

CREEK ALLIANCE TO PUSH FOR STEELHEAD RESTORATION AT WATER DISTRICT BOARD MEETING



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Alameda Creek Alliance

Members of the Alameda Creek Alliance and fishing groups will speak at the next Board of Directors meeting of the Alameda County Water District (ACWD) in support of steelhead restoration efforts on Alameda Creek. The meeting is at 7 PM, Thursday April 9th, at 43885 South Grimmer Boulevard in Fremont.

ACWD operates three inflatable dams in the flood control channel of Alameda Creek through Fremont. The dams, which are used to recharge ground water supplies, are barriers to fish migration when inflated, and have been documented to kill steelhead and salmon attempting to ascend the creek to spawn.

East Bay environmentalists and fishermen would like the ACWD to install fish ladders on their dams or change to an alternate method of recharge to aid in the restoration of anadromous fish. Local steelhead were listed last year as a federally threatened species.

Operation of the inflatable dams is apparently in violation of state Fish and Game Codes 5901 and 5937, and may be in violation of the federal Endangered Species Act. The California Department of Fish and Game wrote off the steelhead in Alameda Creek in the late fifties, and has never enforced state regulations on the creek.

Over 20 steelhead were spotted in the creek in March, and ten of these were successfully moved upstream over barriers by Alliance volunteers and East Bay Regional Parks District biologists. It is hoped that these fish will spawn in and above Niles Canyon, as the start of a restored steelhead run on the creek.

A 12' high sloping concrete weir in the creek below the B.A.R.T. tracks in Fremont is a permanent barrier to fish migration. The Alliance is meeting on April 21 with the Alameda County Flood Control District, which owns the weir, and the Army Corps of Engineers, which built it in 1972. The hope is that the Army Corps can fund and approve permits for a proposed fish ladder on the structure.

On April 20, the Alliance will be meeting with the San Francisco Water Department (SFWD) to discuss flow releases from SFWD reservoirs in the upper watershed, needed to ensure the survival of juvenile fish in the creek.

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