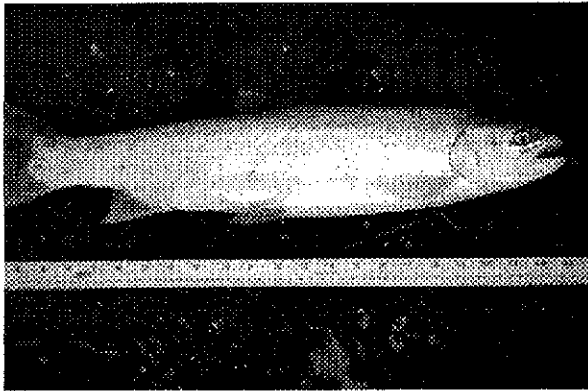


UP YOUR CREEK!!

ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

Issue 2 • January 1998

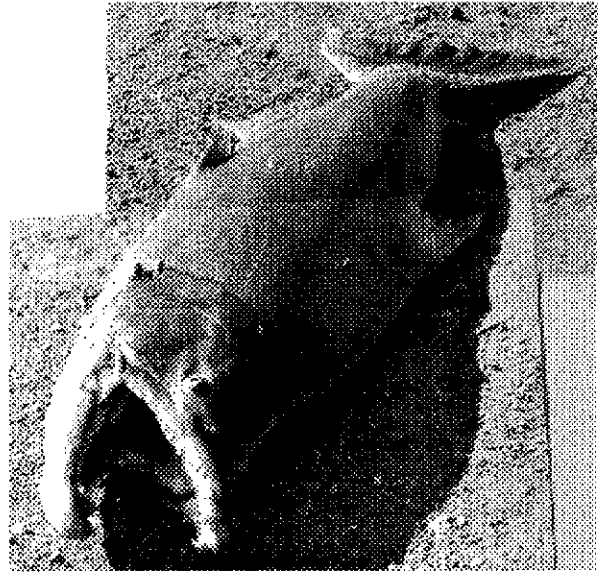
—STEELHEAD FOUND DYING IN CREEK—



An eleven year old Fremont boy found a dying steelhead trout in the Alameda Creek flood control channel near DeCoto Road on December 11th. The 23 inch, 4+ pound steelhead was stranded in a drying puddle of water after ACWD inflatable dams in the channel had been raised, de-watering the creek. "The steelhead was in pretty bad shape" said Mike Forney, a neighbor on the creek, and a member of the Alameda Creek Alliance. "It was in shallow water with the dorsal fin and half of its back exposed." An attempt was made to rescue the fish by putting it in a trash can full of river water, but the fish died. A fisheries biologist confirmed that the it was an adult steelhead, recently listed as a federally threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Photos were taken for documentation, and a fin clip was sent to Hopkins Marine Lab for genetic tests which may reveal information about its origin.

This documentation of fish attempting to return to spawn in habitat further upstream may eventually involve the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the federal agency responsible for listing of threatened and endangered marine species, in the management of the creek. NMFS rules and regulations on steelhead and critical habitat designations are expected to be published in February of 1998.

—KING SALMON RETURNS—



On November 28th, Fremont resident Ken Elliot went down to the channel near the B.A.R.T. tracks to check Alameda Creek for fish. While watching a heron through his binoculars, he saw a salmon jump. He then watched it attempt unsuccessfully to ascend the concrete weir below the tracks. The middle ACWD dam was being inflated, but water was still pouring over and running down the center of the channel. He went home to get his camera, and by time he returned, the water flow had been cut off and the fish lay dead on dry concrete. Ken took some good photos of the 32-36", 20+ lb. fish dead in the channel and being removed by an ACWD employee.



The fish was taken to East Bay Regional Parks employees, and identified as a King Salmon. Fin clips from this fish and another King salmon found dead in the channel on Dec. 12th are also being analyzed. Color photos of these fish can be seen on our new web site (see below).

—————MONITORING THE CREEK—————

We should be checking the creek during and after storms. The weir below the tracks is probably the best place to see fish at high flows. After storms, we should check the channel below the two lower inflatable dams for stranded fish. The steelhead was found over a mile below the lowest dam, near DeCoto Road, three days after the last rain. Bring your binoculars and camera with you.



—————IF YOU SEE FISH—————

If you see large fish in the creek, try to get photos or video documentation and send a written statement of what you saw to the Alliance. If the fish are alive or dead, please call 376-0518 and call Pete Alexander at 635-0138 x2350. If you're sure it's a steelhead, you may want to also call Margaret Roper of Fish and Game at (408)842-8917.

If it's a fish emergency - fish trapped in a pool, soon to expire, or flinging themselves to exhaustion on the weir, you can page Pete at 702-6423. If you can't get Pete or time is critical, do what your conscience dictates.

—————NEXT ALLIANCE MEETING—————

Tuesday, JANUARY 6th, 7-9 PM
Centerville Public Library
3101 Nicolet Avenue in Fremont

Directions: From Hwy. 880 take DeCoto Road exit. Go East on DeCoto. Turn right on Fremont Blvd., turn left on Nicolet.

Things are happening fast on the creek! This meeting is an opportunity to strategize for next year and divide up work that needs to get done. Representatives from ACWD and SFWD may be present. Bring completed petitions to this meeting.

—————WHO ARE WE?—————

The Alameda Creek Alliance is a community watershed group dedicated to preserving and restoring the natural ecosystems of the Alameda Creek drainage basin. We are primarily concerned with protecting and improving habitat for local species that are native to the area. Threatened and endangered species are our first priority.

Our initial efforts will be to help restore runs of steelhead trout and salmon attempting to ascend the creek to spawn. Our goal is to ensure self-sustaining runs of these fish. We will work to remove or modify barriers to fish migration and to supply adequate water flows for spawning, rearing and out-migration of juvenile smolts to the bay.

Once these issues are resolved, we will work to restore and enhance fish habitat, improve water quality and prevent the habitat loss and degradation caused by development, grazing and channelization of streams.

The Alliance is open to anyone committed to the above goals. Participation in the Alliance is on an individual level, not as a representative of any agency, business or political group.

We will work with government and private agencies interested in supporting our goals. We

will monitor the public agencies involved in management of the creek to ensure that they comply with existing environmental laws and protect the public trust, by providing for protection of fish and wildlife.

We are an independent community group. Meetings are publicly announced, accessible and democratically run. We respect diversity of opinion and approaches, and will work through education, publicity, advocacy, public pressure, volunteer work and direct action.

Contact the Alameda Creek Alliance at:

P.O. Box 192

Canyon, CA 94516

(510) 376-0518

e-mail: alamedaCreek@formulate.co

<http://www.formulate.com/alamedaCreek>

MEDIA COVERAGE

- Contra Costa Times - running a story this week
- San Jose Mercury News - 12/2/97 page B-1
- Tri-Valley Herald - date unknown
- Oakland Tribune - date unknown
- Livermore Independent - date unknown
- San Ramon Times - date unknown
- Fremont Argus - 12/14/97 page C-4, with photo
- S.F. Chronicle - 12/13/97 page A-19 - and 12/26/97 page A-27

If you know of other media coverage, or have copies of the stories listed "date unknown", please send them to us.

OUR NEW WEB SITE

Yes, believe it or not, we have a web site at:

<http://www.formulate.com/alamedaCreek>

This was initially designed so the media could pull high resolution color photos of the fish off it. We will also post historical photos and information about the creek, press releases, watershed maps and addresses of people to write letters to. Thanks to Chris Burmester for his excellent job designing the site.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Are you interested in researching historical runs of salmon and steelhead on the creek? A history of the creek could be a valuable educational tool and a way to get people interested in restoration. Sources could include newspaper articles, photos and stories from historical societies, libraries, private collections, Fish and Game files and personal stories and anecdotes from "old-timers".

There is also some interest in putting together a slide show about Alameda Creek. We need slides that show the creek, the dams, and local flora and fauna.

Also, if you have art work to donate for the newsletter, please send it in.

HABITAT SURVEYS

Maya Khosla will be working this spring to do steelhead habitat assessments in and above Niles Canyon. If you are interested in participating, please talk to Maya at the January meeting.

MONEY

We need donations for printing, mailing and phone costs. We will be opening a bank account for the Alliance and setting up non-profit status for ourselves in 1998, but until then donations are not tax deductible. Checks can be made out to the Alameda Creek Alliance.. Thank you to the Southern Alameda Chapter of the Sierra Club for their donation for printing costs.

Jeff Miller has applied for a grant from California Department of Fish and Game for 1998 with the intent of opening an office and funding our non-profit group. State money is available for local watershed organization support and assistance for groups working on coastal salmon and steelhead restoration.

Alameda Creek Alliance
P.O. Box 192
Canyon, CA 94516



Up Your Creek!! ACA Newsletter #2