

Bay Area Counties Get Funding To Benefit Fish and Wildlife

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Fish in some Bay Area counties will be getting a shot in the arm, or rather, the fin, from the state's Wildlife Conservation Board in the form of several million dollars in grants, the board announced.

Awards including about \$5.4 million to the Alameda County Water District, about \$900,000 to the Sonoma Resource Conservation District and around \$900,000 to the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District were made at the board's Thursday meeting.

The board awarded about \$33.1 million Thursday to 22 projects throughout the state aimed at benefiting fish and wildlife habitats by enhancing stream flow. The legislature approved funding for these projects as authorized by the Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014, the board said.

A total of \$200 million was allocated to the board for projects that enhance stream flow. **Salmonids - a group of fish including salmon, trout and chars - will get two concrete fish ladders thanks to the \$5.3 million grant awarded to the Alameda County Water District.** While the image of a fish climbing a ladder might seem comical, the "ladders" actually resemble a series of steps with water flowing over them that will help the fish get around existing barriers.

The fish ladders will be built as part of a cooperative project between the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, California Natural Resources Agency, State Coastal Conservancy and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to modify flow releases in Alameda Creek and construct the fish ladders.

The project will provide salmonids access to rich habitat upstream of its location, about 17 miles north of San Jose and 22 miles southeast of Oakland.

The board also awarded \$851,806 to the Sonoma Resource Conservation District. This award involves a cooperative project with the Coast Ridge Community Forest and 29 landowners to install rainwater-harvesting tanks. Also, it involves agreements to forgo stream flow diversions during dry season periods.

Another one of the grants awarded to Bay Area counties included \$886,590 to the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District. This is a cooperative project with San Mateo County, California Department of Water Resources, Blue House Farms and other entities.

The purpose of this project is to install instream flow conditions in San Gregorio Creek for salmonids during yearly low stream flow periods.