

Up Your Creek!

The electronic newsletter of the Alameda Creek Alliance

Critical Lower Alameda Creek Fish Passage Projects Launched!

The Alameda County Water District and Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District have put out a draft environmental review document for the proposed Lower Alameda Creek Fish Passage Improvements project, including construction of fish ladders at migration barriers in the lower Alameda Creek flood control channel.

The projects will allow steelhead trout and salmon access through the constructed flood control channel to historic upstream spawning and rearing habitats in upper Alameda Creek, for the first time in half a century.

The proposed projects include construction of a fish ladder at ACWD's Rubber Dam 1 and the BART Weir, construction of a fish ladder at ACWD's upper rubber dam, replacement of an existing rubber dam bag, and construction of a new diversion and fish screening facility at Shinn Pond and decommissioning of the existing unscreened diversion pipelines. The ACWD will also modify water bypass rates in the stream reach of Alameda Creek below Mission Boulevard to enhance flow and depth conditions for anadromous steelhead and other fish species. ACWD and ACFCD will develop and implement a joint Operation and Maintenance plan for the fishway and associated facilities.

The Initial Study for the projects is available on ACWD's [website](#). Construction is planned to start in 2014 and be completed in 2015.

Please sign your organization on to a letter of support for this project. Contact Jeff Miller of the Alameda Creek Alliance at jeff@alamedacreek.org.

SFPUC Planning Flawed Alameda Creek Flow Recapture Project

The SFPUC has announced an Alameda Creek Recapture project (formerly called the Upper Alameda Creek Filter Gallery project) to recapture water diverted from Calaveras Reservoir or bypassed around Alameda Creek Diversion Dam for fisheries habitat enhancement in Alameda Creek. The SFPUC goal is to return water released or bypassed for fish habitat enhancement to the SFPUC water system through facilities in the Sunol Valley. The original project involved recapturing water released from the upstream dams via use of an in-stream infiltration gallery that would allow the water to flow by gravity to a new pump station, thereby returning the water to the SFPUC system. The new project announced in March 2013 would instead recapture water that naturally infiltrates from Alameda Creek into an existing quarry pond. A new pump station and pipeline would be constructed to return flows captured in the pond to the SFPUC system.

There are a couple problems with the proposed project. One is that the SFPUC is supposedly planning another project to install cutoff walls adjacent to the gravel quarry pits that would reduce or prevent water from Alameda Creek from infiltrating into the quarry pit. The second is that the SFPUC promised and is legally obligated to keep some of the water proposed for recapture in the creek, since it was promised as mitigation for impacts from the rebuilding of Calaveras Dam.

The Alameda Creek Alliance supports the recapture of the fisheries flow releases from Calaveras Reservoir, since these are minimal summer flow releases that would infiltrate into groundwater in the Sunol Valley and not benefit surface flow in Alameda Creek below the Sunol Valley during summer months even if they were not recaptured. The flows will enhance trout rearing habitat in about 5 miles of Alameda Creek and then could be recaptured downstream of trout habitat with no impact on the fishery. However, we adamantly oppose the proposed recapture of flows

bypassed around Alameda Creek Diversion Dam, since these are flows need for fish migration further downstream. Any attempt to remove fish migration flows promised as mitigation for the Calaveras Dam replacement project would be illegal and we would challenge any such project.

No environmental review document has been released yet. Construction is scheduled for 2014.

SFPUC Considering Cutting Alameda Creek Watershed Improvement Funding?

Help us stop San Francisco from cutting funding for their Watershed and Environmental Improvement Program, which identifies ecosystem restoration needs and protects and restores critical lands and habitats in the Alameda Creek watershed.

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission adopted a Watershed and Environmental Improvement Program in 2005, to protect and restore lands and natural resources critical to or affected by the operation of the SFPUC water supply system. Projects under this program protect source water quality, native species and their habitat; and identify critical watershed lands for protection by purchasing fee title and/or perpetual conservation easements.

The program was supposed to provide \$50 million for the SFPUC to proactively manage, protect and restore environmental resources critical to or affected by SFPUC operations, in the Alameda Creek, Hetch Hetchy and Peninsula watersheds. \$20 million is supposed to come from the Water System Improvement Program bond funds, which rebuilt and upgraded the Hetchy Hetchy and local water supply systems; and \$3 million is to come annually from the SFPUC operating budget. This is just 1% of what the SFPUC is spending on their water system (\$4.6 billion); but now that the water system improvements are over budget, some ratepayers are proposing that SF go back on its promise to fund watershed restoration and cut the program's funding.

This money has been used in the Alameda Creek watershed to purchase land and permanent conservation easements from willing landowners with property that drains into SFPUC reservoirs, pay for stream and habitat restoration, and support outreach and education programs. Few of the expensive water infrastructure projects have had their funding cut; in fact some of them have gone way over budget.

Come to the SFPUC meeting on **Tuesday, April 23** and speak out in opposition to any cuts to the Watershed and Environmental Improvement Program. The meeting is at 1:30 pm at San Francisco City Hall, Room 400, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place. Or write to the SFPUC at 525 Golden Gate Avenue, 13th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94102

Remind SF the Sunol Water Temple Is Not In Paris

The SFPUC is developing plans to construct a new [Alameda Creek Watershed Center](#) in Sunol near the Sunol Water Temple as part of its effort to improve its existing facilities in the Sunol Yard. All well and good.

Except that the San Francisco Arts Commission has to approve any SF building and landscaping designs. Despite several years of discussions and meetings by Sunol residents and the Alameda Creek Alliance and the SFPUC, the Arts Commission is arbitrarily deciding that the landscaping of the approach to the Sunol Water Temple and new watershed temple should look like a formal Parisian Boulevard. With non-native trees that need to be extensively watered! The new designs for the Sunol Yard buildings look like a corporate park, completely at odds with the nearby environment. And the Watershed Center building, which formerly was designed to fit into the

surrounding landscape, will now be redesigned. See the draft plans here: [ACWSC - Sunol Yard Draft Layout - 2.25.13](#)

The Arts Commission plans to toss aside community input and suggestions and requests by the local community for the building design and landscaping to fit into the local environment and use native plants.

The Sunol Water Temple is at the center of the Alameda Creek watershed, at the confluence of Alameda Creek and Arroyo de la Laguna. It is also the confluence of agricultural lands, protected wildlands, the hamlet of Sunol, and regional water supply infrastructure. Its design should reflect its location and the purposes of the grounds. It will also be the entrance to the new Alameda Creek Watershed Center, which will be promoting sustainable use and conservation of water. How ironic to have a landscaping plan that uses non-native, water-intensive plants!

Tell the San Francisco Arts Commission to talk to the community and design their Sunol offices and entrance road and the Watershed Center to fit into the local landscape.

San Francisco Arts Commission
25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 345
San Francisco, CA 94102

The next meeting of the Arts Commission is Monday, May 20 at 3 pm at San Francisco City Hall, room 416.

Volunteers Needed Saturday April 20

Join the Alameda Creek Alliance this Saturday, April 20 for a creek cleanup in lower Niles Canyon and the Fremont Earth Day.

The Alameda Creek Alliance and Alameda County Resource Conservation District are sponsoring a trash cleanup of Alameda Creek. This will be at the Niles Staging Area, from 9-11 am on Saturday, April 20. Please RSVP to Ralph Boniello at ralph@alamedacreek.org.

Come by the Alameda Creek Alliance table at Fremont's Earth Day, from 11 am to 3 pm on Saturday, April 20. The City of Fremont Earth Day "[Let's Go Green Together](#)" will be held at the Conrad E. Anderson Auditoriums, located inside the Washington West building at 2500 Mowry Avenue in Fremont. Please contact Ralph Boniello at ralph@alamedacreek.org if you can help table.

Sunol Butterfly Walk May 25

Join the Alameda Creek Alliance for a spring walk along Alameda Creek in Sunol to Little Yosemite, to learn more about our native local butterflies with expert Bay Area lepidopterist [Liam O'Brien](#). Meet at 11 am at the Sunol Regional Park Visitor Center. Bring a lunch and water. Please RSVP to Ralph Boniello at ralph@alamedacreek.org.

Statewide Coalition Taking on Caltrans

The Alameda Creek Alliance is part of a statewide coalition of conservation and community groups taking on irresponsible and damaging highway-widening projects around the state by the California Department of Transportation. See the Caltrans Watch coalition press release from March 21:

[Statewide Coalition Opposes Caltrans' Environmentally Damaging Highway-Widening Projects](#)

Find out the latest about our efforts to protect Niles Canyon [here](#).

Please Sign the Salmon Aid Petition:

[Restore the Lifeblood of San Francisco Bay: End the man-made drought in the Bay-Delta](#)

Bay Area Regional Desalination Project Community Meetings

Five Bay Area water agencies (Contra Costa Water District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and Zone 7 Water Agency) are investigating a regional water supply project using desalination and water transfers to serve the needs of over 5.6 million Bay Area residents and businesses. Come and learn about the findings, and potential impacts on climate change, water quality, and sensitive fish species. Share your thoughts, and provide feedback to the agencies during this planning phase.

There are two meetings, the content of both meetings will be the same:

San Francisco April 20, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm
SF Main Library, Koret Auditorium
100 Larkin Street, San Francisco

Oakland April 24, 6 – 8 pm
East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD)
375 11th Street, Oakland

More info at www.regionaldesal.com

Regional Salmon News

[Federal Agencies Raise Concerns About Delta Tunnel Plan](#)

Sacramento Bee – April 16, 2013

[Bay Delta Plan would spell end of ecosystem](#)

Point Reyes Light – April 11, 2013

[Hopeful Sign for Klamath](#)

Eugene Register-Guard – April 6, 2013

[Groups Protest Bay Delta Conservation Plan](#)

KTXL – April 5, 2013

[US Recommends Removal of Dams on Klamath River to Aid Salmon](#)

Reuters – April 4, 2013

[Yolo Bypass Floodplain Experiment Produces Salmon 'Fatties'](#)

Sacramento Bee – April 3, 2013

[Salmon Are A Sign of Hope In A Long-Dry Stretch of the San Joaquin](#)

Los Angeles Times – March 29, 2013

[**Resources Secretary Uses Snow Survey to Rush Corporate Water Grab**](#)

FishSniffer – March 28, 2013

[**Latest Effects Analysis Nothing More than a Rationale for Peripheral Tunnel**](#)

Restore the Delta – March 27, 2013

[**Key State Report to Show How Water Tunnels Will Impact Endangered Fish**](#)

KQED – March 26, 2013

[**Meral On The Griddle: Delta Policy Gets the Once-Over**](#)

Capitol Weekly – March 25, 2013

[**California Voters, Lawmakers Have No Say in OK of Major River Diversion Plan**](#)

Sacramento Bee – March 24, 2013

[**Bay Delta Conservation Plan Will Fail to Restore the Estuary**](#)

Indy Media – March 21, 2013

[**Tribes, Conservationists and Fishermen Ask State to Close Loophole in California's Suction Dredge Mining Ban**](#)

Center for Biological Diversity press release – March 20, 2013

[**The Tale of Two Tunnels: Gov. Brown's Tainted BDCP Process Versus Honestly Solving the Problem**](#)

Bilingual Weekly - March 19, 2013

[**Where California's Water Future is Really Being Decided \(Hint: It's Not About Tunnels\)**](#)

KQED – March 19, 2013

The Alameda Creek Alliance is a non-profit community watershed protection group. Please support our efforts by becoming a member.