

# Up Your Creek!

The electronic newsletter of the Alameda Creek Alliance

## ACA Community Meeting and Pizza in Sunol – Sept 10

Be a part of the ACA outreach committee and share your love of the watershed. We will meet over pizza on Thursday, Sept. 10th in Niles at Bronco Billy's Pizza. Come share your passion for the watershed by being part of our Outreach Committee. We'll discuss upcoming events, outreach ideas, and ways to get community members of all ages more involved in watershed stewardship!

We'll meet at 6:30 pm on Thursday, September 10th at [Bronco Billy's Pizza Palace](#) in Niles, CA (37651 Niles Blvd., Fremont, CA). We'll meet casually over pizza and drinks, so don't worry if you're late. Please [RSVP on Eventbrite](#) so that we have an idea of how much space we'll need, or e-mail [ralph@alamedacreek.org](mailto:ralph@alamedacreek.org) if you're interested in participating but can't make it. We look forward to seeing you and hearing your ideas!

## 2015 Harvest Festival at the Sunol AgPark - September 27

Join the Alameda Creek Alliance at the 3rd annual [Sunol AgPark Harvest Festival and Pumpkin Patch](#) hosted by SAGE. It will be on September 27, from 10 am to 3 pm at the Sunol AgPark, located at 505 Paloma Way, Sunol 94586. The festival will feature farmer activities, pumpkin patch, farm produce for sale, kid's crafts and games, food & drink, live music, and more. Bring your bikes, wagons, and a reusable water bottle (and be prepared for sun and warm weather). We're excited to be a community partner, and will have an ACA outreach table with information about watershed happenings, and a fun activity for kids! We hope to see you there.

## Caltrans Niles Canyon Projects Update

Caltrans gave an update on September 3 about their revised plans for highway projects in Niles Canyon. Their future plans involve a Short-term Safety Project, a Medium-term Safety Project, the Alameda Creek Bridge Replacement Project, and mitigation for the trees cut in lower Niles Canyon in 2011.

Caltrans will begin to implement their Short-term Safety Project (no construction or highway work is involved) in summer of 2016. The project will consist of visual measures such as striping and bicycle route delineation on existing pavement.

Because of our [extensive public comments](#), Caltrans is revising the Alameda Creek Bridge Replacement Project, and will re-circulate a new draft Environmental Impact Report in fall of 2015. Caltrans will hold a public hearing on the revised Bridge Replacement Project in late 2015. Completion of the environmental review is anticipated in early 2016, with the start of construction planned for late in 2017. We still have major concerns with impacts of the project. Caltrans has not yet revealed if they will evaluate an alternative that keeps the current bridge configuration and does not involve increasing the engineered driving speed (thus avoiding many of the tree cutting and retaining wall impacts). Stay tuned and we will keep you updated about the revisions to the project and whether or not they are adequate.

Caltrans plans to initiate the Medium-term Safety Project this fall, with a public scoping meeting sometime later in September. This project will involve "limited highway widening," guard rail replacement, traffic signals, warning systems, and "rock slope protection." This project could have

significant impacts due to tree cutting, construction of retaining walls and placement of cage rock slope protection. Caltrans anticipates a draft Environmental Impact Report for this project in early 2016 and completion of environmental review by summer of 2016, with the start of construction planned for late in 2017.

Caltrans states they have abandoned the concept of widening the road throughout the Canyon, for now – they will monitor the effects of the short-term and medium-term safety projects to see if further measures are warranted.

Caltrans is trying to get out of its obligations to mitigate for the 143 trees it cut during 2011 in lower Niles Canyon, stating that the trees are “recovering” even though they have done no monitoring and have no evidence of recovery. Caltrans is unable to mitigate for the mature sycamore trees they cut down along lower Stonybrook Creek. Caltrans has had difficulty finding suitable locations and projects that regulatory agencies will accept as mitigation for the loss of the 143 riparian trees. The agency is instead attempting to offer a fish passage project as mitigation for the tree cutting. Caltrans has proposed removing the lower Stonybrook Creek box culvert under Highway 84 at Palomares Road and replacing it with a free-span road bridge. This is not a suitable mitigation for a few reasons. It is a worthy project, but one Caltrans first proposed in 2002 and had already committed to pursuing as part of the first Niles Canyon Project. Caltrans is required under state law to fix this culvert for fish passage; and will soon have the same requirement under the federal Endangered Species Act when steelhead trout have access to Niles Canyon. For this reason, the fish passage project is not a suitable mitigation for the removal of 143 native trees. We will be working with Caltrans and other agencies to try to locate suitable mitigation projects and locations in Niles Canyon and Stonybrook Creek.

Caltrans will provide updated description and timelines for the Niles Canyon projects soon on their web page: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/nilescanyon/>

## Zone 7 Arroyo Mocho Enhancement



Zone 7 Water Agency is embarking on a new project along Arroyo Mocho in Livermore, at the Medeiros Parkway site. The City of Livermore is dedicating about 45 acres of land adjacent to Arroyo Mocho to the Zone 7 Water Agency. The Medeiros Parkway project concept will allow the creek to reconnect to its floodplain in this area, providing additional flood protection for the region, groundwater recharge, and new and enhanced native riparian habitat. The project will also provide public access to the creek, and Livermore Area Regional Park District plans to implement their Oak Grove Master Plan in the Nature Reserve area, which currently includes a memorial grove and areas for environmental learning.

## Take Action to Oppose the Delta Tunnels!

The last round of public comments ends in 65 days (Oct 30). It is essential that you submit a public comment to go on record opposing the Delta tunnels/CA WaterFix. ***This will be our last chance to submit a public comment -- federal agencies may attempt to permit this plan as early as 2016.*** Go the [Restore the Delta web page](#) and sign their petition to send an automatic letter or create your own using their letter template.

## Arroyo Mocho Article

Check out the informative article in the Granada Native Garden Newsletter, [The Arroyo Mocho at the Granada Native Garden](#). This article by Jim Adams covers the history of the Arroyo Mocho, how the Arroyo Mocho got its name, water in the Arroyo Mocho, the potential for steelhead trout in the Arroyo Mocho, and information about the riparian plant community.

## Wildlife Video

Check out this cool video that Alameda Creek Alliance member Jeff Hemming put together of wildlife in the East Bay: <https://vimeo.com/135732470>. Much of it was shot in the Alameda Creek watershed in Sunol and Pleasanton Ridge.

## Regional Salmon Restoration News

[Feds Scramble to Avoid Another Mass Salmon Die-Off in the Sacramento River](#)  
Sacramento Bee – September 5, 2015

[A Future of Dams: Floodgates Open for Adding Barriers to Combat Drought](#)  
San Francisco Chronicle – August 28, 2015

[Reclamation Will Reduce Lower American River Flows to Only 800 cfs](#)  
Indy Media – August 28, 2015

[State, Feds Forge Ahead With Tunnels Permits Before Public Comment Completed](#)  
Daily Kos – August 28, 2015

[Judge Denies Westlands' Request to Block Higher Trinity River Flows](#)  
Calitics – August 27, 2015

[Irrigators Challenge Release of Water for Klamath Salmon](#)  
Eureka Times-Standard – August 24, 2015

***The Alameda Creek Alliance is a non-profit community watershed protection group. Please support our efforts by [becoming a member](#)***