



Media Release

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For Immediate Release

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A Real Fish Story: Fifth-Graders to Release School-Raised Steelhead Trout into American River

Golden Empire Elementary School teacher among few in state licensed to raise protected species

April 14, 2011 (Sacramento) – It’s never easy to say good-bye when a little one leaves the nest. Or, in this case, leaves the 10-gallon fish tank.

But on Friday, a group of fifth-graders from Golden Empire Elementary School will bravely bid adieu to two-dozen baby steelhead trout they raised from eggs. The release is the culmination of a class study of both fish life cycles and the eco-system of the river.

The release will take place at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, April 15, in River Bend Park (formerly Goethe Park). The students will assemble in the circular parking lot off Ron Beaudry Drive near the restroom facilities and head off to a nearby elbow in the river for the release.

The “Fish in the Classroom” program is the work of teacher Mark Bergeron, who is dedicated to connecting his students to the environment in a hands-on way. “We live in ‘River City’ at the confluence of two great rivers, and it’s important for these students to be aware of the life cycles of the species that live in the river,” says Bergeron. “Steelhead, especially, are very important to the health of the river.”

The fish hatched from eggs in Bergeron’s classroom aquarium on February 18. Students have worked hard since to keep the tiny critters alive until now, carefully monitoring the tank’s oxygen supply and giving the hatchlings just the right food.

“The students will be sad to see the fish go,” says Bergeron. Some of the kids have named the fish, making it even harder to set them free, he says.

Because steelhead trout are a federally protected species, those who raise them must first undergo training at the Nimbus hatchery and receive a license from the state. Bergeron has been licensed to raise both trout and salmon since 1999.

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