

Program says 'no' to eroding arroyo

Project near Sunol aims to protect habitat of indigenous species, such as trout

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By Meera Pal, MEDIANEWS

SUNOL — Using nature's tools of logs and tree roots, local, state and federal agencies have joined efforts to battle erosion of the banks of the Arroyo de la Laguna between Pleasanton and Sunol.

The arroyo is being severely impacted by runoff from the upstream Tri-Valley watershed, with several feet of its banks eroding each year, according to the Livermore-Amador Valley's Zone 7 Water Agency.

To help slow the upstream water and deflect it back into the arroyo's center — as well as create healthier habitat — the project uses harvested eucalyptus trees, Christmas trees, root masses from fallen oaks, rock barbs and vegetative plantings.

The project, expected to be completed on Oct. 15, uses biotechnical restoration practices not typically used in semiurban areas, said Terry Huff of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in a press release.

The project will also improve habitat for steelhead trout once the downstream barriers for fish migration are removed.

If successful, these practices may be utilized in other parts of the watershed with similar issues, he said.

The project is located along a 1,000-foot section of the Arroyo de la Laguna, owned by the San Francisco

Public Utilities Commission, about a half-mile south of the Verona Road bridge between Pleasanton and Sunol.

The arroyo is the main tributary of Alameda Creek, the second largest drainage to San Francisco Bay. The arroyo flows into Alameda Creek just west of the Sunol Water Temple, and Alameda Creek flows from there west through Niles Canyon.

The Arroyo de la Laguna drains about 400 square miles of the upper Alameda Creek watershed in the Tri-Valley region, and provides habitat for the

California red-legged frog, the Western pond turtle, migrating songbirds and other wildlife.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Alameda County Resource Conservation District have teamed up with the Public Utilities Commission, Zone 7, Alameda County Public Works Agency and the Dublin San Ramon Services District on the \$650,000 pilot project.