

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Zone 7 Pitches in to Restore Steelhead in Alameda Creek
Flows study will determine the water flows needed to support the native fish

Livermore – The Zone 7 Board of Directors last night approved funding part of a flows study to restore steelhead runs in Alameda Creek, reiterating the agency’s commitment to supporting natural habitats in the Livermore-Amador Valley and areas downstream. The study is a cooperative effort between Zone 7, the Alameda County Water District, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, and the State Coastal Conservancy. Spearheaded by the Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup, the study will look at how much water would be needed to restore native steelhead populations downstream in Niles Canyon, while also protecting other native fish and riparian habitats and minimizing potential impacts to the Valley’s water supply.

Zone 7 realizes that what we do upstream can impact our downstream neighbors, and we manage our portion of the watershed accordingly. “Zone 7 is committed to finding new ways to manage our operations that also bring value-added benefits to our community,” said John Greci, Zone 7 Board President. “The Alameda Creek watershed connects us to each other and to our neighbors through a network of streams and arroyos.”

Zone 7 releases water down Arroyo del Valle to Alameda Creek as part of its artificial groundwater recharge program. In 2004, Zone 7 studied potential past and present steelhead populations within the Livermore-Amador Valley, with specific focus on Arroyo Mocho and Arroyo del Valle (both tributaries to Alameda Creek). The study found that, historically, steelhead rarely—if at all—visited Arroyo del Valle and Arroyo Mocho. However, both arroyos offer habitat for steelhead, and Zone 7 is doing its part to ensure that conditions are right should the fish enter these areas in the future.

Steelhead are listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. Unlike their relatives the rainbow trout, which live in the same stream their entire life, steelhead migrate to the ocean and return to their native stream to spawn. This past winter was the ninth consecutive winter that ocean-run steelhead have been spotted trying to migrate up Alameda Creek. Besides the Alameda Creek watershed, the only other viable steelhead populations in the San Francisco Bay tributaries are in the South Bay.

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and the Alameda County Water District also use Alameda Creek for their water supply purposes. Several barriers currently thwart upstream migration at various locations along Alameda Creek.

Zone 7 continually looks for more environmentally friendly solutions to manage water supply and flood protection in the Valley, as feasible. The agency recently realigned Arroyo las Positas and widened Arroyo Mocho near where they join south of Interstate 580 at El Charro Road. Instead of building structures that would restrict upstream migration, Zone 7 built two fish passageways that enable the fish to move upstream.

The total cost of the study is \$240,000. The State Coastal Conservancy will fund half of the study, with Zone 7, Alameda County Water District, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission each pitching in \$30,000 for a matching \$120,000.

Zone 7's service area falls in the northern portion of the Alameda Creek watershed along Arroyo Mocho and Arroyo de la Laguna, including the cities of Livermore, Pleasanton, and Dublin. The Alameda Creek watershed is the largest drainage in the Southern San Francisco Bay region, draining roughly the southern two-thirds of the East Bay and covering about 700 miles.

The Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup is made up of Zone 7 Water Agency, the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the Alameda County Water District, the Alameda Creek Alliance, American Rivers, the California State Coastal

Conservancy, the California Department of Fish and Game, the City of Fremont, the East Bay Regional Park District, the National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Supervisor Scott Haggerty's Office, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

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Zone 7 Water Agency is one of the 10 active zones of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The District was established by the State Legislature in October 1949 to solve problems of flooding, drainage, channel erosion and water supply and conservation in Alameda County. A seven-member board of directors governs Zone 7. Along with flood control, Zone 7 supplies water to all of eastern Alameda County and a population of more than 183,000. Treated water is sold wholesale to local retailers, including the cities of Livermore and Pleasanton, the Dublin San Ramon Services District, and the California Water Service Company. Zone 7 also distributes untreated water to local agriculture operations and golf courses.