

# Natural Resources of California

**Purpose: To acquaint the student with the various natural resources of California and to learn their distribution.**

## I. Define Natural Resources - any useful property that is native to an area.

- A. Used to be limited to extractive industries like iron ore or coal etc. but today it includes recreation, tourism, etc.
- B. Excludes purely cultural decisions i.e. Las Vegas - it's there because of
  - a) cheap land
  - b) relaxed gambling laws
  - c) cheap power. The place would otherwise probably become a ghost town if a) gambling would become against the law (or just as important ) b)if California relaxed its prohibition on casino gambling).

## II. California's Most Important Natural Resources

### A. WATER most important. One of state's greatest assets and its greatest problem.

- 1. Indians and missions and early settlers located near water since it does not fall from sky on regular basis like out east.
- 2. Now we irrigate over 8 million acres of land & support some of world's largest urban complexes in an arid climate.
- 3. Calif. normally has ample water within the state to support both its agricultural base and its urban areas, but growth will soon be limited if more water is not diverted.

### B. SEAFOOD

- 1. Cal. ranks 2nd. in Seafood production in the U.S. Louisiana 1st, Alaska 3rd, Then Virginia & Mass.
- 2. Over 600 million lbs. from over 60 species harvested.
- 3. 200 mile zone for enforcement of American laws apply.
- 4. Industry started 1849, by Italian immigrants in S.F.
- 5. Shortly after Chinese fishermen: caught much Cod, halibut, & sardines
- 6. First cannery 1864 on Sacramento R.
- 7. By 1900 canneries at S.F., Monterey, & San Pedro - which is now the leading fishing port in the nation.
- 8. Recently San Diego is increasing in importance.
- 9. Sardines over fished, declined in 1940's - Cannery Row Monterey, John Steinbeck. Last cannery closed in in 1964, but fish are coming back - used for bait.
- 10. Pollution and over fishing = depletion both fish and shellfish. Natural reproduction no longer keeping up with demand.

### C. TIMBER

- 1. There are 42,500,000 acres of forest land in Cal. 17,300,000 commercial, rest wilderness areas and parks
- 2. California is 3rd in Total U.S. lumber production after Oregon and Washington States, exceeding 5,000 million bd. ft. per year.
- 3. 2nd after Oregon in wood and wood products, lumber is one of top 10 leading industries in the state.
- 4. Problem - We cut it down faster than it can naturally reproduce.
- 5. Location is mainly in Northwestern California with Humboldt and Mendocino Co. heading the list. Since this is the principal industry (aside from illegal substances) the counties are most susceptible to great swings in the economic health of the building industry.

### D. MINERALS

- 1. Gold - most important to the **development** of state. Not much now.
- 2. Of the 56 new minerals found in the state, 39 are not known to exist elsewhere in commercial quantities.
- 3. Cal.= greatest variety of minerals in U.S.
- 4. Leading producer of 16 of the 60 major commercial mineral commodities mined in U.S. including: silver, copper, manganese, tungsten, and uranium.
- 5. Cal. = 10 % of U.S. production of minerals = ranked 3rd in U.S., after Texas and Louisiana.
- 6. Death Valley = largest borate reserves in the world
- 7. Cal. chief producer of asphalt, sand & gravel, cement, iodine, salt, and potash.
- 8. **Principal minerals in order (by dollar value) Petroleum, Natural Gas, Cement, Sand & Gravel, Boron.**
- 9. Cal. lacking in coal, iron ore, but some exists.

#### E. PETROLEUM

1. Used by Indians to caulk canoes
2. First commercial refinery Newhall, 1877
3. By 1903 3000 wells Cal. largest producer in the nation until 1936, 12% production, 14% proven reserves.
4. Today Cal. 3rd after Texas and Louisiana (6th Nat. Gas)
5. By order Principal fields (production)
  - a) Wilmington (by far the largest) S.Cal.
  - b) Midway-Sunset (S.W. S.J. Val. near McKittrick)
  - c) Huntington Beach
  - d) Kern River (S.E. S.J.Val. near Bakersfield)
  - e) Ventura
  - f) Elk Hills = Largest Reserve (S.W. S.J. Val.)

#### F. RECREATION AND TOURISM

1. Cal 1st & 2nd is N.Y. in dollars spent on accommodations, amusement, and recreation facilities.
2. Over 150 state parks.
3. National Parks and Monuments
4. List is endless - Climate great, natural wonders, ski areas in mtns. deserts- Death Valley, Palm Springs, Seaside resorts, Tournaments - Roses, Rose Bowl game, Zoos at esp. San Diego, Historical monuments -gold rush, missions, Amusement Parks- Disneyland, S.C. Beach & Boardwalk, Knott's Berry Farm, Hollywood.

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