

Alameda County Water District Awarded \$1.45 Million in Grants

The grant will go toward projects that aim to improve passage for steelhead trout.

August 7, 2011

Alameda County Water District — The Alameda County Water District (ACWD) was recently awarded \$1.45 million in grants to improve steelhead trout migration in Alameda Creek.

The money was awarded by the California Department of Fish and Game as part of its Fisheries Restoration Grant Program.

State Department of Fish and Game grants will help fund two projects that will improve passage for steelhead trout in the Alameda Creek Flood Control Channel.

In conjunction with other Alameda Creek watershed projects completed, planned or under way, these projects will make nearly 15 miles of stream habitat available once again to migrating and spawning steelhead.

A total of \$1 million dollars of the grant money will be used to help construct a fish ladder over county water district's lowermost rubber dam and the adjacent Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District's flood control structure, commonly known as the "BART weir."

The ladder will allow adult steelhead to pass over these structures on their way to spawning grounds further upstream. The fish ladder is a collaborative effort being jointly undertaken by two agencies.

The remaining \$445,000 will help fund the installation of fish screens on ACWD's water supply diversion points at Kaiser and Shinn ponds.

Fish screens eliminate the potential for migrating steelhead from being carried into and trapped in these groundwater recharge ponds.

ACWD Board President Judy Huang expressed her appreciation to the state Department of Fish and Game for the grants.

"The Alameda County Water District is grateful to the Department of Fish and Game for its support of steelhead restoration efforts in Alameda Creek," Huang said. "ACWD is committed to doing our part to improve steelhead migration through the creek so that the fish

may reach suitable spawning and rearing areas in the watershed. CDFG's support is invaluable to achieving this goal."

These two projects are part of a much larger effort to restore steelhead in the Alameda Creek watershed. Within the last few years, the county water district has removed a rubber dam and installed two fish screens.

Alameda County Flood Control, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Zone 7 Water Agency, and the East Bay Regional Park District have also played an important role in improving conditions in Alameda Creek for the federally threatened steelhead trout and other native fish.

The efforts of ACWD and ACFC to improve fish passage at their facilities along lower Alameda Creek have been strongly supported by the Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Work Group, a multi-agency stakeholder group formed in 1999 to develop and implement a strategy to restore steelhead trout to Alameda Creek.

The Work Group is composed of numerous community and citizens' groups, local water management and flood control agencies, state and federal resource agencies, and other watershed stakeholders. The Work Group has been supported with contributions from participating agencies and by grants from the California Department of Fish and Game.

Community representation to the Workgroup is provided by the Alameda Creek Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the natural ecosystems of the Alameda Creek watershed.

Jeff Miller, Director of the Alliance and one of the driving forces behind the restoration effort, was encouraged by the Department of Fish and Games's decision to help fund the fish ladder and fish screens.

"Allowing migratory fish to pass the BART weir and the adjacent rubber dam is the key project for restoring a steelhead run in Alameda Creek," Miller said. "The Alameda County Water District has taken a strong leadership role and shown admirable initiative in moving creek restoration projects forward, and we are grateful for the state funding to help promote steelhead recovery in our watershed."

To date, Alameda County Water District has been awarded more than \$4 million in grants to remove or modify its water supply structures in order to enhance safe passage for steelhead in the Alameda Creek Flood Control Channel.

