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Contact: Kathryn Phillips, Director, Sierra Club California
Cell: 916-893-8494

State Board Adopts Long-Awaited Regulations to Protect California Wetlands

State Regulations Will Ensure Wetlands Protections Despite Federal Rollback in Wetlands Rules

SACRAMENTO –The California State Water Resources Control Board today, by a vote of 5-0, adopted a set of regulations designed to prevent wetlands around the state from being dredged or filled.

The rules will also protect against depleting wetlands of water to serve industrial farms.

The rules have been under development through workshops and stakeholder meetings for more than a decade.

The regulations did not provide as stringent a regulatory protection for habitat and ecosystems as most environmental groups working on the regulation advocated for. However, the simple adoption after such a long period of time, especially in light of recent federal efforts to weaken wetland protections, was vital to staunch the decline of wetlands in the state.

More than 90 percent of wetlands in California have been lost to development over the last 100 years. Wetlands provide critical habitat for birds, fish and amphibians and serve as natural water filtration systems for watersheds that produce the drinking water Californians depend upon.

Statement from Kathryn Phillips, Director, Sierra Club California

“There was a lot of opposition from industry for even these relatively modest rules. We’re thrilled that the Water Board did the right thing for the public interest and the environment and unanimously adopted the wetland rules.”

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Sierra Club California is the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of the 13 Sierra Club chapters in California, representing more than 400,000 members and supporters statewide.