

ENVIRONMENTALISTS SUPPORT REVISED ARROYO MOCHO CREEK PROJECT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEBRUARY 4, 2003



CONTACT:

Jeff Miller (510) 845-4675
Alameda Creek Alliance

Louann Tung (925) 455-8823
Friends of the Arroyos

Livermore, CA – Local creek restoration groups are throwing their support behind a revised creek restoration project by the Zone 7 Water Agency that will widen, realign, and restore sections of Arroyo Mocho and Arroyo las Positas in Livermore. The Alameda Creek Alliance and Friends of the Arroyos had initially opposed the Zone 7 Arroyo Mocho Widening/Arroyo Las Positas Realignment Project, due to concerns about inclusion of potential barriers to migratory steelhead trout and impacts to other sensitive species. As a result of discussions between Zone 7 Water Agency, the California Department of Fish and Game, biological consultants for the Alameda County Community Development Agency, and the Alameda Creek Alliance, the revised project incorporates design changes, mitigation measures, and a biological resources monitoring program that will improve fish passage, enhance stream habitat, and address concerns regarding impacts to sensitive species.

Jeff Miller, Director of the Alameda Creek Alliance, said, “This project will restore a section of the Arroyos to a more natural state, providing improved habitat for fish and other aquatic life as well as a more beautiful stream corridor. We are pleased that Zone 7 Water Agency worked with us to make changes that addressed our concerns.”

The project will realign the confluence of Arroyo Mocho and Arroyo Las Positas, and deepen and widen Arroyo Mocho downstream of El Charro Road for flood control. The revised project scraps two proposed concrete drop structures in favor of fish ladders, to allow for future migratory fish passage through the project area. Two existing drop structures in the Arroyos will be removed, improving fish passage. The project also incorporates extensive planting of native riparian vegetation and creation of habitat features within the redesigned Arroyo Mocho channel such as a meandering low-flow channel and pools with anchored logs or rocks, which will provide significantly improved aquatic and riparian habitat for native wildlife.

A population of western pond turtles, a state species of concern, in lower Arroyo las Positas will be relocated during project construction and pools and other habitat features beneficial for the turtles will be incorporated into the restored creek channel. A proposed Biological Resources Monitoring Program for the project establishes survey,

protection, mitigation, and monitoring measures to protect any nesting raptors (including western burrowing owls, which occur nearby at the Livermore Airport) and California red-legged frogs (which occur upstream in Arroyo las Positas) if they are encountered at the project site.

A tandem Zone 7 project approved in November 2002 that will construct an inflatable rubber dam for groundwater recharge in Arroyo Mocho near El Charro Road has also been revised. At the request of the California Department of Fish and Game and the Alameda Creek Alliance, a fish screen has been added which will prevent juvenile fish from being diverted into the Quarry Lakes while the dam is in operation. The design of the rubber dam will be reviewed to ensure it provides adequate fish passage while deflated and not in use, and minimum flow releases past the dam may be required while the dam is being inflated and after long periods of operation, to prevent rapid de-watering of the Arroyo downstream.

A consortium of 12 local, state, and federal agencies have been pursuing steelhead trout restoration projects for the Alameda Creek watershed since 1999. Planned fish passage projects in lower Alameda Creek may make Arroyo Mocho accessible to steelhead by 2005. Native resident rainbow trout inhabit the upper portion of Arroyo Mocho along Mines Road, upstream of the proposed Zone 7 projects. The upper Arroyo Mocho habitat is thought to be suitable spawning and rearing habitat for ocean-run steelhead, although migratory fish would have to negotiate flood control channels in Pleasanton and Livermore. Zone 7 owns several additional small concrete grade-stabilization structures in Arroyo Mocho, including weirs near Stanley Blvd. and Isabel Ave. that are potential barriers to migratory fish.

The Alameda Creek Alliance is a community restoration group formed in 1997 that is working to protect and restore Alameda Creek and its tributaries, with over 1200 members and supporters in the East Bay. Contact the ACA at (510) 845-4675 or www.alamedacreek.org. Friends Of The Arroyos is a creek protection group formed in 2001 to protect and restore the creeks of Livermore and Pleasanton, including Arroyo Mocho and Arroyo las Positas. Contact the FOTA at (925) 455-8823.