Walla Walla County Conservation District Dozier Instream Fish Habitat

Restoration

Project Implementation Report



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Final Report

Dozier Instream Fish Habitat Restoration Project

WA-SRFB Grant 07-1527R Touchet River Mile 42.5 Habitat Enhancement

> Walla Walla County Conservation District October, 2010

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Project Results

SCOPE OF PROJECT

In the flooding that occurred in 1996, the Touchet River corridor downstream of the City of Waitsburg was heavily damaged. With stream velocities elevated by the Waitsburg flood control dike system, higher flows from the 1996 event wrecked havoc on riparian habitat along the river and blew out much of the accumulated structure. What was left was largely a long riffle run with hardly any large woody debris, high eroding stream banks and very little vegetative cover.



The Touchet River on the Dozier Farm prior to and during the 1996 flood event

Historically high silt recruitment was accelerated and further impacted the already impaired water quality of the Touchet.

Land owner Perry Dozier recognized a worsening problem in the form of eroding banks and an over-extended meander upstream from his farmstead in the late '90s. Local agencies such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Services Agency were contacted for technical and/or financial assistance. Unfortunately, these agencies no longer had programs available that could address single resource problems in a non-competitive manner.



Start of an over-extended meander just east of the Dozier farm headquarters in 2008. Runoff events in the spring of 2009 and 2010 further extended the meander.

In late 2007, an effort was started to assess the problems on Touchet and determine what would be needed to restore the stream corridor to more naturally functioning stream.

The scope of the project that evolved was to assess, design and construct what came to be known as the "Dozier Project". The assessment work was done by U. S. Forest Service TEAMS group headed by Brian Bair and was funded by a grant from the WA-Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). Using LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology, TEAMS actually assessed the Touchet River approximately from the area of Zuger Falls to the start of the dike system upstream of Waitsburg. By looking at the total geomorphology of the stream, TEAMS tried to present a more comprehensive approach to addressing the problems of stream stability and function below Waitsburg. The recommendations for the reach of the Touchet River impacting the Dozier Project were developed during this process.



U.S. Forest Service TEAMS personnel conducting the fluvial geomorphic assessment. Note 3-4 feet of silt loam soils over unconsolidated gravel – a highly unstable condition.



Same eroding bank as shown above in a highly unstable condition.

TARGET SPECIES

Historically, spring Chinook, fall Chinook, chum and Coho salmon (Swindell 1942), steelhead and bull trout were present in the Walla Walla watershed. Of the indigenous salmonids, only three relict populations are present today; bull trout, steelhead trout and mountain whitefish. Steelhead trout and bull trout are listed as "threatened" and as such are provided protection under the Endangered Species Act. The Walla Walla watershed (WRIA 32) is part of the mid-Columbia ESU as defined by NOAA Fisheries.

THE ROAD TO IMPLEMENTATION

Early on in the process after the TEAMS recommendations were reported in 2008, it became evident to the non-profit sponsor of the Dozier Project that they were incapable of completing the project. At this time, the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board (SR-SRB) and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) encouraged the Walla Walla County Conservation District (WWCCD) to take on the project. WWCCD did so even though it was evident that there was not enough funding available from the combined funding of the SRFB and CTUIR for all the construction work needed.

When WWCCD attempts to obtain additional funding in the fall of 2008 fell through, the project was put on hold.

With the over-extended meander getting worse with each high water event, landowner Perry Dozier contacted Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) engineer Bruce Heiner for his recommendations for repairing the most problematic area. Dozier contracted with Barker Excavation to do the instream installation work which was started in the late summer work window of 2009. Natural Reclamation Service was selected to do the riparian restoration component of the project.



A westward view of the over-extended meander. The Dozier Farm headquarters lie downstream in line with the down tree in the foreground.

After a site visit by the Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) contracting officer, it was determined that unexpended funds from the original grant could be used to cover the work that had been completed plus some additional work needed to protect the integrity of the project. WWCCD worked with the RCO to get the needed revisions to the grant agreement.

Final instream work was completed during the late summer work window of 2010 with the installation of one additional barb and three sweeper logs at the downstream end of the project area. Replanting of disturbed areas was completed in October.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The following components of this two year project were installed:

- 5 rock barbs
- 5 root wads
- 3 sweeper logs
- 2 relief channel rough structures
- 1.2 acres of native grass seeding
- 2,100 feet of stream bank treated
- 3,260 native upland plants installed
- 2.9 acres of riparian zone enhanced

The total project costs were \$78,198.00. The following photographs show what was accomplished with benefits to both fish habitat and water quality.











