Gaining Momentum for Alameda Creek Restoration
1916 – Calaveras Reservoir
1930
Alameda Diversion Dam
1960s –
End of
Salmon and
Steelhead
Runs
1965 - San Antonio Reservoir
1960s – Flood Control Channel
1972 - BART Weir Fish Barrier
1975 –
CDFG
Abandons
Alameda
Creek

State of California

Memorandum

To: Files - Alameda Creek, Alameda County

Date: December 3, 1975

From: Department of Fish and Game

Subject: Steelhead Restoration Policy for Alameda Creek, Alameda County

On June 17, 1975 regional personnel representing WLP and IF functions met with the Regional Manager to discuss our management policy regarding steelhead restoration on Alameda Creek. This meeting was prompted in part by my memorandum report on subject dated March 22, 1975.

Following a comprehensive discussion, the Regional Manager stated:

1. Region 3 will not actively promote steelhead restoration on Alameda Creek at this time. There is little public expression of interest on the subject and no expression of interest from the water agencies in the basin.

2. Options are open for a change in this position if general support for steelhead restoration grows within the public sector and water agencies.

3. The major difficulty facing restoration is the current management policies and operational procedures of the water agencies that control streamflow within the drainage.

Keith R. Anderson
Associate Fishery Biologist
Central Fishery District
Region 3

KRA:tw
1970s – 1980s Rubber Dams
1983–1989 Advisory Committee

friends of Alameda Creek
1990s Water Board Lawsuits

- California Trout
- CSPA
- California Water Boards
SFPUC estimates 86% of stream flows in upper Alameda Creek are diverted for water supply. Agreement 1997 Flows
Alliance seeks to bring back ‘wild fish’ to Alameda Creek

Water district says cost is too high

By Kristian Butler

FREMONT — Environmentalists have started a movement to bring wild king salmon and steelhead trout back to Alameda Creek. But water district officials say the effort would cost too much and deplete local water supplies.

The newly formed activist group — the Alameda Creek Alliance — will hold its first meeting from 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday to discuss strategies for bringing the fish back.

“We used to have runs of thousands of fish,” said environmental activist Jeff Miller. “These are big, wild fish, and all over the Pacific Coast they are in decline.

“The fish — which must migrate between fresh and salt water to survive — are native to the freshwater rainbow trout newly found in the creek.

“Because they must migrate so far, their populations have been destroyed by water district diversion projects, urbanization, cattle grazing, and the building of dams for the Calaveras, San Antonio and Del Valle reservoirs,” Miller said.

“The steelhead has declined so much that it was listed as a threatened species by the federal government this year. A new king salmon — ever thought to be extinct from the area — were seen last November trying to scale a dam near the BART tracks near Fremont.

“Environmentalists say they hope these factors will bring money and support to their effort.

“Let’s not be the first time people tried to bring the fish back.

In 1989, officials from the Alameda County Water District, the San Francisco Water Department, the East Bay Regional Water District and the California Department of Fish and Game studied the possibility of bringing the fish back to the creek.

The group considered ideas such as an annually releasing extra fish from several reservoirs above Alameda Creek so young steelhead could make it to the Bay, building fish ladders and removing temporary dams to help

mature fish travel back upstream. But they decided such a project would cost too much.

“The value of the water alone in 1989 would be $11.5 million a year,” said Paul Perino, of the Alameda County Water District. In addition, wild steelhead and king salmon could interbreed with the survival of the 20,000 to 30,000 freshwater rainbow trout that water and parks districts stocked in the creek for years before he said.

But such farmed fish should not replace the wild species, said naturalist Joanne Ivan, of Fremont.

“There is a basic need for nature to be there for us. We said, ‘With every species we lose, every place we lose it, is a little poorer.’

For information about the alliance, call 376-6518

Stephen J. Pringle — Sun
There is no magic bullet!
Organizing
Documenting Steelhead
68 BAY AREA CONSERVATION GROUPS CALL FOR SAN FRANCISCO TO RESTORE ALAMEDA CREEK
Stream Flows, Dam Removal Requested To Restore Fish Runs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 2, 2005

CONTACT:
Jeff Miller  (510) 499-9185
Alameda Creek Alliance

Sunol, CA — While the City of San Francisco hosts a United Nations “Green Cities” conference this week, 68 Bay Area conservation groups are calling on the City’s water agency to improve its stewardship of local watershed lands and restore Alameda Creek in southeastern San Francisco Bay. The Alameda Creek Alliance (ACA) and over 60 other environmental and fishing groups sent a letter today to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), which manages 36,800 acres of public land and operates three dams in the upper Alameda Creek watershed. The groups are requesting that the SFPUC restore stream flows in Alameda Creek sufficient to sustain steelhead and rainbow trout, protect rare fish populations in SFPUC reservoirs, remove a diversion facility that limits steelhead restoration, and abandon plans to construct a new dam in the Sunol Valley reach of Alameda Creek.

“A city is only as ‘green’ as the manner in which it stewards the natural areas which provide its resources,” stated Jeff Miller, Director of the ACA. “After 90 years of water diversions from Alameda Creek, it is time for San Francisco to come to the table with a commitment to provide suitable stream flow for fish and wildlife below their diversion dams.

The SFPUC diverts 80% of natural stream flows tributary to upper Alameda Creek into Calaveras and San Antonio Reservoirs for water supply. Alameda Creek Diversion Dam (ACDD), completed in the 1930s, also diverts water into Calaveras Reservoir from upper Alameda Creek. The groups are asking the SFPUC to abide by State Fish and Game Codes requiring sufficient instream flows to sustain steelhead trout and other native fish in good condition, without impacting other river systems, specifically the Tuolumne River. The SFPUC signed an agreement in 1997 to release minimal flows from Calaveras Reservoir to restore about five miles of Alameda Creek in the Sunol Valley, but to date has not released any water. The groups also want the SFPUC to:

- Implement an interim operation plan to protect steelhead and rainbow trout and their habitat (including providing instream flows, excluding cattle from streams, and controlling predaceous bass in reservoirs), prior to the rebuilding of Calaveras Dam, which is scheduled to be completed in 2011;
- Cease operation of and remove the ACDD, which captures virtually all stream flow from upper Alameda Creek and is a barrier to steelhead migration into the headwaters of Alameda Creek;
- Abandon efforts to construct an unnecessary water recapture dam in the Sunol Valley (the so-called “Alameda Creek Fishery Enhancement Project”), at a savings of $17.5 million.

The SFPUC is planning to spend at least $3.4 billion on their Water System Improvement Program (WSIP) to seismically retrofit the system’s pipelines and other infrastructure. WSIP projects include replacing Calaveras...
Trout fest celebrates conservation victory

By Judith Schonter

Friday - At a boiling table in Niles Community Park, Diane Hart and her husband, Robert, shared their memories of trout fishing. As the couple has fished together for over 20 years, they have seen a significant change in the water quality of Alameda Creek.

Sunol and Niles Dams Removed From Alameda Creek

A historic moment in the restoration of Alameda Creek was realized this fall when the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) removed Sunol and Niles Dams from the Niles Canyon reach of Alameda Creek. Niles Dam was removed from lower Niles Canyon by late August and the last rubble from Sunol Dam was removed by October.

These dam removals, in concert with other fish passage projects in the lower creek already funded or in the planning stages, will eventually allow steelhead trout and salmon to migrate up Alameda Creek to suitable spawning and rearing habitat up through Sunol Wilderness.
Drama
An Assessment of the Potential for Restoring a Viable Steelhead Trout Population in the Alameda Creek Watershed

preparing for the
Alameda Creek
Fisheries Restoration Workgroup

by
Andrew J. Gaither
Jeffrey Hagar
Paul Slapop

Alameda Creek Watershed Historical Ecology Study
February 2000
San Francisco Estuary Institute

Population Genetic Structure of Alameda Creek Rainbow/Steelhead Trout - 2002

By
Dr. Jennifer L. Nielsen

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Moving Forward Together
(and separately)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 16, 2006
Contact: Jeff Miller, Alameda Creek Alliance, (510) 499-9185
        Maureen Barry, SFPUC, (415) 554-3293
        Bonnie Brewer, Zone 7 Water Agency, (925) 454-5015

Agencies Begin Study of Stream Flows Needed for
Alameda Creek Steelhead Trout Restoration
Multiple Agencies Join in Cooperative Study

Studies to restore threatened steelhead trout within the Alameda Creek watershed will soon get under way. A formal agreement to collaborate on water flow and fish habitat studies was signed this month by 17 public agencies and nonprofit organizations.

"These studies should identify how much water is needed, when it is needed, and in what stream reaches," said Jeff Miller, Director of the Alameda Creek Alliance. "We believe we can provide water to restore a steelhead run without compromising water supply, and in the process provide beneficial habitat for other native wildlife."

The agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding to conduct jointly-funded studies of how much water might be needed at critical times to support a viable steelhead population - while also considering other native fish and wildlife and minimizing potential impacts to drinking water supplies. The $240,000 technical study will be conducted in two phases by an independent consultant.

Contributions of $30,000 each were approved this year by four of the signatories - the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), Livermore-Amador Valley's Zone 7 Water Agency, Alameda County Water District (ACWD) and Pacific Gas and Electric Company. The $120,000 provided by these four agencies will be matched by the California State Coastal Conservancy, for a total of $240,000.

"The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding is a milestone in the process of restoring steelhead to Alameda Creek," said Paul Piraino, Alameda County Water District General Manager. "Water supply and environmental issues are not always seen as going hand in hand. In this case, however, all the parties agree that these studies are an important step in determining how to provide enough water for both steelhead and the residents of the Bay Area."
Regulatory Involvement
Low Hanging Fruit
PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 23, 2018
Contact: Laura Hidas, Special Assistant to the General Manager
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Email: Laura.Hidas@acwd.com

Alameda County Water District Awarded $6.1M in Grant Funding
Projects to help restore steelhead in Alameda Creek

Fremont, Calif. — This week, the Alameda County Water District was awarded over $6.1 million in grant funding to help fund two local fish ladder projects that will play a critical role in restoring threatened steelhead trout to Alameda Creek. With approvals from two different agencies made on the very same day, the District is set to receive up to $825,000 from the California Coastal Conservancy and $5.36 million from the California Wildlife Conservation Board for the projects. Both grants are through programs authorized by the voter-approved Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1).

Construction of the first fish ladder will begin later this spring, to be followed by a second fish ladder that will be built in partnership with the Alameda County Flood Control District. Once both ladders are complete, steelhead trout – a federally-listed, threatened species – will have a direct route to pass the District’s rubber dams and a large flood control structure to gain access to the Alameda Creek watershed for the first time in nearly 50 years.

“We are thrilled to be receiving these two grants from the Wildlife Conservation Board and the Coastal Conservancy, and are thankful for the support we’ve received from our local partners” said Jim Gunther, Board Vice President. “These projects will open up the creek corridor and enhance flows for steelhead trout and other fish, which is an exciting advancement for both the environment and our community.”

Alameda Creek serves as a major water source for the local area, providing 40% of the annual water supply for over 351,000 people and numerous businesses in Fremont, Newark and Union City.

As one of the founding members of the Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup, the District has collaborated with multiple stakeholders since 1999 on efforts to benefit Central Coast Steelhead. The Workgroup includes members from advocacy, water management, consulting, environmental, government and educational groups with interests in the Alameda Creek watershed and steelhead trout restoration.

- more -

Alameda County Water District - www.acwd.org
(510) 688-4200 - 43085 S. Ollimer Blvd. Fremont CA 94538
Proactive Agencies
Fish Passage in Lower Alameda Creek
SFPUC Dams – Calaveras and Alameda Diversion
Salt Pond Restoration to Tidal Marsh