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A plan worth approving

AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE area in the East Bay is getting some welcome attention from public officials and, indeed, their action should return Alameda Creek to a more natural state. As the largest creek in the county, Alameda Creek has been affected by humans for generations. A plan to remove four dams along the scenic creek will not bring the site back to its original state, but this proposal is certainly a step in the right direction.

The ultimate goal of the action, being initiated simultaneously by both the East Bay Regional Park District and the San Francisco Water Department, is to reintroduce the endangered steelhead trout into the stream.

The park district plans to remove two dams located along the creek in the Sunol Wilderness Area, while water officials are considering removing or modifying its two dams below Sunol.

Both projects deserve support. In addition to the laudable goal of reintroducing the steelhead, there will be immediate benefits to other animals in the area, including the California red-legged frog, foothill yellow-legged frog and the western pond turtle.

Such action to restore our environment to its original state is a refreshing approach to land management. Indeed, this is often the only way to restore fragile species that are facing extinction because of human actions.

Learning to respect the natural balance found in nature takes a commitment not only from governmental agencies, but also by a concerned public. People have until next Wednesday to comment on the park district's plans, and they would be wise to lend their support to this project. Public input is not limited to just opposition. When a project is responsible and sensitive, it, too, deserves comments from the public.

Both agencies should proceed with their plans to improve Alameda Creek. Restoring it to its past splendor is, indeed, a forward-thinking action.

Times Editorial