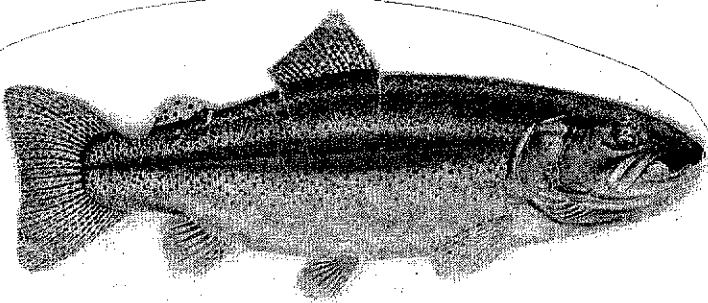


# UP YOUR CREEK!

ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

Issue 7 • September 1999



## NEXT ALLIANCE MEETING

Tuesday, September 21, 7-9 PM  
Centerville Public Library  
3101 Nicolet Avenue in Fremont

Directions: From DeCoto Rd. (Hwy. 84) take  
Fremont Blvd. south, turn left on Nicolet.

## LAST FREE ISSUE

## PLEASE BECOME A MEMBER

This is the last complimentary issue of Up Your Creek! If you would like to continue to receive this newsletter and support the Alameda Creek Alliance, please become a member. A membership form is included inside.

## PHONE TREE

If you did not receive a phone call about the August meeting, you are not on our phone tree. The phone tree will be used to contact you for fish rescues and to notify you about Alameda Creek Alliance events. Please contact us with your phone number and e-mail address. We will try to contact most people by e-mail in the future.

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Alameda Creek Alliance

P.O. Box 192

Canyon, CA 94516

(510) 845-4675

e-mail: [alamedacreek@hotmail.com](mailto:alamedacreek@hotmail.com)

web site: <http://www.formulate.com/alamedacreek>  
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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **SEPT. 25 - ALAMEDA CREEK CLEANUP**

East Bay Regional Parks and Alameda County Water District are sponsoring a trash cleanup in Niles Canyon on **Saturday, September 25, 8:30 AM to Noon**. Meet at the Alameda Creek Staging Area on Old Canyon Road near Niles Canyon Road. Tools, garbage bags, lunch, and beverages will be provided. Please RSVP to Jamie Perkins of EBRPD at (510) 544-2631 to sign up for this event. Alameda County Clean Water Program and Alameda Creek Alliance volunteers are planning to focus cleanup efforts on Stonybrook Creek, a tributary to Alameda Creek in Niles Canyon. Stella the Steelhead migrated 1 mile up this tributary in March, and may have spawned there with native trout. There are hundreds of native trout/steelhead fry in this creek!

### **OCT. 2 - PARK DISTRICT FORUM**

The East Bay Regional Parks will hold a forum to promote the resurrection of Proposition W, the parks bond initiative. The forum will be an opportunity to air comments and concerns about their management of the parks, including grazing issues. Contact Jeff for time and location.

### **OCT. 3 - SUNOL BED RACES**

Join us at the Great Sunol Bed Race and Chili Cook-off on **Sunday, October 3** in Sunol. The Alameda Creek Alliance will field a team in the bed race. We will be pushing a "spawning bed" on wheels, with a person in a fish costume riding on the bed. This will be a fun way to educate people about the creek. Bed races start at noon, but come earlier for booths and chili. We need two more bed-racers, and also someone to staff an information table.

### **OCT. 26 - ALLIANCE MEETING**

We do not yet have a meeting location for our October meeting, as our usual location is unavailable that month. If you have a meeting space available, please contact Jeff. The meeting will be **Tuesday, October 26, 7-9 PM**

## Good-bye Arroyo, Hello Concrete?

The Zone 7 Water Agency has asked the Army Corps to study flooding along the Arroyo de la Laguna, and decide whether federal money will be used to protect developments along the creek. Representative Ellen Tauscher announced in August that Congress has approved \$100,000 and directed ACE to begin.

The type of flood control project adopted by ACE could have significant impacts on fish restoration efforts. The Arroyo de la Laguna area of the Alameda Creek watershed is generally more degraded than Alameda Creek, with many stream sections already channelized, de-vegetated, or lined with rip rap. Because of channelization and rampant development (adding many miles of impervious surfaces), storm flows now run down the creek at accelerated velocities, causing flooding in western Pleasanton and severe erosion in the Arroyo from Bernal Avenue downstream.

The congressional authorization appears to be for a flood control study rather than a combined flood control/environmental restoration project. Unless this is amended, the study will focus only on economically efficient flood control alternatives, and leave out any possibility of restoration for fish and other creek-dependent species.

The last ACE flood control project in the Alameda Creek watershed was a complete disaster for migratory fish and destroyed 12 miles of riparian habitat. Let us not repeat the mistakes of the past, and have to spend years fighting to restore our creek, as we are doing in lower Alameda Creek.

We need to speak up now and advocate for a stream/flood plain management plan which takes a more ecological approach while also providing flood control. The two goals are not incompatible. It is possible to provide flood protection and not nuke fish habitat! Of course, the kinds of cancerous development currently allowed along the stream corridor would have to end, as would building in the flood plain. If Napa can do it, so can Pleasanton.

Write to Rep. Tauscher and Zone 7. Urge them to amend the authorization to include environmental restoration, and to come up with alternatives other than widening or channelizing the Arroyo.

**Representative Ellen Tauscher**  
1801 N. California Blvd., Suite 103  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

**Zone 7 Water Agency**  
5997 Parkside Drive  
Pleasanton, CA 94588

## FISH LADDER NEWS

The Alameda County Flood Control District (ACFCD) has contracted with the consulting firm Applied Marine Sciences to conduct a feasibility study for fish passage past the ACFCD drop structure below the BART tracks, to look at the overall potential for steelhead restoration in the watershed, and to prepare a project description to submit to the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) for a lower Alameda Creek restoration project.

The Coastal Conservancy is expected to co-fund the costs of this study, which is scheduled to be completed by March, in time to meet an ACE deadline for restoration grant proposals. The study will attempt to answer issues that were left unresolved from the 1989 Steelhead Assessment.

The study will identify existing steelhead spawning and rearing habitat, identify areas with restoration potential, and identify barriers to migration. It will also attempt to: 1) quantify the restoration potential of the watershed, 2) identify the management and operating implications of a restored steelhead fishery for participating agencies, 3) describe the facilities to be built and the operators of these facilities, and 4) provide any other information or analysis requested by potential sponsoring agencies.

Barring any surprises in the study, ACFCD is expected to agree to be a local sponsoring agency for the ACE restoration project. This would mean that the earliest date of construction for a fish ladder and other restoration work would be 2 years from April, 2000. The Alameda County Water District (ACWD) has not yet committed to be a local sponsoring agency, and is adopting a wait-and-see attitude until the feasibility study is published. The Alliance plans to hold ACWD accountable for fish passage past their inflatable dams whether or not they commit to the ACE restoration project.

The scope of work being done by Applied Marine Sciences can be viewed at their web site at: <http://www.amarine.com/>.

**The next Alameda Creek Fishery Restoration Workgroup Meeting will be at 10 AM, Tuesday, October 26, at 951 Turner Court in Hayward.** Call Jeff for directions or more specific information.

## FISH RESCUE

Yes, we will be doing fish rescue at the ACFCD drop structure again this fall and winter. Please make sure you are on our phone tree to be alerted. Also, we will try to have someone monitoring the drop structure every day during rainy season. Please contact us if you can regularly check for stranded fish this winter. Chinook salmon have been seen the past three years within one day of Thanksgiving, so that is a good time to survey if there are storms.

## FREMONT STEELHEAD FESTIVAL

Fremont... a Steelhead Festival...why not? Let's celebrate the miracle of wild steelhead returning to over-developed Fremont, and create awareness of the watershed and its restoration potential.

We'd like to get the City of Fremont and local flyfishing groups to help us sponsor an event next April, along Alameda Creek, to promote watershed awareness and fish restoration. The event could have environmental information booths, a fish-fry, lessons in flycasting and fly-tying, etc., bringing together people who like to eat, catch, and restore fish. Also planned is a 10K Spawning Run along Alameda Creek, with prizes for the runners with the best fish costumes, and Alameda Creek Alliance/Spawning Run T-shirts for participants.

If you can help to promote or sponsor this event, or have ideas or energy, please contact us. We need someone with experience to organize the 10K run, and we need T-shirts made up. Please write to the **Fremont City Council, 39700 Civic Center Drive, Fremont, CA 94538**, and encourage them to sponsor this event.

## HABITAT SURVEYS

The Alliance still plans to conduct steelhead habitat surveys along Alameda Creek and small tributaries in Niles Canyon and the Sunol Valley. We've had a lot of interest from volunteers, but are still waiting to get an encroachment permit from the San Francisco Water Department to conduct the surveys on watershed (public) land. We've been waiting 16 months for this permit! Please call **Joe Naras, Acting Watershed Manger, at (650) 872-5933**, or write him at **SFPUC, P.O. Box 730, Millbrae, CA, 94030**, and tell him it is in the public interest to allow these surveys of public resources on public land.

## DIAZINON POLLUTION

In May the Environmental Protection Agency listed portions of San Francisco Bay and numerous streams as "impaired" waterways due to high levels of pollutants. The list includes 35 Bay Area creeks affected by the pesticide diazinon, including Alameda Creek, Arroyo de la Laguna, Arroyo Del Valle, and Arroyo Hondo.

High levels of diazinon can be lethal to fish and even low levels can kill invertebrates, depriving fish of their food base. Diazinon in Alameda Creek likely comes from both household and industrial use of pesticides which are washed into the creek. Vineyards in Livermore/Pleasanton and nurseries on leased San Francisco watershed land in the Sunol Valley likely contribute much of these toxins.

## HELP...WEB SITE...STAGNANT

If you've visited our web site lately, you've noticed that it has become a cob-web site. We've gotten 6400 hits, but few people are getting up-to-date information. We need a dedicated computer geek to update our site several times each year. Please contact us if you can help.

## 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.

# EDITORIALS

## Steelhead Lawsuit

The Alameda Creek Alliance, which seeks to restore steelhead trout to Alameda Creek, has joined seven other organizations in a lawsuit aimed at strengthening the federal government's protection of the fish.

Jeff Miller of the Alliance observes that although the government has placed steelhead restrictions on fishermen, the real problem involves dams, water diversions and habitat destruction. Without regulations that address those matters, steelhead are doomed both here and in all other creeks and rivers where they've traditionally run.

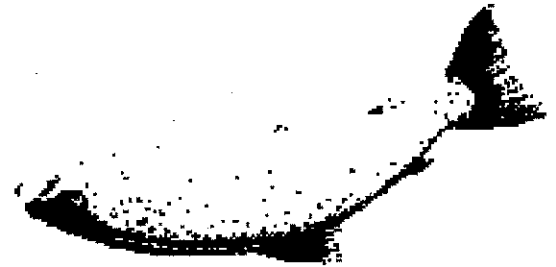
We want to express our support for this lawsuit. It is an important action.

Alameda Creek, which drops down from the mountains and passes through Sunol and Niles Canyon on its way to the bay, was once abundant with steelhead trout. Their restoration would be significant not only for the fish themselves, but also as a signpost that civilization can overcome its environmental mistakes. That would be a wonderful way to help open the 21st century.



ACA Newsletter #7

Up Your Creek!

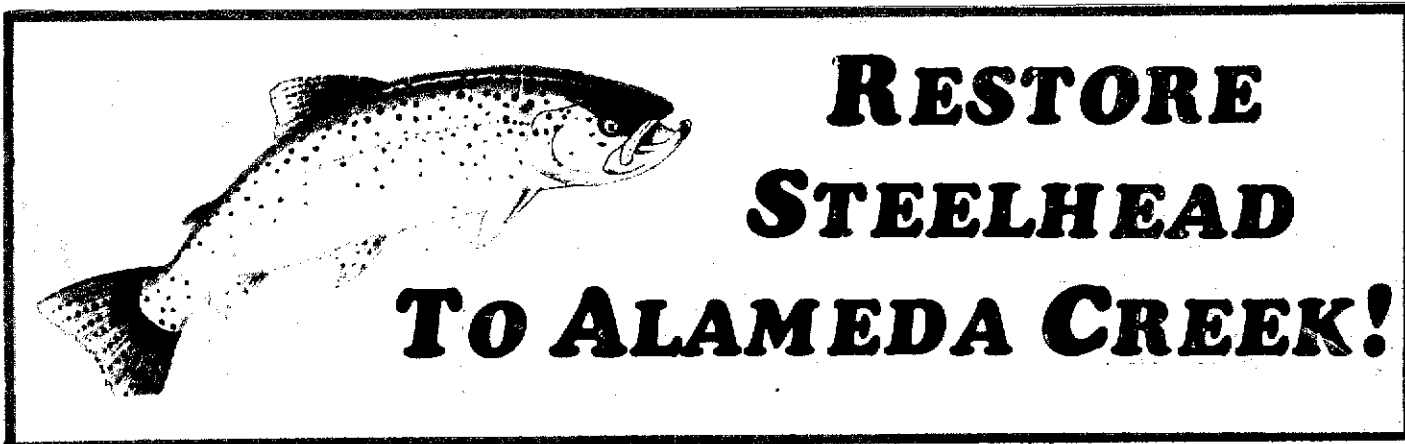


Alameda Creek Alliance  
P.O. Box 192  
Canyon, CA 94516

LAST COMPLIMENTARY ISSUE

MEMBERSHIP FORM INSIDE

**Please support the Alameda Creek Alliance**  
Members will receive our quarterly newsletter, **Up Your Creek!**  
We will also send you this bumpersticker:



Your support will ensure that we can continue to speak up for the interests of native fish and wildlife in the Alameda Creek watershed. In the past two years we have:

- documented the return of wild, native steelhead to Alameda Creek
- rescued migrating steelhead trapped below barriers in the lower creek
- reintroduced steelhead fry raised from rescued eggs into upper Alameda Creek
- generated over 40 articles in local and regional newspapers about steelhead restoration
- successfully lobbied the Flood Control District to study the feasibility of providing fish passage at the Fremont drop structure

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### **ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE 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. Please make checks payable to Alameda Creek Alliance.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\$15 Fry

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\$25 Parr

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

\$50 Smolt

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\$100 Spawner

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

Send me a cool bumpersticker

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