

DAMN DAMS TO BE REMOVED



Niles Dam

SFPUC WILL REMOVE OR MODIFY DAMS IN NILES CANYON

On March 13 The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) announced plans to remove or modify Sunol and Niles Dams in Niles Canyon to benefit future runs of steelhead trout in Alameda Creek. The SFPUC announcement followed the publication of a report by the Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup, which concluded steelhead can successfully be restored to Alameda Creek if barriers to migration are overcome. The report identified 18 potential barriers (most are fairly small structures) that prevent steelhead from reaching historic spawning grounds, including three dams owned by SFPUC.

The 12 foot Sunol dam, just downstream of the town of Sunol, was built in 1901 and the 4 foot Niles Dam, one mile upstream of Mission Blvd., was built in 1886. Both dams were built with fish ladders that no longer function. The decommissioned dams were inherited by SFPUC from the Spring Valley Water Company.

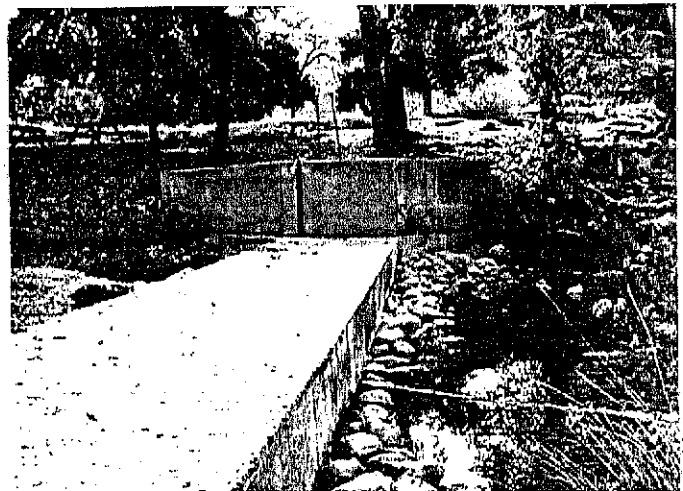
Constructing new fish ladders at the dams would likely prove as costly as removal, and the SFPUC considers both structures to be safety liabilities. No time line has been set for removal, but the SFPUC has begun to search for funding and an environmental review will be initiated. One potential issue is how to deal with the silt which has backed up behind Sunol Dam and whether removing it will impact the stability of the streambanks. The SFPUC has also

raised the possibility that both dams may qualify as historic structures. How about re-assembling the dams outside of the creek channel as a monument to human folly and shortsightedness?

The Alameda Creek Alliance has proposed removal of the SFPUC owned Alameda Diversion Dam in upper Alameda Creek. The Fisheries Workgroup Report noted that the most promising steelhead habitat in the entire watershed is above this dam, providing fish can negotiate the steep boulders of Little Yosemite. The Diversion Dam diverts water from above Little Yosemite through a tunnel under Oak Ridge to Calaveras Reservoir. The 12,000 acre-feet of water diverted annually by the Diversion Dam can be made up by raising the storage capacity of Calaveras Reservoir.

EAST BAY PARKS TO REMOVE SUNOL SWIM DAMS

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) will remove two small concrete swim dams from Alameda Creek in Sunol Regional Wilderness this summer. Removal of the 3 foot structures will allow EBRPD to stabilize the streambanks and replant native riparian vegetation. The project will provide cooler water temperatures, improve habitat, and improve conditions for migration of native rainbow trout - and eventually steelhead and salmon. The Alameda Creek Alliance donated \$100 to EBRPD as part of a challenge grant for the project.



Sunol Lower Swim Dam View of Creek Access

ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE
MEETINGS

Tuesday, April 25, 6:30pm

This meeting will be moved to EBRPD Headquarters to attend the public forum on cattle grazing in our parks. See the article below for information.

Tuesday, May 30, 7-9pm

We will meet at our usual location at the Math/Science Nucleus, 4074 Eggers Drive (at Fremont Blvd.) in Fremont. Call (510) 845-4675 for directions.

CATTLE GRAZING FORUM

Tuesday, April 25, 6:30pm

EBRPD Headquarters

2950 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) has formed a Grazing Task Force to assess EBRPD cattle grazing policy on our public parklands. The first meeting of the Task Force will be to take public comment and input regarding the grazing issue. Please come to this meeting and speak out in favor of removing cattle from our parks! The forum will likely go for several hours, so please come at any time after 6:30. Call (510) 845-4675 for directions.

FREMONT STEELHEAD FESTIVAL

Saturday, May 13, 10am - 3pm

Niles Community Park

3rd & "G" Streets in Fremont's Niles District

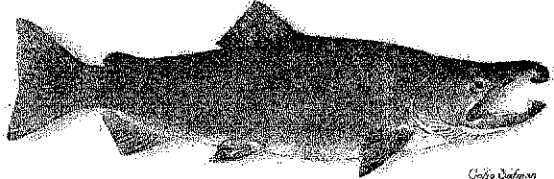
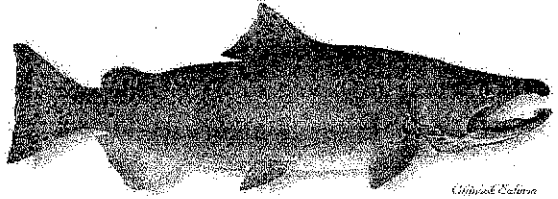
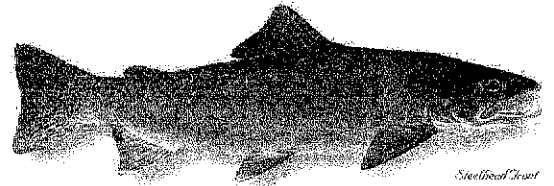
Attend the first annual Fremont Steelhead Festival and Watershed Awareness Fair. There will be information about Alameda Creek steelhead recovery efforts and educational booths hosted by numerous Bay Area creek restoration, conservation, and fishing groups. There will also be fly-casting and fly-tying lessons, activities for kids, food, and music. We need volunteers to post flyers and promote the festival, and to help run the event on May 13.

Come early to participate in the Alameda Creek Spawning Run. There will be 10 kilometer and 5 kilometer run/walk events along Alameda Creek starting at 9am on the day of the festival. \$20 entry fee before May 6 or \$25 registration on race day. Write to Alameda Creek Spawning Run, P. O. Box 192, Canyon, CA 94516 for a race registration form.

MAKE A REAL FASHION STATEMENT

Beautiful tri-colored T-shirts (see the design below) are now available for \$20. Thank you to Maestas Design for design work and printing. Available at ACA meetings and events or see the ordering information at the bottom of this page.

*Three Reasons to Save
and Restore Alameda Creek*



FEASIBILITY STUDY

Copies of the feasibility report commissioned by the Alameda Creek Fishery Restoration Workgroup are available at cost. This study has the most up to date biological and technical information regarding the steps necessary to restore anadromous fish to Alameda Creek. This is highly recommended reading for understanding the issues we face in trying to recover steelhead and salmon runs. See below for ordering information. The study can be viewed on-line at the Applied Marine Sciences web site:

www.amarine.com/information/information.html

ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE TRINKETS

T-shirt (specify size)	\$23 (\$20 each + \$3 postage)
Bumper sticker	\$2 (includes postage)
Feasibility Study	\$7 (\$5 each + \$2 postage)

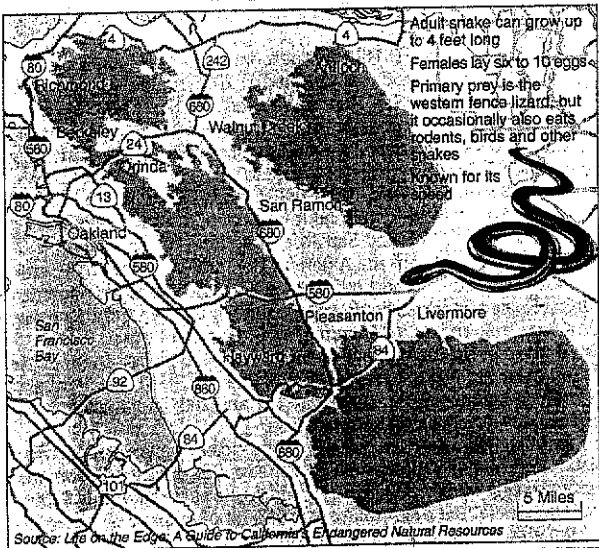
Make checks payable to **Alameda Creek Alliance**

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

SAVE THE ALAMEDA WHIPSNAKE

Please send in the enclosed post card to help save a threatened East Bay species. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has proposed designating over 400,000 acres in the East Bay as Critical Habitat (CH) for the Alameda whipsnake, including large chunks of remaining open space in the Alameda Creek watershed. A vast amount of whipsnake habitat has been lost to rampant development, and the snake's habitat has been fragmented into five populations with little or no connectivity between them. The proposed CH units encompass the Tilden/Briones, Oakland/Las Trampas, Hayward-Pleasanton Ridge, Mount Diablo-Black Hills, and Sunol-Cedar Mountain populations, and connective corridors at the Caldecott Tunnel and Niles Canyon/Sunol.

FWS is certain to hear from opponents of the CH designation (large development corporations and other advocates of suburban sprawl), so it is important that they hear from East Bay residents who support the proposal. Comments on the CH proposal must be received by **May 8**.



Proposed Critical Habitat (Shaded Area)

Points to include on the post card:

- ✓ All 406,708 acres proposed should be designated as CH. Habitat destruction and degradation are the primary reasons for the decline of the whipsnake, so it is essential that the last remaining habitat be preserved.
- ✓ CH is intended to ensure the survival and **recovery** of endangered species. In order to recover the whipsnake, enough habitat must be preserved for populations to expand.
- ✓ Connective corridors between populations must be maintained and increased. The Caldecott Tunnel and Niles Canyon/Sunol corridors should be finalized as proposed without any deletions or reduction in acreage.

RIDE THE HISTORIC NILES TRAIN

*Benefit for the
Alameda Creek Alliance
June 4, 4pm*

Ride the historic steam train on June 4 through Niles Canyon, and \$5 of your ticket will benefit the Alameda Creek Alliance. The train departs from Sunol at 4pm and takes you to the Niles Depot and back. This is a great way to view Alameda Creek in Niles Canyon. Call the Pacific Locomotive Association at (925) 862-9063 for more info.

JOIN THE ALLIANCE

Support the work of the Alameda Creek Alliance by becoming a member. If you haven't already joined, please send in the enclosed membership form. We now have 130 members! If you wish to receive regular e-mail updates and alerts about issues and activities of the Alameda Creek Alliance, e-mail us at: alamedacreek@hotmail.com

NEW UPDATED WEB SITE

Our languishing web site will have a new domain and will be updated by mid-May. Visit the site at:

www.alamedacreek.com

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED READING

Salmon Without Rivers by Jim Lichatowich
A History of the Pacific Salmon Crisis
available from Island Press - Box 7, Covelo, CA 94528

Salmon Nation - People and Fish at the Edge
an Ecotrust book
1200 NW Naito Pkwy., Suite 470, Portland, OR 97209

Totem Salmon by Freeman House
available from the Mattole Restoration Council
P. O. Box 160, Petrolia, CA 95558

Imperial San Francisco by Gray Brechin
Urban Power, Earthly Ruin
U. C. Press - 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94720

Farewell, Promised Land
Waking From the California Dream
by Robert Dawson & Gray Brechin
U. C. Press

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



Up Your Creek!

ACA Newsletter #9

ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE EVENTS

- April 25** **Park District Cattle Grazing Forum**
(see page 2)
- May 13** **Fremont Steelhead Festival**
Alameda Creek Spawning Run
(see page 2)
- May 30** **Next Alliance Meeting**
(see page 2)
- June 4** **Niles Steam Train Benefit Ride**
(see page 3)
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ALAMEDA CREEK ALLIANCE
P. O. BOX 192, CANYON, CA 94516
(510) 845-4675
e-mail: alamedacreek@hotmail.com
web site: www.alamedacreek.com