

SFPUC Approves Removal of Niles & Sunol Dams on Alameda Creek

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Removal of Fish Barriers this Summer & New Creek Flow Studies are Major Steps Towards Alameda Creek Steelhead Restoration

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) took a major step towards eventual restoration of steelhead to Alameda Creek today by approving the removal of the Niles & Sunol Dams, two late 19th-century dams on Alameda Creek near the Town of Sunol and in Niles Canyon. Once an important part of the East Bay water distribution system, the dams are no longer operationally necessary and pose a barrier to migrating steelhead.

“The removal of these dams demonstrates our commitment to restoring steelhead on the Alameda Creek, even as we work to rebuild the seismically vulnerable Calaveras Dam and provide reliable, high quality drinking water to our 2.4 million customers,” said SFPUC General Manager Susan Leal. “A large portion of the Creek passes through our lands, and we have a vested interest in protecting and preserving this precious natural resource.”

The Commission today adopted the findings of the environmental impact report for the project and took the final major step towards removal of the dams. Removal is scheduled to begin later this summer, following approval and award of a construction contract and the issuance of final permits from several regulatory agencies. Work in sensitive creek areas has to be done in summer when creek flows are lowest. Copies of the [Environmental Impact Report and response to comments](#) can be found on sfwater.org.

The removal of Niles and Sunol Dams are part of a larger effort by the SFPUC and others to restore Alameda Creek. The SFPUC also today approved \$30,000 towards participation in flow studies on the creek to restore steelhead. These studies will be conducted together with members of the Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup – including the Alameda County Water District, Zone 7 Water Agency, Alameda Creek Alliance and the Natural Resources Defense Council – to learn more about how much water might be needed in the creek to support a viable steelhead population.

“This is an exciting time for those of us who care about Alameda Creek and steelhead restoration,” said Tim Ramirez, SFPUC’s Natural Resources Division Manager. “We are working collaboratively with environmental groups, state and federal agencies and other water agencies to work towards the common goal of restoration of fish populations in Alameda Creek.”

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) owns and manages the Hetch Hetchy water system that delivers drinking water to 2.4 million people in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara & Alameda Counties. The SFPUC also collects and

treats wastewater and storm water for the City of San Francisco and generates clean hydropower and renewable power to provide San Francisco's municipal energy.

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