



FRIENDS  
OF THE  
RIVER

# What's Wrong with this Picture?



**As Californians** we are fortunate to enjoy some of the most magnificent rivers in the world. They thunder down from the Sierra, roll through Yosemite, meander through cities and towns. It's easy to conjure up beautiful images and assume our rivers are fine.

**But** our rivers are in trouble!



TIM PALMER

More than 1,400 dams in California prevent our rivers from flowing freely. They can reach hundreds of feet high and drown tens of thousands of acres of land.



More than 90% of California's river habitat has already been destroyed. We have lost 95% of our historic salmon and steelhead habitat.



JEFF MITCHELL

Native American cultures that revolve around fishing are being destroyed. Treaties promise tribes they can continue their fishing traditions, but unnecessary dams have decimated fish stocks and are depriving them of their rights.

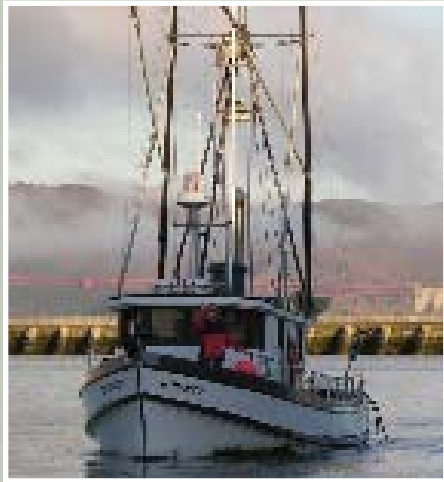


California has more extinct, endangered or threatened aquatic species than any other state. 65% of our native fish species are extinct or declining.



430 rivers and streams in California — totaling more than 26,000 miles — fail to meet water quality standards. 75% of all rivers and streams flowing out of the Sierra Nevada have been contaminated in the past five years.





MARY JANE SCHRAMM / NOAA

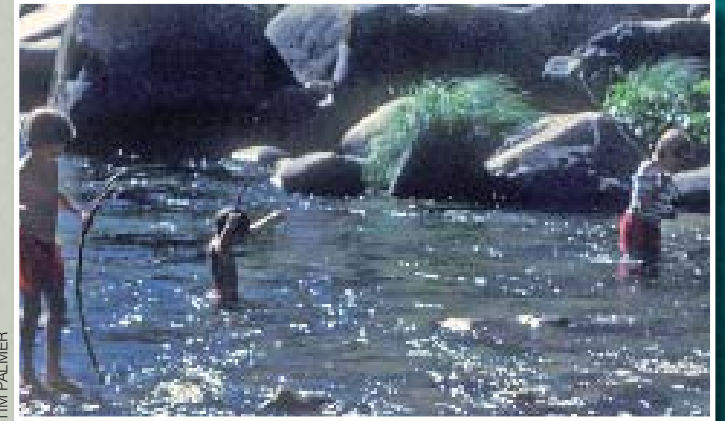
Our degraded rivers have destroyed fishing stocks, bankrupting hundreds of commercial fishermen. Coastal communities that rely on fishing have been devastated.



Developers are proposing to build 130,000 new homes in flood-prone areas. Misguided development increases political pressure to build new dams and further damages our stressed rivers.



Millions of gallons of water from our rivers are wasted each year by inefficient irrigation systems, inattention to urban conservation and outmoded management techniques. Despite rising power costs and energy shortages, the single largest use of electricity in California is pumping water from one place to another.



TIM PALMER

Only 1% of California's 194,000 miles of rivers and streams has been protected. By contrast, Californians wisely elected to preserve our coastline for future generations.



Poor river management is damaging local economies. River recreation and tourism can generate millions of dollars in revenue for local governments and businesses, but only if they are protected.

**Everything that relies on our rivers is suffering:  
plants, animals, businesses, you, me.  
But it's not too late. We can save and restore our rivers.**



# A Plan for Our Rivers

California's rivers belong to everyone, and everyone should enjoy their environmental, economic and recreational benefits. Friends of the River advocates a long-term plan to preserve, restore and sustain our state's amazing rivers. We propose an achievable, seven-point plan to benefit all Californians that can be fully realized within twenty years.

**Preserve 6,000 miles – or 3% – of California's most pristine rivers through Wild & Scenic designation.** California's wild rivers provide unparalleled opportunities for outdoor recreation, important habitat for fish and wildlife, and a critical source of clean water. Protecting our most beautiful rivers as Wild & Scenic will preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

**Establish 1,700 miles of river parkways with easy public access.** River parkways offer recreational opportunities for biking, walking, school outings and picnics. They bring nature into our urban areas, provide habitat for dozens of native species and offer critical flood protection to our communities. Everyone has access to California's unique coast; they should also have access to our beautiful rivers.

**Ease the impact of existing dams & remove those that are obsolete.** Returning rivers to their natural flows allows native species and natural ecosystems to recover and creates opportunities for increased recreational tourism like fishing and rafting. While some of California's more than 1,400 dams provide important services for our modern society, many are obsolete or fail to meet modern environmental standards.

**Utilize state-of-the-art techniques to improve agricultural water conservation by 20%.** California is the most important agricultural producer in the nation. Using existing technologies we can both preserve this critical part of our economy and significantly reduce water use - dramatically easing the pressure on our rivers.

**Protect and restore water quality for people & wildlife.** Every living thing needs clean water - and for most of us that water comes from a river. Protecting and restoring the water quality in our rivers is a critical component of meeting the fresh water needs of all Californians.

**Increase investment in urban water conservation & reduce consumption by 5%.** Many California cities and their water districts are leaders in conservation, but more can be done. Delivering water more efficiently, and using water more wisely, in every city can reduce the impact on our rivers.

**Improve flood management & preserve flood plains.** Floods occur naturally in California. Smarter management, expanded floodways and fewer developments in flood plains will reduce the human cost and taxpayer expense of flooding. Working with the natural cycle of our rivers, and whatever changes may occur due to global warming, is our most cost effective and practical choice.

Learn more about this plan and other ways Friends of the River is helping to save California's rivers at

[www.friendsoftheriver.org](http://www.friendsoftheriver.org)

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# JOIN Friends of the River Now

California's rivers cannot protect themselves. Our magnificent rivers face increasing pressure from higher populations and incessant lobbying by special interests.

Friends of the River, California's statewide river conservation organization, advocates a common sense approach to preserving our wild rivers, restoring rivers that have been damaged and promoting sustainable water management to ease pressure on all our rivers.

Our policy experts earn the respect of state officials. Our volunteers educate thousands of people each year. Most important, our members take action. They write letters. They attend meetings. They tell agencies and corporations that we care about California's rivers. The more members we have and the more active you are, the more effectively we can implement our river-saving plan.

We know – and you know – that our rivers are treasures to be preserved, not just resources to be exploited. Join Friends of the River now and help us put our plan to work.



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**Yes,** I want to join  
**Friends of the River**  
and help save our rivers.

NAME

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE NUMBER

E-MAIL ADDRESS (we need your email address to reach you with urgent alerts)

## Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of:

☐ \$35    ☐ \$50    ☐ \$100    ☐ \$250

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I have enclosed a check made payable to:  
Friends of the River

☐ I prefer to charge my contribution to my:

☐ Visa    ☐ MasterCard    ☐ American Express

CARD #

EXP DATE

NAME - AS IT APPEARS ON THE CARD

SIGNATURE

[www.friendsoftheriver.org](http://www.friendsoftheriver.org)