



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **TEJON RANCH TASK FORCE WINS SIERRA CLUB ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE AWARD**

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. – The Tejon Ranch Task Force has won the Sierra Club 2009 Environmental Alliance Award. The award honors Sierra Club entities that have helped further environmental goals through collaboration with other, non-Sierra Club constituencies. The award will be presented on September 26<sup>th</sup> at the Sierra Club’s Honor and Awards Banquet in San Francisco.

The task force included representatives from the Angeles and Kern-Kaweah Chapters of the Sierra Club, as well as the Club’s regional Desert Committee. It joined with Audubon California, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Planning and Conservation League, and the Endangered Habitats League for two years of negotiations with the Tejon Ranch Corporation and its financial partner, DMB. Assisting the negotiating groups were attorneys from Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger and the Resources Law Group, and scientists from the Conservation Biology Institute and the South Coast Wildlands Project. At various times there was outreach to the U.S. military and the State of California.

Together, they developed an historic agreement that will protect 90 percent of the Tejon Ranch from development. The ranch lies at the biogeographic crossroads of five geomorphic provinces and four floristic regions—circumstances unmatched anywhere in California. Located south of Bakersfield, the 270,000 acres of Tejon Ranch land connects the southern Sierra Nevada, the Mojave Desert, the Transverse and Coastal Ranges, and the Central Valley. With 23 different vegetation communities and over one-third of the oak species in California, including some of the largest individual oaks in the state, it is seen as vital piece of key habitat corridors.

Operated as a working ranch for 150 years, Tejon Ranch is large enough and pristine enough to support such wide-ranging species as mountain lions and California Condors, and sufficiently vast to accommodate large-scale ecological processes such as natural fire cycles. The ranch had already begun development on some of its parcels and was planning additional developments when negotiations began.

Beyond participating in the negotiations, the task force members were responsible for rallying Sierra Club members using techniques such as a petition drive, car-camp teach-ins at a neighboring preserve, and a rally outside the Tejon Ranch’s 2007 shareholders meeting in Irvine, Calif. Other environmental groups took on other roles, such as producing a “national park-like” brochure, and assigning staff time.

In the final weeks of negotiations, task force members, bound by confidentiality agreements, attended a two-day tour of Tejon Ranch. These Sierra Club leaders then carried the weight of persuading the Angeles and Kern-Kaweah Chapters to endorse the terms of the agreement that preserved 90 percent of the Tejon Ranch and established the Tejon Ranch Conservancy.

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