Talking Points for the April 28
California Natural Resources Agency 30x30 Meeting

The virtual California Natural Resources Agency 30x30 stakeholders meeting on April 28 from 4:00-6:00PM is a great opportunity to help the State of California shape and achieve a plan for the protection of 30% of California’s lands and waters by 2030. The 30x30 vision is an ambitious one to be sure, but one that’s achievable if we all work together to:

- Conserve and restore large, intact landscapes, wildlife corridors, and aquatic habitats
- Implement land conservation (nature-based) strategies that contribute to climate solutions
- Support the conservation and stewardship vision and priorities of Tribal Nations and ensure that their voices and traditional knowledge and practices are recognized during the process
- Conserve more open lands and parks near communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities
- Safeguard at-risk plant and animal species and their habitats
- Protect and steward critical private lands
- Protect our water resources, including important coastal and marine habitats.

Here are important messages that you can share with the California Natural Resources Agency during the April 28 meeting. You’ll be able to type in your comments from your smartphone or computer during the meeting:

1. **The Eastern Sierra is critically important.** The Eastern Sierra provides recreation opportunities for people from across California, the US, and abroad. Our area’s wildlands, waters, cultural areas, and recreation resources are the source of critical ecological services and economic and public benefits – they deserve much greater protection, stewardship, and funding than they currently receive.

2. **The Eastern Sierra is under assault – and our special lands and waters need protection.** Gold mining, resource development, and unsustainable recreation are real threats to the Eastern Sierra. Important habitats and cultural areas, like Conglomerate Mesa in Inyo County and Long Valley in Mono County, are now at high risk for open pit gold mining. These areas – and others like them - deserve to be protected for their cultural, ecological, economic, and sustainable recreational values, not sacrificed as open pit mines or other destructive developments. (Please name any other areas in the Eastern Sierra that you believe deserve increased protections as well!)

3. **Equity and inclusion matters.** The State of California should work with Indigenous, black, and people of color on a strong definition of “equity” when it comes to 30x30. Tribes need to be engaged early in this process. Specific goals and recommendations should guide how the 30x30 process will respect Tribal sovereignty and support Tribes in managing lands and resources that include their ancestral homelands. The state should work with Tribes – including the Paiute, Shoshone and Timbisha - to promote the application of traditional ecological knowledge in the management of public lands.

4. **A strong, meaningful definition of conservation is needed.** A clear definition of what “conserved” means must be defined and adopted. Truly “conserved” areas must be established to provide 1) lasting protection measures, 2) thriving habitats and biodiversity, 3) contributions to climate resilience, 4) critical ecosystem services and 5) be managed using sound science so that their natural character and species, resources, and functions exist for current and future generation.
5. **Nature-based climate solutions.** The Eastern Sierra holds many opportunities for nature-based (via land and water stewardship and conservation) responses to climate change: 1) large landscape conservation, 2) migratory corridor protections to allow species to move and adapt to changing climate conditions, 3) habitat restoration, and 4) elimination of unwise developments (e.g., open pit mining) and unsustainable management practices.

6. **Science is key.** The State of California should follow the best available conservation science. A science advisory panel should be appointed to focus on identifying what species and habitats need to be conserved to protect California’s biodiversity. The panel should also help develop conservation and management actions (nature-based solutions) that will build more create climate resilient landscapes for biodiversity and people.

7. **New State and Federal legislative protections are needed.** Additional state and federal legislation and funding is needed to advance 30x30 protection goals for California’s public lands and waters. Critical under-protected areas like Conglomerate Mesa should receive new, lasting protections. It is also important to conserve habitat types that are currently under-represented in the existing network of protected lands.

8. **California should push and engage federal agencies.** The state can help federal agencies identify key public lands and waters that deserve protection or special management because of their superlative natural, cultural, or other values. California must work with federal land managers and decision-makers to protect or restore connections between large blocks of protected habitats and reduce or eliminate other barriers to movement for wildlife. The Forest Service and BLM, in particular, should be urged to identify and administratively protect high-value landscapes and corridors.

9. **Private lands must be included as an emphasis for new protections.** State and federal agencies – and land trusts – can work together to identify important private lands that can be acquired and protected or placed under conservation easements. The protection and restoration of important habitats, public access, equity, are key factors when identifying priority private lands.

10. **Stop the ongoing damage.** The State of California must oppose destructive energy, logging, mining, road construction, oil and gas, or other projects on public lands that may destroy key habitat or harm communities. Conglomerate Mesa is too special to sacrifice to mining.

11. **Safeguard biodiversity and at-risk plants and animal species.** The Eastern Sierra provides habitat for many important species, including rare plants and animals. Bi-state sage grouse, bighorn sheep, pupfish, Joshua trees, bobcats, mule deer and mountain lions are just a few of our key species in need of strong, ongoing protections.

12. **Funding for conservation, stewardship and land management is sorely needed.** The state should urge Congress to appropriate robust funding levels for the BLM, Forest Service, and National Park Service to enable these agencies to effectively manage and protect California’s federal public lands and waters and provide for equitable, well-planned, and sustainable access and recreation. Adequate and sustainable funding is also needed for California state parks, wildlife refuges, and other conserved lands. The state must also provide sufficient resources for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to fulfill its mission.

13. **California’s 30x30 initiative can be a national model.** California can urge President Biden to develop federal 30x30 policies that are as strong as or stronger than those being developed by the State of California.

14. **1872 Mining Law Reform.** California should press Congress to reform the 1872 Mining Law, which gives preference to subsidized mining over all other public land uses - to the detriment of the environment, cultural resources, recreation and other important values.