

DEDICATION FOR ALAMEDA CREEK STEELHEAD RESTORATION PROJECTS JUNE 23

*Dam Removal and Fish Screen Construction Will Help Migratory
Fish Passage in Lower Alameda Creek*



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Fremont, CA – The Alameda County Water District will hold a dedication ceremony for two recently completed fish passage projects in lower Alameda Creek this Wednesday, June 23rd, from 11 am to noon at Niles Community Park in Fremont. Removal of the water district's Rubber Dam No. 2, installation of an associated fish passage facility, and construction of the Bunting Pond Fish Screen were completed in fall of 2009. The projects will improve passage for migratory fish such as steelhead trout and salmon upstream and downstream through lower Alameda Creek.

“These projects will improve fish migration in Alameda Creek, and are also an important part of the restoration and recovery of steelhead trout in the greater Bay Area,” said Jeff Miller, Director of the Alameda Creek Alliance. “Fish passage at water district and county facilities in the lower creek is crucial to bringing back steelhead trout into the watershed. The water district is to be commended for their leadership on efforts to help restore native fish to Alameda Creek.”

The ACWD stream improvements are the latest of over a dozen fish passage projects completed along Alameda Creek since 2001, aimed at allowing steelhead trout and other anadromous fish to access suitable spawning and rearing habitat in the watershed. Fish passage projects in the lower creek are expected to be completed by 2012-2013, allowing steelhead to migrate upstream into Niles Canyon and the Sunol Valley for the first time in half a century.

In 2009 the ACWD permanently removed the fabric portion its lowermost rubber dam from the Alameda Creek flood control channel. The foundation was left in place for grade control stabilization, but was "notched" and a low-flow fish ladder was installed in the foundation. The ACWD also installed a fish screen facility on their water diversion at the Bunting Pond in 2009. This screen is just downstream and across from four fish screens ACWD installed in 2007 on their Mission Boulevard diversion. The screens eliminate the potential for entrainment of out-migrating juvenile steelhead at the intake location. ACWD is working with the Alameda County Flood Control District on planning for a fish ladder that will allow fish to bypass the most significant barrier in the creek at the BART weir and at the middle ACWD rubber dam.

With planning for all major fish passage projects in the watershed now underway, adequate stream flows for fish below dams owned by San Francisco is critical for the full restoration of Alameda Creek. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission will rebuild the seismically-challenged Calaveras Dam, in the upper Alameda Creek watershed, from 2011-2015. The SFPUC released a draft Environmental Impact Report for

the Calaveras Dam Replacement Project in December 2009. The Alameda Creek Alliance is pushing for sufficient water flows to help spawning, rearing and migration of steelhead below the dam.

Alameda Creek, the largest watershed of all local streams tributary to the San Francisco Bay, is becoming an urban stream success story after decades of restoration efforts. Since steelhead trout in the Bay Area and central coast were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1997, numerous organizations and agencies have cooperated on restoration projects to allow migratory fish from the Bay to reach spawning habitat in upper Alameda Creek. Alameda Creek is considered an 'anchor watershed' for steelhead, regionally significant for restoration of the threatened trout to the entire Bay Area. The watershed covers an area of about 680 square miles and once supported populations of steelhead trout and salmon. Steelhead and salmon are anadromous fish, living out their adult lives in the ocean and migrating up fresh water streams and rivers to spawn and rear their young. Construction of dams, water diversions, modifications to the Alameda Creek streambed, and urbanization made it impossible for steelhead to migrate upstream, eliminated access to suitable spawning areas, and reduced suitable habitat. As a result, steelhead have been absent from Alameda Creek and its tributaries for several decades.

The Alameda Creek Alliance (www.alamedacreek.org) is a community watershed group with over 1,750 members, dedicated to protecting and restoring the natural ecosystems of the Alameda Creek watershed. The Alameda Creek Alliance has been working to restore steelhead trout and protect endangered species in the Alameda Creek watershed since 1997.