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IDAHO

Judge rebukes agency over species ruling

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ignored expert advice when it decided to deny federal protection to the sage grouse and must reconsider its decision, a federal judge ruled in Boise.

In a decision highly critical of the agency and its decision-making process, U.S. District Judge B. Lynn Winmill said the service also failed to use the "best science" available when deciding to deny the species protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Winmill also found that Julie MacDonald, a former Interior Department official charged with overseeing the Fish and Wildlife Service, used pressure and intimidation tactics and even edited scientific conclusions to keep the birds from being listed as endangered.

The New York Times

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NATIONAL BRIEFING | NORTHWEST

Idaho: Ruling on Sage Grouse

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Fish and Wildlife Service must reconsider whether sage grouse should be listed as an endangered species, a judge has ruled in a decision highly critical of the agency and its decision-making process. Judge B. Lynn Winmill of Federal District Court said the service ignored experts' advice and failed to use the "best science" available when deciding not to give the species protection under the Endangered Species Act. Judge Winmill also found that a former official used intimidation and edited scientific conclusions to keep the birds from being listed as endangered.