

To the Alameda Creek Alliance e-mail list:

CALAVERAS DAM PROJECT BEGINS - MOST SIGNIFICANT RESTORATION OPPORTUNITY FOR ALAMEDA CREEK?

Alameda Creek is becoming an urban stream success story after decades of restoration efforts. Downstream of San Francisco's three dams, half a dozen fish passage projects are moving forward, including the removal of dams and the construction of fish ladders and fish screens. For the first time in nearly half a century, these projects will make up to 20 miles of stream available for steelhead trout and salmon spawning and rearing. Alameda Creek is an "anchor watershed" considered regionally significant for restoration of endangered steelhead trout to the entire Bay Area.

San Francisco, voted the second greenest city in the nation, will soon be rebuilding the seismically-challenged Calaveras Dam on Alameda Creek, the largest local tributary to San Francisco Bay. Certainly the eco-city by the Bay will operate their rebuilt water system in an ecologically responsible fashion that allows for the historic restoration of salmon and steelhead trout below the dam, right? Sadly, even though they are legally obligated to provide sufficient flows for steelhead, that is not what is currently being proposed by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission as part of the Calaveras Dam replacement project.

The beginning of the environmental review for the Calaveras Dam project is a significant milestone in the restoration of Alameda Creek. With all major fish passage projects in the watershed now underway, stream flows for fish below the San Francisco dams is a critical last piece of the puzzle for the full restoration of Alameda Creek.

SAN FRANCISCO RELEASES FLAWED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR CALAVERAS DAM

The San Francisco Planning Department just released a flawed draft Environmental Impact Report for the Calaveras Dam project, proposing to operate the rebuilt dam in a manner that is incompatible with restoring steelhead below the dam. The proposed stream flow releases for migratory fish are clearly inadequate, the proposed operation of Calaveras and the related Alameda Diversion dams is illegal, and the proposed mitigations for what will be significant construction impacts on habitat for numerous endangered species are meager and inappropriate.

Public comments on the Draft EIR will be accepted until [Friday, November 20](#).

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Help bring San Francisco's water agency into the twenty-first century regarding compliance with modern environmental protections. Please take action in the following ways to tell San Francisco to restore steelhead with the dam rebuild.

1. Easy-Click Action Alert

Click [here](#) to send a prepared e-mail message (or write your own message) to decision makers with San Francisco's water agency, planning department, and Board of Supervisors.

http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/2167/t/5243/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=1645

[After taking action, please forward this email or the action alert link to your friends and family, especially those that live in San Francisco.](#)

2. Write Your Own Comment Letter

A sample comment letter is [here](#)

Send comments to:

Bill Wycko, Environmental Review Officer
San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103
E-mail: bill.wycko@sfgov.org and chris.kern@sfgov.org
Fax: (415) 558-6409

Read our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about the problems with the project and EIR. If you want to send a more detailed letter, we will have an analysis of the EIR for comment letters posted on our [Calaveras Dam web page](#) soon.

3. Sign Your Group or Organization Onto Our Group Comment Letter

A group sign-on letter will be prepared soon – check www.alamedacreek.org to read the letter and contact Jeff at alamedacreek@hotmail.com to sign your group onto the letter.

4. Ask For Extension of Comment Period and Sunol Hearing

Due to the extreme complexity of the project, the highly technical nature of much of the material in the EIR, and considerable controversy over biological impacts of the project and the adequacy of proposed mitigations, the Planning Department should extend the public comment period for at least 30 days.

Insist that the San Francisco Planning Department extend the comment period and also hold a hearing on the project near Sunol, so the communities most affected by the project can participate. They are deliberately trying to ram this project through without adequate public scrutiny or informed comment. See our [letter](#) requesting a time extension and public hearing in Sunol.

5. Attend One of the Public Hearings

The San Francisco Planning Department will hold two public hearings on the Draft EIR:

Tuesday, November 10, at the Fremont Main Library, 2400 Stevenson Blvd, Fremont, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 12, before the City Planning Commission - in Room 400, City Hall, San Francisco, beginning at 1:30 p.m. or later. We are trying to get the Planning Commission to specify the time of the Calaveras Dam item; or call (415) 558-6422 the week of the hearing for a recorded message giving a more specific time.

Talking points about the problems with the EIR and what SF should do to restore steelhead, and a more detailed analysis of the EIR for the upcoming public hearings will be posted on our [Calaveras Dam web page](#) soon.

SPEAKING OUT AT PUBLIC HEARINGS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT

Come speak at the public hearings. We are trying to get a third hearing scheduled in Sunol. Help us turn people out for the hearings, especially the San Francisco hearing.

This is the most controversial project of the entire Water System Improvement Program (and the most behind schedule and most over budget). We are somewhat concerned the SFPUC will try to blame us for delays and costs, even though the environmental review just started. We will likely challenge this project if the environmental mitigations are not adequate, and we need a strong showing of public support for restoration to send a clear message to the SFPUC that they need to comply with environmental laws.

We are concerned there may be some attempts to make this into a fish vs. jobs issue (which it is not). There are rumors the labor unions that will provide workers for the dam rebuild will turn large numbers of people out for the SF hearing demanding the dam be built ASAP. We support building the dam promptly – our issue is with how it is operated after it is built. Come to the hearings and tell SF to do the right thing for fish. The labor unions should be our natural allies – if the project provides sufficient flows for fish, it will avoid unnecessary delays of the environmental review and the dam can be rebuilt on time.

CALAVERAS PROJECT IN THE NEWS

KPIX Channel 5 News Story – October 6, 2009
[*Studies Released in Replacing Calaveras Dam*](#)

San Jose Mercury News – October 2, 2009
[*Large new dam construction steaming ahead in Santa Clara and Alameda County*](#)

Read the Alameda Creek Alliance press releases about the project:

October 7, 2009
[*San Francisco Releases Flawed Draft EIR for Calaveras Dam Replacement Project on Alameda Creek*](#)

April 17, 2008
[*San Francisco Rebuked Over Steelhead Trout Consideration for Calaveras Dam Rebuild*](#)

CALAVERAS DAM PROJECT EIR DOCUMENTS

[Notice of Availability](#)

Download the EIR (1,600 pages!) [here](#) or [here](#)

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OTHER ALAMEDA CREEK RESTORATION NEWS

September 2009 article in [The Osprey](#), the newsletter of the Federation of Flyfishers
[Alameda Creek Update](#)

Fremont Argus photo-story - September 9, 2009
[Helping Fish Go With the Flow](#)