

BAY AREA

If you build it, they will come!

“On an overcast and unassuming Thursday morning in July, a small barge sailed into India Basin along San Francisco’s southeastern waterfront. Resting on the barge were 60 concrete structures called Oyster Reef Balls (ORBs) ready to be deployed into the shallow waters off of Heron’s Head Park. The ORBs resemble wiffle balls cut in half, although much larger, each weighing about 1,100 pounds and requiring a crane to lower them into their designated position about a hundred feet from the shore. Unless you were to look right at the nadir of low tide, you would probably miss this new reef at Heron’s Head. Just like the native Olympia oyster once ubiquitous in the San Francisco Bay, it’s hard to spot. But our hope is that this structure will soon serve as a substrate for a living Olympia oyster reef – a reef that will filter the water, provide food and habitat for other species, and protect the shoreline. ...” Read more from the Earth Island Journal here: [If you build it, they will come!](#)

Marin water agency doubles Mt. Tamalpais fire fines

“After a close-call incident this summer that could have ignited the first major wildfire on Mount Tamalpais in several decades, the Marin Municipal Water District decided this month to more than double its fines for smoking, fireworks and campfires in the watershed. Visitors who decide to light up a cigarette, fire off a firecracker or light a campfire can now face \$945 to nearly \$1,200 in fines and penalties, according to the district. The changes were approved by the district Board of Directors in a unanimous vote last week, nearly half a year after a smoker [ignited a blaze near Bon Tempe Lake](#) that officials said could have grown out of control had it occurred later in the day. ...” Read more from the Marin Independent Journal here: [Marin water agency doubles Mt. Tamalpais fire fines](#)

Project helps restore steelhead habitat along Stevens Creek

“Steelhead and other fish species should find it easier to pass through the section of Stevens Creek that runs by the Deep Cliff Golf Course in Cupertino after contractors working for the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail completed a project to restore natural fish habitat and remove a concrete slab spanning the creek. The concrete had been a barrier to the upstream migration of juvenile steelhead trout, a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. “The fish passage was designed with salmonids—particularly steelhead—in mind, but it will be important for the movements of all other fish species in the creek such as stickleback, minnows and suckers,” said Steve Powell, an environmental scientist who consulted on the project. “Allowing the fish access to more habitat allows them increased opportunity to locate suitable reproduction and feeding sites and maintain viable populations.” ...” Read more from the San Jose Mercury News here: [Project helps restore steelhead habitat along Stevens Creek](#)