



UP YOUR CREEK!

ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER Issue 14 • Spring 2002

RESTORE SUNOL & OHLONE PARKS

EBRPD PREPARING LAND USE PLANS

Your help is needed to shape the future of Sunol and Ohlone Parks, along upper Alameda Creek. The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) is preparing Land Use Plans for Sunol and Ohlone Wilderness Regional Preserves. EBRPD will hold a public input meeting on **Wednesday, March 20**, from 7-9 pm at the Sunol Glen School Community Room.

This process is our opportunity to change the management of these public "preserves" to restore the parks to a more natural state and to protect steelhead trout habitat in Alameda Creek. The ACA will advocate for a phased end to commercial cattle ranching in these parks, and an intermediate program to fence Alameda Creek and its tributaries to protect trout habitat.

Please come speak at the meeting in support of managing these parks as true wilderness areas rather than for commercial ventures such as ranching. Cattle currently have access to Alameda Creek and are damaging some of the best trout habitat. A 1996 California Department of Fish and Game "Alameda Creek Stream Inventory Report" documented habitat damage from trampling and water pollution by cattle in this area.

Sunol and Ohlone should be managed as true wilderness preserves. The removal by EBRPD of the Sunol Swim Dams last summer was a step in the right direction for restoring Alameda Creek and returning the upper watershed to a more natural state. Ending commercial ranching would allow most of the barbed wire fencing and some of the roads to be removed, would allow riparian vegetation to recover, would reduce erosion and siltation of the creek, and would restore habitat for a variety of sensitive species. The ACA will push for the EBRPD to prepare an Environmental Impact Report for their management plan for these parks.

If you cannot attend the meeting, please write a letter to:

Dan Sykes, Park Planner
East Bay Regional Park District
P. O. Box 5381
Oakland, CA 94605

NEXT ACA MEETINGS

Tuesday, March 26

Tuesday, April 30

Tuesday, May 28

7 - 9 PM, Sunol Glen School, Sunol

CALAVERAS DAM REPLACEMENT

"FRANKENDAM"

The SFPUC's Calaveras Dam is most likely seismically unsafe and may be replaced within the next 5-10 years. The 200 foot high earth-fill structure, built from 1913-1925, was designed by William Mulholland (infamous for the 1928 St. Francis Dam collapse). The state Division of Dam Safety reportedly has called Calaveras a "Frankenstein Dam" should a large earthquake occur.

The SFPUC has proposed raising the height of the new Calaveras dam by up to 200 feet, creating a reservoir more than six times its current size, to store additional Hetch Hetchy water. This would flood significant portions of the tributaries to the reservoir which support landlocked steelhead trout. The ACA is opposing a project of this size.

The ACA will support a modest enlargement of Calaveras if the Alameda Diversion Dam (ADD) is removed and other mitigation measures are taken for steelhead restoration. The ADD diverts winter and spring flows, which may be essential for steelhead passage at Little Yosemite, out of upper Alameda Creek via a tunnel into Calaveras Reservoir. There are eight miles of quality steelhead trout spawning and rearing habitat upstream of this dam. The ACA will also push for minimum flow releases from the new reservoir and SFPUC abandoning plans to construct a rubber recapture dam in the Sunol Valley.

**3rd Annual Fremont Steelhead Festival
& Watershed Awareness Fair**

Saturday, May 11

See the flyer on page 3

ACTION ALERT!

FEDERAL SALMON PROTECTION GUTTED

In another attack on environmental protection, the Bush administration announced it will rescind "critical habitat" designations for 19 threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead populations (which includes portions of Alameda Creek). The critical habitat provision of the Endangered Species Act is the most important protection for endangered species, since it provides protection for habitat, rather than just individual animals.

The National Marine Fisheries Service plans to withdraw critical habitat for all the listed west coast salmon runs rather than challenge a lawsuit by developers and water agencies. Environmental and fishing groups will sue, but irate letters are needed now to protect the dwindling habitat of our remaining salmon and steelhead runs. Write to:

**William Hogarth, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
NOAA Fisheries
1315 East West Highway, SSMC3
Silver Spring, MD 20910**

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

SMOLT TRAPPING PROJECT

The ACA is providing volunteers to work with SFPUC biologists on a smolt trapping study of the landlocked steelhead trout populations above Calaveras and San Antonio Reservoirs. These fish will likely be used to help "jump-start" a steelhead run in lower Alameda Creek. Volunteers are assisting with daily checks of fish traps for out-migrants (smolts) and upstream migrant spawning adults in tributaries to these reservoirs. Volunteers are needed each day through the end of May to spend 4-6 hours in the field checking and cleaning traps and collecting fish data. If you are interested, contact our volunteer coordinator:

Mike Ferry - (510) 581-5288 or M13Ferry@aol.com.

FREMONT HILL AREA INITIATIVE

The newly formed Friends of the Ridgeland is working to collect 13,000 signatures needed to put the Fremont Hill Area Initiative 2002 on the City of Fremont's November ballot. This grassroots group is working to preserve open space and wildlife habitat in Fremont, including Mission Peak and the Vargas Plateau. To volunteer or for more information contact:

**Friends of the Ridgeland - Susan Gearhart
(510) 656-7703 or Grasslandladyvrn@aol.com
web site: www.fremonthills2002.org**

SAN LORENZO WATERSHED

DAM REMOVALS POSSIBLE?

The Alameda County Public Works Agency is currently assessing sediment management issues for the Cull and Don Castro Reservoirs in the San Lorenzo watershed. Both reservoirs have silted in and dam removal is one option. Steelhead have been found recently in lower San Lorenzo Creek, and a watershed restoration group is forming for Castro Valley, Hayward, and San Lorenzo residents. Contact the Friends of San Lorenzo Creek at (510) 581-5288 or M13Ferry@aol.com. To support the removal of these dams for fish restoration, write to:

**Rick Baker, Environmental Services Division
Alameda County Public Works Agency
951 Turner Court
Hayward, CA 94545**

SUNOL QUARRY

The battle over the proposed SFPUC gravel quarry expansion in the Sunol Valley is coming to a head, with Mission Valley Rock expected to begin moving earth in April. The ACA and Save Our Sunol (SOS) have opposed quarrying north of I-680, due to environmental and health concerns, and the potential impacts to Alameda Creek and the town of Sunol. SOS and ACA spoke before the Alameda County Planning Commission in February opposing approval of a quarry expansion south of I-680 which will be used to store the silt from quarrying activities north of I-680. The Commission voted to delay approval until April 1 and is considering requiring an Environmental Impact Report for the project. For more info. contact:

**Save Our Sunol - Pat Stillman, President
(925) 862-2263 or bpstillman@cs.com
web site: www.sunol.org**

FRIENDS OF COYOTE HILLS

PATTERSON RANCH DEVELOPMENT

The Friends of Coyote Hills are working to preserve the Coyote Hills ecosystems and wildlife habitat. An 1800-home development has been proposed adjacent to Coyote hills at Patterson Ranch. To get involved contact:

**FCHF - (510) 794-0847 or info@fchf.org
web site: www.fchf.org**

FREMONT EARTH DAY

The ACA will have a booth at Fremont Earth Day on **Saturday, April 27**. The event is at the Fremont Senior Center, Central Park, from 9:30 to 4. Contact the ACA if you would like to volunteer at our table.

Third Annual Fremont Steelhead Festival and Watershed Awareness Fair

Saturday, May 11th, 10 am - 3 pm
Niles Community Park, 3rd and H Streets
in the Niles District of Fremont

- Free to the Public
- Steelhead and Salmon Restoration Information
- Learn Catch-and-Release Flyfishing
- Activities for Kids
- Food & Live Music
- 10 km "Spawning Run" and 5 km Fun Run
(\$20 fee benefits fish restoration)

For more information
contact the
Alameda Creek Alliance
(510) 845-4675



"Quick as my Thought" by Rachel Rees, age 10
Copyright River of Words

Running events along Alameda Creek start at Niles Community Park, 9am
T-shirt with entry ● Benefit for steelhead & salmon restoration efforts
Call (510) 657-6179 for race information

Sponsored by Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Alameda County Water District, Alameda Creek Alliance, City of Fremont, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Sierra Club Southern Alameda County Group, and the Union Sanitary District.

Focus on the Arroyos

A creek protection group has formed to advocate for steelhead restoration and protection of the creeks of the Amador-Livermore Valley, including Arroyo Mocho, Arroyo del Valle, and Arroyo de la Laguna. The Friends of the Arroyos (FOTA) meet at 7 pm the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Pleasanton Public Library. FOTA are focusing on steelhead restoration in Arroyo Mocho, a restoration project on Sycamore Creek in Pleasanton, a creek cleanup on Earth Day, and planned developments along the Arroyo in Livermore. Contact FOTA at:

Friends of the Arroyos
16 Rockrose Street
Livermore, CA 94550
(925) 455-8823
lstung@pacbell.net

Migratory Fish Stream Report for the Livermore, Pleasanton, and Dublin Tri-Valley

By Ralph Moir, FOTA

Ever wonder why there are no steelhead or salmon in the creeks and streams passing through the Tri-Valley? One answer to this question could be that these streams often go dry, especially in the summer. Another possible answer is that there are three existing physical blockages to anadromous fish spawning. The fish are unable to get back and forth from the ocean even if there are adequate flows. The first blockage on the Arroyo Mocho is a three-foot high concrete structure at the now abandoned Southern Pacific railroad crossing. This is a stone's throw from where Stanley Boulevard crosses Murrieta Blvd. in Livermore (See map and photo #1).



Photo #1 - Stanley Blvd. drop structure

The six major creeks and arroyos in the Tri-Valley area have a complex flow pattern. The Arroyo Mocho drains the Mines Road area and passes through Robertson's Park. It then goes behind Granada High School and across Stanley Boulevard. The Arroyo Seco drains the Tesla Road area, while Altamont Creek drains the watershed along the Old Altamont Pass Road area. Both of these streams feed the Arroyo Las Positas, which passes by the Livermore Airport. The Arroyo Las Positas then feeds the Arroyo Mocho and passes through Pleasanton. The resulting stream falls over the second drop structure shown in photo #2. Finally, the water enters the Arroyo De La Laguna.

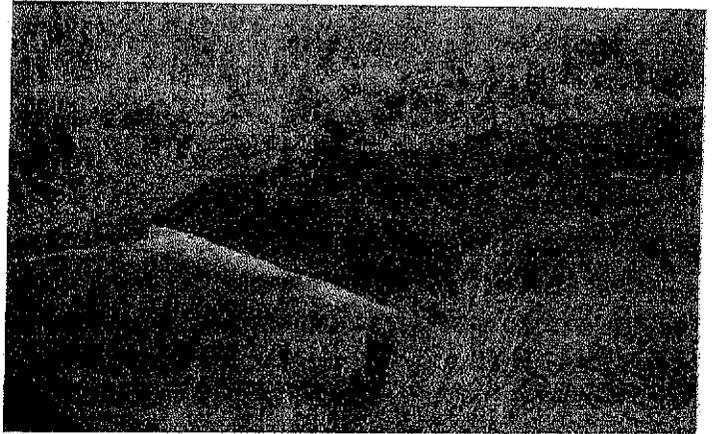
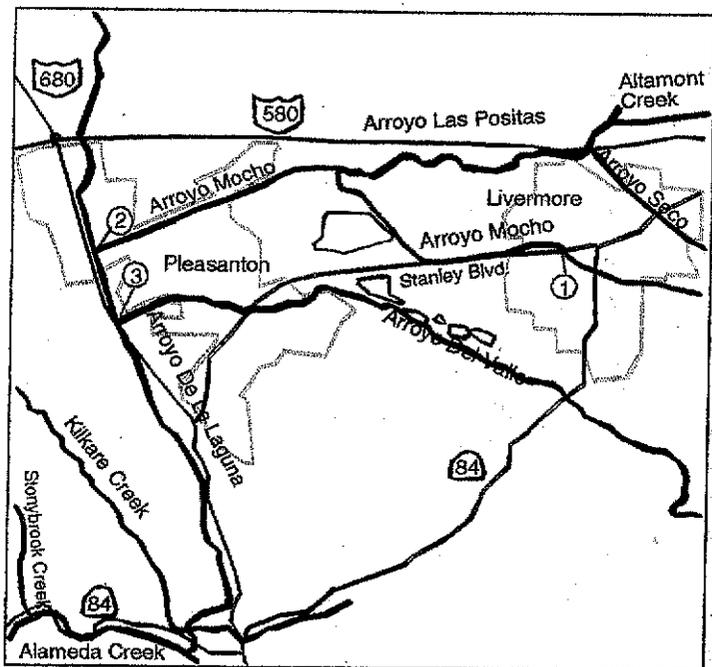


Photo #2 - Drop structure (about one foot) on Arroyo Mocho near W. Las Positas Blvd.

The Arroyo Del Valle is fed by a large watershed in the southern half of the Tri-Valley. In addition to the Del Valle dam, this arroyo has a small drop near the end of Corte Monterey and close to Bernal Ave. and 680 in Pleasanton. This drop is shown in photo #3.



Photo #3- Drop structure on Arroyo del Valle



Map - Tri-Valley streams and drop structure locations

and Del Valle streams to meet Fremont's needs. Unfortunately for the steelhead and other fish, this water is shut off for extended periods.

Will migratory fish ever return to the Tri-Valley? Certainly the three blockages in the area could be removed or modified in coordination with projects in Alameda Creek. Ensuring adequate and sustained water flow is more problematic. Perhaps there are creative solutions to a healthier arroyo system of the Tri-Valley. Let's be friends of the arroyos!

What you can do: Write a letter to Zone 7 Water Agency expressing your support for steelhead restoration. Be sure to mention if you are a Zone 7 ratepayer. Write to:

**Dale Myers, General Manger
Zone 7 Water Agency
5997 Parkside Drive
Pleasanton, CA 94588**

Historical Fish Runs in the Arroyos

By Jeff Miller, ACA

Steelhead trout historically had access to the Arroyos, but modification through diversions and groundwater pumping, as well as the construction of Del Valle Dam resulted in restricted migration. Adult steelhead had been documented up until the 1960s in Arroyo Mocho, Arroyo del Valle, and Arroyo de la Laguna. There is also historical evidence of steelhead in some smaller tributaries of lower Arroyo de la Laguna, such as Sycamore Creek and Sinbad Creek. Native rainbow trout still persist in the Arroyo Mocho gorge southeast of Livermore - they were documented there in 1976, 1978, and 1999. The ability of these trout to migrate to the ocean is limited by the operations of Zone 7 Water Agency, and upstream migrating adults are blocked by barriers in Fremont.

Sources:

- Livermore Herald articles April 9, 1910 and July 3, 1953.
- Skinner, J. E. 1962. An historical review of the fish and wildlife resources of the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Aceituno, M. E., M. W. Caywood, S. J. Nocoloa, and W. I. Follett. 1976. Occurrence of native fishes in Alameda and Coyote Creeks, California.
- Scoppettone, G. C. and J. J. Smith. 1978. Additional records on the distribution and status of native fishes in Alameda and Coyote Creeks, California.
- Smith, J. J. 1999. Steelhead and other fish resources of streams of the west side of San Francisco Bay.
- Alameda County Public Works Department. 1999. A look at fish populations in Arroyo Mocho, Welch, and Pirate Creeks.
- Nielsen, J. and M. Fountain. 1999. Microsatellite analyses of Alameda Creek rainbow/steelhead trout.
- Gunther, A. J., J. Hagar, and P. Salop. 2000. An assessment of the potential for restoring a viable steelhead trout population in the Alameda Creek watershed.

Looking further downstream, there are more watersheds feeding the ocean-going water of Alameda Creek, which runs through Niles Canyon and on to the bay. Like the Tri-Valley area, there are several blockages in this section of the stream. However, through the good work of the Alameda Creek Alliance and other organizations and governing bodies, all the structures and blockages in the lower portion of Alameda Creek will be removed or fish ladders built by 2004 or 2005.

Would the presence of year-round water flow and the removal of these barriers permit migratory fish to travel into the Tri-Valley area? As recently as the 1960s here were steelhead runs into the arroyos. Furthermore, one wonders if the arroyos have any rainbow trout or other migratory fish that would like to go back and forth to the ocean. It turns out that here are such trout still living in the Arroyo Mocho, and in other creeks further downstream. What appears to be missing is sufficient, regular water flow.

There is plenty of water in the Tri-valley, even more than in the past, due to the additional supplies brought in by the South Bay Aqueduct (SBA). This water, however, is used for agriculture and household needs. Once the domestic water is used, it is treated and then pumped as "used" water up over the Dublin grade and into the bay. Much percolated water or agricultural water that gets into the water table is eventually pumped back out, treated and used as domestic water. Water from the SBA is sent down the Arroyo Mocho

Historical photos of salmon and steelhead from Alameda Creek (provided courtesy of Hal Janssen)

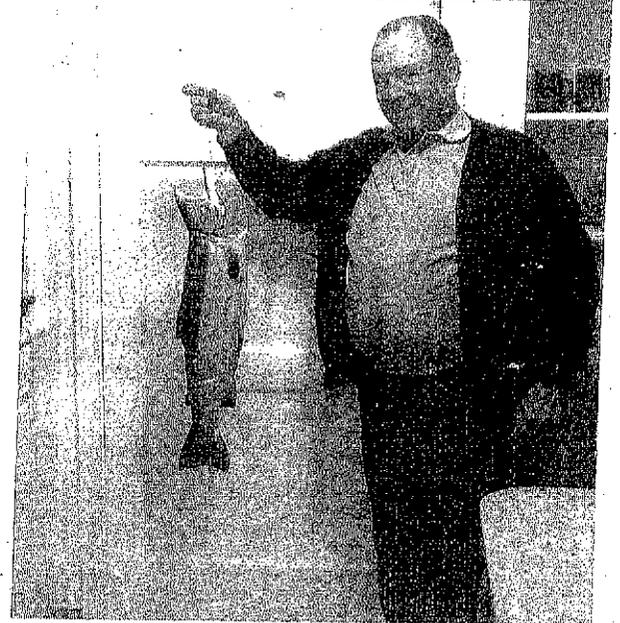


Steelhead and suckers caught Dec. 10, 1954 from under RR bridge at Stonybrook Creek



Steelhead caught in 1956 at end of Niles Blvd.

12 pound steelhead caught in 1961 from Elderberry Park hole



Silver (coho) salmon, one over 15 pounds, caught Feb. 11, 1964 along old Pottery Road

10 pound steelhead caught January 1959 under Mission Blvd. Bridge



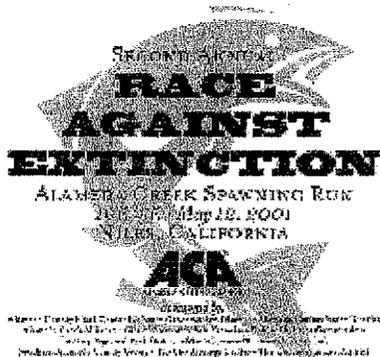
ACA T-SHIRTS

We still have many gorgeous five color t-shirts left over from this year's Fremont Steelhead Festival. These are available at cost for \$7 postage paid (see design below).

Beautiful ACA fundraiser t-shirt (see design below) available for \$20 postage paid. Free t-shirt with membership of \$25 or more. Check payable to ACA. Specify size (S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL).

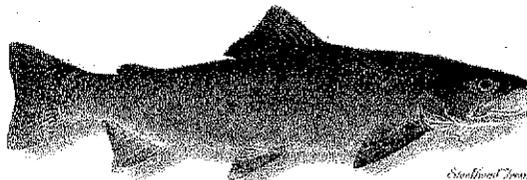


Front

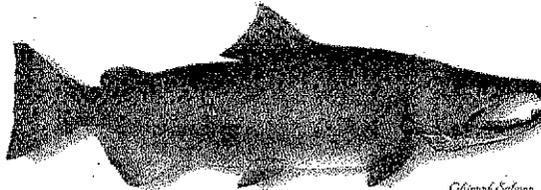


Back

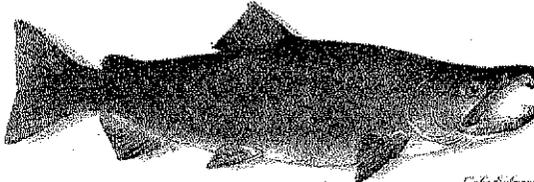
Three Reasons to Save and Restore Alameda Creek



Steelhead Trout



Chinook Salmon



Coho Salmon



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 \$10 or more for a one year membership. For a membership of \$20 or more you will receive an Alameda Creek Alliance "Three reasons..." T-shirt (please specify size). Make checks payable to Alameda Creek Alliance.

Name _____ \$10 Fry

Address _____ \$25 Parr

City _____ Zip _____ \$50 Smolt

Phone _____ \$100 Spawner

-mail _____ Send me a free bumpersticker

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

Alameda Creek Alliance

P.O. Box 192

Canyon, CA 94516

(510) 845-4675



www.alamedacreek.org

Up Your Creek!

ACA Newsletter #14

Upcoming events:

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------|---------|
| March 20 | Sunol & Ohlone Parks Meeting | Sunol |
| March 26 | ACA Meeting | Sunol |
| April 27 | Earth Day | Fremont |
| April 30 | ACA Meeting | Sunol |
| May 11 | Fremont Steelhead Festival | Niles |

If you are not on the Alameda Creek Alliance e-mail list, you are missing important alerts and updates. To get on the list, send an e-mail to:

alamedacreek@hotmail.com