

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
2009 River Warrior Awards Announced
Contact: Huey Johnson (415) 928-3774

San Francisco, CA – July 7, 2009

Thirty environmental groups and individuals received \$1,000 River Warrior Awards in recognition of efforts to protect and conserve water quantity, water quality, and riparian and aquatic habitat in free-flowing rivers. Two-thirds of the 2009 awardees are based in California, with the remainder working to save rivers and fish in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Colorado, West Virginia, Michigan, New Mexico, and Alaska.

The San Francisco-based nonprofit Resource Renewal Institute sponsors the award with the hope of encouraging the “valiant, resolute efforts in defending free flowing rivers and the wildlife that depends on them; and in acknowledgement of the commitment, hard work, and dedication of all who work for free flowing water.”

River Warrior Award founder and former California Secretary of Resources, Huey Johnson, describes the winners: “motivated by half-crazy passion, River Warrior Awardees struggle in the best of years—never mind the added challenge of an economic downturn in a time of climate change.”

There is consensus among fish advocates that salmon and steelhead face extinction within decades without change in water policy that address the effects of climate change.

Experts agree that environmental non-profit organizations will face dire challenges over the next year related to decreased and unpredictable fundraising and increasing need for services. River Warrior Award winner Coast Action Group’s entire 2005 budget was \$5,470. Its director, Alan Levine says, “CAG has been very effective working on a slim budget. We are hurting now.”

The work of River Warrior Awardees shows that streamlined operations, political savvy, and use of volunteers can augment losses in funding.

Gila Conservation Coalition has been working for 25 years to stop dams and water diversions on one of the Southwest’s last free-flowing perennial rivers. Water diversions in Arizona prevent the Gila from reaching the Colorado River, but New Mexico’s portion that runs through the nation’s first wilderness area supports threatened animals, human recreation, and guards against climate change impacts.

Cook Inletkeeper works in southern Alaska to safeguard a watershed that drains an area the size of Virginia. Founding Alaska’s first citizen volunteer environmental and water quality monitoring programs, Cook Inletkeeper is creating a basis of support for renewable energy development, habitat protection, and climate change action in Alaska’s most populous region.

Huey Johnson smiles as he reveals his inspiration for the awards. “Over a long career I’ve known many examples of little guys carrying on fierce fights to maintain remote rivers. It’s about time they got some recognition.”

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2009 River Warrior Awards include:

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| 1. Salmon Protection and Watershed Network | 16. Washington Rivers Conservancy |
| 2. California Water Impact Network | 17. Coast Action Group |
| 3. Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve | 18. Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy |
| 4. Smith River Alliance | 19. Russian River Watershed Protection Committee |
| 5. Carmel River Steelhead Association | 20. Save the Wild Rogue |
| 6. Mattole Restoration Council | 21. Watershed Research and Training Center |
| 7. Friends of the Eel River | 22. Sludge Safety Project |
| 8. Friends of the Navarro Watershed | 23. Colorado Water Trust |
| 9. Friends of Butte Creek | 24. Roaring Fork Conservancy |
| 10. South Yuba River Citizen League | 25. Ballona Institute |
| 11. Tuolumne River Trust | 26. College of Natural Resources, Utah State University |
| 12. Native Fish Society | 27. China Rivers Project |
| 13. Reed Burkholder | 28. Gila Conservation Coalition |
| 14. Ed Chaney | 29. Cook Inletkeeper |
| 15. Friends of the River | 30. Save Auburn Ravine Salmon and Steelhead |