

Restoring Klickitat River Floodplain Connectivity - Technical Considerations and Challenges

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Some of the best rearing and spawning habitat in the mainstem Klickitat River occurs between river miles 20 and 32.2. This reach has the greatest degree of channel complexity and the least amount of human infrastructure in the floodplain. The major element negatively affecting river and floodplain processes is a private valley-bottom road embankment constructed in the 1930s. YN Fisheries personnel have been involved in assessment and planning for restoration in this reach since the late 1990s and partnered with Columbia Land Trust in 2004 to begin implementation.

To date, two projects have been funded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and sponsored by Columbia Land Trust to protect and restore habitat between river miles 18.3 and 32.2 of the Klickitat River. The BPA-funded Klickitat Watershed Enhancement Project, sponsored by YNFP, is the technical lead on the project and has provided assessment, design, construction oversight, grant-writing, and planning support.

Phase 1 was completed in 2009 and acquired ownership interest of 320 acres of floodplain, riparian and associated upland as well as the road itself. It also involved removal of a cross-valley embankment and trestle across Dead Canyon Creek. Phase 2 was completed in February 2011 and treated over 6700 lineal feet of road to restore connectivity of floodplain, riverine, and hillslope processes. Many of the Phase 2 segments treated in Fall 2010 have already been inundated, in some cases multiple times.

This talk will present results of assessment work, the design process, and show a series of before and after photographs.