2002 was another banner year for Environment Now with significant progress in all our program areas. Here are a few highlights of the year:

- Environment Now support was instrumental in achieving a cleaner port in Los Angeles. A suit against the port resulted in a series of measures to mitigate diesel pollution from trucks and yard vehicles serving the port as well as from ships. Hopefully these measures will soon be extended to the Port of Long Beach and serve as a model for ports around the nation.

- The Santa Monica Baykeeper has been involved in a multi-year case against the City of Los Angeles over leaking sewers and sewage spills. The city recently admitted responsibility for over 3,000 spills including one that backed up in the baptismal font of a church. This newly found openness by the city will hopefully move the case toward a rapid, positive conclusion.

- The Sequoia ForestKeeper has now completed its first full year of operation. This grassroots organization came online just in time to counter the Washington administration’s rollback of forestry regulations. Focusing on the Sequoia National Monument, the ForestKeeper is working to protect it and its magnificent trees from unsustainable logging and other deleterious activities.

- Another of our start-up organizations, Windows-On-Our-Waters, has also just completed its first year of operations. Employing the Tide Pool Cruiser, a trailer with a touch-tank of living tide pool creatures and other educational exhibits, this program has introduced the ocean to the general public and over 5,000 school children, instructing them on how to avoid polluting it.

- Our new program to cut the country’s dependence on foreign oil—Energy Independence Now—is gaining increased acceptance in the business community, government, and with our fellow community-based organizations. We expect that in the next few years a ground swell of support for a hydrogen economy will be rippling from Los Angeles across the state and the country.

To learn more about all our projects visit our website at www.environmentnow.org. Our site also provides links to all of our partner organizations where you can learn about their programs and how to support them directly.

Our expectations for Environment Now and its program remain high. We feel, given our organization’s recent successes, we are well placed to continue to make significant improvements in California’s environment.

Kevin Wells
President

Terry Tamminen
Executive Director
These are very troubling times in our nation’s forests given the current administration’s focus on rolling back forestry—as well as other environmental—regulations. Achieving our goal to end all commercial logging in California’s, and the nation’s, public forests will require increased dedication and support from all concerned with preserving our natural heritage.

On Thanksgiving Eve 2002, when the nation’s attention was focused on the holiday, the administration rocked the environmental community with an all-out assault on America’s forests. Changes were proposed to the National Forest Management Act that would make current mandatory requirements for plant, animal and habitat protection optional. New “streamlined” timber rules would greatly reduce the role of science in decision-making by eliminating current monitoring requirements. And the administration’s new rules would also limit the opportunities for public input. We believe that many of the proposed changes are illegal and are prepared to fight to have them overturned in court.

Also in late 2002 the Forest Service proposed a massive logging of nearly 200,000 acres of mature and old-growth forest in the northern Sierra Nevada to evaluate the effect of logging on fire and endangered species. Billed as an “administrative study,” this is the largest logging plan ever proposed for the Sierra. This plan would quintuple logging levels and would focus on removal of large trees. This ill-conceived, blatant attempt to circumvent logging restrictions will be fought by our team through the courts. Only when the Forest Service learns that massive clearcuts are not the answer to fire risk and species extinction will we and our allies rest!

California and the West have had a spate of forest fires in recent years resulting from years of drought and mismanagement. Such fires provide the Forest Service with the chance to “salvage log” the burnt trees. Our partner, the John Muir Project, is currently fighting several projects because the service has used bogus science to proclaim living trees dead and thus subject to salvage logging. We have won a temporary stay to stop the cut of any living trees, but the battle continues. If we ultimately lose in court, millions of board feet of living trees may be taken by the salvage loggers.
Private Land Forestry

Environment Now is helping fund litigation to force the state to conduct comprehensive cumulative impact analyses on several timber harvest plans for cuts on private land in the Sierra Nevada. Traditionally, harvest plans have been evaluated without considering other completed or proposed cuts in a given watershed. Our team contends that the law requires the state to not only consider the impact of the plan under review but the cumulative impact of it along with all other past and planned logging in the watershed. If cumulative impacts were considered, we feel the state would not be able to approve harvest plans without limiting the cut, maintaining larger trees across the landscape, and increasing the width of undisturbed buffer zones along creeks and rivers.

On California’s North Coast a major forestry issue is the degradation of salmon habitat caused by irresponsible logging operations. The runoff from clearcuts transports sediment, herbicides and petroleum products into the streams where this pollution can readily kill young and adult salmon and even their eggs. One of our partners, the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC), has sued the Pacific Lumber Company under the federal Clean Water Act. The act states it is illegal to discharge into the waters of the United States unless the discharge is regulated by permit. Logging companies have avoided this requirement for the past thirty years, a period during which the North Coast salmon have continued their spiral toward extinction. This case, if successful, could be the beginning of improved logging practices in California as well as the rest of the country.

As we went to press we also learned that a superior court judge had sided with EPIC and struck down several key logging permits issued by the California Departments of Forestry and Fish and Game to Pacific Lumber under a 120-year sustained yield logging plan. By not following the letter of the law, the state had allowed Pacific Lumber to illegally log over 31,000 acres, mostly by clearcutting, including over 600 acres of ancient forest used for nesting by the highly endangered marble murrelet seabird. Hopefully this case will lead to reform in these state agencies and to an increase in sustainable logging by the state’s timber companies.

SEQUOIA FORESTKEEPER

ForestKeepers are grassroots organizations that act as guardians of the forest by creating solutions for inadequate land management practices, promoting land stewardship, enforcing existing laws and regulations, and implementing public awareness and volunteer programs. In 2001 we provided seed funding for the establishment of the Sequoia ForestKeeper.

In 2002 the Sequoia ForestKeeper focused on protecting the Giant Sequoia National Monument from logging. The monument was created several years ago to protect the giant sequoia ecosystem. However, one of the proposed management options currently being proposed by the Forest Service goes against the intent of the monument by calling for removal of up to ten million board feet of timber. With the help of a broad alliance of environmental groups, the ForestKeeper is fighting for a no-logging option.

The Sequoia ForestKeeper has also been monitoring the 2000 Manter Fire burn area to assure that only clearly dead trees are cut under the guise of “hazard tree” removal. Ideally, all burned trees should be left in the area to provide habitat and cover for species including the endangered Pacific fisher and several avian species, as well as to augment the soil as they decay.

Our forest preservation partners are small, grassroots organizations located far from major population centers and funding organizations. As such they are constantly scrambling to raise funds to support their valuable work. To contribute to their efforts or to learn more about them as well as our other partners, please visit their websites.

FOREST PRESERVATION PARTNERS

John Muir Project
Environmental Information Protection Center
Sequoia ForestKeeper
Redwood Forest Foundation

www.johnmuirproject.org
www.wildcalifornia.org
www.sequoiaforestkeeper.org
www.rffi.org
Air Quality Restoration & Energy Issues

Any Angelino will tell you the skies today are much cleaner than they were 30 years ago. We have come a very long way in reducing smog, but there is far to go. While Environment Now is working to reduce air pollution in the near term, the ultimate key to clean air is to replace petroleum-based fuels, such as diesel and gasoline with hydrogen. Not only will a new hydrogen-based economy lead to smog free skies and a concomitant reduction in related illness, but also to a reduction in green house gases, geo-political tension and the economic uncertainties brought on by our thirst for oil.

Energy Independence Now

In 2002 Environment Now launched Energy Independence Now, a comprehensive program designed to transition California to a clean, renewable, hydrogen transportation economy as quickly as possible. Hydrogen is a nearly ideal fuel since it has a high energy content, is non-toxic, can be produced from clean, renewable sources; and, with state-of-the-art engineering, is safe.

Already hydrogen is powering vehicles—fuel cell vehicles—on the streets and highways of California. A fuel cell is a battery-like device that produces electrical energy from a chemical reaction between hydrogen and oxygen. Unlike a battery, a fuel cell will continue to operate as long as fuel is supplied. Fuel cells are exceptionally clean—the only emission is pure water! In addition to all types of vehicles, fuel cells can generate power for buildings, homes, and even small, portable devices such as laptop computers.

The transition away from a polluting, economically unstable petroleum economy to a cleaner, self-sustaining hydrogen economy continues to encounter industrial and governmental inertia. Vehicle manufacturers will not develop fuel cell vehicles until they see a fueling infrastructure on the horizon. Energy companies do not want to work on installing infrastructure until they see a commitment from the manufacturers and public to make and use fuel cell vehicles. And the government, while giving hydrogen lip service, has been stingy with R&D and implementation funding.

In order to break this conundrum, Energy Independence Now has focused on educating the voters of California about the use of revenue bonds that could provide funding to retailers to install hydrogen-fueling facilities and provide cash rebates as incentives to the early purchasers of fuel cell vehicles. The revenue bonds would not be supported by an across-the-board state tax but rather by a levy on the sale of hydrogen, thus the users would bear the burden of paying off the bond obligation.

Be it for the environment, public health, or energy independence, California cannot afford to miss this opportunity to take the lead in developing a safe, clean hydrogen economy. California is the fifth largest economy in the world and a leader in environmental policy. Adopting a hydrogen transportation system here will again place California in the forefront of a new technology, one that will benefit the state’s environment and economy well into the future.
Diesel Campaign

Even as we push for tomorrow’s hydrogen economy, Environment Now is working to clean up today’s air. Much of the Los Angeles region’s air pollution is produced by the lung-penetrating, disease-causing microparticles of diesel exhaust. For the past five years we have supported Dump Dirty Diesel, a campaign to reduce diesel pollution. In partnership with the Coalition for Clean Air and the Natural Resources Defense Council, this advocacy and litigation campaign has made great advances in replacing polluting diesel with cleaner alternative fuels, such as natural gas.

In 2002 our partners won a court decision that will significantly clear the air over the Port of Los Angeles and the surrounding communities. The State Court of Appeals reversed the decision of a lower court and found that the port had violated California’s Environmental Quality Act when it went ahead with partial construction of a major facility scheduled for leasing to China Shipping, one of the world’s largest shipping concerns.

When built out the China Shipping facility will be able to handle as many as 250 of the world’s largest container ships a year. The anticipated freight load moving through the facility would require as many as one million additional diesel truck trips through local communities as the freight begins its journey to its countrywide destinations. In addition to trucks and ships, yard vehicles and other support equipment are also diesel powered adding to the port’s pollution burden. Without adequate mitigation, the additional pollution generated at the China Shipping facility would pose a significant threat to local residents.

In settlement talks following the Court of Appeals’ decision, the Port of Los Angeles agreed to several measures to reduce the pollution from China Shipping including (1) using clean burning propane or natural gas yard tractors, (2) providing facilities for shipboard electrical power and retrofitting ships so they will not have to run their diesel engines while dockside, and (3) creating a traffic plan for the terminal and other parts of the port to assure faster truck transit. Further the port agreed to spend $50 million over four years to reduce diesel pollution from port-wide sources and to offset the aesthetic impacts of the port on the community.

In another major victory facilitated by Natural Resources Defense Council support, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court’s finding that the South Coast Air Quality Management District did indeed have the right to bar public fleet operators from purchasing diesel trucks and buses. Had the Ninth Circuit found for the plaintiffs—industrial groups representing diesel engine manufacturers and oil companies—six fleet rules passed in recent years would have been nullified. These rules require operators of public fleets such as transit buses, trash vehicles, school buses, street sweepers and airport shuttle fleets to purchase non-diesel, alternative fuel vehicles when replacing old vehicles or adding to their fleets. The plaintiffs are now expected to appeal to the federal Supreme Court for a review of the case.

In the coming year we will continue to seek out additional diesel “hotspots” to target in our campaign to clean our air.

Air Quality Restoration & Energy Issues Partners

Coalition for Clean Air  www.coalitionforcleanair.org
Natural Resources Defense Council  www.nrdc.org
Coastal Restoration

Our founders grew up on the beaches of Southern California. Indeed, Environment Now was founded on the banks of Santa Monica Bay. Our first offices in Malibu commanded a magnificent Pacific view sweeping from Palos Verdes to Catalina and Santa Barbara Island to Point Dume. With these roots it was only natural for the foundation to focus heavily on coastal issues, especially water quality.

Waterkeepers

Waterkeepers are on-the-water organizations employing a variety of strategies to assure that our waters are protected. They conduct water quality monitoring, participate in coastal planning, educate the public, remedy water quality problems and, if necessary, sue polluters under clean water laws.

In the past decade waterkeeper organizations have blossomed across the country and abroad. Now there are more than 100, up tenfold from the early 1990’s. While individual goals and missions vary with locale, they are all concerned with fighting water pollution and protecting and restoring habitat.

Environment Now has been a long-term supporter of the six local Southern and Baja California waterkeepers, providing seed funding to get these organizations up and running. We also started the California Coastkeeper Alliance, an umbrella organization leveraging the resources of the member waterkeeper organizations in a united coalition focusing on protecting and restoring California’s marine ecosystems.

As part of this program, the California Coastkeeper Alliance recently opened the Regional Kelp Restoration Facility on Terminal Island in San Pedro Harbor. This lab breeds kelp plants that are raised in kelp nurseries called “eco-Karts” in classrooms by local school children. When the plants mature, volunteer divers transplant them to beds where kelp once flourished but has died off from pollution, El Nino storms, sea urchin plagues or a combination of all three.

This exciting “reforestation” program is already leading to a recovery of Southern California’s kelp beds. And with healthier kelp beds will come the return of the 800 or so species that depend on kelp for food and cover including the spiny lobster, sheephead, calico bass, and the California state marine fish, the garibaldi.

The Southern California picket line of waterkeepers has succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. They are a force not only in their home waters, but through the alliance they have a strong voice in Sacramento be it lobbying for clean water legislation or pushing for strong enforcement of existing laws. Because of the keepers’ success, we are currently doing the preliminary groundwork necessary to establish new keeper organizations in central California.
Windows-on-Our-Waters

Windows-on-Our-Waters is an educational program created two years ago by **Environment Now**. One day Windows-on-Our-Waters will consist of a mobile, walk-through trailer including a 3,600-gallon aquarium featuring local marine fish and other ocean denizens and a stormwater pollution education exhibit. A smaller, accompanying vehicle will contain a computerized learning laboratory and a touch tank where the public can experience marine creatures up close.

We already know this duo will be a major hit with all ages. That’s because a smaller version, a prototype called the TidePool Cruiser, is already on the road. The TidePool Cruiser consists of a touch tank, a pollution exhibit, and an exhibit employing a bar code reader and computer to allow users to interactively discover all the products on supermarket shelves that include kelp – products ranging from toothpaste to Cheese Whiz to beer.

During 2002 more than a quarter million people in seven Southern California counties had the opportunity to visit the TidePool Cruiser. In addition to the public education value of Windows-on-Our-Waters, the exhibit is designed to raise awareness of, as well as contributions for, the waterkeeper programs of Southern California.

**Clean Water Litigation**

The California Coastkeeper Alliance and its member waterkeeper organizations have made great strides to improve water quality in Southern California through public education, lobbying, and litigation. But until our sewer systems are upgraded and commercial firms such as metal recyclers clean up their act, we will continue to have elevated pathogen counts and toxic pollution in our beach and coastal waters.

In order to bring action against polluters, **Environment Now** has created a revolving litigation fund. Our lawyers tap the fund when they bring a suit against a polluter to pay for the fees and costs associated with the case. If the lawyer prevails and wins the case, the court will usually award recovery of the fees and costs that are then returned to the revolving fund to sustain new pollution cases.

The following are some of the clean water cases pursued by the five Southern California waterkeepers during 2002:

- **Santa Barbara Channelkeeper** – Halaco Engineering, an Oxnard metals recycler, maintains a huge slagheap that leaches toxics into a coastal wetland and the ocean. The Channelkeeper has sued to force a cleanup.

- **Ventura Coastkeeper** – The Coastkeeper successfully brought action against an industrial polluter in Ventura, forcing it to stop discharging toxic waste products into a coastal creek.

- **Santa Monica Baykeeper** – The City of Los Angeles’ aging sewer system needs to be upgraded to prevent sewage spills. The Baykeeper has gone to court to fight for a system renovation.

- **Orange County Coastkeeper** – The Coastkeeper successfully fought off efforts by sewage plants to exempt themselves from Clean Water Act provisions that would have left partially treated sewage on our beaches.

- **San Diego Baykeeper** – The Baykeeper has challenged renewal of the permit for San Diego’s main wastewater facility. Unlike the permits for almost all other facilities across the country, the San Diego permit would allow the city to discharge minimally treated sewage – in this case up to 180 million gallons of almost raw sewage would be dumped in the Pacific every day.

Stormwater runoff is another major source of toxic and pathogenic pollution to our coastal waters. The California Coastkeeper Alliance and its members have been lobbying local and the state water boards to implement and enforce rules that will significantly lessen this form of pollution.

**Coastal Restoration Partners**

- California Coastkeeper Alliance
  - **www.cacoastkeeper.org**
- Santa Barbara Channelkeeper
  - **www.sbcg.org**
- Ventura Coastkeeper
  - **www.venturacoastkeeper.org**
- Santa Monica Baykeeper
  - **www.smbaykeeper.org**
- Orange County Coastkeeper
  - **www.coastkeeper.org**
- San Diego Baykeeper
  - **www.sdbaykeeper.org**
- Punta Abreojos (Baja California) Keeper
- Windows-on-Our-Waters
  - **www.windowsonourwaters.org**
The state conservatively projects the population of Los Angeles County will be 13.9 million by 2040 – a 42% increase over the 2000 population. This growth means we will all have to work harder to keep our air and ocean as clean as they are today. But it also means that we are going to be faced with problems that will require more than hard work. Without a determination unmatched in our history, this projected growth will consume our remaining unprotected open space and wildlife habitat leaving mostly unbuildable terrain.

While fighting to control population growth is beyond the mission of Environment Now, we have undertaken several projects with the goal of making this growth more environmentally sustainable.

**Park to Playa**

In 2000 Environment Now initiated Park to Playa, an open space project that envisions a restored Ballona Creek as the link between parkland in the Baldwin Hills and a functioning Ballona Wetlands to the west. Over the past few years, this vision, which will provide recreational opportunities as well as good wildlife habitat, has been enthusiastically adopted by those in local, state, and federal government and as well as by community groups and concerned individuals. While progress may be slow, Park to Playa is incrementally coming to fruition.

The project envisions the eventual conversion of over 800 acres in the Baldwin Hills to parkland for the citizens of Los Angeles. Currently the area is mostly devoted to oilfields but as production fails the land will become available for parkland. The state has also already acquired one magnificent parcel and its conversion to parkland is underway with the construction of ranger facilities, access ways and trails.

Ballona Creek is now enjoying the attention of numerous stakeholders diligently working on a watershed management plan and demonstration projects that will ultimately upgrade access points, re-vitalize the bike and pedestrian paths, see to the installation of new signage and creek amenities, and initiate re-greening efforts along the creek’s entire length.

In 2002 Environment Now remained active in the crusade to preserve as much of the Ballona Wetlands area as possible from development. Most of the lands west of Lincoln Boulevard may be restored as functioning wetlands. Lands east of the boulevard will be developed although less intensively than originally proposed.

**Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project**

Southern California’s wetlands are of vital ecological, hydrological, and economic significance to the region, yet from 70 to 75% have been lost to development and other causes. Efforts in the past to acquire and restore wetlands have usually focused on individual wetlands and been spearheaded by local residents. There was no region-wide movement to further wetlands recovery and to recognize the important interrelationships among the region’s wetlands. The Wetlands Recovery Project, a partnership of 17 state and federal agencies, was founded to fill this void. Environment Now is its fiscal agent and provides active support.
The Wetlands Recovery Project will identify wetland acquisition and restoration priorities from Point Conception to the Mexican Border, prepare plans for these sites, pool funds to undertake these projects, implement the plans, and oversee post-project maintenance and monitoring. The goal of the project is to accelerate the pace, the extent, and the effectiveness of coastal wetland restoration thus resulting in a long-term increase in the quantity and quality of the region’s wetlands.

By 2002 fourteen projects funded by the Wetlands Recovery Project and its partners had been completed from Santa Barbara to San Diego counties. Five of these projects involved acquisitions; the others ranged from removing fill and exotic plants to restoring tidal action.

**INFILL PROJECT**

Currently there is no effective mechanism for identifying vacant or underutilized sites in urban areas and evaluating their potential for redevelopment. As a result, it is often easier to identify building sites in the largely undeveloped outlying areas than to seek out urban sites for infill development. This focus on outlying areas by developers leads to sprawl, land use imbalances, traffic congestion, air pollution, and the loss of valuable open space and habitat.

Over the past year *Environment Now* has taken a lead in developing a multi-faceted team to develop a uniform methodology to identify vacant and underutilized infill sites suitable for development or re-development. By adopting this methodology city and county planners will better be able to accommodate growth while curtailing urban sprawl.

**Tejon Ranch**

Straddling the Kern-Los Angeles County line along I-5 is Tejon Ranch, a magnificent 430 square mile property containing habitat unique in Southern California, if not the entire state. Tejon is the only location in California that connects four distinct ecosystems—the Sierra Nevada, the Coastal Mountain Ranges, the High Desert, and the Central Valley—and allows for movement of animal and plant species between them. With an elevation range of over 6,000 feet, the area itself includes an impressive mosaic of 27 different vegetation communities and habitat for endangered plant and animal species. There is compelling evidence that this rare and unique property plays a crucial role for the conservation of biodiversity on a regional, state, and national scale.

The ranch supports healthy populations of mountain lion, badger, tule elk, mule deer, and several smaller mammals as well as many species of raptors and countless other birds. Tejon Ranch also supports suitable habitat for many endangered species including the arroyo toad, the red-legged frog, the blunt-nosed leopard lizard, the Mojave ground squirrel, the striped adobe lily, the Bakersfield cactus, and the Mexican flannelbush.

In the past few years, Tejon Ranch Corporation has begun to develop its holdings. Although the long-term plans for the ranch have not been disclosed, three planned developments have been divulged. Already underway is conversion of almost 1,500 acres of prime farmland to diesel-intensive commercial and industrial uses along the I-5 at the foot of the Grapevine. Up the grade a 2000 unit, low-density resort development covering 32,000 acres of prime habitat is being planned. Further south a massive 25,000-unit, 12,000-acre subdivision is on the drawing board for the western Antelope Valley.

This and future development on Tejon Ranch will endanger its critical biological resources and raise the specter of piecemeal urban sprawl and growth-inducing development patterns. *Environment Now* is working with concerned groups and individuals to halt any further development approvals and to challenge any existing approvals until a collaborative planning process is implemented. Among other issues, this planning process must address environmental and biological concerns, air and water pollution, water supply and infrastructure, cultural resource protection, farmland loss, growth induced jobs/housing imbalances and traffic congestion and alternative transit measures.

**Open Space Protection and Restoration Partner**

Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project  www.coastalconservancy.ca.gov/scwrp
Fresh Water Conservation

At the end of 2002 three of the eight mighty pumps drawing water from the Colorado River for Southern California were shut down. Population growth in the other states drawing from the Colorado had reached the point where California could no longer be allowed to take the quickly vanishing surplus water. Unless water interests within the state can work out a compromise on water usage and conservation, this cutback ordered by the Department of the Interior will mean the reduction will be permanent. Yet, Southern California's Metropolitan Water District in the face of this 25% cut to its water supply remains sanguine. While there is talk of water conservation and desalinization of seawater, the district is also looking north to the already overdrawn Central Valley.

The potential loss of the Colorado River water is just one of the water-related problems California has faced and will face in the future. Environment Now is very concerned about the impact of water shortages and quality on our state. We have developed a three-pronged program to address these issues.

Surface Waters

Environment Now wants to further the sustainable use of water statewide while allowing California's ecosystems to flourish, even in the face of the never-ending population increases and the vagaries of climate change. In 2002 we initiated an investigation of water rights in the state and their impact on its citizens and ecosystems under the Public Trust Doctrine.

Also to further conservation we are seeking to develop a strong Southern California presence on CalFed, the governmental program working to improve the quality and reliability of California's water supplies and revive the San Francisco Bay-Delta ecosystems. With federal support of this—as well as most other environmental initiatives nationwide—crumbling, CalFed needs to be reenergized. Soon we hope to announce a partnership with a conservation-oriented, Southern California organization that could help get the CalFed back on track while providing a stronger voice for sustainable water use and habitat protection.

Finally, we are waiting for final rulings in a lawsuit we are supporting against the State Water Board. The suit is challenging the board's failure to implement a standard adopted in the 1995 Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan that is aimed at doubling the chinook salmon population in Central Valley waters. However, lawsuits notwithstanding, only meaningful agricultural and urban water conservation measures will assure the future survival of Central Valley salmon.
GROUNDWATER

It is estimated that current supplies of usable groundwater in California are 6 times the volume of all the state's surface reservoirs combined. State landowners have the right to extract as much of this water as they can put to beneficial use. Each day that averages out to 1.45 billion gallons of water or between 25 to 40 percent of the state’s daily supply. Not surprisingly, this right to beneficial extraction often ends in abusive over drafting to the point where now many of the state’s aquifers are being drawn down faster than they are being replenished.

Environment Now believes it is time for users to begin to extract groundwater in a sustainable fashion. This goal was boosted in November when California voters passed Proposition 50 that will provide $50 million for groundwater monitoring. Only with accurate data on supply and usage will Californians be able to begin pursuing meaningful groundwater protection in the state.

Environment Now’s only partner outside California is Black Mesa Trust in northeastern Arizona. Over the past few years the trust has been trying to protect the springs upon which Hopi agriculture, and thus the culture, depends. The springs are drying up because the source aquifer is being over drafted by Peabody Western Coal Company. The water is used to slurry coal from the Peabody mine on Black Mesa to the Mojave Power Station in Nevada. In 2002 Black Mesa Trust scored a victory when Peabody agreed to cease drawing water from the Hopi’s aquifer in 2005.

Water Quality

A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is the maximum amount of a given pollutant that a water body can receive and still meet federal water quality standards. This year the Regional Water Control Board adopted a wet weather pathogen TMDL for Los Angeles area waters. This is the second TMDL for the area, the first being one for trash adopted several years ago.

The trash TMDL, which calls for the phase-out of trash discharges into area waters, has been challenged by an increasingly better organized and funded attack by industry and municipal governments. Our partners in our effort to prevent pollution, the Santa Monica Baykeeper and the Natural Resources Defense Council, are countering this attack with public education, lobbying and litigation. The line must be drawn now if we are to control pollution in the face of the massive population increase projected for the area in the coming decades.

Fresh Water Conservation Partners

Black Mesa Trust  www.blackmesatrust.org
Natural Resources Defense Council  www.nrdc.org
Santa Monica Baykeeper  www.smbaykeeper.org
Our Mission

Incorporated as a private nonoperating foundation in 1989 by Frank and Luanne Wells, Environment Now’s mission is to protect, preserve, and restore the health of California’s natural ecosystems and human environment by influencing public policy and promoting responsible resource management. Our operating strategy is to collaborate with other organizations on projects where we feel we can make a meaningful, measurable contribution.

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