

Argus
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Alameda Creek Alliance sues to protect steelhead

By Mary Nauman
STAFF WRITER

FREMONT — The Alameda Creek Alliance has tried persuasion, letters and publicity to protect the threatened steelhead trout. Now, it's trying a lawsuit.

The local group is part of a coalition of California groups that announced plans Wednesday to sue the National Marine Fisheries Service for not taking steps to help the once-abundant steelhead.

"The conditions for the steel head have not improved since it was placed on the threatened species list," he said. "Some of the streams have so few steel head left that we've considered naming them rather than counting them."

The goal of the lawsuit is to convince the federal agency to establish protective regulations for the steelhead, said attorney

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Fish: No law prevents people from killing the steelheads

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Brendan Cummings. Right now, there is no law preventing people from killing or harming the steelhead in Alameda Creek, he said.

"Our understanding is that they are holding back for political reasons," Cummings said. "We want this to be the hammer that pushes for more restoration efforts, like fish ladders, and protective regulations."

A spokesman for the National Marine Fisheries Service could not be reached for comment.

For the past two years, the Alameda Creek Alliance has

been lobbying for a series of adjacent ponds — known as fish ladders — to be built around the dams in Alameda Creek. Without it, the steelhead are blocked from spawning and die, Miller said.

Fortunately, the finances of the project are almost in place, Miller said. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has agreed to finance 75 percent of the project, and details are being worked out with the Alameda County water and flood control districts, he said.