

For Immediate Release  
March 29, 2005

Contact:  
Julie Dixon, Resource Media  
916/446-1056  
Ryan Henson, CA Wilderness Coalition  
530/246-3087

**CALIFORNIA'S "GOLDEN" LANDSCAPES AT RISK**  
New Report Released Today, Lists State's Most Threatened Wild Places

Oakland, California –A new report, released today by the California Wilderness Coalition, details the Golden State's 10 most threatened wild places. Based on surveys completed by conservation groups, scientists and other wildland experts, "Our Natural Heritage at Risk" includes forests, rivers, deserts and other landscapes throughout the state.

The fourth in a series of annual reports, the analysis considers the urgency and impact of threats to these landscapes, like water diversions, off-road vehicle use, logging, and oil drilling. Several places included in this year's report were listed last year.

"California's wilderness and wild rivers provide more than 60 percent of the state's clean drinking water, and offer recreation opportunities to millions," said Coalition Executive Director Mary Wells. "But once they're gone, they're gone forever."

According to the report, the 10 most threatened wild places in California, 2005 include:

**California Desert**

Algodones Sand Dunes (also known as the Imperial Dunes) - A newly proposed plan by the Bureau of Land Management will open the "largest dune ecosystem in the country" to off road vehicles, jeopardizing wildlife and other wilderness values.

White Mountains (Furnace Creek) - California's largest unprotected wilderness is being threatened by illegal off-road vehicle trails, damaging a rare desert stream.

Mojave National Preserve - Up to 2,500 miles of new roads could potentially be proposed in this fragile wild area, with devastating impacts for wildlife and recreation.

**Southern California**

Cleveland National Forest - Proposed freeways, dams, and power lines threaten one of the region's last unprotected wild forests.

## **Central Coast**

Los Padres National Forest - Proposed oil and gas development put wild forestlands, the California condor and other species at risk.

## **Sierra Nevada**

Hoover Wilderness Additions – Snowmobile trespassing threatens the wilderness character of this beautiful wild place.

Northern Sierra Nevada and southern Cascade National Forests – Proposed logging plans could potentially increase fire risk and threaten wildlife.

Owens Valley Wildlands – Due to excessive groundwater pumping, meadows and wetlands are turning to dust.

## **Northern California**

Klamath River Basin - Excessive water diversion is killing salmon and hurting fishermen, tribes, and endangered wildlife.

Salmon River Watershed – Logging, mining and road building threaten this critical refuge for salmon and steelhead.

While the threats to these wild places may cause permanent destruction, there are viable solutions for every one. Upholding federal and state laws; protecting fragile landscapes; designing balanced plans; and limiting destructive development are all part of keeping California wild – and conserving our natural heritage for generations to come.

“California's last wild places face increasing pressures from growth and development, yet we can act now to protect and preserve what remains,” said wilderness outfitter and guide Dave Willis of Sierra Treks.

The report, photographs and contacts from each area are available online at:  
<http://www.calwild.org/resources/pubs/10most05.php>

*Founded in 1976, the California Wilderness Coalition defends the landscapes that make California unique, provide a home to our wildlife, and preserve a place for spiritual renewal.*

###