

Missing Linkages: Restoring Connectivity to the California Landscape

April 30, 2001

The Honorable Gray Davis
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Davis:

We are writing to alert you to a critical issue for California's environment. Wildlife corridors, the linkages between habitat areas that are necessary for the preservation of our state's biological diversity, are being lost at a rapid rate. Unless we act now to protect these corridors, our efforts to save much of California's native wildlife will likely fail. Because of your strong record of support for conservation, we are asking for your help.

On November 7, 2000, 150 scientists and land use professionals conducted a symposium in San Diego on the most urgent needs for biological diversity conservation in California. At this symposium, the participating scientists identified fragmentation of wildlife habitats throughout the state as an enormous threat to conservation. This problem is particularly acute in Southern California, a recognized global "hotspot" of biological diversity, with its exceedingly rapid population growth and highly fragmented natural habitats.

We, the undersigned scientists from that symposium, want to stress to you the urgent need to protect and restore habitat corridors and landscape linkages to sustain California's native diversity. Under the pressure of our growing human population and associated urban sprawl, critical habitat connections are being lost daily. Without such links between existing protected areas and other public lands, biodiversity will degrade rapidly and we will lose some of the most important and charismatic species found in our state.

A large body of field research demonstrates that the cascading effect of losing area-dependent species including top-carnivores (mountain lion, bobcat, badger, and kit fox) and anadromous fish (salmon and steelhead) - animals dependant on intact habitat linkages - from regions of the state will result in the loss of a large proportion of California's native biological diversity over time. These species maintain countless others by ensuring the balance of nature both within and outside protected areas. Further, the corridors themselves serve as important habitats for many important and rare species.



CALIFORNIA
WILDERNESS
COALITION
A LINKAGE TO WILDLIFE HABITATS



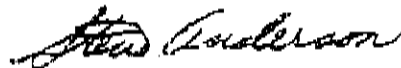
This issue is fundamental for all of our wildlife conservation spending. In essence, every dollar ever spent to protect natural habitats and wildlife is at risk if we do not work now to preserve and restore the landscape connections that will sustain these areas over time.

We greatly appreciate your support for protecting California's remarkable natural heritage. We urge you to consider the importance of our findings and to invest in the long-term preservation of biological diversity by protecting the "missing linkages" of our state. We stand ready to assist in any way we can.

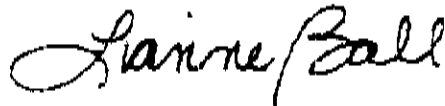
Sincerely,



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Head of Ecology and Applied Conservation
Center For Reproduction of Endangered Species
Zoological Society of San Diego



Steve Anderson
Forest Service, Southern California Conservation Strategy



Lianne Ball, Ph.D.
AMEC Earth and Environmental, Inc.



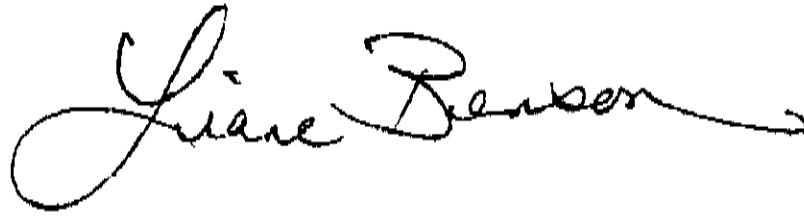
Cameron Barrows
Southern California Regional Director
Center for Natural Lands Management



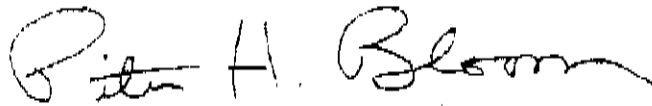
Paul Beier, Ph.D.
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Northern Arizona University



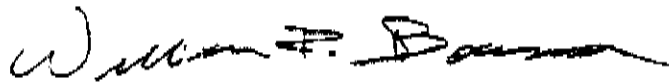
Carole Bell
Santa Rosa Plateau
The Nature Conservancy



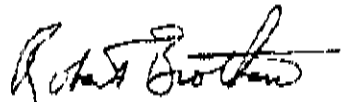
Liane Benson
The Nature Conservancy



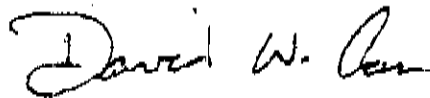
Pete Bloom
Western Foundation for Vertebrate Zoology



Bill Boorman, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor, Biology
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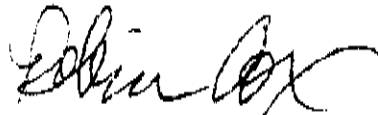
Robert Brothers, Ph.D.
Legacy: The Landscape Connection



David Carr
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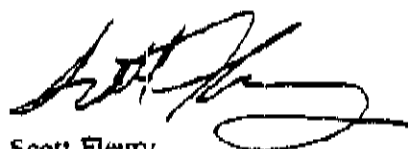
Shana Dodd
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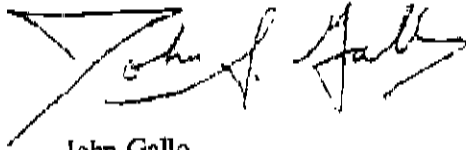
Jeff Dunk
USDA Forest Service



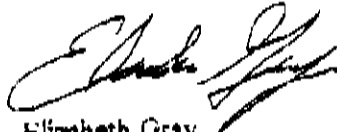
Paul Edelman
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority



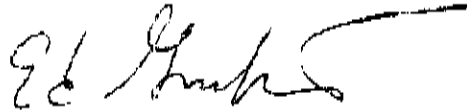
Scott Fleury
Ogden Environmental



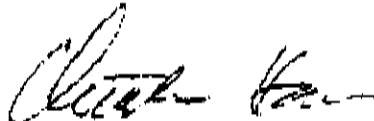
John Gallo
Conception Coast Project



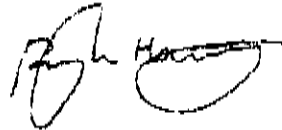
Elizabeth Gray
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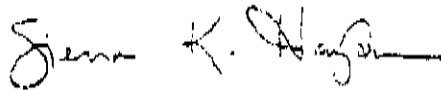
Ed Grumbine, Ph.D.
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Chris Haas
USGS - Biological Resources Division



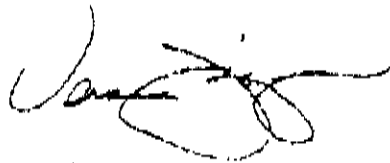
Ruskin Hartley
Save the Redwoods League



Sierra Hayden
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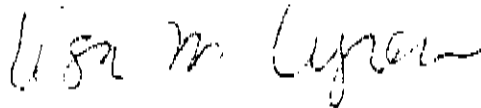
Verna Jigour
Ventana Wildlands Project



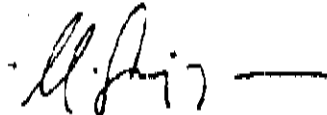
Paul Jorgensen
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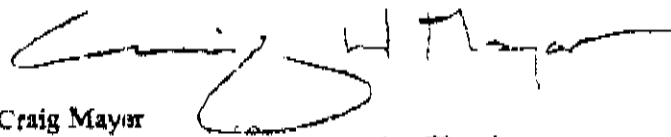
Patrick Kelly, Ph.D., Director
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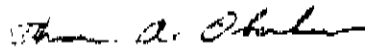
Lisa Lyren
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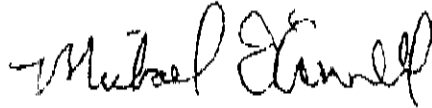
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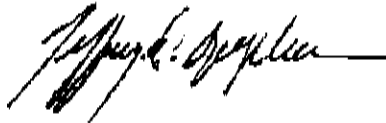
Craig Mayer
Associate Director of Conservation Planning
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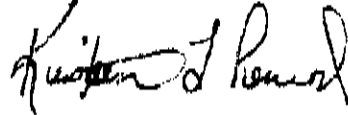
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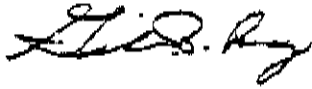
Kristeen Fenrod
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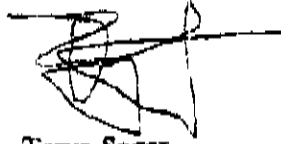
Rick Rayburn
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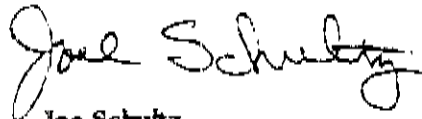
Gilberto Ruiz
Senior Planner
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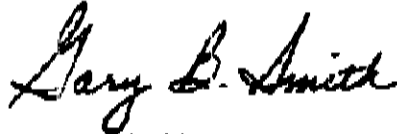
Tarya Sagar
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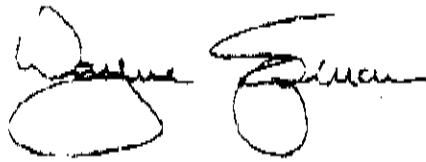
Gary Smith
Lassen National Forest



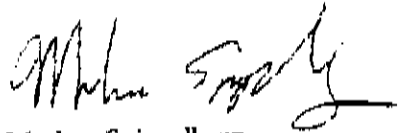
Trish Smith
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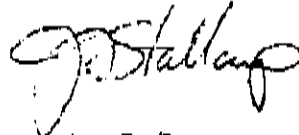
Wayne Spencer
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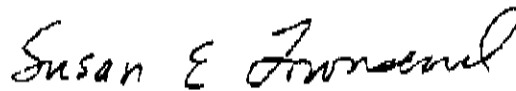
Markus Spiegelberg
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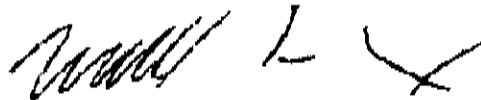
Paul Spiller
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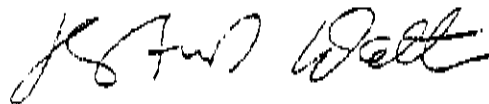
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