

## GRAZING LAWSUIT

The Alameda Creek Alliance has joined in a lawsuit challenging the lack of public input and environmental review for cattle grazing on East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD) lands. The suit was filed on October 2 by the Southwest Center for Biological Diversity and ACA. The EBRPD has improperly declared their grazing program exempt from environmental review under CEQA (the California Environmental Quality Act).

EBRPD grazes 50,000 of the 88,000 acres of public land they manage, with serious impacts on endangered species, native plants, water quality and aesthetic values in the parks. The lawsuit asks for environmental review (preparation of an Environmental Impact Report) of 11 grazing leases in 10 parks, including Del Valle Regional Park in the Alameda Creek watershed. Sunol and Ohlone Wildernesses are also heavily grazed, causing potential impacts to water quality and riparian habitat for fish in Alameda Creek. The Alliance joined in the lawsuit to secure the ability to comment on the impacts to potential steelhead habitat.

Overgrazing damages fish habitat by eliminating native vegetation, compacting the soil, and eroding stream banks. This adds silt and sediment to the creeks, increases stream temperatures, and causes watercourses which once ran year-round to dry up in the summer. Overgrazing in the parks has also led to the loss of native oak woodlands and created conditions which favor the spread of invasive, non-native plants.

Grazing also impacts the California Red-legged Frog and the Alameda Whipsnake, two federally threatened species found in the Alameda Creek watershed.

### **EMERGENCY MEETING** **TO DISCUSS THE ALLIANCE'S** **PARTICIPATION IN THIS LAWSUIT**

**Tuesday, October 20th, 7PM**  
Centerville Public Library  
3101 Nicolet Avenue in Fremont

## NEXT ALLIANCE MEETING

**Tuesday, October 27th, 7-9 PM**  
Centerville Public Library  
3101 Nicolet Avenue in Fremont

**Directions:** From Hwy. 880, take DeCoto Road east. Right on Fremont Blvd., left on Nicolet.

**Josh Milstein**, representing the City of San Francisco, will be at the October meeting to answer questions about the San Francisco Water Department's proposed recapture facility in the Sunol Valley (see below). Josh also has a historic slide show about the **Spring Valley Water Company**, predecessor to the SFWD. **Roger Castillo**, from Silichip Chinook will talk about the successes their group has had in restoring king salmon and steelhead to the **Guadalupe River** in San Jose.

The Alliance meets the last Tuesday of each month. Upcoming meetings:

**Tuesday, November 24th**  
**Tuesday, December 29th**

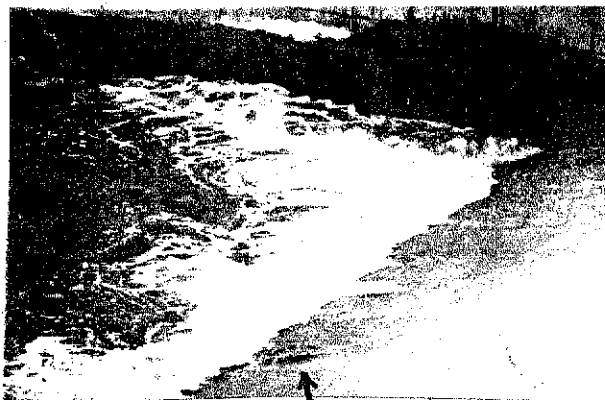
## S.F. WATER DEPARTMENT

As part of an agreement with CalTrout and the California Department of Fish and Game, SFWD will be making limited water releases from Calaveras Reservoir to benefit instream habitat for rainbow trout and other native non-game fishes. Unfortunately, SFWD wants to recapture this water rather than allow it to flow to the bay for the benefit of migratory fish. They plan to build yet another inflatable rubber dam in the upper Sunol Valley to recapture this water. The Alliance has sent a letter voicing concerns about this structure being passable for both upstream and downstream migration. See Jeff for a copy of the letter.

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Contact us at:  
**Alameda Creek Alliance**  
P.O. Box 192  
Canyon, CA 94516  
(510) 845-4675

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

## FISH RESCUE



**steelhead attempting to pass B.A.R.T. weir**

We will again attempt to rescue and move any salmon or steelhead trapped below the weir this winter. King salmon were spotted the last two years within a day of Thanksgiving, and steelhead can show up anytime from December through March. Please go by the weir this winter and check for fish. Another good place to check is below the rubber dams in the flood control channel, when they are inflated.



**ACA volunteers with seine net, March 1998**

EBRPD fisheries biologist: (510) 482-6030  
pager: (510) 702-6423

To activate the ACA phone tree:  
Jeff Miller at (510) 845-4675 or  
Kyra Lee at (510) 535-9206

## PHONE TREE

If you did not receive a phone call about the September meeting, you likely are not on our phone tree. We use the phone tree to activate people for fish rescue and to contact you when there is not time for a mailing. If you would like to be added to or removed from the phone tree, contact Jeff at (510) 845-4675

## WATER QUALITY MONITORING

Volunteers have begun basic water quality monitoring in several areas of the Alameda Creek watershed. The Alameda County Clean Water Program has trained volunteers and is providing kits for water quality tests. The Alliance will be purchasing one of these kits for general use. If you are interested in being involved, or know of a school or other group that would like to set up a monitoring program, call the contact in your area.

### Lower Alameda Creek

Larry Dennis: (510) 471-6040

### Amador Valley

Derrell Bridgman: (925) 846-4898

### Sunol

Joanne Dean-Freemire: (925) 862-9018

## GRANT MONEY

The Alliance has received two grants to help with habitat assessment surveys in the upper creek and to prepare a plan for a restoration project (fish ladders) in the flood control channel. We received a grant from the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission earlier this year and a Community Stewardship Grant from the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program.

## ACA MISSION STATEMENT

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.

...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.

# **BAY AREA SALMON NEWS**

## **GAZOS CREEK**

### ***San Mateo County Trashes Coho***

A private contractor working for the County of San Mateo to clean out creek channels after last year's storms destroyed over three miles of prime coho salmon habitat in one of the south coast's best salmon streams. Working without a permit, crews drove bulldozers in the creek bed, removed large woody debris, destroyed deep pools, and clear-cut riparian vegetation in Gazos Creek. The "environmental mugging", as locals refer to it, occurred in late May. Additionally, the crews illegally entered and logged private land belonging to The Sempervirens Fund and The Peninsular Open Space Land Trust, and the county sold the logs for profit.

The work was supposed to protect a road adjacent to the creek from erosion, though ironically, only one erosion site which was "improved" was as a result of streambed erosion. Most of the erosion sites were due to poor culvert placement and road contouring, and none of the work done stabilized any of these sites, nor made them less prone to flooding! Juvenile coho and steelhead were present in the pools when they were bulldozed, and many were presumed to have been killed. The clear cutting of the stream banks has caused increased stream temperatures and added to erosion problems.

The EPA has issued a mandatory cleanup and restoration order for the county, which includes re-anchoring large woody debris in the creek for fish habitat. Unfortunately, similar destruction was done by the same contractor in several adjacent streams, with "proper" permits from the California Department of Fish and Game. Environmentalists are demanding that the county send a fisheries biologist out with cleanup crews for any future work done in salmon streams.

*Contact: Coastside Habitat Coalition at (650)726-2499*

## **LOS GATOS CREEK**

### ***Barriers To Salmon Removed***

In early October, construction crews tore concrete slabs out of Los Gatos Creek to help migrating salmon make it upstream to spawn. The project is part of the Santa Clara Valley Water District's new approach to managing the creeks for fish and wildlife as well as flood control.

## **LAGUNITAS CREEK**

### ***Roy's Dam To Become Roy's Pools***

Work was begun on October 10th to modify Roy's dam on San Geronimo Creek, which has been a barrier for coho salmon. With a grant secured by Trout Unlimited, and heavy equipment and crews donated by local contractors, work was started to lower the face of the dam, to remove an eroding concrete apron below the dam, and to repair an existing fish ladder. Large boulders will be placed in the creek to create a series of jump pools which the salmon can negotiate at any flow.

*Contact: SPAWN at (415)488-1090*

## **BAY DELTA**

### ***CalFed Proposals A Disaster For Fish***

The state and federal process for a "final solution" for the environmentally devastated delta ecosystem lumbers on. CalFed has been holding public hearings around the state, and the public input has been overwhelmingly in support of water conservation and against construction of new dams. Unfortunately, CalFed's leading choices all include more concrete, more water diversions, and even a new attempt to build another peripheral canal. Under the smoke screen of several million dollars of well-publicized restoration money and environmentally friendly rhetoric, CalFed is proposing the same sorts of projects which have led to the collapse of salmon fisheries in the Sacramento and San Joaquin river systems.

*Contact: Jenna Olsen of the Sierra Club at (415)977-5728*

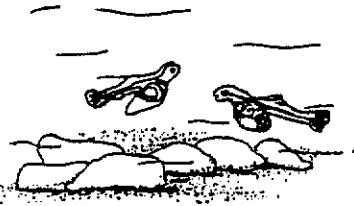
## **GUADALUPE RIVER**

### ***A Win For The Fish***

As a result of a threatened lawsuit by environmentalists, a proposed flood control project through downtown San Jose has been altered to protect fish habitat. The Guadalupe River has had annual runs of up to 1,000 spawning king salmon and about half that number of steelhead trout in recent years. The proposed plan involved ripping out riparian vegetation and installing a traditional hardened flood control channel. Instead, the new project will install two enormous underground culverts to handle flood runoff, and leave the stream channel intact. Additionally, the Santa Clara Valley Water District has removed two concrete barriers from the channel that were obstacles for fish.

# Life Cycle of Salmon and Steelhead Trout

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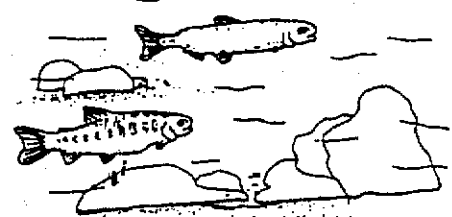


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The female digs a series of shallow nests and lays her eggs. After the male fertilizes them, the female covers the eggs with gravel. The eggs hatch in seven to eight weeks.



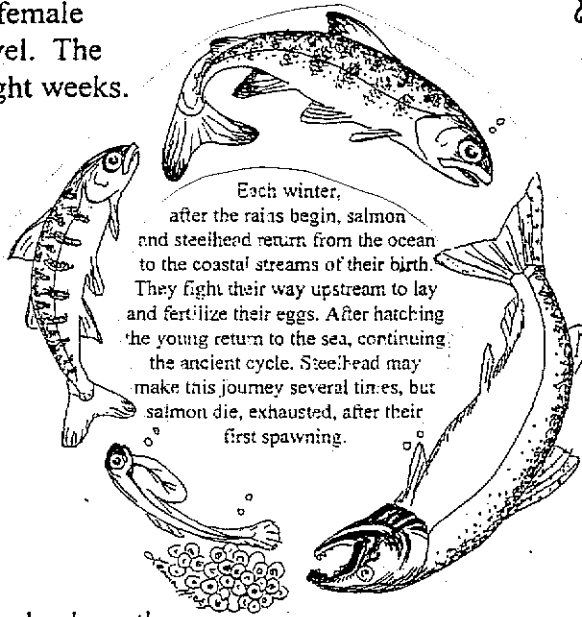
After hatching, the alevin remain under the gravel for several weeks, living off their leftover yolk. When the yolk is gone, they wiggle up through the gravel as fry.



3

Trout and salmon fry spend one to three years in their streams, eating small prey and being eaten by birds, snakes and larger fishes. The spots and oval parr marks help them blend into the environment. Only one in ten survives to enter the ocean.

Each winter, after the rains begin, salmon and steelhead return from the ocean to the coastal streams of their birth. They fight their way upstream to lay and fertilize their eggs. After hatching the young return to the sea, continuing the ancient cycle. Steelhead may make this journey several times, but salmon die, exhausted, after their first spawning.



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As salmon make their way back up the streams, they undergo another transformation. Their color changes, and the male grow hooked jaws, some fanglike teeth.

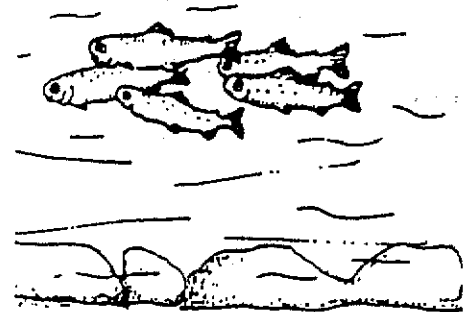


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Once at sea, the fishes may travel thousands of miles. After two to three year they head home to spawn, guided by magnetic clues and the unique scent of their home streams.

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As the fishes migrate to the ocean, their gills and kidneys change to adapt for survival in salt water. They also change colors, for better camouflage in the ocean.



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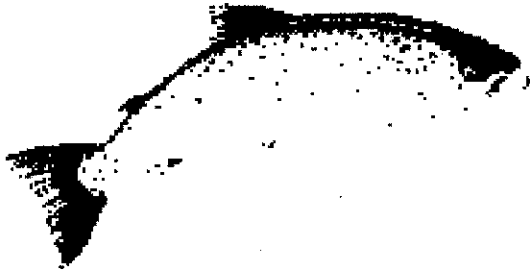
# **EMERGENCY MEETING**

To discuss the Alliance's participation  
in the EBRPD grazing lawsuit

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20TH, 7 PM**  
**CENTERVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY, FREMONT**

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



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Up Your Creek!! ACA Newsletter #4