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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT AND PARTNERS RESTORE ACCESS TO 40 MILES OF HABITAT FOR THREATENED STEELHEAD TROUT

(Half Moon Bay, CA- September 11, 2013) The San Mateo County Resource Conservation District (RCD) announced the removal of a century-old concrete barrier across San Francisquito Creek on the boundary of the cities of Menlo Park and Palo Alto to help protect one of the last remaining wild steelhead trout populations in the Bay Area. The roughly 40-foot-wide structure, called the “Bonde weir,” regularly stranded the fish, listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened by extinction. The project removed the weir and restored 120 linear feet of the creek with natural streambed materials.

“We are thrilled to help protect one of the last remaining wild steelhead trout populations in the Bay Area by improving access to 40 miles of spawning and rearing habitat on their journey between the watershed and the Bay and ocean. This feat would not have been possible without the many committed individuals and organizations that have worked over a decade to restore the watershed and advocate for the removal of the barrier,” said Kellyx Nelson, RCD’s Executive Director, particularly noting Acterra, the San Francisquito Watershed Council Steelhead Task Force, the San Francisquito Joint Powers Authority, and the City of Menlo Park.

Central California Coast steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) were once abundant in ocean and bay streams from Sonoma County to Santa Cruz, but their numbers plunged in the 20th century due to habitat degradation. The Bay Area population has been reduced to 15% of what it was as recently as the 1960s.

Known for their powerful strength, speed, and size (up to 55 pounds and 45 inches), steelhead trout are renowned for their beauty, olive colored on top, silvery white underneath, pink stripes along their sides, and speckled bodies. They depend on freshwater streams for the first years of their life, then migrate to the ocean to feed and mature, returning to the precise creek of their birth to spawn the next generation.

The project cost \$310,900 and was primarily funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA NMFS)- \$174,400, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)- \$75,000, and California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC)- \$35,000.

For photos, video, and more information, please visit the project web page on the RCD's website at www.sanmateorcd.org/bonde.html.

About the RCD: The Resource Conservation District in San Mateo County acts as a focal point for local conservation efforts and assistance to agriculture. It is a non-regulatory special district to help people protect, conserve, and restore natural resources through information, education, and technical assistance programs. 99 RCDs statewide provide assistance to landowners wishing to best manage their natural resources and accomplish thousands of practical, hands-on conservation projects every year. In San Mateo County, the RCD manages a wide array of projects, including soil and water conservation, wildlife habitat enhancement and restoration, control of exotic plant species, watershed restoration, conservation planning, education, rural road improvements, and many others.

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