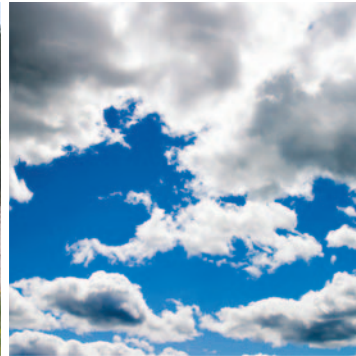




Environment **Now**®



Environment Now's 2009 Program Achievements

Two Biological Opinions Offer the Most Sweeping Wildlife Protections in California

In response to program partner Natural Resources Defense Council's litigation, the National Marine Fisheries Service released an improved salmon Biological Opinion, which including impacts on steelhead, sturgeon, and orca fisheries. Together with the delta smelt Biological Opinion, the two impose the most sweeping wildlife protections on water operations ever afforded to a California listed species, providing a chance to salvage the 150-year old salmon fishing industry. Affected species are winter- and spring-run salmon, Central Valley steelhead, and green sturgeon. The rules require the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to restore access for fish to waters above four dams. The dams were built decades ago without fish ladders and have blocked access to hundreds of miles of historic spawning grounds. The situation is so dire that experts have concluded that the rules are also necessary to save an endangered population of killer whales that feed on salmon and range from British Columbia to California.

Record-Low Logging Levels Reported for California's National Forests

Local grassroots organizations, known as "forest watch" groups, participate in public oversight of national forests and, when necessary, challenge illegal and environmentally-damaging logging projects. Due to the vigilance of program partners such as the John Muir Project, Conservation Congress, and Los Padres ForestWatch, the amount of harmful commercial logging on California's national forests in 2009 decreased to the lowest level ever recorded.

Scientific Research Debunks Fire Fears for Southern California Forests

A study of fire ecology in a Southern California national forest by program partners Monica Bond, Derek Lee, Curtis Bradley, and Chad Hanson was published in *The Open Forest Science Journal* in 2009. Their research found that areas in the San Bernardino National Forest with dead trees did not burn more intensely than areas with green trees. Prior to this study, U.S. Forest Service officials had assumed that the presence of standing dead trees increased fire severity, and therefore had sought to intensively cut these trees, even though dead trees provide particularly important wildlife habitat.

Plan in Motion for Steelhead Recovery on the Santa Clara River

After a multi-year battle to secure and implement steelhead protection measures, United Water Conservation District (United) and program partner California Trout, Inc. finally settled to ensure fish passage improvements in August 2009. United will work with an expert panel, including National Marine Fisheries Service and CalTrout, to draft recommendations to attain "natural historic flows" above and below the Vern Freeman Diversion within one year. At the top of the watershed, CalTrout also secured that the Santa Felicia Dam permit incorporates mitigation measures from the 2008 steelhead Biological Opinion.



Endangered Steelhead Trout



California's First Recycled Water Policy Adopted

In February 2009, the State Water Board adopted California's first Recycled Water Policy after nearly two years of stakeholder negotiations initiated in-part by Environment Now and driven by program partner, California Coastkeeper Alliance. The policy proposes to bring three million acre-feet of recycled water and another million acre-feet of reused stormwater on-line in the next 20 years. It also encourages 20 percent water use reductions through conservation measures. The Water Board also adopted a permit so landscape irrigation can use recycled municipal water. Savings from recycled water use could cut current water demand by nearly 40 percent in the municipal and industrial sector alone.

Program Partners Force Cities to Clean Up Sewage

In 2009, Environment Now's program partners successfully settled three Clean Water Act sewage cases. The California Sportfishing Protection Alliance sued the City of Stockton for wastewater treatment plant discharges, sewer system overflows, and wet weather discharges of raw sewage. The San Francisco Baykeeper sued the City of Burlingame Hills and the City of Hillsborough to compel the municipalities to minimize sewage spills and to improve its sewage collection system. A similar lawsuit, brought in 1998 by program partner Santa Monica Baykeeper, resulted in actual sewage spills reductions of 77 percent in 2009.

New Clearcuts Halted Due to Climate Concerns

California's largest landowner and biggest clear-cutter of forestland was prevented from initiating any large, new clearcutting projects in 2009. Program partner Center for Biological Diversity contends that Sierra Pacific Industries' logging plans do not adequately consider the global warming pollution emissions from clearcutting. SPI filed to begin three logging projects in the summer of 2009, and the Center challenged them in court. SPI quickly withdrew those projects and has not initiated any others.





2515 Wilshire Boulevard
Santa Monica, CA 90403
310.829.5568
310.829.6820 (fax)
www.environmentnow.org