

PROJECT D4

FISH HABITAT AND PASSAGE IMPROVEMENT

This project helps restore and maintain healthy fish populations, especially steelhead, by improving fish passage and habitat. Sites may include Alamitos Creek at Almaden Lake and County of Santa Clara-owned Ogier Ponds, where human-made creek alterations disrupt fish migration. Project D4, which includes coordinating and partnering with other external parties, incorporates studies of streams throughout the county to determine what and where habitat improvements will most benefit steelhead. These studies can be used by regional partners to implement complementary habitat enhancements.

The project also continues funding to place instream gravel, boulders, large wood, or other features to enhance fish habitat at appropriate locations. By adding natural stream features such as large wood, we can create habitat to provide refuge during fish migration, prolonged drought, or extreme rainfall events. Additionally, habitat restoration can improve ecosystem function and increase resiliency to climate change. By restoring natural functions, issues such as water quality may be less exacerbated and native species can continue to flourish and adapt.

Benefits

- Improves habitat and passage for steelhead and other native fish within Santa Clara County watersheds
- Contributes to required mitigation for environmental impacts of reservoir and recharge operations and countywide Stream Maintenance Program
- Maintains investment in earlier habitat improvements
- Addresses climate change

Key Performance Indicators (FY22–36)

1. Complete planning and design for one (1) creek/lake separation.
2. ~~Partially fund the construction of~~ Construct one (1) creek/lake separation project in partnership with local agencies.
3. Use \$8 million for fish passage improvements by June 30, 2028.
4. Update study of all major steelhead streams in the county to identify priority locations for fish migration barrier removal and installation of large woody debris and gravel as appropriate.
5. Complete five (5) habitat enhancement projects based on studies that identify high priority locations for large wood, boulders, gravel, and/or other habitat enhancement features.

Geographic Area of Benefit: Countywide

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