

WORKING IT OUT: DIVERGENT VIEWPOINTS, CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

The future of the **red** wolf in the wild remains uncertain. Although the recovery efforts at the Alligator River and Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuges have been successful, two major challenges remain. The first is the potential for hybridization with coyotes. Data are being collected which demonstrate that some wild **red** wolves have indeed bred with coyotes in northeastern North Carolina. Much research remains to be done to determine the extent of this problem and to find solutions. The second challenge is to find additional habitat for **red** wolves. This is difficult for two reasons. First, there are no areas in the eastern United States that are coyote-free. Second, the human population is large, and road density is high. Also, the national parks and state forests are heavily utilized for recreational purposes. In addition, many people think that wolves will compete economically with human interests, principally farming and hunting. Lastly, a significant number of people are convinced that wolves pose a major danger to people.

Students need to examine a variety of perspectives about **red** wolf recovery and management. This Conflict Resolution Activity is designed to help students examine divergent points of view and find creative solutions. The issue of restoring the **red** wolf to some portions of its former range in the southeastern United States is controversial and often volatile. Summit predators like wolves are at the heart of a broader issue, which is, in a word, wilderness. How much wilderness is enough? How do we preserve our remaining wilderness areas? How can we best be stewards of the earth? The issue of wolf restoration forces us as humans to scrutinize our wants and needs. It forces us to look at ways to achieve compromise and to examine what is really important, both for ourselves and for the generations that follow.

PREPARATION

1. Have students work in groups **writing definitions** for the following terms. Have them write their own definitions before they look the words up in the dictionary.

conflict	compromise	stakeholder	wants / needs (What is the difference?)
negotiate	perspective	solution	

2. **Practice finding a solution** to an issue using “management skills.” For instance, give students a situation to which they can relate. The controversy over backpacks in the classroom would work! Have groups role-play five people with different perspectives on students carrying large backpacks to class. See if they can find a compromise.

Parent: Having everything in a large backpack makes it easier for my child to stay organized.

Principal: We have fewer kids returning to lockers during class time if they have everything in one backpack.

Teacher: Backpacks are dangerous in classrooms. Students trip over them. In addition, it takes too much time for kids to find what they need, and they start packing up before class is over.

School Nurse: Backpacks are a strain on shoulders, and they are bad for posture. We are treating bruises caused by students bumping one another in the crowded halls with heavy backpacks.

Student: I get to class on time if I have everything in a backpack. If I don't have to go to my locker between classes, I have time to visit with my friends.

3. Have students **write a narrative** about a time when they had a conflict with another person or group of people. Have them focus on the following: Was the conflict resolved? Did someone “win” and someone “lose?” Were you happy about the outcome? Did you have to give anything up?
4. Have students **compare the conflicts** that were resolved with the ones that were not. What was the difference?
5. Have students **make a list** of the ingredients for conflict resolution.