

Plan lifts Lower 48 wolf protections (Update)

June 7 2013, by John Flesher



In this Feb. 16, 2006 photo provided by Yellowstone National Park, a gray wolf is seen on the run near Blacktail Pond in Yellowstone National Park in Park County, Wyo. The Obama administration on Friday June 7, 2013, will propose lifting federal protections for gray wolves across most of the Lower 48 states, a move that would end four decades of recovery efforts but has been criticized by some scientists as premature. (AP Photo/Yellowstone National Park, File)

The Obama administration is proposing to end recovery efforts for gray wolves across most of the U.S. and return management to the states.

Friday's announcement comes after wolves rebounded from widespread extermination during four decades on the endangered species list.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe says ending federal protections would let the agency concentrate on restoring Mexican wolves in the Southwest.

Gray wolf protections previously were lifted in the Northern Rockies and western Great Lakes, which now have more than 6,100 wolves.

Some scientists and conservation groups insist the government's work isn't done. They say wolves need continued protections so they can return to parts of their historical range in the Pacific Northwest, the southern Rockies of Colorado and Utah and the Northeast.

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