

Salmon Water Now Press Release

Salmon Water Now! Charges Westlands With Driving Salmon and Fishing Families to the Edge of Extinction

New Video Release, "Bullies of Westlands" Shows How Westlands Water District's Drive for More Delta Water Comes at the Expense of Coastal Communities

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Watch the Video:

YouTube Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivU6YLMi5uo&hd=1>

YouTube Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzIc8uVMFUM&hd=1>

Vimeo: <http://www.vimeo.com/14323573>

San Francisco, CA – A new Salmon Water Now! video, "Bullies of Westlands," examines the words and deeds of Westlands Water District - the country's most powerful irrigation district - in its relentless push to export more and more freshwater flows from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The new release exposes Westlands' bullying tactics designed to move them to the front of the line for water when by law their place is at the end of the line. The video also documents the severe damage to salmon and the West Coast's fishing families caused directly by Westlands. Many believe that Westlands' drive for more Delta water over the last decade has contributed greatly to the decimation of the once mighty runs of Sacramento River wild salmon that depend on healthy freshwater flows through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The video documents the many ways that Westlands achieves their demands for water. We see and hear the voices of Westlands' representatives, politicians, and media outlets carrying a carefully-crafted message that the district's need for water trumps both law and science – and even common sense and basic fairness. In California's on-going water debate, there is no doubt that the biggest bully of them all has been Westlands on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley.

The new video also portrays the struggle of fishery managers trying to determine how many salmon are left in the ocean. (Not many!) It puts the lie to Westlands' claims that reduced water deliveries to the district have put America's agricultural output in jeopardy. We contrast the record - surplus crops of tomatoes, and almonds shipped to China - against struggling salmon fishermen and scarce wild salmon now sold domestically for \$20 a pound.

The Westlands Water District's unwillingness to be reasonable in the face of sound science regarding Delta health and the need for balance is not right. But it is not too late for Westlands to become good citizens and accept their role in forcing wild salmon runs to the edge of extinction. It is not too late for Westlands to actually encourage balance, fairness, and reasonable water management.

Salmon Water Now's new video calls on Westlands to stop being a bully and instead, start to work cooperatively to address California's water challenges. Unfortunately, the odds are against the survival of salmon as long as the bullies of Westlands have their way.

Water management in the Delta is currently woefully inadequate to restore the strong salmon runs that once formed the backbone of the fishing industry in California and Oregon. Great sacrifices have already been made in the form of two consecutive closed salmon seasons, intense hatchery programs, large job losses in the fisheries sector, and raised seafood prices for consumers. All of these sacrifices will be made in vain as long as water, our most precious resource, continues to be mismanaged for the exclusive benefit of California agribusiness. Now is the moment for California to adopt sustainable, equitable water management that will restore our salmon runs, bring back jobs, save coastal and Delta communities, and foster a newfound value for precious freshwater flows.

Salmon Water Now works to raise awareness of the plight of wild salmon and salmon-fishing communities dependent upon freshwater flows in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta. For more information, please visit www.SalmonWaterNow.org

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