Environment Now's mission is to be an active leader in creating measurably effective environmental programs to protect and restore California's environment. Since inception, our focus has been on critical issues near to the hearts of Californians and our founders: preservation of coasts and forests, and reduction of air pollution and urban sprawl.

Our ultimate goal is to restore the balance and health of California's ecosystems. We believe that this goal is achievable through an intelligent combination of enforcement of existing laws, and application of technology and process improvements to eliminate unsustainable practices.
A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT:

The pressure on California’s natural environment looms ever larger and Environment Now’s work has never been more critical. Environment Now and its program partners achieved some critical milestones in 2003, notable among them:

- A lawsuit brought by the Coalition for Clean Air and the Natural Resources Defense Council successfully forced a groundbreaking settlement with the Port of Los Angeles that will utilize new technology and systems to reduce air pollution and clean up the port for local residents.

- In December, the John Muir Project and Sequoia ForestKeeper obtained a temporary restraining order barring the US Forest Service from further logging of the McNally Fire region of the Sequoia National Forest. The restraining order prevents the destruction of habitat for burnt-forest dependent species and old growth forest. John Muir Project’s strategic challenges to timber sales reduced logging on public lands in California by 25%.

- In the fall, the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) won a critical legal decision determining that logging companies are no different from other businesses in the requirement to obtain permits to discharge pollution from “ditches, culverts, channels, and gullies.” This decision will protect California streams and the wildlife that depend upon them for habitat from destructive logging practices.

- We launched Energy Independence Now, a campaign to rapidly transition California to a hydrogen-based transportation economy. The campaign has elevated the profile of hydrogen transportation and is pressing for development of a clean, efficient and renewable hydrogen infrastructure.

- Environment Now launched an environmental events calendar, augmenting the free tools we provide the entire Southern California environmental community, such as our policy maker database. The calendar enables non-profits to post and view upcoming events; thereby promoting open communication and ensuring effective planning and coordination for local environmentalists.

Environment Now’s focus on achieving measurably effective results continuously challenges our staff and partners to assess the value of our work on behalf of California’s environment. This year’s achievements demonstrate progress towards a healthy, balanced and environmentally sound California.

This year, Environment Now also proudly celebrated the departure of our executive director and friend, Terry Tamminen, to Sacramento to direct the new governor’s environmental programs as the Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency. His years at Environment Now were years of passionate growth and we wish him well in his new post. With Terry’s departure, I have assumed the additional role of Acting Executive Director. We have also added Terry O’Day to our team as Chief Operating Officer. He brings a great deal of experience in the private sector having founded two environmentally responsible businesses, most recently EV Rental Cars. Terry O’Day’s role is to manage the day-to-day operations and development of our program areas.

Kevin Wells
President
Environment Now’s Coastal Program has three key goals: restore ocean productivity by reducing pollution, restore habitat via Marine Protected Areas, wetland restoration, dam removal and hands-on restoration projects and eliminate human health risks by enforcing and tightening Clean Water Act standards.

The ocean is an integral, vital part of the Southern California ecosystem and the California lifestyle, but it has been overexploited for decades. Kelp beds have disappeared, the abalone are going, the black sea bass is gone, coastal pollution is on the rise, exotic species out compete indigenous species, coastal wetlands are filled, manicured beaches offer little food for shorebirds, fisherman are advised not to eat their catch ...and the list goes on.

Given this bleak state and since Environment Now was literally founded on the shores of the Pacific, it naturally follows that our Coastal program was our first and, as it is today, largest program. One of the most effective strategies to reach our goals for coastal restoration has been to propagate the bold, results oriented model of the Waterkeepers. We have started five Waterkeeper organizations covering Southern California’s five counties, plus the California Coastkeeper, which provides a regional voice on coastal issues.

The work of the Southern California Waterkeepers varies by local needs. But they are all out to stop pollution, be it from government, industry or private citizens. And their work helps Environment Now reach its own goals for Coastal restoration through hands-on restoration projects like kelp and eel grass and enforcing the Clean Water Act through advocacy and litigation. Some of the highlights from their work in 2003 include:

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper Identifies Underreported Sewage Spills by City
Concerned about regular beach closures and health warnings in Santa Barbara, the Santa Barbara Channelkeeper has been investigating the claim that the City’s sewer system contributes harmful bacteria to the ocean. During 2003, Channelkeeper collected all spill reports filed by the City and learned that sewage periodically spills out of the sewer system and into storm drains that lead to the creeks and ocean. Official records indicate that 28 sewage spills were reported from January 2000 to May 2004, but Channelkeeper’s investigation revealed that the City has consistently underreported the actual number of sewage spills. Further investigation uncovered another, perhaps larger, problem with leaking sewer pipes. 85% of the City’s sewer pipes consist of 2 – 5 foot sections of decades-old vitreous clay pipe. Channelkeeper requested that the City Council direct staff to investigate the magnitude of the problem of sewer spills. While these efforts have generated some forward momentum, there has also been denial of the problem and resistance to remediation, which may lead Channelkeeper to pursue other means to address the problem.

Ventura Coastkeeper’s Agri-Toxin Report Wakes Up Community
The focus of the Ventura Coastkeeper’s anti-pollution effort has been on the agricultural fields of the Oxnard Plain. Herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers—be they airborne or waterborne—are all very significant pollutants that greatly harm public health and the coastal environment. A research paper entitled, “Agri-Toxins: Ventura County’s Toxic Time Bomb” was released with the help of International Waterkeeper Alliance President, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Ventura Coastkeeper has taken a lead in the community by creating monitoring programs and conducting farm worker outreach, including a bi-lingual hotline to report agri-toxin problems.

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Santa Monica Baykeeper Stands Firm to Clean Up LA Sewers

The Santa Monica Baykeeper is a plaintiff in the biggest and longest running sewer lawsuit in California—against the City of Los Angeles. By the city’s own admission, over 600 spills occur each year in its 6,500-plus mile mainline sewer system. Baykeeper hopes for a positive settlement in 2004. Baykeeper also has been pursuing the adoption and enforcement of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed in a specific waterway under the Clean Water Act, in Los Angeles County.

Orange County Coastkeeper Reforests Crystal Cove State Underwater Park

With more than 90% of Southern California’s kelp forests gone, Orange County Coastkeeper has worked hard to restore this critical element of the coast’s overall health. The Orange County Coastkeeper has worked with the California Coastkeeper Alliance’s Kelp Lab to grow and plant kelp as part of a three-year project. By the end of 2003, their team will have reforested 26,700 square feet of reef in Crystal Cove State Underwater Park. As part of their Kelp program, Orange County Coastkeeper has also educated more than 30,000 people in Southern California about kelp and taught 1,500 kids how to grow kelp in their classrooms.

San Diego Baykeeper Fights Sewage Spills

While San Diego Baykeeper’s sewage spill lawsuit against the City of San Diego has not yet been resolved, this suit combined with pressure from regulatory agencies has provided the impetus for a dramatic increase in funding to address sewage spills in the City. In October 2001, the San Diego City Council approved a 30% sewer rate increase over four years, resulting in the allocation of over $240 million for inspection, maintenance and replacement/rehabilitation of aging sewer lines. Spills declined by 58% from 2000 to 2003 (from 365 to 153), and beach closures also decreased by nearly 50% over the same period. Baykeeper is hopeful that a final settlement providing long-term protections against sewage spills will be reached by mid-2004.

Waterkeepers are also involved in habitat protection and restoration. San Diego, Orange County and Santa Monica are working with the kelp laboratory in San Pedro run by the California Coastkeeper to restore local kelp beds with young plants grown in the laboratory. Santa Barbara Channelkeeper is fighting wetland destruction in the Goleta Slough and Ventura Coastkeeper is working on riparian restoration in Nicholas Canyon in the Santa Monica Mountains.
Environment Now’s Forest Program has three key goals: eliminate commercial logging on all public lands, promote true sustainable forestry practices on private lands and fully protect all old growth.

The new century has not been kind to our forests. Drought and fire have ravaged Western forests and provided the impetus for the “Healthy Forests Initiative,” Washington’s answer to a century of mismanagement and fire suppression. The initiative is focused on thinning national forests to reduce fire risk. Unfortunately, the initiative does not reduce fire risk, and is a thinly-veiled subsidy to the logging industry.

Forests on California’s private lands, especially in the central Sierra Nevada, are also increasing-ly at risk due to expanded clearcutting. Sierran forests will be replaced by single-species tree farms that provide little to promote ecological diversity. Further, these clearcut areas will have a significant impact on the range’s ability to generate reliable flows of clean water throughout the year. The health of the Sierra Nevada’s watersheds is critical to all Californians. The Sierra Nevada region generates up to 65% of California’s developed water supply.

Environment Now’s history with forest work started with the redwood groves of the North Coast. In recent years, we have expanded our work to include the other two major logging areas of the state: the central/northern Sierra Nevada and the southern Sierra Nevada. Today we are working with dedicated program partners in each of these three areas to fight for sustainable forestry practices and ecosystem protection.

Courts agree with EPIC – Loggers need permits to discharge pollution

One of the most effective forest activist groups on California’s North Coast is the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC). We have worked with EPIC for several years to ensure preservation of the magnificent Headwaters Forest as well as to protect the habitat of the endangered coho salmon. In 2003, EPIC continued to pursue a Clean Water Act case against loggers not taking adequate precautions to protect the streams adjoining their operations. Under the act, it is illegal throughout the United States to discharge pollution into waters from “discrete conveyance points” such as pipes, ditches, channels and gullies. Logging companies countrywide have never been held to this rule even though their operations have continually fouled adjacent streams with silt, herbicides and other industrial chemicals.

In the fall, the court handed down a critical decision, agreeing with EPIC that logging companies must also obtain permits to discharge pollution from their operations. If the companies are ultimately required to operate under the Clean Water Act, California streams will run clearer and North Coast salmon will have a better chance to avoid extinction.

John Muir Project Reduces Logging Levels in Sierra National Forests by 25%

In the Sierra Nevada, we partner with the John Muir Project (JMP), a non-profit organization dedicated to ending federal timber sales thereby placing all federal forestlands beyond the reach of commercial exploitation. In 2003, through their strategic legal defense program, the project was able to reduce logging levels on Sierran National Forests by more than 25%. JMP’s efforts have stopped or delayed projects that would have affected over 30,000 acres of mature and old-growth forests. The John Muir Project also won several significant court victories including preventing logging projects
that could be shown to increase, rather than decrease, fire risk and protecting habitat value by preventing several fire salvage sales in order to leave burnt trees for the species dependent upon them.

ForestKeeper Influences Decision to Reduce Grazing in the Sequoia National Forest

Our partner in the Southern Sierra is the Sequoia ForestKeeper, a non-profit founded by Environment Now to protect the Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument. During 2003, ForestKeeper worked diligently to ensure that the management plan under development by the Forest Service truly protects the monument from any form of degradation especially logging.

ForestKeeper advocacy also led to a decision that will reduce the amount of grazing allowed in the forest during the next decade. 36,000 acres in the Sequoia National Forest and 17,000 acres in the Sequoia National Monument are now protected from grazing. Mismanaged grazing can significantly degrade a forest and adjoining riparian areas as the cattle denude areas of vegetation, promote erosion, breakdown stream contours, pollute waters and spread exotic plant species.

The health of California’s forests was one of Environment Now’s earliest priorities, and with our partners, we continue to prioritize protection of this sacred public resource.
The Urban Program at Environment Now seeks to restore sustainability in Los Angeles urban areas by catalyzing activities to preserve environmentally sensitive open spaces and force environmental factors into the decision making process for Southern California.

Tejon Working Group Established to Bring Balance to Development Process
Tejon Ranch lies approximately 70 miles up the I-5 from downtown Los Angeles. This 430 square mile property is home to 27 different vegetation communities providing habitat for many endangered plant and animal species. The ranch also lies at the hub of several major biological corridors linking four of California’s major ecosystems—the Sierra Nevada, the Coast Ranges, the Mojave Desert and the San Joaquin Valley. Preserving Tejon’s habitat value is a key to protecting much of California’s biodiversity.

Recently, the Tejon Ranch Company has launched a major development campaign. Announced plans for three projects include an industrial park at the foot of the Grapevine, a resort and residential development near Frazier Park, and a massive subdivision in the western Antelope Valley. Environment Now and a coalition of scientists and planners believe that these projects are not sustainable and pose a threat to regional biodiversity as well as air quality in the region.

To address the issues raised by development, Environment Now has joined with planners, biologists, conservationists, and non-profit organizations to create the Tejon Working Group. The group’s goal is to halt any further development approvals and to challenge existing approvals, until the Tejon Ranch Company discloses all future development plans. In 2003, the Tejon Working Group tracked planning and development progress on the Tejon projects and commissioned Conservation Significance of the Tejon Ranch, a detailed report on the biological importance of the ranch.

Urban Land Not Efficiently Used – Planners Lack Basic Tools
Not only does Environment Now support the fight against urban sprawl represented by projects such as Tejon Ranch, but we are also working to change the incentives in the current urban planning process that encourage that sprawl. More efficient utilization of land within urban areas lessens demand for development in exurban and rural areas as well as reduce land use imbalances, traffic congestion, air pollution and water usage.

We found the urban land is not efficiently used because government planners lacked the basic tools necessary to facilitate an infill strategy. Critical among the missing tools was a set of effective and standardized mechanisms to identify vacant or underutilized urban areas and to evaluate their potential for development projects. Environment Now is developing these basic tools with a team consisting of a wide variety of stakeholders representing federal, state, county, and city governments, elected officials, developers and the business community, environmental organizations, and housing and community groups. The team surveyed existing infill analysis methodologies, defined and explored new methodologies, developed models that were then tested for applicability, accuracy and completeness. Results of this work will be documented and the final methodologies will be submitted to local and state agencies for review and implementation in the summer of 2004.
The Air Program at Environment Now has two primary goals: to reduce air pollution to zero health risk levels by 2014 and to hold polluters financially responsible.

For seven years, Environment Now has focused on the impact of diesel pollution on the environment and public health. Our diesel fight achieved a stunning victory in 2003 with the Port of Los Angeles settling a lawsuit over a new facility being developed for China Shipping.

2003 Precedent Setting Victory at Port of Los Angeles
The Port of Los Angeles has been the focus of our diesel work for the past few years. This port and the adjacent Port of Long Beach are of importance because they comprise the largest port complex in the United States and the third largest in the world. Ports are the largest single source of air pollution in the Los Angeles Air Basin even when discounting the impact of diesel-powered locomotives and big rig diesel trucks moving freight to and from the ports.

Our partners in the diesel effort, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Coalition for Clean Air, achieved a precedent setting China Shipping facility victory in March when they reached a settlement with the Port of Los Angeles. The port has committed to reducing air pollution and industrial blight in the bordering communities over the next four years. The work will include "greening" the facility by using 100% alternative fuel yard trucks and by providing shore electrical power that will allow the massive container ships to shut down their highly polluting diesel engines when docked.

A ship at dock under its own power generates up to 1 ton of smog forming nitrogen oxides (NOx) a day. Given the anticipated ship traffic at the new China Shipping terminal, the use of shore power can be expected to reduce the port’s pollution load by well over 200 tons of NOx a year.

The China Shipping victory will not only help us reach our air quality goals in Southern California but it has also created a model for the rest of the nations’ ports. The partners’ challenge in coming years will be to leverage these achievements in order to develop an earnest commitment from West Coast ports to abate pollution generated by their operations.
The Natural Resources Defense Council and Coalition for Clean Air are developing a report that will grade the country’s ten largest ports on clean air and water issues. Harboring Pollution: The Dirty Truth about U.S. Ports will be followed up by another report containing in-depth technical procedures that port operators can employ to reduce pollution.

**Defense of Fleet Rules before the U.S. Supreme Court**

Diesel vehicles on the road today constitute one of the largest sources of air pollution in California. In 2003, NRDC and Coalition for Clean Air continued their advocacy for new state rules and regulations to reduce emissions from these vehicles as well as defend earlier rules from attacks by industry groups.

During the last half of 2003, NRDC prepared to defend six fleet rules developed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District before the U.S. Supreme Court. The rules, which are being brought before the court through litigation by the Engine Manufacturers Association and the Western States Petroleum Association, mandate that public entities and their contractors purchase only alternative fuel trucks and buses.

Even as the local fleet rules were under attack, our partners were actively advocating for statewide rules that would require existing fleets to be retrofitted with devices to reduce diesel pollution. The first of the diesel retrofit rules, a strong one aimed at trash trucks, was adopted this fall. The rule requires fleet operators to retrofit, repower or replace refuse vehicles by 2010.
The primary goal of Environment Now’s Energy Program is to create action-oriented solutions to catalyze a rapid transition to a clean, renewable hydrogen economy in California.

Energy Issues a Priority with Energy Independence Now
Environment Now has long recognized that our addiction to petroleum energy is harming California and the country – our health, economy, security, communities and the environment. For the past few years, we have been investigating strategies to accelerate the transition of a substantial portion of California’s transportation system to hydrogen fuel cells. Hydrogen is a nearly ideal fuel since it is non-polluting and can be produced from clean, renewable resources.

In 2001, we launched the Energy Independence Now (EIN) campaign with the goal of transitioning California from a petroleum-based transportation system to hydrogen. Hydrogen will lead to a significant reduction in air pollution and a resultant improvement in public health but it will also reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Energy Independence Now is a lead participant in the public-private partnership called for by California’s new governor – Arnold Schwarzenegger – to implement his vision for the development of a hydrogen economy in the state. The partnership will prepare a Hydrogen Blueprint Plan to make recommendations on how to achieve the visions laid out in the Governor’s recent Executive Order on Hydrogen. The plan will make recommendations on timing, infrastructure siting, rollout strategy, policy and regulatory options, incentives, financing options, public education and more.

EIN’s primary focus during 2003 was on development of effective education and outreach tools including a comprehensive website, fact sheets, maps, news updates and more. These tools were integrated into the program’s main focus – the continuing advocacy effort to educate government officials, nongovernmental organizations and others about the benefits of hydrogen.

The website, www.energyindependencenow.org offers a wide selection of downloadable fact sheets covering topics ranging from public health issues associated with burning petroleum fuels to technical discussions about how a fuel cell works. The website also includes links to companies selling fuel cell vehicles to private individuals today. The technology is here now; it is not a generation off, as some would have us believe. In 2003, the EIN research team completed an assessment of the health impacts of exposure to the numerous pollutants found in petroleum fuels and their emissions, developed data on the costs of health care due to exposure to petroleum-related pollution, assessed the marketability and readiness of alternative vehicle technologies, and assessed the economic impact and costs of a transition to a hydrogen economy.
Our Mission

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Operating Charter

Because Environment Now is small, we are able to respond quickly to issues and assume risk where larger foundations cannot. We think of ourselves as the “SWAT team” of the environment and live by this principle. We bring an entrepreneurial approach to building grassroots groups and campaigns with actionable, achievable goals. We also seek to create leverage within all of our programs through means such as capacity building in our partner organizations, setting legal precedents, demonstrating the viability of sustainable alternatives, and creating best management practices. Environment Now’s active, forward leaning approach to working with our partners creates more effective working relationships, and ultimately more successful outcomes.

All grants made by Environment Now relate to specifically identified projects, which are almost always based in California.

Our History

Environment Now is a private foundation that was created in 1989 by Frank and Luanne Wells. Frank Wells was a well-known corporate executive, mountain climber and adventurer as well as a man of high integrity who was unafraid to fight for what is right. He saw many environmental problems in Southern California going unchecked and wanted to form an action-oriented organization to do on-the-ground work and truly make a difference. Environment Now’s early successes include founding the first Baykeepers in Southern California and bringing together a broad coalition of forestry activists for 1992’s comprehensive Sierra Now conference. More recently, we have supported successful litigation to force dramatically improved environmental planning at the Port of Los Angeles that is a model for ports nationwide.

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