



Creek Currents

Newsletter of the Urban Creeks Council
Spring 2000



News From the South Bay: Alameda Creek

Last winter was the second consecutive year in which wild steelhead returned to Alameda Creek. One steelhead—named Stella—was implanted with a radio transmitter. Stella swam up Niles Canyon, over a low dam, and about a mile up a very steep section of Stony Brook Creek, where she was blocked by a culvert. A genetic study of Alameda Creek steelhead has determined that returning adult fish are native to the area and genetically similar to native rainbow trout populations in upper Alameda Creek and several tributaries below major dams. These fish would respond well to restoration efforts.

The County of Alameda just released a feasibility study that concludes that a viable run of steelhead could be restored to Alameda Creek. The report determined that suitable spawning and rearing habitat exists within the watershed, that a native, locally adapted trout stock survives in the watershed, and that barriers in the lower creek are the main impediment to steelhead completing their life-cycle. The report recommends that the County provide fish passage past the BART weir in Fremont, as well as at several other County-owned drop structures. Also recommended are passage improvement projects at several other partial migration barriers, and screening of water diversions to protect juvenile steelhead. The County is already preparing a restoration proposal to the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers for federal funding to build a fish ladder at the BART weir and for other improvements. Altogether, up to 20 miles of habitat could be made accessible to steelhead and salmon within the next three years!

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is finalizing protective regulations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for threatened populations of steelhead in California. The regulations, which will go into effect in July, were proposed by NMFS in December 1999 after settling a lawsuit the Alameda Creek Alliance had brought with a coalition of other environmental and fishing groups. The regulations will give ESA protection to Alameda Creek steelhead and fish in other Central California Coast streams, preventing illegal "take" of the species.

The Alameda Creek Alliance will sponsor a Ratepayers for Fish demonstration at the headquarters of the Alameda County Water District in Fremont from 12-1 on March 14. The Alliance is planning a Fremont Steelhead Festival and Watershed Awareness Fair for Saturday, May 13, to celebrate the miracle of wild steelhead and salmon returning to an urban creek. There will be a road race along the creek (the Alameda Creek Spawning Run), booths, food, and music. For information 510/845-4675 or alamedacreek@hotmail.com.—JM

Some Great Creek Newsletters and Web Sites:

The Friends of Sausal Creek
<http://www.aoinstitute.org/sausal>
c/o Aquatic Outreach Institute
1327 So. 46th St.
Richmond Field Station #155
Richmond, CA 94804

Current News/The Voice of the River
Friends of the Los Angeles River
P. O. Box 292134,
Los Angeles, CA 90029

Creeks Speak, The Voice of Bay Area Citizens for Creek Restoration, c/o Aquatic Outreach Institute
1327 So. 46th St.
#155 Richmond Field Station
Richmond, CA 94804

Creek Watch
Sacramento Chapter, Urban Creeks Council
5228 Adelaide Way
Sacramento, CA 95841

Up Your Creek!
Alameda Creek Alliance
P.O. Box 192
Canyon, CA 94516
www.formulate.com/alamedaCreek