

S. Jose
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Salmon raises hopes for new fish ladders

The day after America feasted on turkey, Ken Elliott went looking for salmon in Alameda Creek in Fremont. Walking near the train trestle over the creek, he wasn't disappointed.

"It was unbelievable," said Elliott, a fisherman who would like to see a salmon spawning ground re-established up-creek in Niles Canyon. "I saw a salmon jump out of the water and try to get up(stream)."

Due to low water levels in the creek, the lone salmon couldn't make it past a concrete erosion-control wall. The salmon died, but Elliott clipped off a fin. If he can come up with the money, he's hoping an expensive genetic test will show the salmon is a native.

The state Department of Fish and Game believes the fish that do try to swim up Alameda Creek are non-native hatchery fish, according to Elliott. If it can be shown that native fish are swimming up-stream, Elliott and others believe they may be able to convince officials to build fish ladders past the wall and other obstructions.

Similar tests showed that salmon in San Jose's Guadalupe River were hatchery fish, he said.

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Fish fight: Salmon will continue returning to Alameda Creek — just as they did as a result of last year's early winter rains — if the newly formed Alameda Creek Alliance has its way. The group wants to remove barrier along the creek through Southern Alameda County so that more salmon can return to spawn in waters in the hills east of Fremont just as they traditionally had before man-made obstacles came along. The group has a meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Centerville library, 3101 Nicolet Ave., Fremont, and seeks volunteers. Call (510) 376-0518 or email AlamedaCreek@formutate.com.