



# UP YOUR CREEK!

ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER Issue 19 • Fall 2004

## ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE

Protecting and restoring the natural ecosystems  
of the Alameda Creek watershed

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## STEELHEAD AND SALMON CONTINUE TO RETURN TO ALAMEDA CREEK

Both steelhead trout and salmon were seen in lower Alameda Creek on October 27<sup>th</sup>. The ACWD reported a large silvery fish at the lower rubber dam estimated at 15 pounds and believed to be a chinook salmon. An ACA volunteer observed another large salmon and numerous smaller half-pounder steelhead trout at the BART weir. There had been numerous unconfirmed reports of salmonids in the lower creek after the early first rains of the season. A river otter was observed in the creek just below the BART weir on October 26, probably hunting for these fish.

There is still no federal or state permit in place to move fish upstream, a major failure of the regulatory agencies to allow interim fish passage while we try to push forward stalled fish passage restoration projects. An East Bay Parks biologist has permission to capture fish, take fin clips, and move them downstream to the Bay if they are in danger of getting stranded or de-watered, but not upstream to where they can spawn.

We have now documented these barriers blocking federally protected steelhead during their spawning migration for 6 of the last 7 winters. This is the last year the ACA will allow fish passage to be blocked without an interim fish passage plan and permits to move fish upstream. If a plan and permits are not in place by next fall, we will pursue legal action for past and ongoing take under the Endangered Species Act and state Fish and Game Codes requiring fish passage.

## RESIDENT RAINBOW TROUT AND LANDLOCKED STEELHEAD IN ALAMEDA CREEK PROPOSED FOR FEDERAL PROTECTION

The federal agency NOAA Fisheries released a status review earlier this year for 26 west coast salmon and steelhead stocks listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including central California coastal steelhead trout. NOAA has proposed including resident rainbow trout in Alameda Creek and landlocked steelhead trout above Calaveras and San Antonio Dams as part of the threatened central CA coast steelhead population. NOAA extended the comment period to November 12, 2004 for its proposed ESA hatchery listing policy and proposed listing determinations for all west coast salmon and steelhead. More information about the NOAA proposal can be found on their web site at [www.nwr.noaa.gov](http://www.nwr.noaa.gov) by clicking on "Hatchery Policy & Revised Listings."

The status review proposed maintaining ESA protection for 25 stocks of endangered west coast salmon. The Bush administration also decided to include some hatchery-raised salmon as part of listed populations. A critique of this flawed hatchery policy that will further endanger listed salmon can be found on the Wild Salmon web site at [www.wildsalmon.org](http://www.wildsalmon.org) by clicking on "Bush Administration Hatchery/De-Listing Policy."

Alameda Creek fish are the only population of resident trout above major dams proposed for ESA listing at this time, in part due to published studies (from data on fin clips collected by ACA volunteers) showing that native Alameda Creek rainbow trout and landlocked steelhead are genetically related to the central CA coast steelhead population. Protection of resident trout would likely require water releases from SFPUC reservoirs and protection of stream and riparian habitat. The genetics report and ACA comments on the status review can be found on the ACA web site at [www.alamedacreek.org](http://www.alamedacreek.org) by clicking on "Action Alerts."

## HELP US KEEP AN EYE ON ALAMEDA CREEK BECOME A VOLUNTEER STREAMKEEPER

You can help us keep an eye on the creek and monitor fish populations and habitat by signing up to be a volunteer StreamKeeper. StreamKeepers adopt a section of the creek to monitor for fish during winter and check year-round for impaired water quality, pollutants, dumping, poaching, or habitat destruction. We also will train StreamKeepers who are interested in learning to do water quality testing and survey potential fish habitat. If you are interested in adopting a stream section in Alameda Creek or one of its tributaries, please contact the ACA via e-mail at [alamedacreek@hotmail.com](mailto:alamedacreek@hotmail.com).

We particularly need designated StreamKeepers for the following creek sections and tributaries:

- Lower flood control channel between Hwy. 880 and DeCoto Road crossing
- Lower flood control channel between DeCoto Road crossing and the lower ACWD rubber dam
- At the lower ACWD rubber dam
- At the BART weir
- Lower Niles Canyon from Mission Blvd to Niles Dam
- Niles Canyon from Niles Dam to Stonybrook Creek
- Stonybrook Creek
- Niles Canyon from Stonybrook Creek to gravel turnout across from RR depot
- Upper Niles Canyon from RR depot to Sunol Dam
- Confluence of Alameda Creek and Arroyo de la Laguna near the Sunol Water Temple
- Alameda Creek in lower Sunol Valley from the Water Temple to Sunol Golf Course
- Alameda Creek in Sunol Valley near gravel quarries
- Alameda Creek in upper Sunol Valley near the Sunol Valley Water Treatment Plant

## PUBLIC BOVINE SAFETY SURVEY

If you or someone you know has been injured, chased or had other close calls with cattle while in the East Bay Regional Parks, please send an e-mail to the Friends of Sycamore Valley (FSV) at [FriendsOfSV@aol.com](mailto:FriendsOfSV@aol.com). FSV is conducting a public safety survey and is requesting a brief description of the incident including: date, time, and location; whether the incident was reported to the Park District; whether any further action was taken by the individual involved in the incident; and whether the Park District responded to the report.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO LAWRENCE LIVERMORE!

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory completed the removal of a cement stream crossing this fall from Arroyo Mocho upstream of Mines Road. The crossing, which was a potential fish migration barrier was replaced by a bridge. We will hopefully have more details and photos for the next newsletter.

## SINBAD CREEK ASSESSMENT

A U. C. Berkeley hydrology class prepared a preliminary assessment of potential steelhead habitat in Sinbad Creek through Sunol. The report can be found on the ACA web site by clicking on "Fish Passage Projects" then "Sunol Valley."

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**December 8** - Bird-watching field trip to Alameda Creek with Jim Edgar of Mount Diablo Audubon. Meet at 8:30 am at Vallejo Mills Park at the corner of Mission Blvd. at the bottom of Niles Canyon.

**January 13-16, 2005** - "Conversations About Watersheds," a conference at Merritt College in Oakland on volunteer stewardship. A discussion about obstacles and opportunities for volunteer stewardship in the East Bay and beyond, featuring nationally and locally known keynote speakers, facilitated round table discussions, workshops, and field trips. For information call (510) 434-3840 or e-mail [ecomerritt@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ecomerritt@sbcglobal.net).

### → E-MAIL ALERTS ←

Sign up to get e-mail alerts about conservation issues in the Alameda Creek watershed. Alerts and updates are sent out several times a month. To subscribe send an e-mail to

[alamedacreek@hotmail.com](mailto:alamedacreek@hotmail.com)

### → UPDATED WEB SITE ←

Check out the updated Alameda Creek Alliance web site for information about the Alameda Creek watershed, fisheries restoration, including upcoming events, past newsletters, press releases, media articles, reports and data, action alerts, educational resources, and much more!

[www.alamedacreek.org](http://www.alamedacreek.org)

## **WATERSHED LAND USE PLANNING**

### **SUNOL COMPOST FACILITY**

The Alameda County Waste Management Authority has prepared a draft EIR for proposed construction of a 40-acre compost facility along Andrade Road in the Sunol Valley. The compost facility would be located next to Sheridan Creek, a tributary of Alameda Creek, and nearby known populations of the California red-legged frog and the California tiger salamander. The EIR can be found on the ACWMA web site at [www.stopwaste.org/organics](http://www.stopwaste.org/organics). Written comments of the EIR can be submitted by November 18 to:

*Brian Matthews, Program Manager  
Alameda County Waste Management Authority  
777 Davis Street, Suite 100  
San Leandro, CA 94577  
(510) 614-1699*

### **CORRAL HOLLOW OFF ROAD VEHICLE PARK**

The CA Department of Parks and Recreation is preparing an EIR for a significant expansion of the Carnegie State Vehicle Recreation Area (CSVRA) in Corral Hollow, in the eastern Alameda Creek watershed, just south of Altamont Pass. The CSVRA is an off-road vehicle park that has serious impacts to numerous of federal and state listed species on the site including the CA red-legged frog, Alameda whipsnake, CA tiger salamander, western pond turtle, western burrowing owl, and foothill yellow-legged frog. Off-road vehicles at CSVRA kill and crush rare animal and plant species and cause indirect impacts such as excessive dust, erosion, sedimentation of aquatic habitats, noise, disruptive nighttime lighting, crushing of burrows and nests, toxic oil and gas spills, and interference with wildlife migration corridors. An expansion of off-road vehicle trails is proposed that will increase these impacts and will likely displace the tule elk herd that exists in Corral Hollow Canyon.

The ACA, Center for Biological Diversity, and other community groups are opposing the expansion and advocating protecting the expansion parcel as mitigation for impacts to wildlife at the current site. To get information about the proposed expansion and to comment, write to:

*Jennifer Buckingham  
OHMVR, State Parks Planning Division  
California Department of Parks and Recreation  
13300 White Rock Road  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95742-6700  
(916) 653-9901*

## **ZONE 7 STREAM MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Zone 7 Water Agency is planning for multiple fish passage barrier removals in Arroyo Mocho, Arroyo del Valle, and Arroyo de la Laguna as part of their Stream Management Master Plan (SMMP) projects in Livermore and Pleasanton. The SMMP proposes about a dozen restoration and enhancement projects which will remove or modify fish passage barriers, restore natural stream meander, plant riparian vegetation or replace non-native vegetation with native plants, create wetlands and other habitat for sensitive species, and install educational kiosks, and construct a trail along Alameda Creek from the confluence of Arroyo de la Laguna over two miles downstream into Niles Canyon to Stonybrook Creek.

Although there appear to be a few traditional flood control projects that involve hardening stream banks in already-altered stream reaches, most of the proposed flood protection and erosion control projects appear to be quite visionary and take environmental and habitat consideration into account. Zone 7 will be preparing an EIR for the SMMP. More information can be found at [www.zone7water.com/pdfs/Zone7\\_SMMP\\_NOP.pdf](http://www.zone7water.com/pdfs/Zone7_SMMP_NOP.pdf) and the initial comments of the ACA can be found on the ACA web site by clicking on "Fish Passage Projects" then "Arroyo Mocho."

## **ENDANGERED SPECIES**

### **CALIFORNIA TIGER SALAMANDER**

Your support is needed for state protection of the CA tiger salamander, an imperiled species which is found in the Livermore Valley and the Sunol Valley in the Alameda Creek watershed. The CA Fish & Game Commission rejected a petition submitted in 2001 by conservationists for emergency listing of the species under the state CA Endangered Species Act (CESA), despite the recommendation of 13 independent scientists and the CA Dept. Of Fish & Game for listing. The federal Fish and Wildlife Service listed the salamander under the federal ESA in 2003 and the Center for Biological Diversity re-petitioned for state listing in January 2004.

More information about the tiger salamander can be found on the CBD web site at [www.biologicaldiversity.org](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org) by clicking on "Species" then "CA Tiger Salamander."

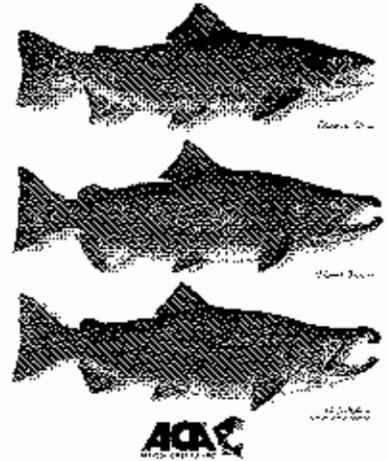
**STOP GOLDEN EAGLE AND BURROWING OWL  
KILLS AT ALTAMONT PASS WIND FARMS**

Wind turbines at Altamont Pass are killing extraordinary numbers of birds of prey, including golden eagles, burrowing owls, red-tailed hawks, kestrels, falcons, and other species. Turbines at Altamont kill an estimated 880 to 1,300 raptors each year in flagrant violation of federal and state wildlife protection laws. Conservation and renewable energy groups have appealed Alameda County's approval of 29 permits for wind turbines at Altamont Pass because the County failed to conduct an environmental review. The County permits have no conditions requiring reduction of bird kills or compensation for bird deaths and require no scientifically valid monitoring to determine whether proposed mitigation measures actually will work to reduce bird kills. The County has failed to retire a single lethal turbine in 20 years of operation and rewarded lawbreaking wind power companies with indefinite or 20 year permit renewals.

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors will hear the appeal of the permits on **November 4 at 9 am, at the Board Chambers, 1221 Oak Street, Room 512, 5th Floor, in Oakland.** Please plan on attending the hearing or write to your Alameda County Supervisor and request that they grant the appeal, revoke the existing Conditional Use Permits, and conduct a full environmental review under the CA Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for all wind turbines permit approvals. For more information about the bird kill issue visit the Center for Biological Diversity web site at [www.biologicaldiversity.org/swcbd](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/swcbd) and click on "Programs/Regions" then "Biological Diversity & Endangered Species."

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*Three Reasons to Save  
and Restore Alameda Creek*



**Support the Alameda Creek Alliance  
Help restore Alameda Creek  
Free t-shirt with membership of \$20 or more**

**ACA Membership Form**

Yes, I would like to become a member of the Alameda Creek Alliance and receive the newsletter Up Your Creek! Enclosed is \$15 or more for a one year membership. Membership of \$25 or more receives ACA t-shirt (please specify size). Checks payable to Alameda Creek Alliance.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- \$15 Fry     \$25 Parr     \$50 Smolt
  - \$100 Spawner     Send me a free bumpersticker
- Mail to: Alameda Creek Alliance, P. O. Box 192, Canyon, CA 94516  
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