

FREMONT STEELHEAD FESTIVAL

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The third annual Fremont Steelhead Festival and Watershed Awareness Fair will be held on Saturday, May 11, at Niles Community Park in Fremont. The festival is an educational event and celebration of the progress made toward restoring native steelhead trout and salmon to Alameda Creek. The event will run from 10 am to 3 pm and is free to the public. This year's festival is co-sponsored by the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Alameda County Water District, Alameda Creek Alliance, City of Fremont, East Bay Regional Park District, Mission Peak Striders, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Sierra Club Southern Alameda County Group, Tri-City Ecology Center, and the Union Sanitary District.

Activities at the festival will include educational and informational displays by organizations and agencies working to restore Alameda Creek and other creeks in the East Bay. Local fly-fishing groups will teach fly-casting and fly-tying, and promote fish conservation and catch-and-release fishing. The California Department of Fish and Game will provide tanks with live steelhead, salmon, and other native fish on display. There will also be walking tours of proposed restoration sites in lower Alameda Creek, creative activities for kids, food, and a live bluegrass band.

The event kicks off at 9 am with the Alameda Creek Spawning Run, a 10-kilometer road race along lower Alameda Creek and Quarry lakes Regional Park. A 5-kilometer fun-run/walk along the creek will start at 9:30. Race registration (which includes a T-shirt) is \$25 the day of the event and benefits steelhead restoration efforts. For information about the festival or the Spawning Run, please call (510) 845-4675.

The Alameda Creek Alliance has been working to restore native steelhead trout to Alameda Creek since 1997. A workgroup of 11 local, state, and federal agencies have been cooperating on a number of migratory fish restoration projects. Restoration projects are planned which will allow adult steelhead, which have been blocked by barriers in lower Alameda Creek, to reach spawning and rearing habitat 25 miles upstream in Sunol Regional Wilderness.

The East Bay Regional Park District completed the first Alameda Creek dam removal project in fall of 2001 when two small swim dams were removed from Alameda Creek in Sunol Regional Wilderness. The Army Corps of Engineers is in the planning process for a \$6.7 million project in lower Alameda Creek in conjunction with the Alameda County Flood Control District and the Alameda County Water District (ACWD). This project will construct fish ladders at barriers in the lower creek and install fish screens at ACWD diversions by 2005. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission plans to remove Niles and Sunol Dams in Niles Canyon by 2004 for fish passage.