wild and put them into a captive-breeding program in the 1970s. The tactic proved successful and in 1987 biologists released the descendants of these last wild red wolves into the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern North Carolina, marking the first time that a species declared extinct in the wild had been restored to part of its former range. Additional wolves were later released into nearby Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (although the park reintroduction did not succeed for various reasons and the remaining wolves were subsequently removed). Today, there are approximately 100 wild red wolves located throughout rural northeastern North Carolina. Biologists believe that the species can fully recover in the wild. However, this can only happen if residents and wolves can coexist side by side.

Reintroducing carnivores into habitat where people live is controversial and challenging. But preliminary studies undertaken in the mid 1990s to examine resident and visitor attitudes toward red wolves in northeastern North Carolina showed that the public is generally in favor of wolves, including the majority of residents already living in their midst (Quintal 1995; Rosen 1997). In 2005, with the help of the Alex C. Walker Educational and Charitable Foundation (Walker Foundation), Defenders of Wildlife (Defenders) took the additional step of examining ways residents and landowners of Tyrrell and Hyde counties could generate economic benefits from ecotourism, given that the Outer Banks—already a major tourist destination—is just 35 miles away. After determining that residents were interested in making their counties ecotourism destinations, Defenders outlined the needed strategies, such as: increasing public education about the red wolf recovery program, conducting tourism business training and creating a tourism plan for the two counties in *Red Wolves: Creating Economic Opportunity Through Ecotourism in Rural North Carolina*.

Defenders' current report, *Stakeholder Meeting on Red Wolf Ecotourism in North Carolina*, also funded by the Walker Foundation, is a follow-up to the 2005 report and the result of a May 10, 2006 meeting that brought stakeholders together to develop concrete plans for ecotourism that will benefit rural landowners and farmers in red wolf country. Participants discussed (1) marketing strategies for small businesses, such as developing a Web site; (2) the best methods for generating economic benefits, such as organizing a farmer's market; (3) educational outreach regarding red wolf conservation, including the building of a "red wolf center" that would house live wolves, hold events that provide education to visitors about wolves and other species native to the area; and (4) creative incentives to keep tourist revenue in the communities and position the town of Columbia as a red wolf ecotourism destination by building accommodations for large tour groups and creating package tours that encourage visitors to spend more time and money in the area.

Interest from the community for advancing profitable ecotourism ventures is evident. It is critical as ecotourism plans develop that the process involves the active and committed participation of rural residents, local and regional tourism planners, thereby ensuring the conservation and integrity of the surrounding areas. Further, participants concluded that if red wolves are to serve as an economic engine for the local economy, a red wolf education center needs to be developed on a sound ecotourism plan. The essential next step requires individuals from the community to step forward as leaders, ensuring that community decision makers are in control of steering their regional ecotourism efforts. For this to occur, it is critical that volunteers be recruited to organize future meetings on a regular basis.

PURPOSE OF MEETING

On May 10, 2006 Defenders hosted a stakeholder meeting to develop a red wolf-based ecotourism plan for communities located in rural northeastern North Carolina. The one-day meeting located at the Eastern 4-H Environmental Education Conference Center in Columbia, North Carolina, focused on formulating strategies to initiate the next steps the community must take to make ecotourism a viable means of economic development. The concept for this meeting was directly identified in *Red Wolves: Creating Economic Opportunity Through Ecotourism in Rural North Carolina*, a 2005 report by Dr. Gail Y. B. Lash and Pamela Black of Ursa International and commissioned by Defenders of Wildlife. Dr. Joseph Flood of East Carolina University helped organize and facilitate the meeting, with the intention of both encouraging and passing on the leadership role to community stakeholders.

The meeting gathered regional community leaders and local landowners to initiate discussion on the exploration and development of free-market solutions. Discussion generated at the meeting will guide the community to develop a strategic plan to promote the implementation of market-based incentives that will benefit the local economy and the conservation of the endangered red wolf.

BACKGROUND

The 2005 report highlighted several problems that currently prevent the implementation of a thriving ecotourism agenda in Tyrrell and Hyde counties. In the past, one major issue has been a lack of communication about the red wolf recovery program between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) managers and local residents and businesses. This factor has resulted in both confusion and distrust between locals and FWS. Additional confusion lies “in the lack of clarity in regard to economic partnerships on refuge lands” (Lash and Black, 2005, p. 41).

The absence of a premier attraction and marketing for existing ecotourism opportunities in Columbia, Tyrrell County’s only incorporated town, also hinders ecotourism. Despite Columbia’s location on Highway 64, only 35 miles from North Carolina’s Outer Banks, Tyrrell County ranks 99th out of North Carolina’s 100 counties on tourism revenue (Lash and Black, 2005, p.14). Due to this lack of marketing, potentially millions of people drive past the town each year, unaware that they have a reason to stop, spend money and explore the local attractions. In their report, Lash and Black suggested that improving roadside signage would be significant in attracting more potential visitors. Currently, one of the only attractions for tourists is the Walter B. Jones, Sr. Center for the Sounds Visitor Center. Findings from the report highly recommended creating a red wolf education center as a premier attraction for drawing visitors to the area.

Development of this area will happen with or without the input of the local community. Outside developers are hungry for land and could potentially and aggressively create a plan

that will not include the input of local citizens or incorporate the over-reaching goals of the red wolf recovery program. Because tourism development is an inevitable, immediate discussion and action is necessary so that sustainable tourism is developed with the local community capturing the majority of economic benefits.

STAKEHOLDER MEETING GOALS

The two primary goals for the stakeholder meeting included: (1) advancing equitable ecotourism opportunities within rural communities surrounding red wolf country and (2) developing strategic plans to guide the implementation of rural ecotourism activity to benefit local residents and conserve red wolf habitat.

While the first goal primarily addressed advancing opportunities for increasing economic revenue from ecotourism development within the rural communities surrounding red wolf country, clearly defined short- and long-term goals are essential before these broader goals can be initiated. Joe Landino, a 45-year resident farmer, emphasized this point when he stated that “we actually have what we need here now, but it just needs to be put together and it won’t happen in six months.”

The second goal focused on developing a strategic plan to guide the implementation of rural ecotourism activities to benefit local residents while conserving red wolf habitat. Local residents will have the ability to create their own plan, and maintain an appropriate infrastructure placing them in the driver’s seat. However, they will require guidance from the ecotourism committee to prevent ceding control of developing their economic markets for tourism to outside investors who may not take their wants or needs into consideration.

MEETING AGENDA

Four presentations offered at the meeting summarized (1) ecotourism and strategic planning, (2) findings from the 2005 red wolf ecotourism report, (3) a local landowner’s perspective about the red wolf recovery program and (4) successful ecotourism marketing practices. Following the presentations, participants separated into smaller working groups to focus on a specific topic or area of expertise. A discussion regarding the red wolf education center confirmed community support for its construction. In addition, participants exchanged conceptual ideas about the vision for this venue. (see Appendix H).

PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Joseph P. Flood, Assistant Professor, East Carolina University

Dr. Flood’s presentation (see Appendix C) highlighted the benefits of tourism for the community as well as its associated costs. Tourism may offer employment opportunities, additional income, economic diversification, tax revenues, visibility and cultural benefits. Conversely, tourism may cost money to provide facilities and services, promotions, and staff

and employee training. Further, while tourism can be beneficial, it is also seasonal, and the resulting influx of more cars and people visiting the area could lead to increased pollution and congestion on adjacent roadways. Strategic planning and development will be a key factor in developing ecotourism in the area and are vital to the area's future.

Moreover, potential development should ensure that the benefits of tourism are distributed equitably throughout the community and that proposed development fits in with the surroundings. It is equally important to recognize that tourism has limitations, and plans should optimize potential growth without changing the rural nature and habitat of the area. This is clearly important from the perspective of maintaining viable red wolf habitat. Planning for this kind of growth requires organizational evaluation and community involvement, as well as clearly identified product development and marketing. Local stakeholders have the ability to control development but must do so systematically, collectively and with a sense of urgency.

To develop ecotourism in Tyrrell County, Dr. Flood highlighted three steps that must first be attained: (1) a community vision must be developed (2) issues and concerns need to be identified and (3) clearly articulated goals must be established. It is important to develop goals that will help the community achieve their vision of the future. An example used to identify goals and objectives was illustrated using an analysis applied in the 2005 report, which focused on community Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) in terms of ecotourism opportunities (Lash and Black, 2005). The SWOT analysis is beneficial because it stimulates group participation, provides a framework for assessing capabilities and community values and provides a base upon which to develop a set of goals that will take advantage of opportunities, address weaknesses and ward off threats.

Dr. Gail Y. B. Lash, Ph. D., Ursa International, Community Planner/Biologist

Dr. Lash's presentation (see Appendix D) was a summary of the report *Red Wolves: Creating Economic Opportunity Through Ecotourism in Rural North Carolina* (2005). She addressed specific issues of concern for residents in Tyrrell and Hyde Counties, including (1) the lack of jobs in the area forcing young people to leave town to find work, (2) rising land costs, (3) the lack of communication and cooperation with federal agencies, (4) fear of being overrun by tourists, and (5) the ability of residents to keep development at a small-town scale and preserve local beauty. One hundred percent of the residents she interviewed during her study agreed that if red wolves could be used as a marketing tool to attract tourists and tourist dollars, they would feel better about the red wolf recovery program. This factor bodes well for red wolf conservation, as increasing public tolerance is imperative for the continued success of a species recovery. Residents were open to developing and participating in ecotourism ventures, but indicated they had little time to do so, and were concerned about start-up costs, liability, potential damage to property and the fear that residents would disagree over what to do.

In the market demand part of the study, Dr. Lash found that those activities and amenities that tourists at the Outer Banks were most interested in were also those that the community members in Tyrrell and Hyde Counties wanted to supply and to see in place. These included such activities as river cruises, trail walking, visiting the red wolf center, and kayaking, and amenities such as relaxing in a peaceful rural setting, quaint small towns and enjoying unspoiled nature. This study documented that the type and structure of future development that tourists and residents are looking to build and experience is very synergistic.

Paying close attention to the type and pace of development in the region is crucial in order to maintain a desirable quality of life for residents. The construction of a red wolf education center could be the keystone in the development process. Findings from the report concluded that such a center would generate revenue and tourists without overdeveloping the area. Furthermore, the center would create a link between resident wants and tourist needs and assist in generating optimal local benefits from ecotourism. Additional tourism facilities, such as hotels and restaurants, are needed as well as packaging trips and tours. Dr. Lash emphasized the importance of involving area youth and educating residents about events and changes occurring within the community. Finally, marketing and advertising for the Inner Banks must be implemented in order to draw tourists to the area, with the building of the red wolf education center as a premier attraction.

Joe Landino, Local Retired Farmer

Joe Landino's presentation provided an overview of a landowner's perspective on red wolf reintroduction in Tyrrell County. Mr. Landino received a degree in forestry, and later became a farmer while working for a land development corporation. His breadth of experience in the region over the past 45 years offered insight into understanding the level of acceptance and trepidation area farmers feel about red wolf reintroduction. While Mr. Landino shared his feelings regarding how farmers and landowners initially feared the release of the wolves on their lands, he emphasized that this was primarily based on a misunderstandings about wolves, their habits, and FWS's unexplained plans to reintroduce wolves back into the region. The following quote by Mr. Landino represents the landowners' point of view: "The landowners felt like the public agencies were trying to grab control of our land without buying it."

Area farmers were concerned that FWS personnel would travel on their land anytime without permission while tracking the wolves. Many landowners were concerned about the impact to roads and fields and felt that they would be stuck footing the repair bill. Farmers and landowners felt they were being taken advantage of at the expense of the FWS mandate that the red wolf had free reign throughout the region. Mr. Landino summed up past local concerns by saying, "If the red wolf shows up on your property, you're going to have to cease everything you are doing and just let the red wolf have its way." These concerns were real fears that landowners and farmers once had regarding how wolves might potentially impact their livelihoods.

Mr. Landino explained that his perspective changed over time; however, there are still many who harbor doubts about the red wolves' role in the environment. Some are worried about the sustainability of the red wolf. According to Landino, he and others have seen many wolves that look ragged and malnourished. He stated that because some wolves may be mating with coyotes and hunting dogs, it is hard for most locals to identify a true red wolf unless it has a collar. As the presentation drew to a close, Mr. Landino said, "I think that landowners would cooperate with something like this [reintroduction efforts] if they knew how to do it." He further stated that ecotourism has potential for increasing community confidence and generating local revenue.

In an effort to develop business plans for ecotourism opportunities, he stressed that guided tours led by respected locals would be more appreciated by local farmers because tourists would not be able to roam on restricted areas of their property. In closing, Mr. Landino recommended a few ecotourism ideas including the establishment of interpretive talks about native flora and fauna within ecotourism programs, rather than completely focusing on the red wolf.

Jill Simonetti, Ecotourism Programs Coordinator, The Conservation Fund

Ms. Simonetti summarized the major steps for marketing ecotourism in the region: (1) preparation, (2) execution, and (3) evaluation (see Appendix E). In the preparation stage, it is necessary to know "who you are" (the organization), understand customer wants and needs, and know what media source to best utilize the organization's advertising needs. Knowing who you are is best explained through knowledge of what your organization represents, which can be determined by evaluating sales, visitation numbers and trends. It is necessary to establish benchmarks and set realistic goals for the future. Identifying general trends in tourism, ecotourism and specific customer trends in North Carolina tourism will help potential business owners understand the customer.

A major challenge for effective ecotourism marketing lies in selecting the appropriate media source to portray the advertising image. Executing the marketing strategy can only follow the creation of the right image. While there are many pros and cons associated with specific media outlets, several were outlined in a handout: *North Carolina Visitor and Trip Profile 2005 Fast Facts* (see Appendix F). The final step in the marketing process for ecotourism is evaluation. To determine if business goals are being attained, continual feedback must be collected, organized, analyzed and evaluated based on revisiting benchmarks and conducting surveys.

SMALL GROUP BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Participants separated into small groups to promote interaction that enabled them to exchange information in their specialty areas. The groups focused on identifying and marketing potential ecotourism opportunities, making ecotourism profitable, increasing red wolf education and keeping revenue within the community.

Identifying and Marketing Ecotourism

The group generated a list of ecotourism possibilities to assist local farmers and businesses create revenue through ecotourism. Once ecotourism ideas are identified and developed, local farmers and business owners will need to develop marketing strategies to attract tourists.

Group members first identified different products and projects already available in the county and finished by developing ideas the county could effectively utilize in the future. The most important factors for this group related to preserving community culture and the environment. Collectively, the group decided to concentrate on the following types of tourism: (1) heritage, (2) agritourism and (3) ecotourism.

Heritage Tourism is defined by the North Carolina Department of Commerce as “travel that is motivated by a desire to experience the authentic natural, historic and cultural resources of a community or region” (2006). Participants identified three heritage tourism opportunities currently operating within the community: (1) Somerset Farm, a historic 19th century plantation; (2) Davenport Homestead, a Creswell landmark offering a look at how residents lived more than 200 years ago; and (3) Columbia Theatre, a cultural and historical museum. Tours could draw tourists to these venues, package them with other ecotourism enterprises and distribute information about the red wolf recovery program.

Agritourism refers to visiting a working farm or other agricultural business. Because of the community’s agricultural landscape, agritourism through the development and implementation of farm activities is very feasible. Opportunities to investigate include (a) spending a day on a farm (where tourists and school groups would assist with farm work); (b) selling produce through seasonal pickings and farmers’ markets; (c) offering seed plant tours; and (d) creating and marketing corn mazes.

Of these tourism ideas, creating a farmers market is the most tangible project that could be immediately implemented. Farmers and business owners could work with the county extension office to explain and implement the specific required regulations. Before moving forward with a farmers market, insurance and zoning requirements need to be determined.

Farmers are apprehensive about on-site farm visits because they fear potential lawsuits. A recent law, North Carolina Statute House Bill 329 Session Law 2005-236, enacted in 2005 addressed the liability issue (see Appendix I). The statute recommends that landowners post specific warning signs (as the statute outlines) on their property. The law does not prevent farmers from liability for accidents but may discourage lawsuits if visitors are aware of the risks associated with the activities offered on the farm.

Another innovative idea involves participation with the North Carolina Birding Trail, which links bird watching sites across the state and connects birders to local community attractions. According to several participants, the organization, comprised of state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations, is looking for communities to showcase potential birding

opportunities in the area, and it is willing to train businesses and landowners. More information is available at: www.ncbirdingtrail.org/. Agritourism and ecotourism entrepreneurs may also be able to secure funding through the Golden LEAF Foundation at: <http://goldenleaf.org/>.

Other suggestions for creating ecotourism included offering red wolf tracking tours, building a red wolf education center and developing media packets for area businesses. Further research in marketing techniques is essential.

Making It Profitable

Economic benefits are a key incentive for farmers and landowners to cooperate with red wolf recovery and ecotourism, but it is important that economic opportunities do not degrade existing businesses. One major problem identified was the lack of communication among government officials, landowners, farmers and businesses within the community. Improved one-on-one communication among these varied groups would be a good place to start. In addition, it was recommended to send newsletters to selected individuals to keep interested parties informed of red wolf locations and their mating seasons and to map concentrated areas of red wolf habitat. Participants also endorsed the idea of creating incentives for landowners to support ecotourism efforts including financial incentives in the form of cash income to be generated from red wolf tourism activities, as well as increased awareness of the tourism benefits red wolves generate for farmers and other landowners.

Roughly 235 farms are located in Tyrrell and Hyde counties, with the farm size averaging 716 and 809 acres, respectively (NASS 2002). It was suggested that landowners should be compensated for red wolves on their farm. If implemented, compensation should not be based on the size of the farm because a smaller farm could have a large proportion of red wolves, and a larger farm could have none at all depending on the location. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) could be used as a tool to overlay populations of wildlife to geographic features, although the entire area needs to be monitored because red wolves could easily be in at least five counties in the area.

Landowners could potentially benefit from red wolf ecotourism by (1) generating revenue from merchandise sales (*e.g.*, t-shirts, mugs and paintings) and (2) creating trained local guide services, which would bring tourists to the farms without impacting roads and habitats. Many farmers are reluctant to allow people on their property without supervision, but a locally paid guide could disseminate information and prevent visitors from disrupting normal farming activities.

The next benefit the group identified does not take the form of a cash payment, but nevertheless carries economic value for farmers. Many landowners are actually unaware of the benefits from red wolves in the form of avoided production costs or reduced crop losses. Red wolves feed on nutria and raccoons, two animals considered pests by most farmers. Farmers in the group believe that red wolves are reducing both populations, which may allow farmers to save money by not having to repair dikes and erosion caused by nutria. The U.S.

Department of Agriculture may have incentive funding available for farming and landowners to maintain red wolf habitat (i.e. Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program). A pilot research project could provide science-based answers to prove that the red wolf is providing economic benefits to hunters and farmers. It is important to bring this information to area landowners where the biggest benefits might be recognized.

Increasing Red Wolf Education

It is imperative that the long-term viability of red wolves remain the foremost concern as tourism develops within these communities. Red wolves are shy and sensitive. Disruption to their habitat, or way of life, may have detrimental effects on the species' recovery. It is important to recognize that ecotourism opportunities that may seem beneficial to the public may not necessarily be good for the red wolf.

As human tolerance is key to the success of the recovery program, it is important to relate the benefits of red wolves to the community. The FWS Red Wolf Recovery Program and the Red Wolf Coalition, a Columbia-based non-profit organization, already provide red wolf-related educational materials but should identify additional constituencies within the community to target. The coalition promotes the long-term survival of red wolves by educating the public about the species and fostering public involvement in its conservation. For example, the FWS offers a discovery box containing a red wolf pelt, track cast and a radio collar to educate students and community groups about this endangered species. As evident by the discussion at the stakeholder meeting, additional outreach must expand educational information to farmers and landowners about the benefits of red wolves and the recovery program.

The Red Wolf Coalition and FWS currently partner in one of the first red wolf-related ecotourism opportunities—howling tours. At these events, participants learn about the recovery program and join in a group howl in hopes of hearing a return howl from the resident wolves. Nearly 1,200 people participated in the free tours last year and they are by far the biggest draw for tourists. The coalition estimates that 50 percent of participants are visitors from out of town and 50 percent are residents of North Carolina. More information can be obtained through the organization's Web site at: <http://www.redwolves.com>.

Currently, the coalition is developing a wildlife program that will highlight the habitat of the red wolf and other wildlife. Participants will learn to use spotting scopes and telemetry equipment, which uses electronic signals emitted from radio-collars to locate and track an animal's movement, to look for signs of wolves in the area. The coalition is dedicated to constructing the red wolf education center within this community and strongly feels that the center will be a cornerstone to help create diverse economic and educational opportunities in the community.

Keeping Revenue within the Community

Participants decided that they need to complete a needs assessment of the ecotourism resources currently available, such as number of available beds and recreational

opportunities, and then immediately begin implementing procedures to develop the additional necessary resources.

Creating Columbia as a red wolf ecotourism destination is critical. For this to happen, the development of an express hotel in the town to accommodate large tour groups is needed. While smaller accommodations and opportunities are already in place, community members could implement more specific strategies, such as utilizing existing visitor centers across the state as well as accessing Web-based information to disseminate more accurate and interesting red wolf facts to the public.

Canoe, kayak and bike rentals are another great way for communities to generate revenue while showcasing the natural beauty of the areas. Pettigrew State Park is considering possible campground space on the Scuppernon River, which is a superb place to rent canoes and kayaks. Interested parties should work with government entities to develop other projects and entrepreneurial opportunities in the area, such as a visitor center. Local guides could also be trained and hired for specific ecotourism education. A volunteer guide association could train retired members and high school and college students from the community to lead tours. This strategy would keep expenses low while still offering a credible guide service.

Another attractive way to sell Columbia as a tourist destination spot is to develop package deals. By combining various tourism opportunities, visitors would spend more time and money in the area and experience the community from many perspectives, including hunting and fishing opportunities. Moreover, package deals have the potential to unite local businesses while generating word-of-mouth advertising.

A communal effort, vision, compromise and can-do attitude within the community holds the potential for a tremendous future and enduring possibilities for both ecotourism in the area and preservation of the red wolf.

MEETING SUMMARY

The stakeholder meeting provided an opportunity to identify the framework that will best demonstrate to the community measurable private economic benefits that can be achieved while furthering endangered species protection. The stakeholders clearly have the resources to develop ecotourism opportunities within the community, and this forum provided an opportunity for them to identify barriers that are hindering the cohesive development of these activities. Two such factors discussed at the meeting included a lack of communication among stakeholders about (1) the red wolf recovery program and (2) the resources currently available to plan ecotourism opportunities. In addition, participants worried that time constraints may prevent them from future involvement.

To address the lack of communication about red wolves, FWS and the Red Wolf Coalition must take this opportunity to identify how to educate the community about the ecological and economical value of red wolves and cultivate relationships among the diverse community

groups to garner additional support for red wolf recovery, which is important for the advancement of red wolf-based ecotourism.

Despite the availability of resources to advance ecotourism within the community, the general public is not taking full advantage of them, potentially because they are not aware of them. The Tyrrell County Ecotourism Committee and local government must disseminate information about public forums to the entire community, particularly meetings discussing ecotourism or land-use planning. In addition, local constituencies such as hunting and fishing businesses, the marine industry and artisans must be included in future ecotourism discussions.

Without a doubt, stakeholders are interested in furthering ecotourism endeavors. Despite this interest, participants at the meeting expressed their concerns that they didn't have enough time to join another committee or attend another meeting. To ensure that critical input is not lost, this factor must be addressed when scheduling future training sessions and meetings.

Local involvement in ecotourism development is important in ensuring the protection of green space and wildlife, as well as low impact methods of building and growth. The following recommendations may be used as an action plan to advance aspects of ecotourism within this and ensure that projects, education and outreach are established.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Derived from the discussions generated at the one-day meeting, the following information identifies potential options that could serve as fiscal mechanisms for rewarding landowners to engage in red wolf conservation efforts and the infrastructure that must be established to further ecotourism opportunities, including training in general business, hospitality and tourism for local entrepreneurs and the establishment of zoning laws to preserve the natural assets that will draw tourists into this area.

This information is only a starting point from which the community can establish a timeline for action. Community members must conduct meetings dedicated to advancing market-based incentives and to evaluate the immediate, short- and long-term needs for building sustainable tourism-based economic growth, while benefiting the conservation of red wolves and other critically endangered species.

Economic Incentives and Red Wolves

- Farmers/landowners could receive cash income from red wolf activity on their lands or for land containing suitable habitat for red wolf expansion in several ways:
 - A share of red wolf guide fees paid by guide tour participants could be distributed to farmers;
 - A share of entrance fees and souvenir sales at the planned red wolf center could be distributed to farmers;
 - A share of souvenir sales at shops in the area could be recycled to farmers;

- Hotels in the area could offer guests to check a voluntary payment box on their bill to donate a small amount (\$1 or \$2 perhaps) to the red wolf recovery effort. This money could be recycled to farmers; and
- Farmers could receive payments for the ecosystem services red wolves provide to federal land managers in the form of reduced nutria populations (Lash and Black, 2005). These services may be administered by USDA researchers, or US Fish & Wildlife Service biologists, and have the potential to lower management costs (nutria control, purple loosestrife control) and hence represent a benefit to federal land managers. They also reduce negative impacts of nutria on migratory waterfowl (whose food and cover is negatively impacted by nutria's impact on wetland plants) and water quality (Flood, 2006).

Ecotourism Opportunities to Investigate

- Offer a farm tour or the opportunity to spend a working day on the farm;
- Offer seed plant tours;
- Create corn maze;
- Market ecotourism opportunities through the North Carolina Bird Trail and provide services for bird watchers;
 - After the meeting, 23 sites within Tyrrell, Beaufort, Hyde, Dare and Washington counties were selected for the coastal plain component of the North Carolina Birding Trail. A complete list of selected sites is available online at: www.ncbirdingtrail.org/Documents/approved_sites_coast.pdf. Local businesses should utilize this marketing tool to highlight ecotourism activities within the area. Businesses should also introduce new activities catering to birding enthusiasts to draw them into the area.
- Provide tourists the opportunity to pick seasonal produce and vegetables
- Farmers market
 - Contact the North Carolina Extension agent to determine zoning and insurance requirements and best ways to market this opportunity to local producers and artisans.
- Develop an association of trained volunteers to offer ecotourism services. For instance, trained guides could develop interpretative talks about native flora and fauna. Initially, local retirees and high school students could be solicited to volunteer in this training program. As the program develops, guide usage could be expanded to include both volunteers and paid employees.
- Develop a business offering canoe, kayak or bicycle rentals to tourists
- Engage the following local constituencies in discussions about ecotourism developments
 - Artisans
 - Hunting Guides
 - Fishers
- Develop package deals to sell tours
- Increase information accessibility by creating web links among the Web sites operated by local businesses, landowners and government.
- Offer day trips focusing on ecotourism activities

- Sell red wolf merchandise
- Promote telemetry tours and discovery boxes
 - The Red Wolf Coalition is developing this program. The Coalition could partner with local merchants to jointly advertise their opportunities.
- Build the red wolf education center
 - Local organizations, like the Red Wolf Coalition, are exploring this initiative, but community support will be necessary to move the project forward.

Resources for the Community

- Funding to establish ecotourism businesses may be available through Golden LEAF Foundation. This foundation includes the five counties containing red wolves—Hyde, Washington, Tyrrell, Beaufort and Dare—on their priority list for funding. Visit www.goldenleaf.org for details.
- Blackland Farm Managers Association
 - Joe Landino is the president
- Office of Agritourism, www.agr.state.nc.us/agritourism/, offers networking services and membership in the Agritourism Networking Association
- North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, Inc. —www.ncruralcenter.org/
- The Nature Conservancy—www.nature.org/ecotourism
- Tyrrell County Community Development Corporation
 - Contact: Mavis Hill, Director, 604 Main Street, P.O. Box 58, Columbia, NC 27925, (252) 796-1991
- North Carolina Cooperative Extension—www.ces.ncsu.edu
 - Contact: Carla Pugh, Extension Agent, Agriculture, Tyrrell County, carla_pugh@ncsu.edu, Phone: (252) 796-1581, Fax: (252) 796-2881

Educational and Research Needs

- Investigate training opportunities in Web site development
- Meetings/training should take place during the winter season. Weekdays are preferred. All-day meetings are not popular and difficult to attend.
- Develop GIS map to overlay flora and fauna with geographical features of the area
- Identify and provide a report on the economic benefits attributed to the presence of the red wolf, monetary and non-monetary.
- Focus available dollars to maximize potential investments through granting organizations such as Golden Leaf Foundation of North Carolina,.
- Categorize potential money flow and/or benefits (which ones can be controlled by locals and which ones can be targeted to specific landowners and projects).
- Increase communication among government staff, landowners, business owners and farmers.
- Use a pilot project through the USDA to provide financial incentives for habitat conservation. Contact the local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office at (252)796-3701, ext. 100.
- What do farmers need?

- Local farmers need support and business plans
- Information about insurance
- Education about tourism and marketing
- Assistance identifying their role in furthering ecotourism
- Participants recommended that farmers should use farm management software, such as Farm Works (Tyrrell County Community Development Corporation office offers farm management software for free).

Marketing

- Media identified by stakeholders to market ecotourism
 - Media kit – funding came from NC Division of Tourism – Contact The Conservation Fund for a copy of the media kit.
 - brochures
 - local newspapers
 - Ray McClees—local reporter
 - Scuppernon Monitor
 - Coastal Times
 - Radio show—Jimmy Fleming and Lee Brickhouse
 - Homegrownhandmade.com
 - Ncbirdingtrail.org
 - Use the Tyrrell County Ecotourism Committee Web site, www.ecotourismnc.org, as a central information gathering point.
 - Washington County tourism and travel Web site—www.visitwashingtoncountync.com/
 - Collaborate with the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau to identify ecotourism marketing approaches. Visit www.outerbanks.org.
- Mediums to market the red wolf recovery program
 - Newspapers;
 - Publications;
 - Brochures;
 - Local events; and
 - Tourism Web sites.

Zoning and Land-Use Planning

- Tyrrell county and the city of Columbia are in the process of land use planning
 - 2-year planning process for Tyrrell County
 - 3-year planning process for Columbia
 - Stakeholders must attend these planning meetings if they want to ensure sustainable development. Rhett White, Columbia town manager, can be contacted for more details

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- Quintal, P. K. M. 1995. Public attitudes and beliefs about the red wolf and its recovery in North Carolina. Unpublished M.S. Thesis, North Carolina State University, Raleigh. 75 pages.
- Rosen, W. E. 1997. Red wolf recovery in northeastern North Carolina and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park: Public attitudes and economic impacts. Final Report. Department of Policy Analysis and Management. Cornell University. Ithaca, New York. 158 pages.

Appendix A: Stakeholder Meeting Attendees

<p>Lee Brickhouse 415 Main St. Columbia, NC 27925 (252) 766-3333</p> <p>Ken and Terrie Cherry Cherry Farms (252)796-1341</p> <p>Andy Drumm Senior Ecotourism Specialist The Nature Conservancy 4245 N Fairfax Dr. Suite 100 Arlington, VA 22203-1606 adrumm@tnc.org (703) 841 8177</p> <p>Bud Fazio Team Leader, Red Wolf Recovery Program P.O. Box 1969 Manteo, NC 27954 buddy_fazio@fws.gov (252) 473-1131</p> <p>Joseph Flood (Facilitator) Assistant Professor Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies East Carolina University 160 Minges Coliseum Greenville, NC 27858 floodj@ecu.edu (252) 328-2745</p> <p>Mike Gerhart Farmer Columbia, NC</p> <p>Diane Hendry Outreach Coordinator Red Wolf Recovery Program U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service P.O. Box 1969 Manteo, NC 27954 Diane_Hendry@fws.gov (252) 473-1131, ext. 246</p>	<p>Mavis Hill Executive Director, Tyrrell County Community Development Corporation P.O. Box 58 Columbia, NC 27925 tccdc@mail.com (252) 796-1991</p> <p>Timm Kroeger Natural Resources Economist Conservation Economics Program Defenders Of Wildlife 1130 17th St. NW Washington D.C. 20036 tkroeger@defenders.org (202) 682-9400</p> <p>Joe Landino Farmer, retired 855 Bulls Bay Rd Columbia, NC 27925-9246 (252) 797-7252</p> <p>Gail Lash Ursa International 366 Oakland Ave, SE Atlanta, GA 30312 gail@ursainternational.com (404) 222-9595</p> <p>Chris Parker Graduate Assistant East Carolina University 160 Minges Coliseum Greenville, NC 27858 cp0419@ecu.edu</p> <p>Carla Pugh Agricultural Extension Agent Washington County Center North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Tyrrell County Center P.O. Box 209 Columbia, NC 27925-0209 carla_pugh@ncsu.edu (252) 796-1581</p>
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Conservation Associate
Defenders of Wildlife
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gschrader@defenders.org

Jill Simonetti
Ecotourism Program Coordinator
The Nature Conservancy
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Chapel Hill, NC 27514
jsimonetti@conservationfund.org
(919) 267-2223

Harry and Sharon Spruill
Scuppernong Farms
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Columbia, NC 27925
(252) 796-0025

Tom Stroud
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Partnership for the Sounds
North Carolina Estuarium,
223 E. Water Street
Washington, NC, 27889
(252) 974-1044
tstroud@beaufortco.com

Barrett Walker
Trustee
Alex C. Walker Educational and
Charitable Foundation
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Decatur, Georgia 30030

Kim Wheeler
Executive Director
Red Wolf Coalition
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P. O. Box 96
Columbia, NC 27925
(252) 796-5600
redwolf@redwolves.com

Rhett White
Columbia Town Manager
P.O. Box 361
Columbia, NC 27925
Rhett_townofcolumbia@yahoo.com
(252) 797-4800

Appendix B: Tyrrell County Ecotourism Committee

Tyrrell County Ecotourism Committee

The Tyrrell County Ecotourism Committee uses ecotourism initiatives to promote and protect the natural resources of Tyrrell County, North Carolina, benefit the local economy and pay tribute to the region's rich Native American and African American heritage. The Tyrrell County Ecotourism Committee is comprised of representatives from local, state and federal government agencies, non-governmental organizations and local business owners.

P.O. Box 55
203 S. Ludington Dr.
Columbia, NC 27925
Phone: 252-796-0723
Email: info@ecotourismnc.com
Web site: www.ecotourismnc.org

MEMBERS

Eastern 4-H Environmental Education Center

100 North Clover Way
Columbia, NC 27925
Phone: 252-797-4800
Email: info@eastern4hcenter.org
www.eastern4hcenter.org

Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

P.O. Box 329
Columbia, NC 27925
Phone: 252-796-3004
pocosinlakes.fws.gov

Emily and Richardson Preyer—Buckridge Coastal

Reserve
P.O. Box 8
Columbia, NC, NC 27925
Phone: 252-796-3709
www.ncnerr.org

The Red Wolf Coalition

P.O. Box 96
Columbia, NC 27925
Phone: 252-796-5600
www.redwolves.com

Partnership for the Sounds

P.O. Box 5
Columbia, North Carolina 27925
Phone: 252-796-1000 or 888-737-0437
Email: pfs@beachlink.com
www.partnershipforthesounds.org

The Conservation Fund

P.O. Box 271
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
Phone: 919-967-2223
Email: palmettop3@earthlink.net
www.palmettopeartree.org

Pettigrew State Park

2252 Lake Shore Road
Creswell, NC 27928
Phone: 252-797-4475
Email: pettigrew@ncmail.net
www.ils.unc.edu/parkproject/visit/pett/home.html

Tyrrell County Government



P.O. Box 170
Columbia, NC 27925
Phone: 252-796-1996
Email: info@visittyrrellcounty.com
www.visittyrrellcounty.com/Government

Appendix C: Stakeholder Meeting on Red Wolf Ecotourism in North Carolina

Stakeholder Meeting on Red Wolf Ecotourism in North Carolina
Dr. Joe Flood
 East Carolina University

Eastern 4H Center
 Columbia, North Carolina
 May 10, 2006

Sponsored by the Department of Wildlife and Funded by the Alex C. Walker Education and Charitable Foundation

Benefits of Tourism

- Employment Benefits
- Income Benefits
- Economic Diversification
- Tax Revenues
- Visibility
- Cultural Benefits



Costs of Tourism

- Public Facility & Service Costs
- Promotional Costs
- Monitoring Costs
- Staff Costs
- Business Owner and Employee Training
- Tourism can be seasonal
- Congestion



Benefits of Strategic Planning

- Provide clear direction and rationale
- Establish realistic goals consistent with the community's vision
- Communicate goals and development strategies
- Establish a sense of ownership in the plan
- Focus limited resources on key priorities
- Provide a framework for implementation and evaluation



Development Considerations

- Focus on the authentic
- Recognize that tourism has limits
- Insure that development fits in with the surroundings
- Interpret your resources
- Remember aesthetics and ecology
- Make sure the benefits of tourism are distributed throughout the community



Visitor Motivations

- Need for Change
- Need for Achievement
- Social Interaction
- Cultural Experiences
- Pampering
- Novelty Seeking



SCSU Wild/Pack logo and name also held on Visitor Pouch in Bank 34.

Visitor Needs

- **Access**
(Information, Your Community, Your Business)
- **Attitude**
(Local Hospitality, Welcome Signs)
- **Attractions/Activities**
- **Accommodations**
(Lodging, Food Service, Personal Needs)
- **Security**
(Emergency Services)



Tourism Planning Process

- **Where are you now?**
- **Where do you want to go?**
- **How will you get there?**
- **How are you doing?**



Planning Considerations

- **Organizational Development**
- **Community Involvement**
- **Tourism Product Development**
- **Tourism Product Marketing**




Creating a Crop Map with GPS

Organization Evaluation

You Are The Ecotourism Action Committee?

- Recognized community leaders and leaders of organizations
- Broad cross-section of stakeholders
- Committed volunteers and dedicated team members
- Desire to contribute to community well-being
- Respect and appreciate views of others



Economic & Visitor Profiles

- How does ecotourism fit within your existing economy?
- What does the existing data tell us about the characteristics and travel patterns of the visitors already coming to the area?



Natural Resources

Where We Need To Go!

- Step 1: Develop a Community Vision
- Step 2: Identify Issues and Concerns
- Step 3: Establish Goals



Developing a Vision

- How do you see your community after tourism development?
- What do you want to see happen?
- What is an acceptable level of change in your community?
- How much of what type of tourism development fits with your image of your community's future?



Identified Issues & Concerns

SWOT Analysis



S	Strengths
W	Weaknesses
O	Opportunities
T	Threats

SWOT Analysis Matrix

	Strengths <i>(Internal)</i>	Weaknesses <i>(Internal)</i>
SWOT ANALYSIS	Positive characteristics and advantages of the issue or situation	Negative characteristics and disadvantages of the issue or situation
Opportunities <i>(External)</i>	S-O Analysis	W-O Analysis
Factors that can benefit, enhance or improve the issue or situation	How can strengths be employed to take advantage of development opportunities?	How can weaknesses be overcome to take advantage of development opportunities?
Threats <i>(External)</i>	S-T Analysis	W-T Analysis
Factors that can hinder the issue or situation	How can strengths be used to counteract threats that tend to hinder achievement of goals and pursuit of opportunities?	How can weaknesses be overcome to counteract threats that tend to hinder achievement of objectives and pursuit of opportunities?

Benefits of a SWOT Analysis


- Stimulates group participation
- Provides a framework for assessing capabilities and community values
- Provides a basis for the development of a set of goals that will take advantage of opportunities, while building up weaknesses and warding off threats



SWOT Analysis Summary

ASSESS:

- Identified strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats
- What can we learn from the SWOT Analysis?
- How can we benefit from this information?
- Use this information as a spring board for future planning efforts...




Establish Goals for the Future

- Develop goals that will help the community achieve a vision of the future...
- Goals should be SMARTER



Goals Should Be SMARTER

S	Specific
M	Measurable
A	Acceptable
R	Realistic
T	Timely
E	Extending
R	Rewarding



How To Get There...



- Step 1: Identify projects
- Step 2: Prioritize projects
- Step 3: Develop an Action Plan for each project
- Step 4: Monitor the progress of each project

Part I of Small Group Exercise: Prioritize Projects

- What projects/ products will be of value to potential visitors?
- What projects/ products will be of value to the community?
- What projects/ products can help your community's ecotourism industry have a competitive advantage?




Value to the Tourist

- Will it fill a vacation motive or need?
 - Motives: Change, Achievement, Interaction, Experience, Pampering, Novelty Seeking
 - Needs: Access, Attitude, Attractions, Accommodations, Security
- Will it give a reason for tourists to spend more time in your community?
- Is access acceptable to the visitor?

Value to the Community

- Will it help bring in outside income?
- Is it compatible with your community's lifestyle?
- Will it maintain the natural beauty of the area?



NC Biodiesel Suppliers

Competitive Advantage

- Is the project unique?
- Can the ecotourism opportunity be provided at a price that is acceptable to both buyer and seller?
- Can the ecotourism opportunity provide a better value than another opportunity elsewhere?

Part II: Afternoon Action Plan

- List the steps or tasks needed to accomplish each project/ or product development strategy
- Steps should be specific and detailed
- Realistic timelines should be established for each step
- Identify resources (human or financial) needed to accomplish each step should be identified
- Identify who is responsible for each step
- Obtain the consent and commitment of the responsible party

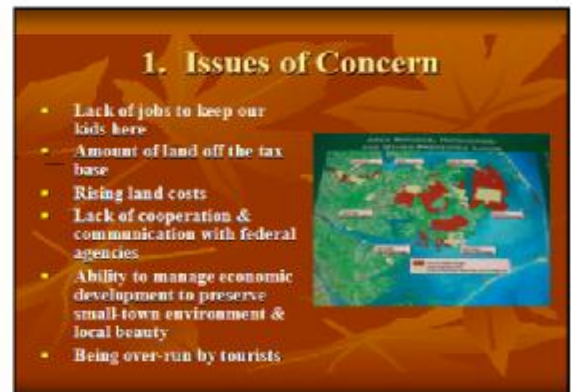
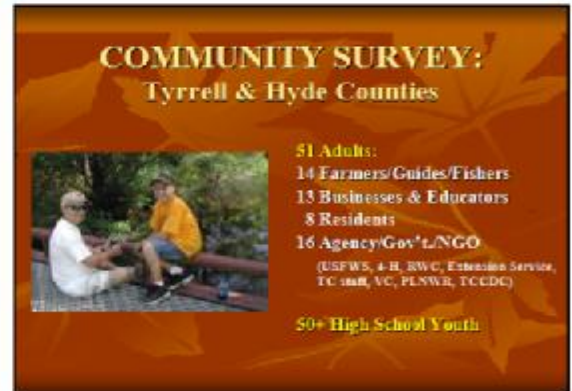
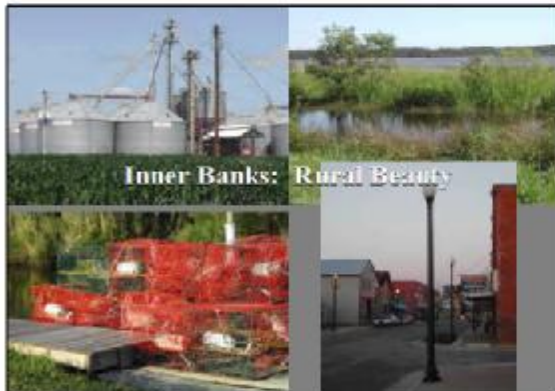
Next Step in the Plan?

- **Who's in the Driver's Seat?**
- **Community Tourism Leadership Roles?**
- **Next Meeting?**

My future depends on you!



Appendix D: Summary Report on Red Wolves: Creating Economic Opportunity Through Ecotourism in Rural North Carolina



2. Residents & Red Wolves: Benefits

- None
- RW can be tourist attraction
- Like to see & hear RW
- RW lower populations of nuisance animals & costs of repair
- Quail population increase



Residents & Red Wolves: Costs

- Tax dollars paid for RW programs
- USFWS hires non-local staff
- Farm maintenance from USFWS trucks
- RW fees paid to landowner, not farmer
- RW reduce deer & duck populations



Resident Quotation

"80 percent don't care [about red wolves], 10 percent like 'em, 10 percent dislike 'em."

LO4

Residents & Red Wolf Tourism

- Think people will come to view RWs
- Rarely see a RW in the wild
- Continue howling trips
- Hunt one or more RW per yr. with lottery/drawing
- Charge people to work or volunteer with USFWS documenting scat or tracks
- Need Red Wolf Center in order to have viable red wolf tourism



"If the red wolf could be used as a marketing draw to bring tourists & tourist dollars to the area, would that make you feel better about the red wolf?"

Yes = 100%

3. Residents & Ecotourism: What Can Be Done Here

- River cruises
- Kayaking & canoeing
- Bear/Swan/Wolf viewing/photo tours
- History tours
- Waterfowl Museum
- Harvest & seed-cleaning tours
- Farm tours
- Crabbing
- Corn maze & hay rides
- Restaurants & cabins
- Build Red Wolf Center




Residents & Ecotourism: General Concerns

- No time to do tourism myself
- Expense: start-up costs & continued funding
- Liability and insurance costs
- Potential damage to land, crops, equipment
- Regulations & licenses
- Fear community won't agree on what & how to do



Resident Quotation

"Ecotourism is as good as an industry can get. It's cleaner than factories, gives opportunities for a lot of people, gives a certain amount of pride and prestige to the natives that it's a desirable place to be."

LO 25

4. Development Residents Want: Look & Feel

- Small town
- Pride & prestige as desirable place to be
- "Main St. USA" with waterfront, outside dining, shops, sidewalks
- Walkable community with alleys, parking lots with attractive storefronts
- Natural waterways & wildlife, with farm land



Development Residents Want: Downtowns To Model After

- Manteo, NC
- Beaufort, SC
- Eureka Springs, AR
- Savannah, GA River Street on waterfront



Development Our Youth Want: Jobs

- Wildlife job - hands-on
- Communications
- Law firm
- Computer technology
- Marine biology
- Retail: Wal-Mart
- Guides
- Veterinarians
- Automotive technician



Development Residents Don't Want: Types of Business

- Heavy industrialization
- Casinos & large hotels
- High rises
- Wal-Mart (50/50)
- Malls
- Fast food (50/50)
- Junk Shops
- Theme parks
- Golf course



Resident Quotation

"We need organized development and planning before this thing runs over us. We have the power right now, but we won't have the power long."

LO 14

TOURIST SURVEY



THE OUTER BANKS
North Carolina

Outer Banks Tourism




Based on nature & culture

202 Tourists Surveyed



- At Columbia, Manteo, Kitty Hawk Visitor Centers & NC Aquarium
- 11 yrs. to 83 yrs. old
- 16 states & 4 countries
- 46% male, 54% female
- Most w/income < \$75,000
- 81% traveling w/family
- Average group size = 4.6

Knowledge of Red Wolf (RW)



- 58% know RW – endangered species;
- 33% know RW are located 35 miles inland from OBX
- 32% know of RW reintroduction project;
- 14% know of RW howling trips;
- 1% have been on a RW howling trip.

Red Wolf Center



- 89% of visitors interviewed would like to visit the Red Wolf Center
- Average max. amount visitors would pay for admission is \$7.60
- 76% of visitors would 1) like to visit the RWC, 2) & pay at least \$5 for admission

Red Wolf Center: Revenue

(76% would pay \$ 5 admission)



- 200,000 visitors per wk. come to OBX
- 76% of 200,000 = 152,000 people/week
- 10% actually come to RWC = 15,200/week
- At \$ 5/person = \$ 76,000/week
- 12 wks/summer = 182,400 visitors to RWC, and \$ 912,000

Very Important to Visitors

(average score is 4)





- Relaxing in a peaceful rural setting
- A clean, safe environment
- Quaint, small-town setting

Enjoying unspoiled nature

Enjoying the beach

Visiting historical sites and landmarks

National parks or protected areas

Activities Most Likely to Do

(average score is 3)

- Trail walking to view wildlife
- Viewing a wild bear
- Visit Red Wolf Center
- Red wolf howling trip
- River cruise
- Viewing thousands of swans





- Visit Waterfowl Museum
- Learn about Indian history
- Look for RW tracks & scat
- Bird watching
- Photograph wildlife
- Kayak or canoe
- Visit Farmer's Market

Day Trip Activities Most Selected by Visitors





- 52% River cruise \$18.00
- 43% Trail walking \$5.00
- 37% Visit RWC \$9.00
- 27% Crabbing \$21.00
- 26% Wolf howling \$8.00
- 26% Kayaking \$21.00
- 25% Wild bear \$9.00

Tourists:



- 90% willing to take 1 or more day trips
- 92% returning to NENC in next 5yrs.
- 49% willing to stay 35 miles inland & make day trips to OBX
- 100% driving here - have car

Synergy of Residents & Tourists

<p>Residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farming & wild areas • Small towns, with relaxed lifestyle • Small businesses, employing local youth • Red Wolf Center 	<p>Tourists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural, wild areas • Quaint small towns in peaceful settings • Eco-activities & artisans • Red Wolf Center
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Recommendations:

- Build the Red Wolf Center
- Build tourism facilities
- Create & package Day Trip tours
- Get youth involved
- Educate residents in tourism
- Advertise Inner Banks



Acknowledgements

- Defenders of Wildlife
- Alex C. Walker Foundation
- Landowners & Residents in Tyrrell and Hyde Counties, NC
- Tourism Authorities for Columbia, NC and The Outer Banks, NC
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Red Wolf Coalition
- Ursa International

Appendix E: Successful Marketing Strategies in Ecotourism Stakeholder Meeting

“Successful Marketing Strategies in Ecotourism”

May 10, 2006
Stakeholder Meeting on Red Wolf
Ecotourism

Jill Simonetti, The Conservation Fund

Step 1. Preparation

- Know yourself
- Know you customer
- Know your media source

Know Yourself

- Create a marketing brief
- Evaluate sales/visitation numbers for trends
- Establish benchmarks
- Set marketing goals

Know Your Customers

- General Tourism Trends
- Ecotourism Trends
- North Carolina Trends

Know Your Media Source

- Internet
- Print Media
- Face-to-Face

Step 2. Execution

- Internet
- Printed Media
- Face-to-Face

Internet

Pros:

- Widely used
- Virtual reality
- Dynamic
- Press friendly
- Far reaching
- Interactive
- Feedback
- Inexpensive
- Always on
- Information rich

Internet

Cons:

- Not universal
- Ease of location
- Time intensive
- Not portable

Internet

Your Website

- Balance
- Photos
- Accuracy
- Contact Info
- Interactive
- Itineraries
- Ease uncertainty
- Links
- Window shop

Printed Media

- Paid advertising
- Feature articles
- Travel guide reviews
- Brochures
- Newsletters/follow-ups

Paid Advertising

- Pros
- Cons
- Tips:
 - Complimentary article
 - Available discounts
 - Design
 - Location

Features & Guides

- Pros
- Cons
- Tips:
 - Media kits
 - Website
 - Plan ahead
 - Pitch the story
 - Be kind to reporters

Brochures

- Pros
- Cons
- Tips:
 - Multiple Designs
 - Contact info
 - Maps & directions
 - Photos
 - Trivia

Newsletters & Follow-ups

- Pros
- Cons
- Tips:
 - Sneak peak
 - Personalize
 - Don't overdo it

Face-to-Face

- FAM Tour
- Open House
- Festivals

Face-to-Face

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Pros:</u> | <u>Cons:</u> |
| • Direct pitch | • 1 strike rule |
| • Community involvement | • Tourist think |
| • Relaxation factor | • Limited scope |

FAM Tours

- Remember to rest
- Community ambassadors
- Broad knowledge

Open House

- Logistics
- Activities for all
- Guestbook

Festivals

- Equipment
- Think broadly
- Engage audience

Step 3. Evaluation

- Revisit benchmarks
- Survey
- Zip codes & Area codes
- Internet
- Paid ads
- Brochures
- Festivals
- FAM tours

Appendix F: North Carolina Visitor and Trip Profile 2005 Fast Facts

FAST FACTS
2005 North Carolina Visitor & Trip Profile

Top States of Origin for 2005 NC Overnight Visitors

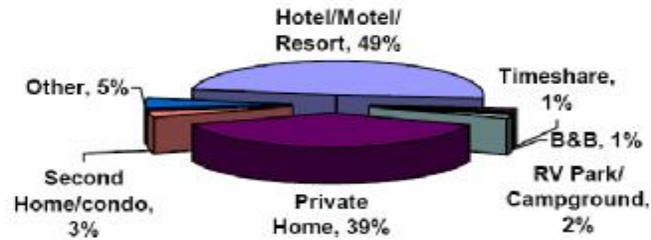
NC	43%	NY	4%	MD	3%
SC	8%	FL	4%	OH	2%
VA	8%	TN	4%	NJ	2%
GA	6%	PA	3%	TX	2%

Visitor Activities in North Carolina

Dining	28%	Museum/Art Exhibit	4%
Shopping	20%	Concert/Play/Dance	4%
Touring/Sightseeing	19%	Watch Sports Event	4%
Entertainment	18%	Gamble	4%
Beach/Waterfront Activities	12%	Nature/Culture	3%
Nightlife	9%	Group Tour	3%
Historic Site	6%	Theme/Amusement Park	3%
National/State Park	6%	Golf	3%
Festival/Craft Fair	5%	Hunt/Fish	3%

- The average number of activities a visitor participated in while visiting North Carolina was 1.6.
- Approximately 70% of overnight visitors to North Carolina reported that they were visiting for leisure purposes. Business travelers accounted for 30% of overnight visitors in 2005. Business includes meetings and conventions.

Lodging Choices of NC Overnight Visitors



- Eight-seven percent of all travelers came by auto to North Carolina. Four percent came by plane.
- The average party size of a 2005 NC visitor was 2.2 persons. Approximately 21% of parties included children in their visits to North Carolina, while 79% did not. For those parties with children, the average number of children per party was 2.0.

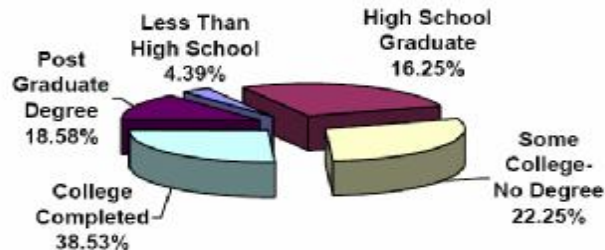
2005 Trip Duration

United States	2.1 nights
NC Portion	1.3 nights

2005 Overnight Trip Duration

United States	3.9 nights
NC Portion	3.0 nights

Education Level of NC Visitors



- Seventy-five percent of 2005 NC visitors are married, 13% have never been married and 11% are divorced, widowed or separated.
- The average age of the 2005 NC visitor is 46 years.
- The average household income of a 2005 NC visitor is over \$66,000.
- Eleven percent of NC visitors in 2005 are retired.

Source: TravelScope, Travel Industry Association, 2005

Appendix G: Economic Impact of Red Wolves in Reducing Nutria Populations & Mutual Benefits for Eastern North Carolina Wetland Managers & Farmers. Dr. Joseph P. Flood, East Carolina University (2006).

Since 2001, the community of Columbia, North Carolina has been involved in developing long-term strategic planning to establish linkages between the vitality and compatibility, of both human and wildlife environments. Since 1967, when the red wolf (*Canus rufus*) was designated as a threatened and endangered species, FWS has achieved significant success in reestablishing the population in eastern North Carolina. Placed in a captive breeding program in 1970, a small pack of red wolves was reintroduced into the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in 1987. Since the beginning of the introduction, there has been a strong collaboration between a number of state and federal agencies, as well as public stakeholders.

One critical group of stakeholders has been the farming community which provides critical habitat for the red wolf recovery efforts. Nutria (*Myocastor coypus*), a mammal with its origins in South America, was introduced to eastern North Carolina to increase the fur trade in the region. Since the introduction of nutria, and because of a lack of predators to control the population, nutria have multiplied and become a nuisance for agricultural communities and wetland managers. According to Bounds (2000)¹ this voracious herbivore is capable of causing extensive damage to native wetland plants, reducing food and cover for migratory waterfowl, degrading water quality, displacing muskrat populations, encouraging the spread of purple loosestrife and causing negative impacts to agricultural lands.

Research (Bounds, 2000) indicates that the reintroduction of red wolves is reducing the number of nutria, which in turn increases the potential for increasing economic benefits to farmers in eastern North Carolina. One reason for the proliferation of species like nutria and raccoons may be due to the lack of predators. Farmers in the region believe that red wolves are already reducing the nutria population in the area. Along with the goal of providing critical habitat for red wolves and their recovery as a species, the Inner Banks Regional Stakeholder Planning Group has been trying to link the recovery of the red wolf species to their long term strategic ecotourism planning. Using baseline data provided by wildlife biologists, this proposed project will investigate the economic benefits of red wolf recovery efforts both as a symbol of economic stability to the regional community. In addition, it is an effort to understand the relationship and potential benefits to improving crop yields for farmers who are transitioning away from tobacco production while assisting with red wolf recovery. Columbia has been involved in strategic planning efforts since 2003, and generated a report emphasizing that red wolves created economic opportunities (Lash and Black, 2005), and supporting a stakeholder report focusing on future strategic planning efforts (Flood, 2006).

The focus of this proposed research project will include East Carolina researchers, state and federal wildlife and wetland managers, local and regional planners, farmers, and ongoing

¹ Bounds, D.L., 2000, Nutria: an invasive species of national concern: *Wetland Journal* 12(3), pp. 9-16.

involvement with area stakeholders. The goal of this project will be to link the reintroduction of red wolves to the decrease in nutria populations and the wolves' economic benefit to the region. Although experimental in nature, this project can be used as a model to demonstrate how the collaborative efforts between rural communities and federal and state agencies can be a win-win situation: for animals and people. Red wolf recovery goes far beyond regional, North Carolina concerns. It provides a national model of how to create sustainable ecotourism while balancing the economic impacts of wildlife with the reality of human habitation/encroachment on former undeveloped environments.

Appendix H: Group Discussion on Fees and Location for the Red Wolf Center

Stakeholder A

- When the aquarium opened they charged no fee, eventually they were forced to charge a \$3 fee and participant numbers went up immediately.
- “People pay to see value.”
- “We did turn that money back in and we got better, everybody in the facility got better because we were so conscious of the fact that we were now charging for something and we had to be ready”
- “It had an immediate impact on staff, it had an impact on visitor experience, and the visitors paid for it with very few complaints.”
- It costs \$8 now, but the facilitators are 10 times better now than they were at this time.
- “My suggestion would be charge a fee” -- “and make it worth the experience.”
- “If you don’t charge a fee you’ll probably not make it work.”
- Another thing is location is extremely important, you cannot entice visitors away from their cottages no matter how much you spend on advertising and promotion.
- Must build a center so there is a central focus to guide visitors, placed in an easily accessible area.

Stakeholder B

- If we could put the center on 64 we would do it, we want to keep it as close to the traffic as possible, the center doesn’t have to be tucked away.
- Right now we have a sight a mile off of 64 down 94, very easily accessible.

Stakeholder A

- That mile will hurt.

Stakeholder B

- The center will go in Tyrrell County, the site on 94 is even better than the initial proposed site on 64 because we were originally thinking people will go through Columbia after they have visited the Center, rather than if the site was on the other side of Columbia. They could easily use coupons or promotional products which would make it easier and more economically sound for vendors and businesses in Columbia.
- The international wolf center in Ely MN is just slightly larger than Columbia, on average the center brings in \$3 million annually.

Stakeholder C

- Would Red Wolf center being 1 mile off 64 hurt or help the RWC?
- “One mile off of 64 is actually perfect because you don’t want to be a roadside zoo.”
- You don’t want the Red Wolf education center to be perceived as a visitor center, the fact you get off and go into the rural ambiance makes the experience much better and helps to portray the natural habitat of the species you are portraying is a distinct advantage. If it was 5 or 10 miles down it would be a detriment.

- You can make a good sign off the main hwy to advertise the center.
- “The whole point of designing these habitats is making it be that you are actually there in the habitat of the animal.”
- “Right on the roadside is not appropriate.”

Stakeholder A

- Another advantage of aquarium sign and charging a fee is that for the first time local people were aware or came in to visit. Staff members had vouchers for local residents and could give them away accordingly. These people could then be proponents for, and use word of mouth, to promote the site to tourists.

Stakeholder D

- There were people who live within a mile of the 4-H center who had never visited it before and it's been open for six years. There was a voting booth at the 4-H Center and 25% of the people who showed up to vote in that region had never been there before.

Stakeholder B (Update on the Red Wolf Education Center)

- One idea is to expand the existing Walter B. Jones Center at Pocosin Lake.
- Building a Red Wolf Education Center is something the Coalition has wanted since it began almost 10 years ago.
- That's where we are there are a group of individuals. Partnership for the Sounds with US fish and wildlife, Walter B. Jones Organization, and the Red Wolf Coalition have just started sitting down and saying okay, if we really want to make this thing happen what are the steps that we need to take?
- We have some issues, this building will be put at Pocosin Lakes, so there are some constraints when you put a building like this on federal land as far as charging an admittance fee, that's a big thing for the coalition.
- How are we going to be able to maintain the building and pay staff?
- We are in an interesting stage where we are trying to decide what are the questions we have to get answered now, and then we go on to the next stage. We have to make sure all the parties involved agree that this is what we want.

Stakeholder E

- In Bolivia we established a pilot entrance fee system which generates a \$3.90 entrance fee on approximately 50,000 visitors per year which leads to a significant amount of income.
- “Whenever we talk about fees, the tourism industry historically sort of throws up its arms and says, we can't be charging people fees that will affect my market and it will drive people away.”

- “But what we find invariably in reality is that as long as you establish a fee that you are demonstrably reinvesting that income and improving the quality of the visitor experience” then visitation tends to increase, and demand tends to increase.
- In Bolivia visitation went from 8,000 people, all foreigners, when there was no fee to 50,000 visitors currently since fees have been introduced.
- Other interesting aspects: in Baja, California the government already introduced an entrance fee for a coastal marine reserve of \$2 per person per day, feeling was that was much below what visitors were prepared to pay and wanted to pay more in order to contribute to conservation.
- Systematically soliciting hoteliers and local tour operators’ donations from visitors to the area to fund red wolf conservation in the region.
- Example: in Mexico, participating hotels agreed to contribute systematically to this fund by adding on a \$1 contribution from each of their clients on their bills- visitors could choose to donate or not simply by marking a box on their bill.
- “Invariably people are quite happy to pay \$1 on their hotel to contribute to the conservation of the area they have just been visiting.”
- Information about this is available in case studies and publications at: www.nature.org/ecotourism

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2005**

**SESSION LAW 2005-236
HOUSE BILL 329**

AN ACT to limit liability arising from certain agritourism activities.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 99E of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new Article to read:

"Article 4.

"Agritourism Activity Liability.

"§ 99E-30. Definitions.

As used in this Article, the following terms mean:

(1) Agritourism activity. – Any activity carried out on a farm or ranch that allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy rural activities, including farming, ranching, historic, cultural, harvest-your-own activities, or natural activities and attractions. An activity is an agritourism activity whether or not the participant paid to participate in the activity.

(2) Agritourism professional. – Any person who is engaged in the business of providing one or more agritourism activities, whether or not for compensation.

(3) Inherent risks of agritourism activity. – Those dangers or conditions that are an integral part of an agritourism activity including certain hazards, including surface and subsurface conditions, natural conditions of land, vegetation, and waters, the behavior of wild or domestic animals, and ordinary dangers of structures or equipment ordinarily used in farming and ranching operations. Inherent risks of agritourism activity also include the potential of a participant to act in a negligent manner that may contribute to injury to the participant or others, including failing to follow instructions given by the agritourism professional or failing to exercise reasonable caution while engaging in the agritourism activity.

(4) Participant. – Any person, other than the agritourism professional, who engages in an agritourism activity.

(5) Person. – An individual, fiduciary, firm, association, partnership, limited liability company, corporation, unit of government, or any other group acting as a unit.

"§ 99E-31. Liability.

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, an agritourism professional is not liable for injury to or death of a participant resulting from the inherent risks of agritourism activities, so long as the warning contained in G.S. 99E-32 is posted as required and, except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, no participant or participant's representative can maintain an action against or recover from an agritourism professional for injury, loss, damage, or death of the participant resulting exclusively from any of the inherent risks of agritourism activities. In any action for damages against an agritourism professional for agritourism activity, the agritourism professional must plead the affirmative defense of assumption of the risk of agritourism activity by the participant.

(b) Nothing in subsection (a) of this section prevents or limits the liability of an agritourism professional if the agritourism professional does any one or more of the following:

(1) Commits an act or omission that constitutes negligence or willful or wanton disregard for the safety of the participant, and that act or omission proximately causes injury, damage, or death to the participant.

(2) Has actual knowledge or reasonably should have known of a dangerous condition on the land, facilities, or equipment used in the activity or the dangerous propensity of a particular animal used in such activity and does not make the danger known to the participant, and the danger proximately causes injury, damage, or death to the participant.

(c) Nothing in subsection (a) of this section prevents or limits the liability of an agritourism professional under liability provisions as set forth in Chapter 99B of the General Statutes.

(d) Any limitation on legal liability afforded by this section to an agritourism professional is in addition to any other limitations of legal liability otherwise provided by law.

"§ 99E-32. Warning required.

(a) Every agritourism professional must post and maintain signs that contain the warning notice specified in subsection (b) of this section. The sign must be placed in a clearly visible location at the entrance to the agritourism location and at the site of the agritourism activity. The warning notice must consist of a sign in black letters, with each letter to be a minimum of one inch in height. Every written contract entered into by an agritourism professional for the providing of professional services, instruction, or the rental of equipment to a participant, whether or not the contract involves agritourism activities on or off the location or at the site of the agritourism activity, must contain in clearly readable print the warning notice specified in subsection (b) of this section.

(b) The signs and contracts described in subsection (a) of this section must contain the following notice of warning:

'WARNING

Under North Carolina law, there is no liability for an injury to or death of a participant in an agritourism activity conducted at this agritourism location if such injury or death results from the inherent risks of the agritourism activity. Inherent risks of agritourism activities include, among others, risks of injury inherent to land, equipment, and animals, as well as the potential for you to act in a negligent manner that may contribute to your injury or death. You are assuming the risk of participating in this agritourism activity.'

(c) Failure to comply with the requirements concerning warning signs and notices provided in this subsection will prevent an agritourism professional from invoking the privileges of immunity provided by this Article."

SECTION 2. This act becomes effective January 1, 2006, and applies to agritourism activities, as defined in G.S. 99E-30 as enacted in Section 1 of this act, that occur on or after that date.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 20th day of July, 2005.

s/ Marc Basnight
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

s/ James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley
Governor