



UP YOUR CREEK!

ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

Issue 10 • August 2000

NEXT ALLIANCE MEETING

Tuesday, September 26, 7-9 pm

We meet at the Math/Science Nucleus, 4074 Eggers Drive (at Fremont Blvd.) in Fremont. Visit our web site at www.alamedacreek.com for directions.

NEW CREEK GROUPS FORMING

The Alameda Creek Alliance is initiating the formation of local creek protection groups for Stonybrook Creek along Palomares Road in Niles Canyon and for Arroyo Mocho in Livermore. These autonomous creek groups would also work toward steelhead restoration in the watershed under the umbrella of the Alameda Creek Alliance. Both Stonybrook Creek and Arroyo Mocho have been identified as potential restoration sites for steelhead, containing suitable spawning and rearing habitat and harboring populations of native rainbow trout.

The Alameda Creek Alliance's role will be to contact and educate residents along these creeks and to help organize a local watershed group. Formation of these groups will allow us to do habitat surveys, monitoring, and future restoration work in these creeks, as well as build a local base of people willing to protect this important habitat.

The Math/Science Nucleus and the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program can help with contacting residents and setting up educational and monitoring programs, but we ought to do the initial outreach and try to cultivate a core of local activists to organize and run these efforts. We can start by going door to door to talk to residents and also do a targeted mailing. If you live in either of these watersheds or would like to help initiate these projects, please contact the Alameda Creek Alliance.

FRIENDS OF STONYBROOK CREEK

For residents along Palomares Road, in Niles Canyon, along Old Canyon Road, and in the Niles area. Native rainbow/steelhead trout already thrive here, and a radio-tagged steelhead made it one mile up this creek in 1999. Potential projects include contacting landowners along the

creek; creek monitoring; steelhead habitat assessment; continuing our creek clean-ups; educating residents; and eventual small-scale restoration involving erosion and pollution control and re-vegetation projects on private land. Also working with the Alameda County Flood Control District (ACFCD) and Caltrans to modify fish passage barriers in the creek. The County is studying design proposals for fish passage at 9 road culverts in Stonybrook Creek, and we are on the Caltrans "hot list" for fixing potential fish passage problems at the box culvert where Stonybrook Creek joins Alameda Creek in Niles Canyon.

FRIENDS OF ARROYO MOCHO

For Livermore and Pleasanton residents. Native rainbow trout persist in the upper reaches of Arroyo Mocho, and the County feasibility study concluded that steelhead can be restored if fish can make it through Arroyo de la Laguna in Pleasanton and up Arroyo Mocho through Livermore. Potential projects would be similar to Stonybrook Creek. ACFCD is planning to contact landowners (mostly ranchers) along the upper Arroyo with help from the Alameda County Resource and Conservation District, so that habitat assessment and monitoring can be conducted. Also working with the County on modifying drop structures which may be fish migration barriers - at the confluence of Arroyo Mocho with Arroyo de la Laguna, and at Stanley Blvd. Other projects include opposing construction of an inflatable rubber dam in Arroyo Mocho proposed by the Zone 7 Flood Control District, and working to ensure that further sections of the Arroyo are not channelized.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Enclosed is a membership appeal from the Center for Biological Diversity, the premiere environmental group working to protect endangered species and biodiversity in the western U.S. The Center is the fiscal sponsor of the Alameda Creek Alliance for non-profit purposes, and is working on protection for a number of imperiled species in the Alameda Creek watershed, including steelhead trout, the California red-legged frog, and the Alameda whipsnake. Please support the Center if you are able to, or disregard this one-time pitch if you are unable.

How can I get involved with the Alameda Creek Alliance?

Please join one of our volunteer committees which will be formed at the August 29th meeting:

Outreach/Membership Committee - table at community events (such as Farmer's Markets, County Fair, Earth Day, etc.), present our slide show to community groups and schools, post flyers, help produce an ACA brochure, and contact and organize creek-side residents.

Education Committee - get local schools involved, help produce an ACA brochure, and prepare educational materials for the Outreach Committee.

Fund-raising Committee - promote ACA T-shirts, do outreach to local businesses, help organize the Steelhead Festival, other fund-raising ideas.

Fish Rescue Committee - coordinate monitoring of the BART weir during the winter and spring, maintain and activate the phone tree when needed for moving fish.

Join the Alameda Creek Alliance

Support the work of the Alameda Creek Alliance by becoming a member. If you haven't already joined, please send in the enclosed membership form. We now have 157 formal members. If you wish to receive regular e-mail updates and alerts about issues and activities of the ACA, e-mail us at: alamedacreek@hotmail.com.

AGENCIES WILL MEET DEADLINE FOR BART WEIR FISH LADDER

The Alameda County Flood Control District and the Alameda County Water District will submit their letter of intent to be the local co-sponsors for the Section 1135 Project in the flood control channel to the Army Corps by September 1. The Section 1135 Project will likely provide majority federal funding for construction of a fish ladder at the BART weir and adjacent inflatable dam, allow fish passage at the other two inflatable dams, and install fish screens at all ACWD water diversions. The agencies are on target to have the work completed by Fall of 2003. The next steps will be preparation of an Ecosystem Restoration Report by the Corps, and consideration of design proposals for the fish ladder and other improvements. We will ask in the near future for letters to the Corps supporting approval of the project - from elected representatives, other agencies, environmental groups, and local residents. See pages 4-5 for an update of the current status of the various barrier removal projects for fish passage in the watershed.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE WATERSHED

Sunol Gravel Quarry Expansion

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission has completed an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for their Alameda Watershed Management Plan, which includes plans to permit expansion of existing gravel quarries in the Sunol Valley to the north of Hwy. 680. Save Our Sunol (SOS) has been battling this plan for years, based on the potential adverse noise, dust, aesthetic, and quality of life issues. ACA has opposed the quarry expansion because of Endangered Species issues, and the potential impact on surface water flow and steelhead habitat in Alameda Creek.

SOS and ACA are preparing for a legal challenge to the adequacy of the EIR, which did not fully address or mitigate for the significant impacts of the project. SOS is hiring a lawyer, and ACA will sign on to a 60-day notice letter, and a lawsuit, if it gets that far. SOS is currently producing a film about Sunol and the threats posed to rural Sunol living by the quarry expansion. Sunol residents have also promised civil disobedience if the project goes through. ACA may hold a joint fund-raising dinner with SOS to raise money for a potential lawsuit.

For more information contact:

Pat Stillman, President
Save Our Sunol
(925) 862-2263

Wendt Development - East Alamo Creek

Save Our Danville Creeks is fighting a proposed housing development along East Alamo Creek (within the Alameda Creek watershed) in Danville. The 272-home Wendt project, proposed by Shapell Industries, would damage a vernal marsh, as well as California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander habitat, and potential San Joaquin kit fox habitat. The ACA has signed on to a 60-day notice letter of intent to sue the Army Corps and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for violations of the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act in improperly granting a permit for this development. Shapell also plans a massive 6,000 acre development downstream of the Wendt project in the Dougherty Valley.

For more information contact:

Howard Siu
Save Our Danville Creeks
(925) 736-1942

Schaefer Ranch - Dublin

The Sierra Club and local Danville residents are fighting a proposed development at Schaefer Ranch, between Dublin, Castro Valley, and Hayward, on the north side of Hwy. 80. The area proposed for development has one of the highest concentrations of California red-legged frogs in the East Bay, with at least seven known frog breeding ponds.

For more information contact:

Mike Daley
Sierra Club
(510) 848-0800

North Livermore Wetlands

Illegal and apparently deliberate deep-plowing of a seasonal wetland at the Lin property in north Livermore may drain a pond which is known breeding habitat for the California tiger salamander. Several environmental groups, including ACA, the Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, Preserve Area Ridgeland Committee, Citizens for Balanced Growth, and Golden Gate Audubon Society are looking into a lawsuit for illegal wetlands alteration, a violation of the Clean Water Act.

For more information contact:

Steve Bloom
Sierra Club
(510) 663-6200

SFPUC Inflatable Rubber Dam

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) has proposed constructing yet another inflatable rubber dam on Alameda Creek in the Sunol Valley at the site of their Sunol pumping station. The rubber dam would be used to recapture water flows which will eventually be released from Calaveras Reservoir to enhance five miles of trout habitat in upper Alameda Creek. The water releases are planned as part of a settlement of a water rights complaint filed by California Trout in the early 1990s. The Alliance has opposed recapture of the water released and construction of the rubber dam, due to potential impacts on steelhead habitat, known habitat for red-legged frogs and tiger salamanders near the Sunol pumping station, and the likely flooding a quarter mile of riparian vegetation along the creek. The SFPUC is reportedly re-working the design of the dam to attempt to reduce environmental impacts. The Draft EIR for the project is due out in November of 2000, with construction planned for Fall of 2003.

SPRING EVENTS SUCCESSFUL

The First Annual Fremont Steelhead Festival, held on May 13, brought over 300 watershed residents to Niles Community Park along Alameda Creek, and 120 entrants ran or walked in the Alameda Creek Spawning Run the morning of the event. The Festival raised \$3,000 for the Alameda Creek Alliance and generated several articles in local newspapers. The Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup (the watershed stakeholders group) has expressed interest in sponsoring and helping to organize next year's Festival. Special thanks to Forest Frasier, City of Fremont Environmental Services, for help with obtaining permits and equipment; also to Larry Hiebert and the Mission Peak Striders for organizing the Spawning Run.

A benefit ride on the historic steam train in Niles Canyon on June 4 raised \$300 for the ACA. Thanks to Mary Flannigan and the Tri-City Ecology Center for organizing the event and donating lots of delicious food.

BAY FUND GRANT

The Alameda Creek Alliance has received a generous one-year grant from the San Francisco Bay Fund. The grant will be used to hire Jeff Miller half-time as Project Director for the steelhead restoration project and to pay for production of the newsletter and office expenses. Thank you to the San Francisco Foundation for supporting our work!

FISHERIES WORKGROUP MEETING

The next meeting of the Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup will be held on **Wednesday, October 18** at the ACFCO offices, at 951 Turner Court in Hayward. The Fisheries Workgroup is the stakeholder group that is working out the details and timing of how to proceed with steelhead restoration in the watershed. All the water management agencies involved with the creek, wildlife regulatory agencies, and the ACA participate in this workgroup. Meetings are open to the public.

For more information contact:

Laura Kilgour
ACFCO
(510) 670-6478

Free bumper stickers opposing public lands grazing
Bumper stickers read "Cattle out of East Bay Regional Parks!" Free upon request while supplies last.

PG&E ARMORED GAS LINE CROSSING

10 feet high - built in 1997
Owned by Pacific Gas & Electric
Fish passage options being investigated

LIVERMORE ★

2 ARROYO MOCHO DROP STRUCTURES

2-4 feet high, owned by
Alameda County Flood Control District, Zone 7
No current proposal for fish passage

Arroyo Mocho

Arroyo Valle

2 SWIM DAMS

2-3 feet high
Owned by East Bay Region
Scheduled for removal

★ PLEASANTON

STONYBROOK CREEK CULVERTS

9 road crossings culverts owned by
Alameda County Flood Control District and CalTrans
Fish passage options being investigated

Arroyo de la Laguna

Sinbad Creek

Stonybrook Creek

← San Antonio Reservoir

Alameda Creek

3 INFLATABLE RUBBER DAMS

6-13 feet high - built in 1972, 1976, and 1989
Owned by Alameda County Water District
Scheduled for modification by Fall 2003

5
12 feet
Owned by San Fran
Scheduled for ren

★ FREMONT

BART DROP STRUCTURE

12 feet high - built in 1972
Owned by Alameda County Flood Control District
Scheduled for fish ladder construction by Fall 2004

Alameda Creek

NILES DAM

4 feet high - built
Owned by San Francisco Public
Scheduled for removal/modifi

AS LINE CROSSING

built in 1997
Gas & Electric
lines being investigated

ALAMEDA DIVERSION DAM

Approximately 40 feet high - built in 1930s
Owned by San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Alameda Creek Alliance has suggested removal, with
water right to be made up in Calaveras Creek watershed

2 SWIM DAMS

2-3 feet high
Owned by East Bay Regional Park District
Scheduled for removal by Fall 2001

← San Antonio
Reservoir

Alameda Creek

Alameda Creek

← Calaveras Reservoir

SUNOL DAM

12 feet high - built in 1901
Owned by San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Scheduled for removal/modification by Fall 2004

NILES DAM

4 feet high - built in 1886
Owned by San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Scheduled for removal/modification by Fall 2004

ALAMEDA CREEK WATERSHED

**CURRENT STATUS
of
BARRIER REMOVAL
for
FISH PASSAGE**

ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE MISSION STATEMENT

The Alameda Creek Alliance is a community watershed group dedicated to preserving and restoring the natural ecosystems of the Alameda Creek drainage basin. We are primarily concerned with protecting and improving habitat for species that are native to the area. Threatened and endangered species are our first priority.

Our initial efforts will be to help restore runs of steelhead trout and salmon attempting to ascend the creek to spawn. Our goal is to ensure self-sustaining runs of these fish. We will work to remove or modify barriers to fish migration and to supply adequate water flows for spawning, rearing, and out-migration of juvenile smolts to the Bay.

Once these issues are resolved we will work to restore and enhance fish habitat, improve water quality, and prevent the habitat loss and degradation caused by development, grazing, and channelization of streams. We will monitor the public agencies involved in management of the creek to ensure that they comply with existing environmental laws and protect the public trust, by providing for protection of fish and wildlife.

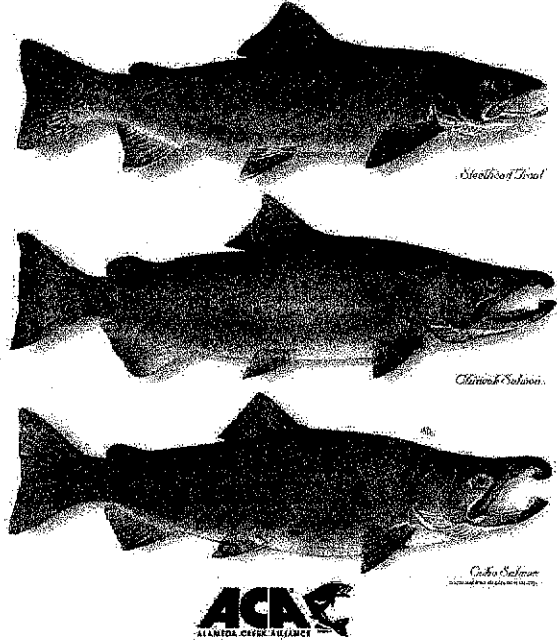
The Alliance is open to anyone committed to the above goals. Participation in the Alliance is on an individual level, not as a representative of any agency, business, or political group. We will work with government and private agencies interested in supporting our goals.

We are an independent community group. Meetings are publicly announced, accessible, and democratically run. We respect diversity of opinion and approaches and will work through education, publicity, advocacy, public pressure, volunteer work, and direct action.

MAKE A REAL FASHION STATEMENT

Beautiful tri-colored T-shirts (see the design below) are now available for \$20. Thank you to Maestas Design for design work and printing. Available at ACA meetings and events or see the ordering information at the bottom of this page.

Three Reasons to Save and Restore Alameda Creek



FEASIBILITY STUDY

Copies of the feasibility report commissioned by the Alameda Creek Fishery Restoration Workgroup are available at cost. This study has the most up to date biological and technical information regarding the steps necessary to restore anadromous fish to Alameda Creek. This is highly recommended reading for understanding the issues we face in trying to recover steelhead and salmon runs. See below for ordering information. The study can be viewed on-line at the Applied Marine Sciences web site:

www.amarine.com/information/information.html

ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE TRINKETS

T-shirt (specify size)	\$23	(\$20 each + \$3 postage)
Bumper sticker	\$2	(includes postage)
Feasibility Study	\$7	(\$5 each + \$2 postage)

Make checks payable to **Alameda Creek Alliance**

Mail to: P. O. Box 192
Canyon, CA 94516

Dear friend of Alameda Creek:

I encourage you to support our work to restore steelhead and salmon by becoming a member of the Alameda Creek Alliance. Your support will ensure that we can continue to speak up for the interests of native fish and wildlife in the Alameda Creek watershed.

The past two years have been productive and successful. We are expecting the Alameda County Flood Control District and the Alameda County Water District to approach the Army Corps of Engineers in September for assistance in construction of a fish ladder and other improvements in the lower creek channel. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) announced they will remove or modify Sunol and Niles Dams, and the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) is removing two small swim dams in Sunol Regional Wilderness. We have documented that native steelhead are returning to the lower creek, and native trout/steelhead have been found to persist in numerous tributaries to upper Alameda Creek. We are poised to make possible the return of steelhead and salmon to a stream where they have been absent for four decades. Within five years, you may be able to watch salmon and steelhead spawning in your local creek.

We still have a lot of work ahead of us. We intend to secure adequate stream flows to restore a viable steelhead run. We will work to ensure that gravel mining and cattle grazing do not further degrade aquatic habitat. We have commented on and will monitor the Alameda Creek Watershed Management Plan being prepared by the SFPUC, and will be involved in Land Use Plans which the EBRPD is preparing for Sunol and Ohlone Regional Wildernesses. We will continue to actively oppose development proposals that threaten the habitat of native species in the watershed. We also will be doing more hands-on restoration work, from creek clean-ups to re-vegetation projects.

We need your support! If you are not able to support us financially, we still need you to write letters, help move fish past the dams, or organize events. Please return the membership form below. Include your phone number if you want to be contacted for fish rescue or events. Include your e-mail if you want to receive alerts about items and issues regarding steelhead restoration and watershed protection.

Thank you for your interest in Alameda Creek, and for believing that we can restore a part of what has been lost.

- Jeff Miller



Alameda Creek Alliance
P. O. Box 192
Canyon, CA 94516

(510) 845-4675
e-mail: alamedacreek@hotmail.com
web site: www.alamedacreek.com

ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP FORM

Yes, I would like to become a member of the Alameda Creek Alliance and receive the newsletter **Up Your Creek!** Enclosed is \$15 or more for a one year membership. For a membership of \$25 or more you will receive an Alameda Creek Alliance T-shirt (please specify size). Please make checks payable to Alameda Creek Alliance.

Name _____

\$15 Fry

Address _____

\$25 Parr

City _____ Zip _____

\$50 Smolt

Phone _____

\$100 Spawner

e-mail _____

Send me a cool bumpersticker

Mail to: Alameda Creek Alliance, P.O. Box 192, Canyon, CA 94516



ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE
P. O. BOX 192
CANYON, CA 94516
