

**COUNTY STUDY PROMOTES  
ALAMEDA CREEK STEELHEAD RESTORATION**  
*FIRST STEELHEAD OF THE SEASON IN ALAMEDA CREEK*



**February 9, 2000**

**CONTACT:**

**Jeff Miller           (510) 845-4675  
Alameda Creek Alliance**

**Laura Kilgour       (510) 670-6479  
Countywide Clean Water Program**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Alameda County publicly released a report this week that determines steelhead trout restoration in Alameda Creek to be feasible and recommends moving forward with a project to allow fish migration through the lower creek. The Alameda County Public Works Agency commissioned the feasibility study in response to increased public interest in steelhead restoration and documentation of adult steelhead blocked below a County owned barrier during the last three winters. The study concludes that suitable habitat exists within the Alameda Creek watershed to support spawning and rearing of steelhead. The study also finds that steelhead are currently prevented from completing their life cycle by the BART drop structure in Fremont and are severely limited by several other migration barriers in the lower creek. The report recommends habitat improvements such as constructing fish ladders to assist steelhead in passing barriers, augmenting springtime stream flows to assist downstream migration of juvenile fish, and installing fish screens to prevent water diversions from killing young fish.

“This report validates what we’ve been saying all along,” said Jeff Miller, spokesman for the Alameda Creek Alliance. “The habitat is there and native steelhead are showing up, we know the barriers are the limiting factor, and it’s time to take action to restore this creek. We’re quite pleased with the report - it’s thorough and provides the scientific and biological basis for initiating restoration projects which will ultimately benefit the quality of life of people who live near and visit Alameda Creek.”

County employees, volunteers, and fisheries biologists netted the largest steelhead seen in the creek in four decades on January 27. The huge fish was spotted trapped in a 6-inch deep pool below an Alameda County Water District inflatable rubber dam in the lower creek channel, and was moved upstream into Niles Canyon. The fish, a 34”, 17 3/4 pound female full of eggs, was fitted with a small radio transmitter to track her movements in Niles Canyon.

Another adult steelhead was seen on the same day, but evaded capture, and a steelhead was reported to be trapped below the BART drop structure on January 28.

Based on the findings and recommendations of the study, the County is preparing a restoration proposal to the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers which would provide 75% federal funding for the needed improvements. The proposed Corps project will include construction of a fish ladder at a sloping cement barrier in the creek in Fremont known as the BART drop structure. The fish ladder would likely consist of a series of jump pools which would allow migrating fish to bypass the barrier, which has blocked steelhead and salmon from reaching spawning areas in Niles Canyon and Upper Alameda Creek in Sunol Regional Wilderness. The report was prepared at the request of the Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup, a stakeholder group composed of all the water and flood control agencies involved in management of the creek.

The Alameda Creek Alliance is a community watershed restoration group with over 100 members residing in or near the Alameda Creek watershed. The Alliance has been working since 1997 to restore steelhead and salmon to the creek. Steelhead trout in the central California coast, including those in Alameda Creek, were listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act in 1997, due to catastrophic declines from impacts of dams, water diversions, and habitat destruction from urbanization and flood control projects.

Applied Marine Sciences, Inc. and Hagar Environmental Science prepared the report. A copy of the report, “An Assessment of the Potential for Restoring a Viable Steelhead Trout Population in the Alameda Creek Watershed,” is available on request or can be viewed on-line at [www.amarine.com/information/alameda/fish/background/acfish.html](http://www.amarine.com/information/alameda/fish/background/acfish.html). The Executive Summary of the report is available upon request.