

Wild Kids



Kids Lead the Way on Red Wolf Education

by Mark MacAllister

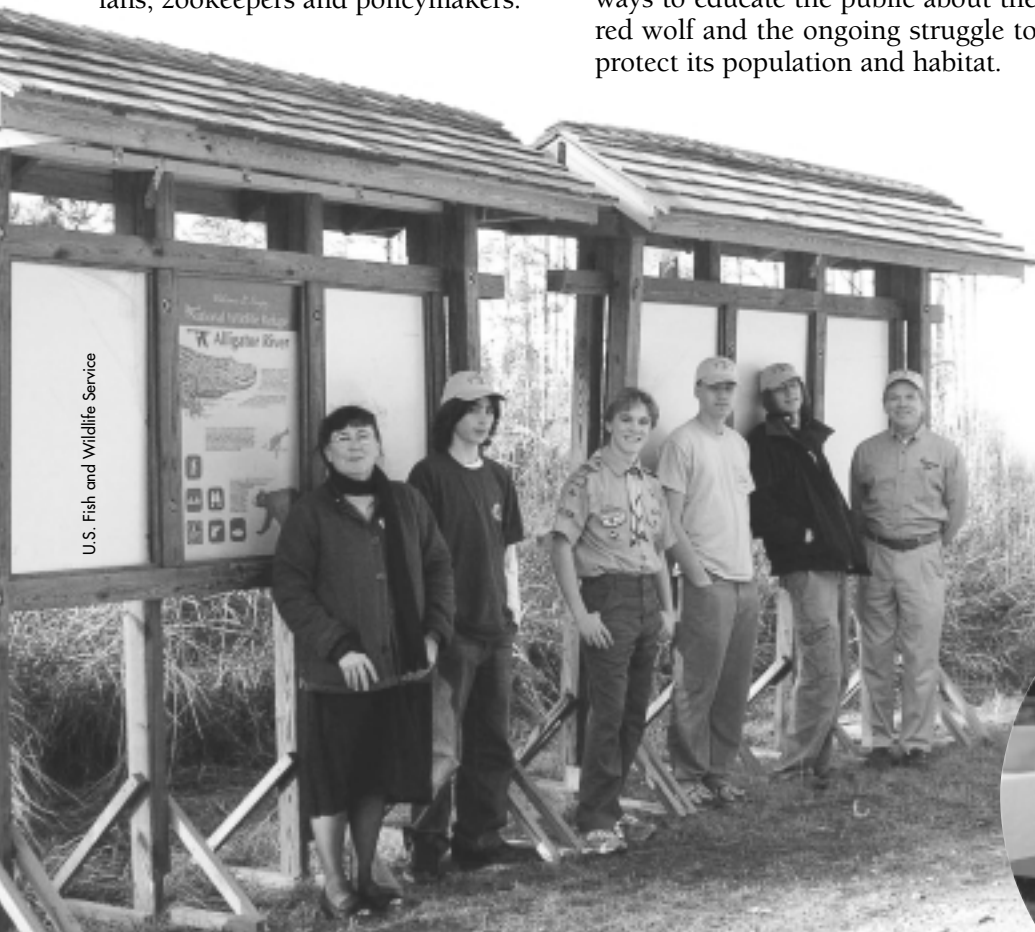
Endangered species recovery is generally considered the domain of adults. People commonly perceive efforts to shield animals from the threat of extinction to be in the control of experts—wildlife biologists, lawyers, veterinarians, zookeepers and policymakers.

But it doesn't take long to dispel this perception. The Red Wolf Coalition has for years watched children undertake valuable projects on behalf of red wolf recovery. Two projects in particular demonstrate the creativity of children in devising ways to educate the public about the red wolf and the ongoing struggle to protect its population and habitat.

The Wildlife Kids, led by three California siblings, is a true grassroots educational group. During Wolf Awareness Week 2005, Wildlife Kids members sold homemade drinks, cookies and jewelry and distributed wolf-related information flyers and stickers. More importantly, they made the most of every opportunity to speak with their customers about the wolf's situation in the world. By the end of the day, they had raised nearly \$200, which they then donated to the Red Wolf Coalition.

Wildlife Kids also organized a recycling program at their school, with the money raised going to support wildlife organizations. Their most important legacy, though, is a \$300 donation to the Coalition in 2004. We acknowledged this gift by attaching a small plaque honoring Wildlife Kids to a wild wolf's radio-tracking collar.


Eagle Scout Alec Grubbs of North Carolina took a different route toward educating the public



Above: Eagle Scout Alec Grubbs built two information kiosks with six display panels to provide information about red wolves and their recovery for use at the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Left to right: Rosemarie Haskell, Henry Garagan, Alec Grubbs, John Sommerville, Josh Hartzog, and Andy Grubbs



Right: Members of Wildlife Kids raised nearly \$200 for the Red Wolf Coalition by selling homemade drinks, cookies and jewelry. Left to right: Lizzy Mayersohn, Emma R., Kalli Kouf, Whitney Browne, Rebecca Weitzel, Amanda Gould, and Emily Gould



about red wolves—one that promises long-term benefits for both wolves and the Coalition. As part of his scouting project, Alec built two huge information kiosks, each measuring 10 feet by 10 feet and weighing 600 pounds. These kiosks support six large display panels that provide important information about red wolves and their recovery. They were delivered to the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, site of the Coalition's howling safaris, in early January 2006.

Projects like these—and there are dozens more like them in support of endangered species everywhere—are important on a number of levels. They extend the educational capacity of small nonprofits, and they help children develop intellectual skills useful in school and in later life. The most exciting aspect of their work, though, is that it demonstrates that all people, expert or not, can play an important role in advocating for wildlife. ■

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Terri Gould

