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**Mojave Trails National Monument makes list of
15 wild areas at high risk of harmful development**

New report shines spotlight on important wild lands that must be protected

Joshua Tree, California—“Too Wild To Drill” - a new report released today by The Wilderness Society raises the alarm about Mojave Trails National Monument, as well as other protected places in the California desert and across the U.S. threatened by extractive industries eager to exploit the resources on or underneath them, including groundwater, minerals, oil, gas and coal.

The “Too Wild To Drill” report identifies 15 unique places found on public lands that are at high risk of drilling, pumping, mining and other development—and the damage and destruction that inevitably follow. These lands provide Americans with important benefits such as clean air and water, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, historic and sacred sites, jobs and other socioeconomic benefits.

“This report is a wake-up call to everyone who cares deeply about our shared public lands,” said Conservation Director at The Wilderness Society, Phil Hanceford. “Mojave Trails National Monument and nearby wildlands are home to stunning scenery and unique wildlife, as well as historic, archeological and scientific wonders. Local desert communities depend on access to recreation and tourism dollars generated by visitors from around the world who come to admire the natural beauty of the region. These lasting benefits cannot be traded for quick profits enriching private interests.”

Two of the biggest threats to the Mojave Desert region are harmful mining operations and one private company’s plan to drill deep into the desert’s underground aquifer, pumping out enormous quantities of water and selling it to communities in the Orange County area, putting natural springs and the desert ecosystem at risk.

Cadiz, Inc. has attracted widespread opposition for its plans to pump around 16 billion gallons of groundwater per year for the next 50 years from a very dry region. It is also criticized for its ties to Deputy Interior Secretary David Bernhardt, a former lobbyist for the firm.

“Mojave Trails protects public lands between Joshua Tree National Park and Mojave National Preserve, allowing for the free movement of animals like bighorn sheep, excellent public access, and safeguarding delicate springs. The environmental impact of the Cadiz project would be devastating to wildlife, local communities, and a regionally important aquifer in and around the Mojave Trails National Monument,” said Frazier Haney, Conservation Director of the Mojave Desert Land Trust.

“America’s national parks and monuments are only as strong as the public’s willingness to protect them, particularly from extractive projects like Cadiz. We appreciate our partners at The Wilderness Society bringing light to this critical issue.”

The Wilderness Society issues a new version of ‘Too Wild To Drill’ every few years to call attention to vulnerable places on public lands. In this edition, other places highlighted include the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, one of the most remote and wild places left in the world, as well as:

- Mojave Trails National Monument, California
- North Fork of the Gunnison, Colorado
- Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Minnesota
- Badger-Two Medicine, Montana
- Paradise Valley, Montana
- Owyhee Desert Sagebrush, Nevada
- Wayne National Forest, Ohio
- Bears Ears National Monument, Utah
- Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Utah
- Appalachian Trail, Virginia
- Green River Valley, Washington
- Northern Red Desert, Wyoming

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The Wilderness Society is the leading conservation organization working to protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places. Founded in 1935, and now with more than one million members and supporters, The Wilderness Society has led the effort to permanently protect 109 million acres of wilderness and to ensure sound management of our shared national lands. www.wilderness.org.

The Mojave Desert Land Trust (MDLT) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with the mission to protect and care for lands with natural, scenic, and cultural value within the Mojave Desert. It has conserved more than 60,000 acres of prime desert habitat, forever weaving together National Parks, wilderness areas and wildlife linkage corridors. www.mdlt.org