

# Group wins ruling in Wyoming water rules case

CHEYENNE (AP) — The Wyoming Supreme Court has sided with an environmental group that tried to challenge the state's water quality rules but was denied on a technicality.

The court on Thursday reversed a district judge who last year threw out the appeal filed by the Lander-based Wyoming Outdoor Council. The justices sent the case back to the district court.

"We think they got it right and we look forward now to pursuing our original challenge," Chris Merrill, a spokesman for the Wyoming Outdoor Council, said Friday.

The rules approved by the Environmental Quality Council and Gov. Dave Freudenthal in 2007 significantly changed state standards for pollution discharged into streams.

The Wyoming Outdoor Council opposed the reclassification of many streams that previously had the highest level of protection as recreational waters. The council also targeted new regulations for streams that had started flowing year-round as a result of water discharged by coal-bed methane wells.

"I guess it's back to looking at the substantive issues. It will be interesting to see how it works out," John Wagner, head of the department's Water Quality Division, said of the Supreme Court ruling.

The environmental group had named the state Department of Environmental Quality in appealing the rules to court.