

Abstract

Collaboration with Private and Tribal Partners: Continuing Restoration on a Key Reach of the West Fork Hood River Darcy Saiget, Fish Biologist, U.S. Forest Service, Hood River Ranger District, Mt. Hood National Forest

The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon (CTWS) and the U.S. Forest Service, Hood River Ranger District (USFS) are working as partners to place large wood (LW) into the West Fork Hood River (WFHR) in 2016 and 2017 during the in-water work window (July 15 – August 15). The project reach extends from the confluence with Red Hill Creek downstream ~0.7 mi to a narrow canyon area and the majority of the project is located on an in-holding within the Mt. Hood National Forest that is owned by Weyerhaeuser Columbia Timberlands (WCT). Spring Chinook salmon, ESA listed summer steelhead, and coho are all present in the WFHR. The goal of the project, developed in partnership with the Bonneville Power Administration and the USFS Regional Assistance Team for Streams (RATS), is to restore stream function and salmonid spawning and rearing habitat within the treatment reach by placing large wood in the stream, side channels, and floodplain and by breaching stream confining berms built during past logging activities. Historic logging in the riparian area of the WFHR decreased in-stream LW and increased sediment transport, and the removal of LW from the stream increased export of bedload and organic material from the stream system. Restoration actions are designed to maintain or improve the connections between the channel and floodplain, collect and sort spawning sized gravel, increase habitat complexity in side channels and maintain river processes that ensure side channel formations/stability. Phase 1 of the project, implemented in 2016, used two 300 class excavators and a Silvicom skidder to place approximately 430 logs in 23 structures, tip 42 whole trees into the stream channel, and remove berms along the stream margin. Phase 2, planned for implementation in 2017, will place approximately 450-500 logs in 16-24 structures, tip 46-66 whole trees, and remove berms. The project involves multiple challenges, including completing a Wyden Amendment Agreement with WCT to obtain access to the project site, finalizing additional NEPA to tip whole trees and remove berms, and receiving permission from the Oregon Department of Forestry to remove (tip) trees within the Riparian Management Area.