FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DAMS, DEAD FISH, TUNNELS and INDIANS**

Sacramento, CA September 20, 2016 – In the midst of a 300-mile trek and prayer journey to bring salmon back to the McCloud River, the Winnemem Wintu Tribe and their allies converge on the State Capitol to demand a change in California’s water policy.

With plans to build new Dams and expand existing ones, and proposing to build two forty-foot Tunnels to divert more water out of the Delta, the stakes could not be higher for all of Californian. Fish species are on the verge of extinction. Disadvantaged Communities, subsistence fishermen, and small family farmers could see their water and way of life disappear altogether. And, the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, who suffered over 90% loss of their traditional homeland, sacred sites, and cultural gathering sites along the Sacramento, McCloud and Pit Rivers when Shasta Dam was built, will again suffer the brunt of this destructive water policy.

The Winnemem Wintu and their allies have embarked on a 300-mile prayer journey from Sogorea Te (Glen Cove, Vallejo) to the historical spawning grounds of the winter-run salmon on the McCloud River. This journey is a walk/run/boat/bike and horseback ride to bring attention to the plight of all the runs of salmon in California, and the water management practices that have brought some of those runs to the edge of extinction. It is a prayer to let Californians know that the water they enjoy has come to them at the cost of others and the threat of death and extinction to species necessary for a healthy California.

Chief Caleen Sisk of the Winnemem Wintu Tribe says, “We consider Shasta Dam a weapon of mass destruction. It has already taken our homes, sacred sites, burial sites, and stopped the salmon from returning to their historical spawning grounds. If these tunnels are built, Governor Brown’s so called ‘California WaterFix’, they will not only cause more death and destruction to the already endangered salmon, but they will encourage and motivate plans to enlarge Shasta Dam. An enlarged Shasta Dam will flood what remaining sacred sites, and cultural sites that we still use today.”

Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla, Executive Director for Restore the Delta states, “Restore the Delta stands today with the Winnemem Wintu calling on Governor Brown to abandon a failed water plan for California.  The era of unlimited water resource development is over.  As we revealed last week in the state's own economic analysis, the only way to make the Delta tunnels pencil out in terms of water delivery is to take even more water from the Delta -- which will finish off its fisheries, its entire ecosystem.  And to make matters worse, the government expects you and me to pay for this destruction with our taxes.”

Trent Orr, a lawyer for Earthjustice, which represents the Winnemem Wintu in various legal fights to protect and restore salmon, said:

“The Sacramento River's salmon runs are an emblem of wild California and its mountain-born rivers. The Winnemem Wintu Tribe has long fought to save these fish, which are central to their culture, and to restore health to the waters they need to thrive. But it has been an uphill battle. Much of the Tribe's homeland was drowned by Shasta Dam, and the salmon's access to the cold, clean spawning grounds above the dam, to which they had returned for eons, was blocked. Plans to raise the dam and to pump even more fresh water out of the Sacramento River via the governor's proposed giant tunnels could doom the salmon, already perilously close to extinction. The dam raise would also drown much of what's left of the Tribe's homeland. Earthjustice is proud to have represented the Tribe in many of its legal battles to save and restore the salmon. On behalf of the Tribe and its allies, we will continue to fight for the day when wild salmon again spawn in the headwaters of the Sacramento.”

In written testimony submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board, for the ongoing hearings regarding the Bureau of Reclamation’s and the Department of Water Resource’s water diversion change petition regarding the California WaterFix, Winnemem Wintu Governmental Liaison Gary Mulcahy asks,

“Drowned cultures, dead and extinct fish, broken promises, stolen lands, environmental destruction, water grabs, and years and years of litigation – is it truly worth it?

PRESS CONFERENCE: West Steps of State Capitol – Tues, Sept. 20th, 2016 10:30 – 12:00

Speakers: Chief Caleen Sisk, Winnemem Wintu Tribe; Trent Orr, Earthjustice; Barbara Barrigan-Parilla, Restore the Delta; Eric Wesselman, Friends of the River.

For more information on the 300-mile journey: Contact: Gary Mulcahy
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For more information on the Winnemem Wintu:
[www.winnememwintu.us](http://www.winnememwintu.us)