

ALAMEDA CREEK – 90 YEARS OF NEGLECT



steelhead trout caught during construction of Calaveras Dam

- 1913 Ground breaking begins on construction of Calaveras Dam on Calaveras Creek
- 1916 Calaveras Dam is completed, cutting off access for migratory fish to the Calaveras Creek sub-watershed and altering the hydrology of Alameda Creek
- 1930s Construction finished on Alameda Diversion Dam, which diverts the majority of winter stream flows out of upper Alameda Creek
- 1950s CA Department of Fish and Game informally concludes the steelhead fishery in the Alameda Creek watershed is no longer viable
- 1964 Last documented coho salmon spawning run in Alameda Creek
- 1965 San Antonio Reservoir completed, capturing the entire runoff of the San Antonio Creek sub-watershed and blocking access to ocean-run fish
- 1960s Last years ocean-run steelhead documented successfully passing through the Alameda Creek flood control channel
- 1960s Lower 12 miles of Alameda Creek straightened and channelized by U. S. Army
- 1970s Corps of Engineers flood control project
- 1972 Completion of BART weir at river mile 8 prevents all anadromous fish migration upstream through the Alameda Creek flood control channel
- 1975 CA Department of Fish and Game memo reveals DFG policy to “not actively promote steelhead restoration on Alameda Creek at this time” - DFG does not require fish passage for any subsequent instream projects until the late 1990s
- 1970s Alameda County Water District inflatable rubber dams constructed in flood
- 1980s control channel without provisions for fish passage

- 1980 California Department of Water Resources (DWR) identifies Alameda Creek as the top priority stream in the state for urban stream restoration, publishes “Alameda Creek Urban Streams Study” advocating stream flow augmentation - no follow-through was ever done
- 1980s Local fishermen, organized as “friends of Alameda Creek” move fish past barriers in the lower creek, advocate for steelhead restoration
- 1983 In response to public pressure, eight local and state management agencies convene Alameda Creek task force to examine the question of restoring Alameda Creek steelhead
- 1989 Alameda Creek task force Technical Advisory Committee issues “Establishment of a Steelhead Fishery in Alameda Creek,” offering four restoration alternatives - local water agencies oppose restoration and no action is taken
- 1990 California Trout files a complaint with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) challenging the City of San Francisco’s water right for Calaveras Reservoir, claiming unreasonable water diversion and violation of section 5937 of the CA Fish and Game Code
- 1991 California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA) files a complaint with the SWRCB against all Alameda Creek water agencies claiming unreasonable water diversion, violations of section 5937, and violation of the public trust doctrine regarding water diversions and the decline of the steelhead fishery
- 1991 SWRCB dismisses CSPA complaint without holding a water rights hearing
- 1993 In response to Cal Trout complaint, SFPUC publishes “Alameda Creek Watershed Study Fishery Restoration Feasibility Evaluation and Preliminary Restoration Plan” advocating flow releases from Calaveras Dam for trout habitat enhancement
- 1995 SFPUC estimates 86% of the stream flows in the watershed area tributary to Sunol Valley are diverted for water supply demand
- 1996 SFPUC settles complaint with Cal Trout, signing a Memorandum of Agreement with DFG for minimum flow releases from Calaveras Reservoir, to be recaptured downstream - no flows have been released to date
- 1997 Central California Coast steelhead trout federally listed as a threatened species
- 1997 Alameda Creek Alliance founded

- 1999 A stakeholders group, Alameda County Fisheries Restoration Workgroup (ACFRW), forms to cooperatively address steelhead restoration issues
- 2000 ACFRW publishes “An Assessment of the Potential for Restoring a Viable Steelhead Trout Population in the Alameda Creek Watershed” outlining nine essential actions for steelhead restoration - two of these actions have been accomplished to date
- 2000 SFPUC Alameda Watershed Management Plan ignores public input and fails to address steelhead restoration or stream flow issues
- 2001 SWRCB estimates that the entire Alameda Creek watershed is 72% “impaired” - impairment representing the ratio of water appropriation under existing water rights to estimated stream flow
- 2002 DWR concludes the Alameda Creek watershed is “fully appropriated” and no further water diversions will be considered
- 2003 Although there is still no fish passage for migratory fish past the flood control channel, 13 agencies are involved in planning for fish passage projects. Participating agencies include: Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Alameda County Water District, California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Transportation, California Department of Water Resources, California State Coastal Conservancy, East Bay Regional Park District, Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Zone 7 Water Agency