



Endangered Steelhead Trout Restored In Malibu Lagoon:

Restoration officials celebrating the first sighting in decades of an endangered steelhead trout in the Malibu Lagoon, which underwent a major overhaul, are preparing on May 30 for another \$2.1 million steelhead restoration project just up the coast.

California State Parks and the Bay Foundation are working toward a July 15 start date for the removal of two crossings and an earthen and concrete dam from Arroyo Sequit Creek at Leo Carrillo State Park.

The Arroyo Sequit Creek Steelhead Barrier Removal Project is meant to allow steelhead trout easier access up the creek, where they can spawn.

“Those are the kind of projects that we love to do, the ones that provide multiple benefits for multiple species – people, wildlife, fish and then return sand to our beaches, which desperately need them,” said Mark Abramson, senior watershed advisor for the Bay Foundation.

Steelhead trout journey from freshwater to brackish water to the ocean to reproduce. There used to be thousands of steelhead trout in Southern California waters, but their numbers have declined dramatically since the construction of concrete dams.

There are only 50 documented steelhead trout in all of Southern California that go up creeks and rivers and return to the ocean, making the documentation of the steelhead trout in the Malibu Lagoon so special, Abramson said.

The Malibu Lagoon project, which was finished up last year, drew concerns from some Malibu residents and environmentalists who were worried for the existing wildlife.

Abramson and California State Parks officials are touting the sighting of the steelhead trout in the Malibu Lagoon as proof that the restoration project achieved its purpose.

“This is the first time I can recall seeing one here,” Abramson said. “In all the surveys they’ve done and all the data we have, we’ve never seen one using the lagoon.”

Suzanne Goode, a senior environmental scientist at California State Parks, said the steelhead trout hasn’t been seen in the lagoon for decades.

“It’s an indication to us that the water quality is very good, and it just gives them some additional habitat, because they’ve been cut off from a lot of their habitat upstream,” Goode told KPCC.

There are also plans to remove the Rindge Dam from Malibu Creek, to further restore steelhead trout to the Santa Monica Mountains watershed.

“The more habitat we can provide them, the more room we can provide them, the more fish they can produce,” Abramson said. “The more fish they can produce, the more fish that will come back year after year.”