

## **SUPPORT CREATION OF A TEJON-TEHACHAPI NATIONAL OR STATE PARK IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

### Background:

The privately-held Tejon Ranch Company, which controls 270,000 acres of undeveloped land in the Tehachapi and adjoining southern Sierra, has recently proposed large housing and commercial developments throughout much of the ranch. Although the Company has proposed a conservation area of up to 100,000 acres for public acquisition, conservation biologists have recommended that approximately 90 per cent of the Ranch (245,000 acres) be preserved to ensure that ecosystems are maintained.

Ranch land includes a wide diversity of geographic features and ecosystems, including mountains, valleys, and grass-covered plains. The land contains one of the highest numbers of oak species in the entire state of California, and extensive native grasslands that are now extremely rare. The Ranch is a critical wildlife corridor connecting the Sierra Nevada, Central Valley, Mojave Desert, and South Coast ecosystems.

Tejon is in the "California Floristic Province" which is designated as one of the world's 25 biological "hotspots" owing to its extremely high concentration of diverse plants and animals. The area includes more than 80 imperiled species that rely on this biologically-rich habitat, many found nowhere else on earth. These species include the California condor, the San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, and burrowing owl.

A coalition of 14 national, regional, and local environmental organizations, including the Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity, Natural Resources Defense Council, Defenders of Wildlife, and the Endangered Habitat League are working to protect the Ranch from excessive development. Broader support from environmental, endangered species, wildlife, and outdoor recreation organizations would be extremely helpful in the battle to achieve success in this major campaign to protect unique ecosystems found nowhere else on earth.

### Resolution:

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs supports efforts to protect the Tejon Ranch as a national or state park or with another appropriate designation to protect its unique biodiversity.