

The Log

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Fish Runs Being Restored to Alameda Creek

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Steelhead and king salmon runs are slated to be restored in Alameda Creek by 2004 to 2005, which should greatly improve fishing in the Bay. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has proposed a 6.7 million dollar project to build fish ladders and remove dams in the lower creek, so that steelhead and salmon can migrate upstream to the traditional spawning grounds.

"In the next three to five years, steelhead spawning will be restored in Alameda Creek for the first time since the early 1960s," according to Jeff Miller Director of the Alameda Creek Alliance. It was back in 1955 that a flood in Fremont caused the Army Corps of Engineers to re-locate the creek below Niles Canyon, causing it to flow in a flood control channel, rather than the natural creek channel. Then the BART weir was built in the early 1970s, and steelhead were stopped from getting upstream through Niles Canyon to spawn.

Passage of fishery restoration laws over the last few years and the recent listing of the steelhead as an endangered species have created new attitudes in federal and state agencies. Besides the Corps of Engineers construction of the fish ladder, Caltrans is replacing a culvert in Stonybrook Creek; the East Bay Regional Park District removed two swim dams in the Sunol Valley Wilderness during 2001 and the utility district plans to remove Niles and Sunol dams in Niles Canyon.

The restoration efforts of these various government agencies are being propelled by the Alameda Creek Alliance, which is an organization of over 300 people, many of them fishermen interested in restoring the steelhead and salmon runs in the creek. The Alliance is sponsoring their Third Annual Steelhead Festival at Niles Community Park on Saturday, May 11. For more information, contact ACA President Jeff Miller at (510) 845-4675 or check out their website at www.alamedacreek.org.

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