Up Your Creek!

The electronic newsletter of the Alameda Creek Alliance

Alameda Creek Restoration Day – March 17

Join the Alameda Creek Alliance for a stewardship project along Alameda Creek on Saturday, March 17th from 10 am to 1 pm.

Come spend a Saturday morning enhancing habitat along the creek with friends and neighbors. We'll continue our project of removing ivy and clearing weeds around our recent native tree and shrub plantings. We'll also work on clearing a pile of tree trimmings that had been dumped at our site. This continues past work by ACA volunteers, and your efforts are enhancing habitat for fish and wildlife along Alameda Creek now and for years to come. Thanks to Linda, a CivicSpark Fellow at Alameda County Water District, for partnering with us on this workday.

For more details and to register please visit our Eventbrite page. We ask that you register in advance on there so we know how many people to expect, but last-minute volunteers are always welcome. There's no need to print the registration ticket.

Meet at 10 am near 1004 Old Canyon Road in Fremont (just past Clarke Drive). There is parking along the road on the creek side where it widens some. We'll work until 1:00 pm. Please wear long pants and sturdy, closed-toe shoes that can get dirty (no sandals or flip-flops). We provide gloves and tools. The work isn't on much of a slope, but the ground can be uneven. The ground and vegetation will likely be cool and wet when we start, so please wear clothes that can get damp and possibly dirty. Please bring water for yourself in a re-usable bottle. Heavy rain cancels.

All participants need signed waiver forms (one for ACA and one for Alameda County), and anyone under 18 needs a parental signature.

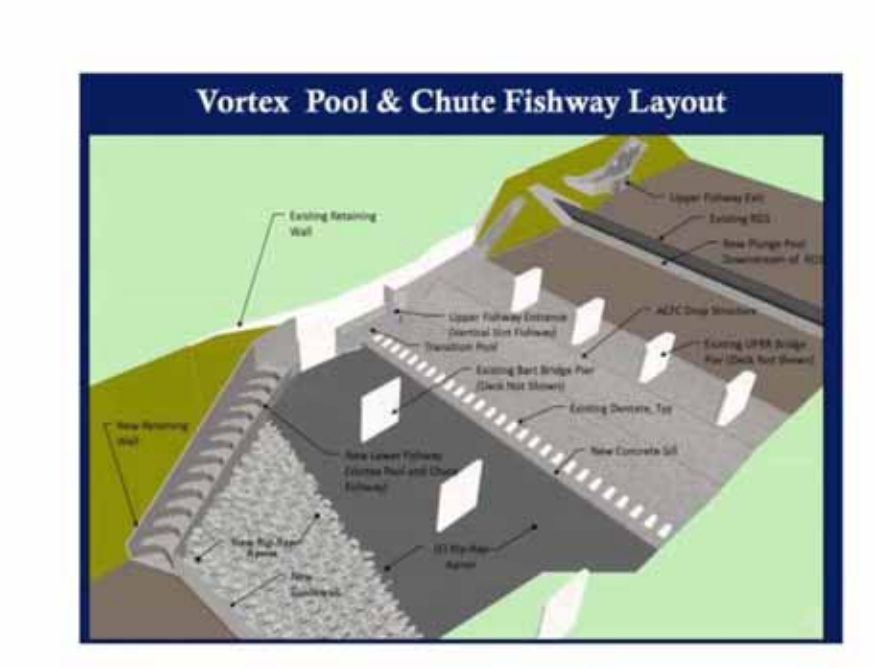
Sunol Wildflower Festival - April 8

The annual Sunol Wildflower Festival will be held in Sunol Regional Wilderness on Sunday, April 8, from 11am to 4 pm, at the Old Green Barn Visitor Center.

Celebrate the colorful spring season with the Sunol wildflower festival. Hikes will be offered throughout the park to see the flower blooms and wildlife, while games, crafts, and activities offer something for everyone on the valley floor. Come check out the Alameda Creek Alliance table at the festival.

Free event, no registration needed. $5 (cash only) parking fee applies to get into the park. Carpooling encouraged. Offsite parking with shuttle will be provided. For more info call the EBRPD at (510) 544-3249.

Lower Alameda Creek Fish Ladder Construction Begins This Spring!



The Alameda County Water District will begin groundbreaking soon on the fish ladder at the upper inflatable rubber dam, with installation of diversion pipes in April and May. The upper rubber dam fish ladder will be completed by the end of this year. Construction will begin on the final fish ladder at the BART weir and middle rubber dam next year, in 2019. See the ACWD Current Fish Passage Projects web page.

Surveys and Studies Show Alameda Creek Trout Are Still Migratory

The SFPUC has been surveying Alameda Creek's native rainbow trout populations below the major dams for several years, to track population sizes and determine if resident rainbow trout are smolting. A smolt is a young trout after the parr stage, when it becomes silvery and migrates to the sea for the first time.

The SFPUC has been operating a screw trap and a fyke net trap in upper Alameda creek to sample native fish, and although only a handful of trout have been caught this year, some of them appear to be smolting. A smolt caught in 2015 in the upper Sunol Valley was definitely headed to the Bay to become a steelhead. The SFPUC surveys are confirming suspicions that our resident trout populations below the dam still have some migratory component that can smolt, go to the ocean, and return as adult steelhead.

Check out more photos and videos of the Alameda Creek trout surveys on the Alameda Creek Alliance Facebook page.

A recent report by the Institute of Marine Sciences and Southwest Fisheries Science Center has documented that Alameda Creek's landlocked rainbow trout above the major dams, in Calaveras Reservoir and San Antonio Reservoir, still have a strong genetic marker for migratory behavior. The report, *Ancestry and Adaptive Evolution of Anadromous, Resident, and Adfluvial Rainbow Trout (Oncorhynchus Mykiss) in the San Francisco Bay Area*, looked at resident steelhead/rainbow trout populations in the San Francisco Bay Area. Genetic analysis determined that resident trout in Bay Area streams are more closely related to native coastal steelhead than to Central Valley trout, that there is no evidence of interbreeding with hatchery rainbow trout, and that trout populations above and below dams and other barriers within Bay Area watersheds are each other's closest relatives.

The study looked at an adaptive genome associated with migratory life-history traits in trout, and found substantial evolutionary differences between trout above and below Bay Area dams. Within the Bay Area, most trout populations above dams had low frequencies of alleles associated with anadromy (migration to and from fresh to salt water). However, in Alameda Creek, trout in Arroyo Hondo and Indian Creek, which flow into the large Calaveras and San Antonio Reservoirs, have retained the genetic variants and migratory behavior associated with anadromy. Alameda Creek reservoir fish had the highest observed frequencies of migratory alleles.

In other words, Alameda Creek trout below the dams still produce steelhead offspring, and trout above the dams still strongly retain the genetic marker for migratory steelhead behavior. Good news for using

these trout populations to jump—start a restored steelhead run once the fish ladders are completed in the lower creek.

Join the Conversation to 'Unlock Alameda Creek'

Over 100 people joined the Alameda Creek Alliance and experts from the Alameda County Water District, East Bay Regional Park District, and Alameda Creek Public Sediment team on the "Creek Crawl" on February 24th. The creek crawl was a guided tour of Alameda Creek as it enters the flood control channel in Niles. The Creek Crawl was an opportunity to get out on Alameda Creek Trails and share thoughts about future needs and wants for creek users of all kinds. We engaged in conversation with participants about the history of the creek, its uses today by fish and people, and the impact of climate change in the area. Claire from the Public Sediment Team invited "crawlers" to post to Instagram and social media about their needs and wants for the creek by taking photos with laser-cut stencils she handed out.

Check out the ACA's newest flyer on the Floodplains and Riparian Forests of Alameda Creek that was produced for the event.

This conversation is part of the Resilient by Design Bay Area Challenge that brings designers, local and regional stakeholders, and community members together to build community resilience to climate change. The Public Sediment team proposes to "Unlock Alameda Creek," working with the community to enhance sediment flows, create new access for fish, and expand public access between upland and lowland communities.

Alameda Creek is the largest sediment shed (contributor) in the Bay, even though it has been dammed, rerouted, and channelized. Yet its potential is far from realized - sediment is trapped behind multiple dams and in the channel itself, where it reduces flood protection and requires expensive dredging. Fish face many hurdles to migrating upstream and public use of the creek is limited. The marshes at the mouth of Alameda Creek don't get the sediment needed to maintain elevation as sea levels rise. By redesigning Alameda Creek to more effectively deliver sediment, mud will be able to move downstream and replenish the South Bay marshes and mudflats that buffer the impacts of sea level rise. By connecting the uplands and lowlands, the project organizes a water-based network of communities that benefit from the protective resources of the Bay.

Be part of the conversation! Stay tuned for the next Resilient by Design Alameda Creek Public Sediment meeting on April 18th or 19th (time and place to be determined). Visit the Unlock Alameda Creek page for more information and to sign up for regular updates.

Help Slash the Trash in Our Creeks

Save the Bay wants you to take action to keep trash out of our creeks and San Francisco Bay. Every time it rains, trash from busy state roads and freeways pours through storm drains directly into creeks and the Bay. It poisons fish and wildlife, smothers wetland habitat, blights the shoreline. Caltrans is legally required to prevent trash pollution under the federal Clean Water Act. It should be removing litter from dirty freeways and installing capture devices in storm drains so that trash doesn't poison fish or smother wetlands. But the agency is not doing enough. We're lobbying the Regional Water Board to require Caltrans to reduce trash coming from Bay Area roadways.

Take action here: https://www.savesfbay.org/caltrans

Free Weed Management Workshop for Stewards of Natural Areas

Weed Management Training for Volunteers - April 7, 2018

Do you volunteer working to improve habitat in local parks or open spaces? Would you like to steward a local natural area but don't know where to begin? The California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) , East Bay Regional Park District, and Calflora are partnering with local conservation organizations to host Working with Volunteers: Invasive Plant Management, a free one-day training for members of local groups who are concerned with or would like to learn more about the control of invasive plants.

Participants will learn the basics of weed management, hear about diverse restoration efforts in our area, and meet fellow stewards. The training workshop will be held on Saturday, April 7th from 9 am to 4pm, at the Trudeau Conference Center in Oakland.

Workshop topics will include:
- The biology and ecology of invasive plants,
- Invasive plant management tools and best practices,
- Resources available to assist you with your project,
- Break-out sessions focusing on tool types, group management techniques, and using a restoration framework for weed management,
- Use of Calfora and the Observer Pro app,
- A field tour with identification and mapping of invasive and native plants.

Space is limited, so register now!

Alameda Creek in the News

Lawsuits Challenges Caltrans Niles Plan
Livermore Independent – February 15, 2018

Regional Salmon Restoration News

California Salmon Will Have Places to Chill with Dam Removal
ABC News - March 8, 2018

Healthy Habitat
The Bohemian - March 6, 2018

Stanford Plans to Remove Lagunita Dam
The Almanac - March 2, 2018

Is the Future of Eel River Dams Being Decided Behind Closed Doors?
KHSU - March 1, 2018

California's Drought, Poor Ocean Conditions Impact Salmon Forecast for 2018
CDFW News - March 1, 2018

US Considers Protected Status for Wild Spring Chinook
AP - February 27, 2018

NMFS Considering Adding Klamath Spring Chinook to the Endangered Species List
Redheaded Blackbelt – February 27, 2018

Lake Sonoma Steelhead Festival Spotlights Russian River's Prized Fish
Santa Rosa Press-Democrat - February 10, 2018

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