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WATCH A MOVIE, PROTECT A SPECIES: POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM SPONSORS EXCLUSIVE SCREENING OF THE DOCUMENTARY “RED WOLF REVIVAL” AT GRAND CINEMA ON APRIL 28
Film’s director and red wolf experts from the zoo will participate in a panel discussion about the perils facing this critically endangered species, which was saved from the brink of extinction four decades ago

TACOMA, Wash. – The endangered red wolf has slowly made a comeback in its native North Carolina, but its survival remains precarious. Fewer than 50 red wolves remain in the wild, and the Red Wolf Recovery Program is under intense scrutiny by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, which is set to decide later this year on whether to continue restoration of the species into the wild.



A special public screening of the 2015 documentary “Red Wolf Revival” is scheduled at the Grand Cinema at 6:30 p.m. April 28 to raise funds and awareness for red wolf conservation efforts.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium is sponsoring the event. Suggested donations for attendance are \$10 per adult and \$5 per student. The Grand Cinema is located at 606 S. Fawcett.

The screening will include a panel discussion featuring film director Roshan Patel, Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium Red Wolf Program Supervisor Will Waddell, and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium Public Programs and Visitors Studies

Coordinator Craig Standridge. Waddell supervises the Red Wolf Species Survival Plan® managed breeding program; Standridge serves as its education adviser.

Gary Geddes, director of Zoological and Environmental Education for Metro Parks Tacoma, will be the master of ceremonies.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, working with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, led the effort to save the red wolf species from extinction nearly four decades ago.

“The Point Defiance Zoo breeding program for red wolves has been – and remains – a flagship conservation program for us,” Zoo Deputy Director John Houck said. “It long has been considered one of the most successful conservation efforts in North America, and we have been extremely proud of our participation in this effort.”

“It’s more critical than ever for people to come out and get involved,” Standridge said. “This issue is specific to red wolves, but it could potentially affect other endangered species,” he added. “If the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ends this program, what could it mean for recovery programs for other animals? If you care about animals, you should care about this issue.”

The day before the public screening, Patel and film producer Susannah Smith will discuss red wolf conservation efforts with students of Tacoma’s Science and Math Institute.

The red wolf species dates back hundreds of years; the animals once roamed much of what is now the eastern and south-central United States. But over time, predator control programs and loss of habitat nearly depleted the population.

By 1980, only 14 red wolves remained.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium stepped up to lead the recovery effort, and those 14 wolves came to Tacoma, where a managed breeding program for the species began. Using a science-based approach to ensure genetic diversity in the population, the number of red wolves in the program grew. And in 1987, the species was reintroduced to the wild in Eastern North Carolina.

In addition to the estimated 50 red wolves in the wild, there are now about 200 at some 40 participating zoos and wildlife facilities.

Over the years, the Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium program has collaborated with several partners. Now-retired U.S. Rep. Norm Dicks championed the effort during his many years in Congress. The Puyallup Tribe of Indians was the major benefactor for construction of the zoo’s Red Wolf Woods exhibit. Today, four red wolves call that exhibit home. And the zoo remains dedicated to raising awareness and conservation programs.

Zoo biologists are leaders in red wolf genome banking research, and the zoo’s Dr. Holly Reed Wildlife Conservation Fund has contributed more than \$150,000 to red wolf education, conservation and research over the last few years.

“Red Wolf Revival” focuses on the wolf population that has been reintroduced to Eastern North Carolina, a region grappling with economic and cultural changes, where wolf recovery has been controversial. The film includes an interview with the zoo’s Standridge.

Following the April 28 film screening, zoo staff members will be equipped with iPads so audience members can sign electronic letters of support to their Congressional representatives concerning the Red Wolf Recovery Program. The Zoo Society will hold a raffle and offer red wolf “adoptions”; all funds raised will support red wolf conservation through the Zoo Society’s Dr. Holly Reed Wildlife Conservation Fund. .

For more information, go to: www.pdza.org/save-red-wolves.

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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest’s only combined zoo and aquarium, practices and promotes responsible stewardship of the world’s resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).

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Photo credit: **Mike Centioli for Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium**