

Up Your Creek! The electronic newsletter of the Alameda Creek Alliance

Two Dozen Heroes Clean Trash Out of Stonybrook Creek and Niles Canyon

On October 14, volunteers from the Alameda Creek Alliance and Grizzly Peak Fly Fishers descended upon Stonybrook Creek and Alameda Creek in Niles Canyon with trash bags, gloves, ropes and a hand winch. When the dust cleared, our volunteers had pulled 33 large bags of trash, half a dozen tires and a refrigerator out of the two creek reaches.

Federal Highway Agency Report on Niles Canyon Highway Safety Measures

The final Federal Highway Administration report on its Road Safety Assessment for Highway 84 in Niles Canyon and an associated Value Analysis document are now available on the Caltrans' Route 84 Webpage. <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/nilescanyon/>

The most important element of the FHA report is that it rejects Caltrans' uniform highway widening approach for Niles Canyon Road. The FHA states that highway widening throughout Niles Canyon is not warranted by the state's safety data and suggests a less environmentally damaging approach for the canyon. The FHA proposes several dozen inexpensive and relatively easy immediate safety measures that Caltrans can install within the existing roadway, and suggests focusing on site-specific, medium-term safety improvements for five dangerous spots in the canyon.

The ball is now in Caltrans' court – they are starting over on the Niles Canyon highway safety projects and have promised to consider the FHA recommendations and solicit stakeholder input. The coalition of groups working to protect Niles Canyon and Alameda Creek will evaluate the final FHA report and come up with recommendations for Caltrans for specific fixes at genuine safety problem areas in the canyon that are warranted, effective and can be done with minimal environmental impact.

Vote No on Alameda County Measure A1

The Alameda Creek Alliance recommends voting NO on Alameda County Measure A1. It sets a bad precedent in using taxpayer funds for development projects that destroy native wildlife habitats.

Measure A1 is a parcel tax for the Oakland Zoo that has been presented as a humane animal care measure, but in reality is a blank check that allows the zoo to spend the money any way it wishes, including using it to fund a proposed massive zoo expansion into ecologically rich wildlife and native plant habitat in Knowland Park, Oakland's largest wildland park. A1 could allow taxpayer funds to be used for building a planned 34,000 square foot restaurant, gift shop, visitor center and office complex beside a rare chaparral plant community used by many species of native wildlife, including mountain lions and the threatened Alameda whipsnake. Zoo executives refuse to consider environmentally superior locations and deny that this measure will fund the controversial expansion, but language within the measure explicitly allows funds to be used for this purpose. Further, due to the tax's estimated \$125 million revenue over its 25 year lifespan, Measure A1 funds could be used to fund even further expansion into Knowland Park beyond what has already been planned.

The Zoo currently gets millions of dollars in public funding, including Oakland city funds, hotel taxes, East Bay Regional Park District funds, other bonds, and a multimillion-dollar State Parks grant, and it has made profits of over half a million dollars in four of the last five years. It is deceptive for the Zoo to suggest that it hasn't enough money to care for its animals now while at

the same time planning a \$72 million expansion project. Schools, libraries, and other public programs should take priority. Vote NO on Measure A1.

Please visit www.saveknowland.org for more information.

Read the related East Bay Express article: [Oakland Zoo Operators Violate Election Laws](#)

Join the Christmas Bird Count in the Alameda Creek Watershed on December 14

Join the Alameda Creek Alliance and Ohlone Audubon Society for the 4th annual [Eastern Alameda County Christmas Bird Count](#).

The bird count is an annual volunteer-based bird survey effort to assess long-term trends in winter bird populations and promote bird conservation. The 15 mile radius count circle is in the vicinity of the towns of Sunol, Pleasanton and Livermore, and includes five East Bay Regional Parks, significant SFPUC watershed lands, and exciting East Bay birding hotspots such as lower Mines Road, Sunol Wilderness, Calaveras Reservoir, Lawrence Livermore National Lab, and Springtown Preserve. Birders and volunteers with any level of experience can participate in the Christmas Bird Count.

Please contact Rich Cimino (yellowbilledtours@gmail.com) for more information.

Birdwatching in Nome, Alaska, June 2013!! Alameda Creek Alliance Fundraiser

Rich Cimino of Yellowbilled Tours is leading five bird-watching field trips to Nome, Alaska in May and June, 2013. The trips begin May 28, June 1, 6, 10 and 14. The early June trip from 6/1/13-6/5/13 will be a fundraiser for the Alameda Creek Alliance, with ACA Director Jeff Miller attending. Yellowbilled Tours will donate \$150 for every Alameda Creek Alliance member that goes on one of the Nome trips.

Nome is a frontier town accessible only by boat and airplane. Bordered on the west and south by the Bering Sea, and the north and east by miles of trackless wilderness, Nome is a fascinating birding destination. During June and July the Midnight Sun is at its brightest, the tundra is in full bloom, and the birds and mammals are breeding.

The tour will cover the prime birding areas along the seacoast and the beautifully blooming alpine tundra surrounding Nome. Most of the birds are in their resplendent breeding plumages—rarely if ever seen in the “lower 48.” We’ll make an extra effort to locate some of the accidental Asian species that regularly occur at Nome. These trips are suitable for beginning birders as well as the advanced birder. Contact Rich for a copy of birds seen on these field trips.

Cost per person is \$2,500, which includes a \$150 donation to ACA. This includes lodging, ground transportation, airport transfers, and guide services. Not included are airfare and meals. The tours are limited to four participants for each week. The guide will be Rich Cimino of Yellowbilled Tours. Rich has led birding trips throughout California, the western U.S. and Alaska, including Nome. Rich is a Pleasanton resident and Alameda Creek Alliance Board member.

For more information contact Rich Cimino at 925-353-0266, yellowbilledtours@gmail.com or visit his website www.yellowbilledtours.com.

Tuolumne River Trust Stops Salmon-Threatening Water Transfer

Congratulations to the Tuolumne River Trust, which recently successfully stopped a water transfer from the Modesto Irrigation District to the SFPUC. The water transfer would have reduced water flows in the lower Tuolumne River needed for salmon spawning and rearing. It took a year of collaboration between farmers, environmentalists and the City of Modesto to stop the water transfer. Read about the Modesto Irrigation District board's vote to cease negotiations with the SFPUC in the Modesto Bee: [Modesto utility rejects SF water sale](#). Learn more about the Tuolumne River Trust's [reasons for opposing the transfer](#).

Regional Salmon News

[**Delta Water Gates Won't Be Closed for Salmon**](#)

Sacramento Bee – October 22, 2012

[**West Coast Salmon Show Up in Virginia Courtroom**](#)

Lake Stevens Journal – October 22, 2012

[**Two Landmark San Francisquito Creek Restoration Projects Funded**](#)

Beyond Searsville Dam – October 20, 2012

[**Proposed Hydroelectric Project Draws SYRCL Ire**](#)

The Union, October 15, 2012

[**Garamendi Introduces Bill Requiring Cost-Benefit Analysis of Tunnels**](#)

Bay Area Indymedia – October 12, 2012

[**Tribes Accuse Forest Service of Failing to Protect Endangered Salmon**](#)

IndyMedia – October 11, 2012

[**Shovelers Breach Pescadero Marsh Lagoon**](#)

Half Moon Bay Patch – October 5, 2012

[**Delta, Accustomed to Water Wars, Prepares for Battle**](#)

Los Angeles Times – October 4, 2012

[**Is Salmon Program A Risk to Endangered Fish?**](#)

San Jose Mercury News – October 3, 2012

[**Westlands Masquerades as "Tea Party" In Attack on Delta Film**](#)

Daly Kos – October 3, 2012

[**Chinook Salmon Begin Return to Russian River**](#)

Santa Rosa Press Democrat – October 2, 2012

[**Long May They Run: A Quest for Coho from Santa Cruz to Marin**](#)

Bay Nature Magazine – September 27, 2012

[**Klamath Salmon Could Be Harmed By Planned Canal**](#)

Eureka Times-Standard – September 27, 2012

[**Calling Back the Salmon to the Yuba River**](#)

The Union of Grass Valley – September 27, 2012

[**Lower Eel River: Counting the Salmon**](#)

Willits News – September 23, 2012

[**Officials Unveil Project to Help Steelhead Trout At Pescadero Marsh**](#)

San Mateo County Times – September 12, 2012

[Modesto Irrigation District Kills Proposed Water Sale to San Francisco](#)

Modesto Bee – September 18, 2012

[Stanislaus Salmon Habitat Improved](#)

Modesto Bee - September 16, 2012

The Alameda Creek Alliance is a non-profit community watershed protection group. Please support our efforts by [becoming a member](#).