



November 10, 2005

Hearings Set For Calaveras Dam Scoping EIR

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) will conduct public hearings on the scoping EIR for its proposed project to rebuild the Calaveras Dam.

The hearings will be from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Nov. 14 at the Fremont Main Library, 2400 Stevenson Blvd., and at the same time on Nov. 15 at the downtown San Francisco campus of San Francisco State University, 425 Market St., Room 301. The building is near the Embarcadero BART station.

Deadline for written comments on the scoping EIR is 5 p.m. Nov. 30. Surface mail letters should go to the San Francisco Planning Department, attn: Paul Maltzer, environmental review officer, Calaveras EIR, 30 Van Ness Ave., Suite 4150, San Francisco, CA. 94103. E-mail comments should go to Diana.sokolove@sfgov.org. For more information about the EIR process, call the SFPUC at 415-558-5971.

The Calaveras Dam, completed in 1925, is part of the Alameda Creek watershed, which includes the Sunol Valley. Genetic studies of fish have indicated that before the dam was built, steelhead were migrating from the ocean to the upper waters of Alameda Creek to spawn, said Jeff Miller, director of the Alameda Creek Alliance (ACA).

The ACA and other conservation groups have expressed support for the rebuild, which the SFPUC says is necessary for seismic improvements. However, environmentalists have had concerns about whether the rebuild will interfere with migrating populations of steelhead.

Miller said that there are about 300 isolated steelhead/trout in the upper reaches of Alameda Creek. The environmentalists want San Francisco to remove the uppermost dam on the creek, known as the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam (ACDD). The dam diverts up to seven-eighths of the stream water into Calaveras and San Antonio reservoirs, said Miller. That water is needed to provide better upstream habitat for the fish and other wildlife. Not enough water diverted into the creek makes the water too warm for the fish, he said.

Michael Carlin, assistant general manager for water for the SFPUC, said, in an Independent story that discussed creek issues in June, that scientific study has to examine the role of the diversion dam. Keeping the dam may be necessary for other things, such as putting in fish ladders and screens, said Carlin. Also, fish management requires a mix of warm and cold waters, depending on where the fish are located in the stream, he said.

Carlin and Miller also disagree about the desirability of building a rubber dam to retain more water. Carlin said it's needed to keep more water for San Francisco, or it will go into the underground in Fremont.

Miller said that is true, but San Francisco could sell that water to Fremont's water district.