

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

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Twenty-seven 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, and Michigan.

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.

The Salmon Protection and Watershed Network utilizes citizen volunteers supervised by a single paid fisheries biologist to collect data on California’s largest remaining coho salmon run, Lagunitas creek, saving the state money and providing education and skills to the public.

Washington Rivers Conservancy publishes the *Landowners’ Guide to Washington Water Rights*, which helps keep water disputes from bogging down courts. The group helped achieve the first ever “reverse water rights auction” that allowed market-based incentives to help keep water in rivers for fish.

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

