

Developing Creek Stewards

Chapter Two

Alameda Creek Alliance (ACA) has completed the second season of their “Trout In the Classroom” (TIC) program. Once more, the program has shown that it can be a powerful tool for building a sense of ownership for our environment within the minds of our kids – the future citizens of our world.

The program provides local students with an opportunity to witness Rainbow Trout eggs hatch and develop into beautiful little trout. This process happens in an aquarium set up right in their classroom. They complete lessons and related classroom curriculum about the fish, their life cycle, environmental and habitat requirements, pollution threats, and human impacts on their survival or demise. They learn to protect and to take care of their little friends. Their experience concludes with a field trip to an approved local reservoir, where they are given the opportunity to bid their little fish friends a fond farewell and release them into the waters of their new home.

Young student bidding his fish a fond farewell as he releases it into the waters of Quarry Lakes



The TIC program is well organized and very effective. It consists of three partners:

1. It is organized and regulated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).
2. It is managed by volunteer sponsor organizations (Fly Fishing Clubs, Water Districts, Environmental Organizations, etc.).
3. The third partner is the classroom teachers.

Dedication to the success of the program is essential for all three partners

CDFW regulates the program. They provide the trout eggs, training, and classroom curriculum material. Teachers are required to complete a CDFW training program before they are approved to receive the trout eggs.

Sponsors typically provide the classroom aquarium and related equipment, including a “chilled” aquarium that maintains the cool water temperature needed for the survival of the trout. They also help the teachers with aquarium set-up, repairs of any equipment failures, and provide technical assistance as required. Usually the sponsors are able to set up an aquarium system in the classroom with no cost to the teachers or the school districts. ACA is a proud sponsor.

Dedicated teachers are the heart of the program. They teach the students about the fish, their life cycle, environmental conditions, food sources, etc. The students learn about watersheds and what people can do to ensure the fish in those watersheds have what they need to survive. These lessons help motivate the students to want to protect their little friends.

The program provides an excellent teaching tool and has applications in several different classroom categories (i.e. - Science, English, Math, etc.). Teachers that participate in this program really love it and appreciate the opportunity to have it as a part of their curriculum.



The program concludes with a field trip to a local (pre-approved) reservoir where the students are given the opportunity to bid their little fish friends a fond farewell.

The program concluded this year with 3 schools participating; Sunol Glen Elementary in Sunol, Millard Elementary in Fremont, and Creekside Middle School in Castro Valley. A combined total of 195 students participated in our program this year. They released 80 healthy young rainbow trout fry into the waters of Quarry Lakes and Shadow Cliffs Reservoir. ACA members Derrell Bridgman and Bobbie Armour managed the program for the Alliance.

ACA is proud to be an active sponsor in this program. The valuable experience it provides the kids of our communities is outstanding and unique. The connection they make with the real natural world is a refreshing, healthy alternative to the “virtual” world (i.e. cell phones, computers, video games, etc.) they have become accustomed to. The best part is they learn to respect and appreciate what this new world offers – and they love it. We at Alameda Creek Alliance believe this is nothing but GOOD.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are a teacher, or know of a teacher, in the Alameda Creek watershed who would like to participate in this program next year please contact Derrell Bridgman at (derrellwb@gmail.com). I will be happy to answer any questions and help you get started.