

Creek group plays name that trout

March 9, 2006

INSIDE BEAT: BONITA BREWER

WHAT A STUD - A male steelhead trout rescued last week after being trapped behind a concrete barrier while migrating up Alameda Creek weighed in at 11 pounds and was 31 inches long. That is the biggest fish on record found in the creek since the early 1960s.

"We might have to call this one Brutus," said Jeff Miller of the Alameda Creek Alliance, who with others helped move the big splashy critter past the man-made creek obstruction in Fremont to more suitable spawning and rearing habitat upstream in Niles Canyon.

"Hopefully, we'll catch some females this week and get them up there for him," Miller said of additional rescue efforts expected as other steelhead get trapped behind creek barriers while trying to migrate in from the Bay. "He's going to be intimidating to the local (rainbow) trout."

Another male steelhead, smaller but still an impressive size, was rescued along with Brutus and brought upstream.

Although the creek alliance hasn't made naming rescued steelhead a routine practice, one found in 1998 trapped behind a BART weir and brought to an Alameda Creek tributary in Niles Canyon below Sunol was named Stella.

Miller said it might be a good idea to name all the rescued fish, perhaps by going through the alphabet, similar to how hurricanes are named.

The Alameda Creek Alliance, which hopes to restore a steelhead run there, continues to work with various agencies in attempts to remove all the man-made barriers from the creek.