



August 31, 2013

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## Settlements reached in Mexican gray wolf program

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The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.— Environmentalists have reached settlements with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that will allow for direct releases of captive wolves into New Mexico as part of the federal government's efforts to re-establish the species in the Southwest.

The agreements also call for the agency to drop plans for capturing any wolves that enter New Mexico or Arizona from Mexico. The agency is also proposing expanding the area where wolves are allowed to establish territories.

Michael Robinson of the Center for Biological Diversity says the agreements will breathe new life into the struggling program.

But U.S. Rep. Steve Pearce on Friday criticized plans to expand the recovery program. The New Mexico Republican says millions of dollars have been spent over the last decade and the wolf population has yet to recover.