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Salazar, Ashe Finalize Agreement with Wyoming on Revised Gray Wolf Management Plan

WASHINGTON DC — Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Director Dan Ashe today announced that the Service has reached an agreement with the State of Wyoming that will result in revisions to the state’s management plan for the gray wolf. The points of agreement, first announced in principle in early July, promote the management of a stable, sustainable population of wolves and pave the way for the Service to return wolf management to Wyoming.

“The recovery of the gray wolf serves as a great example of how the Endangered Species Act can work to keep imperiled animals from sliding into extinction. The agreement we’ve reached with Wyoming recognizes the success of this iconic species and will ensure the long-term conservation of gray wolves,” said Secretary Salazar. “I look forward to working with Wyoming to implement this responsible management approach guided by science.”

Under the points of agreement, the State of Wyoming will develop and implement a wolf management plan to maintain a healthy wolf population at or above the Service’s recovery goals, provide for genetic connectivity with other wolf subpopulations in the Northern Rockies, and otherwise ensure that gray wolves in Wyoming are managed so that they will not need to be returned to the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife.

“This important agreement enables us to recognize the successful recovery of the gray wolf across the Northern Rocky Mountains. This success is a testament to years of hard work by the states, tribes, landowners and our other conservation partners, all of whom have enabled us to get where we are today,” said Director Ashe. “Responsible management by the state wildlife professionals of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department — which includes regulated, limited trophy game hunts in certain areas similar to those conducted for other game species like elk and mountain lions — will ensure the long-term conservation of this population of wolves.”

Once Wyoming incorporates the revisions into the wolf management plan, the Service will move forward with a proposed rule to delist the gray wolf in Wyoming. That proposed delisting rule will be subject to public and peer review as part of a formal rulemaking process, and a final determination to delist wolves in Wyoming and return management of the species to the State will be dependent upon corresponding changes also being made to Wyoming state statutes and regulations. Until a final determination to delist gray wolves is published, wolves in Wyoming will remain fully protected under the Endangered Species Act.

The Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population is biologically recovered, with more than 1,650 wolves and over 110 breeding pairs. It has exceeded recovery goals for 11 consecutive years, fully occupies nearly all suitable habitat, and has high levels of genetic diversity and gene flow within the region's meta-population structure. Under state management, the Service expects the Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population will be maintained above recovery levels and no longer faces a risk of extinction.

A fact sheet about the agreement and its provisions is available [here](#).

The Endangered Species Act provides a critical safety net for America's native fish, wildlife and plants. This landmark conservation law has prevented the extinction of hundreds of imperiled species across the nation and promoted the recovery of many others.

America's fish, wildlife and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. The Service is working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit: <http://www.fws.gov>.

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