

ANOTHER NATIVE STEELHEAD SIGHTED IN ALAMEDA CREEK



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A lone 24" steelhead trout was spotted in Alameda Creek on Sunday morning by an Alameda County employee. The threatened fish was spotted by Richard Wetzig, an employee of the Flood Control District, trapped below and trying to jump over the cement drop structure in Fremont owned by the Flood Control District. The drop structure is one of several barriers in the lower creek keeping steelhead and salmon from migrating upstream to spawning habitat in Sunol Regional Wilderness. Sunday's fish was the first steelhead sighting of the year, but there may be more. "I'd be willing to bet there's more than this one fish in there" said Jeff Miller, of the Alameda Creek Alliance. "The Water District raised their inflatable dams just after this fish was spotted. They are likely holding in the pool downstream, and will try to move again with the next rains. We'll be there to try and move them over the dams."

A school of 20-60 steelhead were trapped below the drop structure last March, and 10 of those fish were successfully netted and moved over the barriers in the creek by Alameda Creek Alliance volunteers and East Bay Regional Park District and Flood Control District employees. Fin clips were taken last year from each of the steelhead moved, and sent to Hobkins Marine Lab in Monterey for genetic testing. Tests done by fish geneticists at Hobkins indicated that the fish were wild, central California coast anadromous steelhead. "These steelhead are exactly where they belong," said Miller. "In Alameda Creek, where they spawned for millennia before dams and water diversions destroyed the run. Now is the time to restore this resource - let us state clearly for the last time: these are native fish attempting to return to spawn in their native habitat, and they deserve protection!" A California Department of Fish and Game spokesperson had claimed last winter that returning fish were "lost" and "wandered into the wrong creek".

The Alameda Creek Alliance has been meeting since last winter with the Flood Control District, and the Alameda County Water District, which operates three inflatable rubber dams in the lower creek channel. The Alliance wants the two agencies to apply for funding assistance from the Army Corps of Engineers, which built the flood control project, to help construct fish passage ladders at all the barriers. Through an Army Corps Section 1135 restoration project, the local agencies would pay only 25% of the construction costs of the fish ladders. "These barriers need fish ladders, in fact it's

required by state and federal law" said Miller. "Section 1135 is a great deal for the agencies, and a fair deal for the fish. We encourage both agencies to be the local sponsors for this restoration project." The Alliance has offered to help fundraise the non-federal costs of the fish ladders, and already holds \$7500 in trust for that purpose.

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