



A Regional Collaboration in Natural Resources Conservation

## Arroyo de la Laguna Streambank Restoration Project

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### **Arroyo de la Laguna Restoration Project Could Benefit Steelhead and Other Wildlife**

Efforts to reduce streambank erosion and improve habitat along Arroyo de la Laguna could go far in multijurisdictional efforts to restore steelhead trout runs in parts of the Alameda Creek watershed. Steelhead, which migrate to the ocean to mature and return to fresh water to spawn, have been listed as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act since 1997.

A project under way aimed at reducing erosion along Arroyo de la Laguna, which feeds into Alameda Creek, could benefit steelhead, along with other kinds of fish and wildlife, by enhancing water quality and reducing sedimentation in the creek. Also, habitat would be improved under plans to use harvested trees and the root masses along the streambank to help slow down water and deflect it back to the stream’s center.

Other efforts to restore steelhead to areas of the Alameda Creek watershed where there were historical trout populations are gaining momentum. For example:

- More hurdles to fish passage were cleared earlier this year when the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission approved removal of two nonfunctioning dams in Niles Canyon below Sunol. The late-19<sup>th</sup> Century dams are no longer needed by the water district, and pose a barrier to steelhead trying to migrate from the San Francisco Bay up Alameda Creek to the hills upstream of Sunol. Removal of one dam is complete, and removal of the other is scheduled to begin Sept. 21.
- The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has awarded \$1 million to the Alameda County Water District, which serves the Fremont area, to remove an inflatable diversion dam in Alameda Creek and to install fish screens at the district’s water supply diversion point at the mouth of Niles Canyon. Meanwhile, agencies are pursuing grant funding to address other barriers in the creek.
- A technical study of water flows needed to support steelhead in Alameda Creek is expected to get under way soon. Local and state funding for the \$240,000 study is anticipated, with much of it already approved. It will look at how much water might be needed in the creeks at critical times to support a viable steelhead population, without adversely affecting drinking water supplies.

The Arroyo de la Laguna restoration project also could improve habitat for the California red-legged frog, the Western pond turtle and migrating song birds.

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