

## ***Up Your Creek!***

The electronic newsletter of the Alameda Creek Alliance

### **Oil Trains Through Niles Canyon?**



***ACE train derailment into Alameda Creek in Niles Canyon, 2016***

We're trying to make sure that oil trains and oil spills aren't a part of Alameda Creek's future.

The San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission is proposing to expand the existing Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) passenger rail service between Stockton and San Jose – but there's a catch: the railway expansion could also dramatically increase Union Pacific freight trains through Niles and Niles Canyon.

The goal of the [ACEforward project](#) is ostensibly to improve and extend passenger rail service, an appropriate and worthy transportation and conservation goal. However, track upgrades, connections and additions proposed in the project are also aimed at increasing freight train access to and from the Port of Oakland. This could dramatically increase freight train traffic across and along Alameda Creek and through highly populated areas of Alameda County.

We have strong concerns about increasing freight traffic through Niles Canyon, a narrow, constrained rail corridor that runs closely to Alameda Creek, and an area which is subject to landslides. An ACE train recently derailed in Niles Canyon into Alameda Creek. Increased freight traffic will almost certainly lead to further train derailments and accidents that could spill toxic materials and damage water quality and wildlife habitat in Alameda Creek, as well as put nearby communities at risk from toxic and flammable materials.

A draft Environmental Impact Report has been prepared. The Alameda Creek Alliance has submitted comments and questions about the frequency of future freight train traffic, the possible toxic and flammable contents of freight trains, and the risks to public safety, water quality, and wildlife habitat from derailments or accidents. None of these issues have been adequately evaluated or addressed.

The Rail Commission claims that construction of the various railway improvements will not increase the overall number of projected freight trains or freight traffic in the ACE corridor by 2020 or 2040, but it is impossible to determine from the environmental review document whether this is actually true. The draft EIR admits that some freight traffic from the Coast and Oakland Subdivisions would be rerouted to the Niles Subdivision and the Niles Canyon Railway; and that up to 5 freight trains daily could travel through Niles canyon by 2020, and 8 daily freight trains by 2040. The draft EIR does not disclose the contents of freight trains, which could include crude oil, gasoline and other combustible and toxic materials. The draft EIR does not adequately evaluate train safety and accident issues.

The project proposes to essentially take over the historic Niles Canyon Railway through the canyon. The proposed railway improvements will require extensive tree cutting, vegetation removal and excavating in Niles Canyon; and proposes miles of fencing, concrete barriers and retaining walls that will cause blight and create an industrial atmosphere throughout the scenic corridor of the canyon. A new bridge proposed over Alameda Creek in Fremont may interfere with the fish ladder that is going to be built at the BART weir in lower Alameda Creek. Many parts of the project may also conflict or interfere with the proposed Niles Canyon Trail through Niles Canyon.

You can read the draft Environmental Impact Report for the project [here](#). You can find the Alameda Creek Alliance's comments on the draft EIR [here](#). Public comments on the draft EIR are due by July 31.

## Salt Marsh Restoration along Lower Alameda Creek



A hopeful development for Alameda Creek is the upcoming restoration of former salt ponds near Alameda Creek, which will be restored to tidal marsh habitat. The restored marshes could provide important rearing habitat for fish and be very beneficial for restoration of steelhead trout to the Alameda Creek watershed.

The South Bay Salt Pond Restoration is moving forward with the next phase of the Eden Landing Salt Pond Complex restoration. Consultants are currently conducting an environmental analysis of the various alternative restoration options for Eden Landing. A draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report is expected to be released in early August.

The Alameda Creek Alliance recently submitted comments by fisheries biologists on Eden Landing restoration plan alternatives, relative to impacts and benefits for steelhead trout. Our comments focus on how steelhead may use the restored Eden Landing salt ponds and risks to steelhead which may be associated with project alternatives. Concerns are: culvert and pond designs which could increase the risk of predation on young fish; the need for connectivity between the restored marshes, Alameda Creek, the bay and tidal channels; and water quality. Fisheries experts McBain Associates reviewed scientific literature and solicited expert opinions to provide recommendations of preferred project alternatives and comments on potential changes that could be made to benefit steelhead trout. You can read the Alameda Creek Alliance comments [here](#).

The South Bay Salt Pond Restoration will hold a [public tour and a stakeholder forum](#) on the Eden Landing restoration on Tuesday, August 15. The walking tour of the new public access features at Eden Landing will be from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. Meet at the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve Parking Lot, at the corner of Eden Landing Road and Arden Road, in Hayward.

The stakeholder forum will be from 2:00 to 5:00 pm, at the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex Headquarters, Third Floor Auditorium. The address is 1 Marshlands Road, in Fremont. Click [here](#) for a map link.

The [public hearing](#) on the Eden Landing Phase 2 Draft Environmental Impact Statement will also be held On Tuesday, August 15, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. The location is the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex Headquarters, Third Floor Auditorium. The address is 1 Marshlands Road, in Fremont. Click [here](#) for a map link.

## **Alameda Creek in the News**

### **[California Reservoir on Shaky Ground Highlights Aging U.S. Dams' Risks](#)**

Wall Street Journal - June 23, 2017

## **Regional Salmon Restoration News**

### **[Millions Allocated Toward Butano Creek Restoration](#)**

San Mateo Daily Journal – July 17, 2017

### **[Tunnel Vision: Why Do the Delta Conveyors Need to Be So Big?](#)**

Sacramento News & Review - July 13, 2017

### **[With San Clemente Dam Gone, Are Steelhead Trout About to Make Comeback on the Carmel River?](#)**

San Jose Mercury News - July 7, 2017

### **[SPAWN to Study Lagunitas Creek Flows](#)**

Point Reyes Light – July 6, 2017

### **[Can California Fish Catch Break With Giant Tunnels? Depends](#)**

San Francisco Chronicle - July 2, 2017

### **[Costly Approval Doesn't Guarantee The Governor's Delta Tunnels](#)**

San Francisco Chronicle - July 1, 2017

### **[Fishing and Conservation Groups Sue to Block Delta Tunnels Project](#)**

Indy Media - June 30, 2017

### **[Trump Administration Greenlights a Project That Will Devastate California's Most Fragile Ecosystems](#)**

Mother Jones - June 26, 2017

### **['Huge Milestone' for Delta Tunnels – Feds Say They Won't Push Fish Over the Brink](#)**

Sacramento Bee - June 26, 2017

### **[Here's How Big Wine Gets To Avoid Environmental Rules in Napa](#)**

Link TV – June 16, 2017

**[The Eel River Could Save Wild Salmon – If We Can Save the River Itself](#)**

Sacramento Bee – June 15, 2017

**[Why Years of Waiting May Be Over On Delta Tunnels](#)**

Sacramento Bee – June 13, 2017

**[In California Wine Country, Restoring Salmon Habitat after More Than a Century of Dams](#)**

Yes Magazine – May 30, 2017

**[Can We Save Sonoma Valley's Salmon and Trout?](#)**

Sonoma News – May 25, 2017

**[Where Have All the Salmon Gone? State Committee Discusses Impacts of Low Runs](#)**

Eureka Times-Standard – May 24, 2017

**[Kent Lake Water Flow Study to Look at Fish Impact](#)**

Marin Independent-Journal – May 22, 2017

**[California Salmon, Steelhead, Trout Species Face Extinction Within Next Century](#)**

Eureka Times-Standard – May 16, 2017

**[Most California Trout and Salmon at Risk of Extinction](#)**

San Diego Union-Tribune – May 16, 2017

**[Science Is Clear — Twin Tunnel Plan Will Hurt the Delta](#)**

East Bay Times – May 12, 2017

**[Oroville Dam: Salmon Survive Spillway's Erosion, Then Suffocate In Mishap](#)**

San Jose Mercury-News – May 11, 2017

**['These Fish Are In A Bad Way.' How Many More Will Die Because of the Delta Tunnels?](#)**

Sacramento Bee – May 7, 2017

**[Santa Cruz County's Endangered Coho Salmon and the Fight to Save It](#)**

Santa Cruz Sentinel – May 6, 2017

**[How We Killed Off the Giant Salmon of the Pacific Northwest in 50 Years](#)**

Vimeo – May 5, 2017

**[Facing Extinction: California Fishes](#)**

California Water Blog – April 30, 2017

**[Salmon Recovery Effort Takes Root in Redding](#)**

Redding Record-Searchlight – April 28, 2017

**[Early Review of Delta Tunnel Project Warns of Risks to Fish](#)**

News Deeply – May 2, 2017

**['Living River' Rejuvenates Napa, Brings Needed Flood Control](#)**

San Francisco Chronicle – April 30, 2017

**[Santa Maria River Lawsuit over Steelhead Trout](#)**

KEYT News – April 29, 2017

**[Fate of Flows in Russian and Eel Rivers Rests In Big Fight over Small Hydroelectric Project](#)**

Santa Rosa Press-Democrat - April 8, 2017

***The Alameda Creek Alliance is a non-profit community watershed protection group. Please support our efforts by [becoming a member](#)***