



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For immediate release

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INTERIOR SECRETARY LUJAN TO ACCEPT RED WOLF ART DONATION

Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan today accepted print number one of an original pastel of endangered red wolves by noted West Virginia wildlife artist Steve Jackson. Lujan's acceptance of the print, at Washington's National Zoo, coincided with the opening of the zoo's red wolf exhibit.

The print is the first of 500 donated by the artist to benefit the Department's red wolf recovery program, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The National Zoological Park is the 19th zoo to participate in captive breeding efforts.

Proceeds from the sale of the prints, expected to net approximately \$50,000, will be matched by a donation of as much as \$40,000 by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The Foundation is a private conservation organization established by Congress to assist the Fish and Wildlife Service in accomplishing its mission and to enhance the Nation's fish, wildlife, and plant resources.

"The red wolf recovery program is an excellent example of what can be accomplished when Federal, state, and local governments; private organizations; and the public pitch in to restore one of our Nation's endangered wildlife species," Lujan said. "By making these generous contributions to the program, Mr. Jackson and the Foundation are displaying the American spirit of stewardship so vital to meeting the many environmental challenges facing us today."

Red wolves once roamed throughout the southeastern United States, from the Atlantic coast west to Texas and as far north as the Ohio River. By the early 20th Century, the species had been exterminated from most of its territory by predator control activities and the conversion of forested areas to agriculture.

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By 1970, the species teetered on the brink of extinction, with a mere 40 red wolves remaining in the wild. The red wolf was listed as an endangered species in 1967, and as a result of aggressive recovery efforts, and strong public support, there are 131 red wolves in existence today.

Members of the public interested in obtaining more information or purchasing prints of the red wolf painting may contact the Red Wolf Recovery Project, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 1969, Manteo, North Carolina 27954, telephone: 919-473-1131.