

# Prop. 40 critics, backers mull parks' value

Measure would spend \$2.6 billion on civic projects

By Douglas Fischer  
STAFF WRITER

Two years ago California voters went to the polls and approved \$2.1 billion for state parks, waterways, playgrounds and wildlife.

The money went fast — about \$70 million is left today — and the state is now paying off the 25-year notes.

On March 5, voters get a chance to do it again. Proposition 40, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002, directs \$2.6 billion worth of state-backed bonds into virtually the same areas attended by Proposition 12 in 2000.

Supporters peg the measure as a badly needed sequel to a bond act that finally brought cash to conservation. State parks, wildlands and waterways were largely ignored through the 1990s, and supporters say approval would produce a "nice mosaic" of conservation and parks across California.

"Prop. 12 was basically catch-up," said John Woodbury, director of the Bay Area Open Space Council. "We were dealing with stuff that we hadn't dealt with for a decade. To not go back into shutdown mode, Prop. 40 is essential."

Detractors question the decision to borrow, especially when the state faces a \$17 billion budget gap and needs \$30 billion-plus in the near future for school construction. They



JEFF MILLER sits in front of the Sunol Dam on Alameda Creek in Niles Canyon earlier this month. Should Proposition 40 pass, Miller hopes to use some of the \$2.6 billion bond measure to restore the creek's steelhead run.

MICHAEL LUCIA — Staff

## Measure K would pump money into East Bay parks

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Up in a whirlybird 1,000 feet off the ground, East Bay Regional Parks District trails specialist Steve Fiala spies potential. To his right a trail hons from ridge to m.



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