



Environment **Now**<sup>®</sup>



# Environment Now's 2010 Program Achievements

## Coastal Program

### State Water Board Approves Once-through-Cooling Phase Out

In April, the California Coastkeeper Alliance and Surfrider Foundation finally convinced the State Water Resources Control Board to phase out once-through cooling (OTC) in 19 coastal power plants. OTC, the process of using ocean water to cool power plants' equipment, uses outdated ocean water intake pipes and kills untold numbers of marine organisms. The decision to phase out the technology comes after a five year campaign of briefing the Board on OTC's impacts on coastal ecosystems, Clean Water Act compliance, and alternative technologies.

### New Interactive Maps Make Water Pollution a Priority

In April, the State Water Resources Control Board released its first impaired water body map. It was modeled after California Coastkeeper Alliance's interactive mapping initiative, which began in 2007. The Board's maps illustrate the severity of water pollution in California and include inland watershed regions. They allow users to learn about contamination in local watersheds, identify pollutants, and consider cleanup priorities.

### Humboldt Baykeeper Forces Union Pacific to Clean Up Balloon Track

In August—after 5 years of litigation—Humboldt Baykeeper (HBK) settled its Clean Water Act and Resource and Recovery Act lawsuit against Union Pacific (UP). HBK asserted that significant toxic pollution contaminates UP's Balloon Track property, deteriorating neighboring surface water quality and the local ecosystem. The pollution includes dioxins, furans, PCBs, and heavy metals, which were used in railroad operations on the site and never properly remediated. Under the settlement, UP is required to remove contaminated sediment at numerous "hot spot" locations to prevent further discharges of pollutants to Clark Slough and Humboldt Bay.

## Forest Program

### Spotted Owl Protections Reduce Logging on Shasta-Trinity National Forest

In January, program partner Conservation Congress filed a notice of intent to sue over the Shasta-Trinity National Forest's proposed logging projects in spotted owl habitat which violate the Endangered Species Act. Subsequently, the Forest Service did not finalize any new commercial logging in spotted owl critical habitat for the rest of the year. As a result, the Shasta-Trinity National Forest had the lowest annual volume of timber sales in its recorded history.

### New Scientific Report Reveals Importance of Forest Fires

In February, Dr. Chad Hanson of program partner John Muir Project published a report titled *The Myth of 'Catastrophic' Wildfire: A New Ecological Paradigm of Forest Health*. It is the first major report to compile the growing body of scientific research showing that large, high-intensity fires—which had previously been mischaracterized as "catastrophic" for forests—are in fact a natural, necessary, and beneficial part of California's forest ecosystems. The report is available at [www.johnmuirproject.org](http://www.johnmuirproject.org).

### Clean Water Act Applies to Forests

In August, a federal appeals court issued a decision establishing that the Clean Water Act can be applied to erosion from logging roads. This ruling will require timber companies to control soil erosion from their logging roads that pollutes the forest watersheds that are the source for much of our drinking water. The appeal was brought by an Oregon-based environmental organization, building on an earlier lawsuit in California by program partner Environmental Protection Information Center.

## Freshwater Program

### The San Joaquin River Finally Reaches the Ocean

In April—after 60 years of running dry for 60 miles—the San Joaquin River started flowing past Friant Dam to the Pacific Ocean. This is the result of program partner Natural Resources Defense Council’s long-standing lawsuit and congressional negotiations to restore the river and a viable salmon fishery. EN supported late-phase negotiations for remedies in 2005, which led to a partnership for restoration between the federal government and Delta nonprofits. Given the Delta’s status as one of the most vulnerable U.S. ecosystems for endangered species, these restoration efforts were launched not a moment too soon.



San Joaquin River

### \$2.5 Million Grant Awarded for Water Efficiency Programs in Southern California

In June, EN staff and allies were awarded the Governor’s \$2.5 million Green Innovations Challenge grant for our Los Angeles Water Efficiency Workforce Development program. EN staff pulled together a coalition of environmental and labor groups in mid-May, and within 10 days turned-around a winning proposal to develop 220 jobs in water efficiency in and around Los Angeles. Training in auditing and monitoring water losses; retrofitting the City with low impact development techniques; and replacing grass with drought-tolerant landscaping began January 2011.



Post fire habitat in Tahoe National Forest

### Center for Biological Diversity Sues to Stop the “Monterey Amendments”

In November, Sacramento Superior Court accepted for consideration the claims made by the Center for Biological Diversity related to the Monterey Amendments (“Monterey”) and Kern Water Bank (“KWB”). Monterey removed an urban preference for water deliveries that prioritizes human use of water over agricultural, removed safeguards against fictional “paper water” that allows over-reliance on water resources, and transferred the state-owned KWB to private interests. It was initially signed in 1995, and fifteen years later an environmental assessment is finally available to the public.



Pumping Wells at the Kern Water Bank

Environment Now's mission is to be an active leader in creating measurably effective environmental programs to protect and restore California's environment.

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