

San Francisco Alameda Watershed Habitat Conservation Plan

The Alameda Creek Alliance and 10 other Bay Area conservation groups have submitted extensive scoping comments on the Francisco Public Utilities Commission's proposed Alameda Watershed Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The comments are posted [here](#).

The San Francisco Planning Department and federal wildlife agencies held a scoping meeting last week on the HCP in Dublin, attended by about 30 people. There is an article in today's Livermore Independent about the HCP and the hearing, [Conservationists Want More Species in Watershed Plan](#).

The HCP will provide conservation measures and legal coverage for the SFPUC under the Endangered Species Act for lawful "take" of 12 special-status wildlife species and 5 plant species within the watershed, for 30 years. This HCP is the mechanism the SFPUC will use to address instream flows for steelhead trout and other migratory fish. It will provide the SFPUC with immunity from litigation over endangered species impacts from covered activities such as dam and reservoir operations, lease activities such as cattle grazing, and nursery and golf course operations, and road and fence construction and maintenance.

The conservation groups are asking for an extension of the comment deadline for scoping comments on the environmental review of the HCP (due today), suggest additional species that should be covered in the HCP, ask for peer review of all information produced by the SFPUC, critique the inadequacies of the Biological Inventory report released by the SFPUC, and propose mitigation measures for impacts.

The San Francisco Planning Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Marine Fisheries Service will conduct a public environmental review process and release a draft Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR). The SFPUC so far has provided an overview of the HCP, a revised list of covered activities, a revised list of covered species, preliminary modeling for the covered fish species, and a draft approach for impact analysis and conservation measures.

See the SFPUC's [web page](#) and the ACA [web page](#) for more information on the HCP.

Rain is Finally Here - Watch for Fish

With last night's rain, the stream flow in lower Alameda Creek is now at almost 700 cubic feet/second and rising. Here is the USGS stream gage for the lower creek: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ca/nwis/uv?11179000>

Steelhead trout are typically seen in the flood control channel from January through March, after big storms. Watch the lower creek and the BART weir for steelhead all this week. See our web page on [What to do if you see salmon or steelhead in Alameda Creek](#).

Volunteer for SFPUC Fish Surveys in Alameda Creek

If you would like to volunteer to help S.F. Public Utilities Commission biologists with surveys of landlocked steelhead and resident rainbow trout populations, as well as potentially assist with radio tracking and monitoring of tagged adult steelhead this winter, please contact Aaron Brinkerhoff of the SFPUC at abrinkerhoff@sflower.org.

Alameda Creek Sediment Forum

The presentations from the second Alameda Creek Sediment Forum in December 2008 are now posted on the SFEI website at <http://www.sfei.org/alamedacreek/>.

A combination of eroding soils, landslides and debris flows, and incising and widening channels annually supply large volumes of sediment to the Creek. Coarse sediment is positive for the creek segments managed for spawning and rearing habitat for salmonids. However, those same coarse sediments can fill reservoirs and the downstream flood control channel in Fremont, impact bridges, and impair regular operation and maintenance of groundwater pumping and percolation facilities. Fine sediment is generally deleterious to all the beneficial uses of the Creek. However, once both types of sediment have passed through the flood control channel and into the Bay, they are valuable as the supply for the biological and physical material necessary for wetlands on the Bay margin. Hence, agencies managing different parts of the Creek system face a dichotomy of competing needs with regards to coarse and fine sediment.

The next forum will be held in May.

Good News on Bonnie and Clyde's Kids

It was previously reported that we feared all of the offspring of Bonnie and Clyde, the historical steelhead pair that spawned in Stonybrook Creek last winter, perished during the unusually dry summer. We are happy to report that a few surviving steelhead/trout fry were spotted in a Stonybrook Creek pool in early November.

Upcoming Events in the Watershed

Tuesday, January 27 - 7:00 pm

Talk on Ecological Restoration: Native Grasslands

Robert Livermore Community Center

A slideshow by Livermore Area Regional Park District Ranger Lewis Reed on restoration of native grasslands. This event is a precursor to upcoming opportunities for hands-on volunteer projects this spring and summer. Call (925) 960-2400 to sign up.

Thursday, January 29 - 6:00 pm

Film and Talk on Joaquin Murrieta: Local Bandit Turned Hollywood Hero

Hayward Area Historical Society

Discover the man behind the legend of Zorro and a local folk legend. Professor Warren Haack of San Francisco State University will present a short film followed by a talk with Erica Herron of the East Bay Regional Park District. Joaquin Murrieta and his wife had a ranch in Niles Canyon at the time of his death. Admission is FREE for all Historical Society members, \$5 for nonmembers, and \$3 for students and seniors. This event is the first in the Heart of the Bay series of programs on the history of the Hayward area.

Hayward Area Historical Society

22701 Main Street, Hayward CA. 94541

http://www.haywardareahistory.org/events/view/7-joaquin_murrieta

Leaping Steelhead Conservation Awards For 2008

Dan Bacher's annual awards to heroes on fishing and environmental issues:

<http://www.fishsniffer.com/dbachere/090121leapingsteelheadawards.html>