

# YOUNG STEELHEAD HATCHED FROM RESCUED EGGS TO BE RETURNED TO ALAMEDA CREEK



Release Date: May 6, 1998

## CONTACT:

Annette Thompson  
(510) 569-7763  
(510) 843-3045

Jeff Miller  
(510) 595-8671

On Thursday May 7th, at 9:00 AM, students from Donlan Elementary School in Pleasanton will be releasing steelhead trout hatchlings into upper Alameda Creek in Sunol Regional Wilderness. Teacher Evelyn Frantz and her students have been caring for several hundred steelhead eggs rescued from the Alameda Creek flood control channel in Fremont. The eggs were deposited in the creek in March, where several dozen steelhead were blocked in their attempted spawning migration by a cement weir below the B.A.R.T. tracks. Members of the Alameda Creek Alliance and the Golden West Women's Flyfishers collected the eggs while netting and moving adult steelhead over the weir. The portion of Alameda Creek in the flood control channel is judged to be unsuitable habitat for steelhead to successfully spawn due to elevated water temperatures, high silt levels, and lack of cover for young steelhead to hide.

Steelhead trout were listed as a federally threatened species last August. Salmon and steelhead numbering in the thousands once made their way up Alameda Creek each year to spawn. Water supply and flood control projects reduced available water and blocked access to spawning grounds. Prime spawning habitat still exists in upper Alameda Creek through Sunol Wilderness, where the hatchlings are to be released. The hatchlings, called "alevins" still have their yolk sacs. At this point they are ready to eat stream invertebrates and support themselves, and to chemically imprint on their home stream. Ideally, steelhead will stay in the creek for 1 to 2 years, and then drift downstream during spring rains to the bay. They will spend time in brackish estuary water as "smolts", undergoing physical changes to adapt to salt water. They then will roam the ocean, returning 3-5 years later to their home stream to spawn.

The Alameda Creek Alliance has been meeting with the Alameda County Flood Control District and the Alameda County Water District to get fish ladders constructed over barriers in the creek. They also have been meeting with the San Francisco Water Department (which owns Calaveras Reservoir upstream of the release site) to ensure sufficient stream flows through late spring for the smolts to

migrate out to the bay. Ten steelhead were successfully moved upstream this spring into Niles Canyon by the Alliance and the East Bay Regional Park District. "These fish need sufficient stream flows to survive and to make it out to the bay." said Jeff Miller, of the Alliance. "We're hoping that when these little guys come back as 25" fish, there will be fish ladders over all the barriers in the creek, and they can make it up here on their own."

Close to 100 of the school-raised Alameda Creek hatchlings have already been released. The classroom egg rescue program is sponsored by the Golden West Women Flyfishers, who have supported 10 years of in-school aquatic education programs.

**Directions to Sunol Regional Wilderness:** Take highway 84 east (Sunol exit off Hwy. 680) under 680 onto Calaveras Road. Follow Calaveras Road 4 miles, left on Geary Road. After Sunol Park entry gate, park in 2nd parking lot on the left near the visitor center. 9 AM, Thursday May 7th.

Contact us at:

P.O. Box 192  
Canyon, CA 94516  
Phone: (510) 845-4675  
FAX: (510) 848-5499  
[AlamedaCreek@formulate.com](mailto:AlamedaCreek@formulate.com)  
<http://www.formulate.com/alamedaCreek>